



# WESTERN TANAGER

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## Gull Identification: The Sequence of Plumages

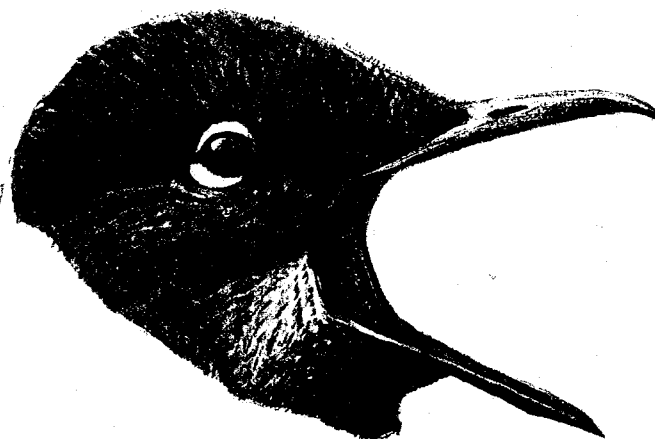
by Henry E. Childs Jr., Ph. D.

A mixed flock of gulls on a beach in winter presents a challenge to birders. The identification of the array of species is difficult, even for expert birders, as a result of the variation in plumages seen in immature, winter and breeding plumaged individuals. In this article the process of sorting out the age classes is described as an aid to the identification of three of the common species seen in southern California and to facilitate the singling out and identification of rarer species.

### The General Sequence of Molts and Plumages

The downy plumage of the semi-precocial young is replaced rapidly by a molt which results in the juvenal plumage. In many species, juvenile gulls may be seen in southern California in late summer; however, juveniles of other species have undergone a body molt (B) ("B" and "C" refer to codex on the figures) by the time they reach our area and are in the first winter or first basic plumage (basic 1) [Refer to K. Garrett's Field Tips article in *Tanager* V.52, No. 2, Oct. 1985.]. Body molts do not replace the flight or tail feathers (remiges and retrices), a situation which results in these feathers becoming very worn by the time they are replaced during the first summer molt. This worn condition can be easily observed in the field.

In spring, a second body molt (B) occurs which results in the loss of the body feathers and the assumption of the breeding, summer, or alternate plumage. As you can see, the terminology varies and helps to confuse. If full breeding condition is reached at this time, the species is called a two-year gull, breeding condition having been obtained in the second year of life.



Bonaparte's Gull, Breeding Adult

Illustration by Jonathan Alderfer

In summer, after the breeding season, a complete molt (C) occurs in which all the feathers are replaced, both body and flight, and the winter or basic plumage is achieved.

The problem is that not all species of gulls have this simple molt/plumage sequence. Some species go through a second series of basic and alternate plumages. These species are called three-year gulls. If an additional third series of plumages occur before the definitive plumages, the species is a four-year gull. In general the small gulls are two-year gulls and the large species are four-year gulls. Only the new National Geographic Field Guide makes an attempt to clarify these plumage patterns.

By referring to Figure 1, the sequence of molts and plumages can be seen and related

to the calendar. Start with the egg and proceed in a clockwise direction through the annual cycle of the Bonaparte's Gull, a two-year gull. Please read the rest of this paper with your Field Guide (National Geographic) in hand, remembering that basic equals winter and alternate equals summer. I like this terminology for biological reasons but I suspect that it will be slow in general acceptance by birders.

### Bonaparte's Gull, a Two-year Gull

Two-year gulls reach the adult, breeding or definitive alternate plumage in the beginning of their second year of life. The Bonaparte's Gull is our commonest, two-year gull in Southern California. By examining Figure 1 and using a straight edge

Figure 1a. Seasonal distribution and status of the Bonaparte's Gull in southern California (Garrett and Dunn, 1981).

SPECIES	District	Habitat	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Bonaparte's Gull	C	ibel												
	S	lb												
	DMR	l												

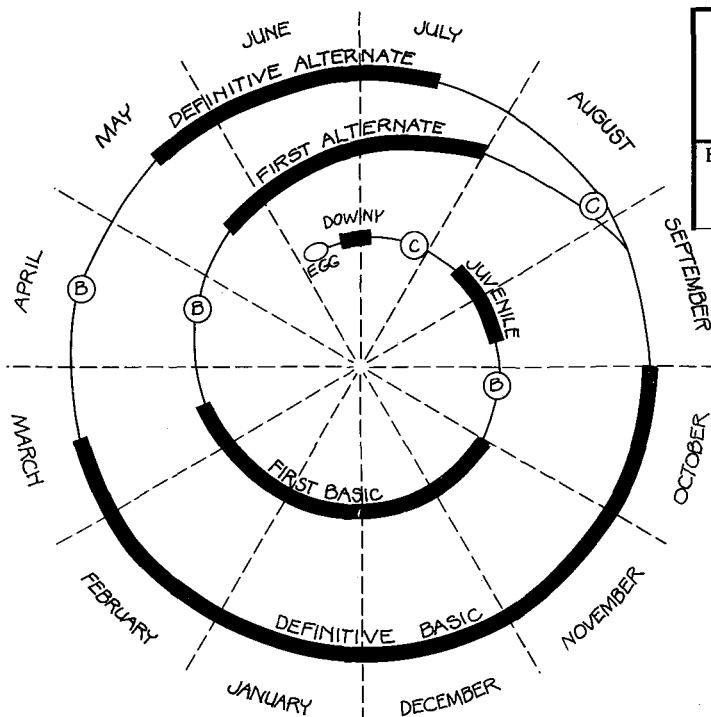


Figure 1. Plumage cycle in the Bonaparte's Gull, a two-year gull (modified after Dwight, 1925). B represents body molt; C, a complete molt.

connecting the center to any month, one can see that at any time there are generally only two different plumages present, and which ones they are likely to be. Around the time of the molt there may be early or late molting, intermediate plumaged individuals present. This confuses the issue, but is the result of different levels of sex hormones which regulate the molting process.

However, by examining Figure 1a, it becomes apparent that this species is not present in large numbers in the early fall as most of the individuals do not arrive in southern California until November, after the molt has been completed. In the field the presence of a black band on the tail distinguishes the first year, basic plumaged birds from the pure, white-tailed, adult, basic plumaged individuals.

Other North American gulls that exhibit essentially the same molt/plumage sequence are the Laughing, Franklin's and Sabine's Gulls and the two species of kittiwakes (though Franklin's and Sabine's Gulls show a variation on the same theme). These are rare in southern California and should not concern the beginner. The "hard core" birder, however, is always on the lookout for the rarities and should refer to Garrett and Dunn (1981) for likely localities and dates of occurrence.



Ring-billed Gull, First Winter

Illustration by Jonathan Alderfer

SPECIES	District	Habitat	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Ring-billed Gull	CSR	ibel												
	DM	l												

Figure 2a. Seasonal distribution and status of the Ring-billed Gull in southern California.

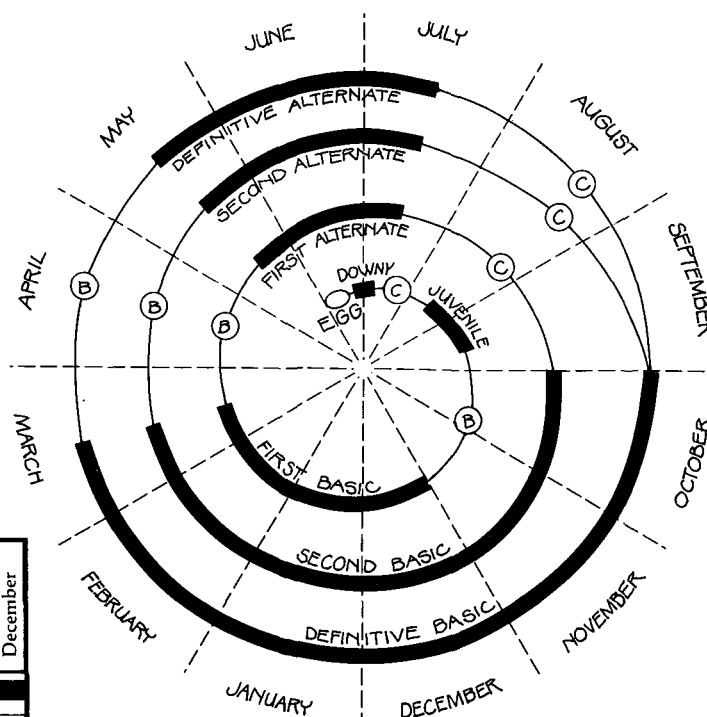


Figure 2. Plumage cycle in the Ring-billed Gull, a three-year gull.



Western Gull, Adult

Illustration by Jonathan Alderfer

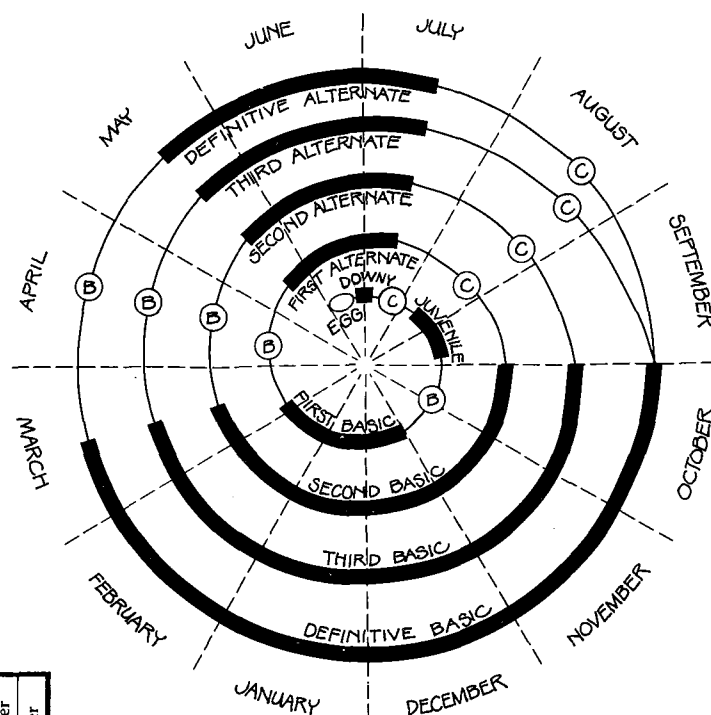


Figure 3. Plumage cycle in the California Gull, a four-year gull.

SPECIES	District	Habitat	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
California Gull	C	oibel												
	S	lb												
	DMR	I												

Figure 3a. Seasonal distribution and status of the California Gull in southern California.

### Ring-billed Gull, a Three-year Gull

The Ring-billed Gull is, next to the California, the most abundant gull in urban southern California. It occurs in mixed flocks with the California, with which it is often confused. Perhaps the following comments will help.

Figure 2 shows the plumage cycle of this species. Except at the time of the molt, three distinct plumages are found. In winter there are three basic plumages. So, in searching through a flock of Ring-bills on the local beach, three different plumages should be expected. With practice, and an understanding of the plumage cycle, identification of the year classes of plumage becomes another exciting birding skill. Figure 2a shows the seasonal distribution of this species.

Ring-bills are difficult as they are present (abundant in fall, winter, and spring, fairly common in summer) throughout the year. Migration does not remove all of the alternate plumaged birds, and juveniles arrive in August before molting into first basic. Note, however, that the juvenal plumage is replaced by October with the first basic plumage, which has a pale gray mantle and a strong terminal band on the tail. This is significantly different from the basic I of the California Gull. [See Oct. 1985 *Western Tanager* for discussion of juvenile California Gull.]

Basic II is more like the definitive basic in that the brown of the wing coverts is gone,

but the spotting of the head continues into the chest and flanks and remnants of the tail band remain (see National Geographic Field Guide, page 149). The definitive basic plumage lacks any brown in the wings, has a pure white tail and the spotting is restricted to the head and back of the neck. The Mew Gull is a coastal species seen in winter which also exhibits the pattern of a three-year plumage cycle.

### California Gull, a Four-year Gull

On Figure 3, again using a straightedge connecting the center to the perimeter, in December one can see that there are four basic plumages in the population. Basic I is a mottled brown bird. Brown immatures of the appropriate size after November are almost certainly California Gulls.

Basic II is a whiter bird, with a gray mantle, brown wing coverts and dark tail. Basic III is close to the adult plumage but with some brown in the wings, smudges in the tail and lacking the adult bill color. The definitive basic, with its spotted head, dark gray mantle and yellow bill with a red and black spot, is unmistakable.

Other four-year species include the Western, Glaucous-winged and Herring Gulls. For an excellent and thorough discussion of gull plumages, refer to Guy McCaskie (1983). He discusses Western and Yellow-footed Gulls, two closely related

species which differ markedly in their molt/plumage cycles.

In this paper no attempt has been made to describe in detail the various plumages, bill and leg colors. That information is in your Field Guide. I suggest Malibu Lagoon as an excellent place to study the plumages of gulls. There are usually seven to nine species present in winter. See you there. I'm the guy under the red hat.

### References For Further Study

- Cramp, S. and Kel Simmons, Editors. 1983 *Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. The Birds of the Western Palearctic, Vol. 3. Waders to Gulls*; Oxford University Press, New York.
- Garrett, K., and J. Dunn. 1981 *Birds of Southern California, Status and Distribution*. Los Angeles Audubon Society, Los Angeles, California.
- Grant, P. 1982. *Gulls, a Guide to Identification*. Buteo Books, S.D.
- Harrison, P. 1983. *Seabirds, an Identification Guide*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
- McCaskie, G. 1983. *Another Look at the Western and Yellow-footed Gulls*. *Western Birds* 14: 85-107.
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# Malibu Christmas Count 1984

by Kimball Garrett

In a count effort gratifyingly similar to that of recent years, eighty-three observers (in thirty-four parties) combed the canyons, ridges and shorelines of Malibu on Sunday, December 16th. The 168 species uncovered formed the third highest species total in the thirty-year history of the count; some 36,500 individuals were recorded.

Moderate rain the previous evening (and into the early hours of the morning) gave way by dawn to a cold but clear day, providing nearly ideal weather for the participants. Nearly all observers in chaparral and woodland habitats felt that such wintering species as Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows were present in relatively low numbers. In fact, rather low numbers were obtained for a wide variety of passerine species. Raptors, on the other hand, were counted in good numbers, with highlights including a Rough-legged Hawk, a record three Ferruginous Hawks, two Merlins, seven Northern Harriers, eight Black-shouldered Kites, and three Golden Eagles. Relatively few pelagic species were counted, although observers from Pt. Dume did count an impressive total of 2000 Black-vented Shearwaters. Two Black Scoters and 21 White-winged Scoters were found along the coast, and numbers of all three scoter species would have been much higher had the count been held a week earlier (at least three-fourths of the local scoter population departed the count circle during the week before the count!).

Highlights among the landbirds included the count's first Mountain Bluebirds (off lower Chesebro Road in Agoura Hills), exciting but not completely surprising in light of this species "invasion" into the coastal lowlands this winter. Other firsts for the count were three Violet-green Swallows over Malibu Creek in Malibu Creek State Park and a "staked-out" adult male American Redstart at Malibu Lagoon. Good numbers of cardueline finches were recorded, including a Red Crossbill on Pt. Dume.

As for other "irregular" species, one Lewis' Woodpecker was present (at Mulholland and Las Virgenes), nine Varied Thrushes were counted (down from last year but up from the five years before that), and Red-breasted Nuthatches were completely missing.

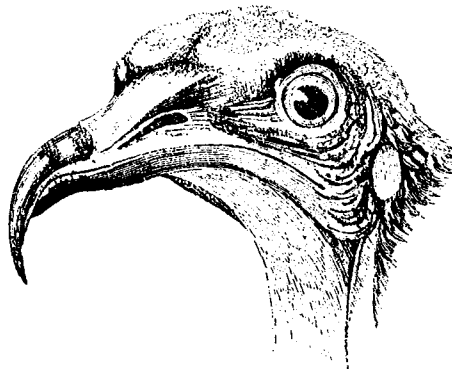
Every year a few "low-density" resident or wintering species are missed on the

count; such misses this year included Western Screech-Owl, Red-naped Sapsucker, and Brown Creeper. A pesky wintering flock of Vaux's Swifts was also missed on count day. In the "Compilers' Coronary" department, we squeaked by with three Savannah Sparrows (all in the late afternoon!).

The 1984 Malibu Count brings to an end the ten-year collaboration of Jean Brandt and Kimball Garrett as co-compilers. Ten years is a nice round number, and a period over which the consistency of coverage has remained relatively high. These ten years have seen important changes in the count circles: from the habitat restoration of Malibu Lagoon (which, with concomittant habitat *protection* may ultimately pay off) to the uncontrolled urbanization of the Ventura Freeway corridor in the northern part of the count circle. Our ten years of high-quality Christmas Count data will serve as an excellent "snap-shot" of the area's winter birdlife in the late 1970's and early 1980's. (By no means do we wish to belittle the efforts of the count compilers before 1975; they continually brought the Malibu Count to higher and higher standards, but did not achieve that desirable standard of consistency.) An analysis of the ten-year data will undoubtedly suggest many trends in species populations, although analysis on the level of a single count has innumerable pitfalls. Among the most apparent trends are the reduction of grassland passerines over the years, and the establishment of a growing resident population of Allen's Hummingbirds on the coastal strip. Careful analysis of the data may suggest additional trends which might be corroborated by additional research.

Soon we will present a detailed ten-year analysis of the Malibu Christmas Bird Count. These data are the result of a lot of hard work by nearly 200 people over the past ten years; to each of these people the compilers are extremely grateful. We are also indebted, in advance, to the brave person or persons who will step forward to take over the compilation of the count — the ground work has been done, and there's nothing in it for the new compiler(s) except fun and challenge!

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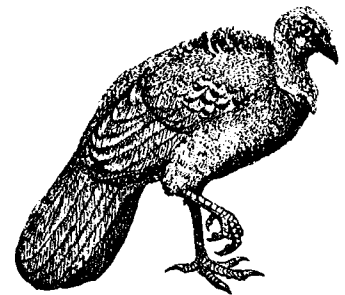


## Is the Malibu Count on the Endangered List?

The count was first reported to the Audubon Society in 1955. Since then it was spotted yearly by a number of skilled and dedicated birders. Gene Brandt and Kimball Garrett kept it alive and kicking for the last ten years, but there have been some ominous rumors about 1985. Well, the reports of the death of the Malibu count are premature. The Malibu Count Recovery Team is gathering its resources to keep the count alive.

*You* are the resource. We need all of you devoted birders to give us a call and join us on Sunday, December 22 for another history making day in the field.

Liga Auzins (213) 828-2936  
Roger Cobb (213) 398-4672  
Susan Fox (213) 399-5408  
Ken Youngleib (213) 393-4332



## O-Rings Solve a Binocular Problem

by Henry E. Childs, Jr.

Every birder has probably had this problem. There's a good (sic) bird out there and the adjustable eyepiece is out of focus and you miss the identification. That eyepiece seems to have a mind of its own and goes out of focus just when you need it. Worry no more. The solution is at hand!

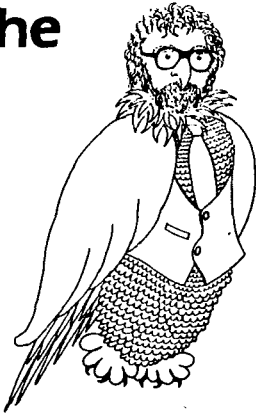
My original solution was to tape the eyepiece in place with electrician's tape, a messy and temporary business at best. Recently I learned of a more satisfactory and longer lasting method to eliminate this problem. Bob Manns, writing in *Wingbars*, the newsletter of the Atlanta Audubon Society, September, 1985, suggested that the use of a rubber O-ring slipped over the eyepiece would do the job.

Armed with this information and my binoculars, I took off for my local hardware store, rummaged around until I found the proper size (just slightly smaller than the diameter of the eyepiece), slipped the O-ring in place into the slot between eyepiece and the body, and it worked! Now the eyepiece is tight, movable if needed, but the eyepiece stays where it is placed.

So, for about 50 cents, another annoying problem can be solved and better birding obtained.

## From The Editor

by Fred  
Heath



The volume of letters concerning my statement about the Henry Childs' article on Ecuador has finally subsided and my mail box has been empty more often than not lately. Mr. Childs has even forgiven me and is busy writing still another article for inclusion in a future *Tanager*.

Kimball Garrett's new column has generated quite a bit of interest. Isabel Ludlum has suggested a few possible titles:

In Focus  
Identacles  
Identatips  
Winging It  
Wing-tips  
Feather-tips

Another letter made a very specific request.

Dear Fred,

I am writing to you because I think I have the perfect title for Kimball Garrett's new column. It is "The Ecology, Distribution, and Evolution of the White-headed Woodpecker (*Picoides albolarvatus*)."

This may not have the popular appeal of some of the other suggestions you will receive, and it may not even appeal to Kimball, but I am confident that he can adapt. It is also possible that you might not find the subject suitable for a continuing monthly contribution, but I can assure you that at least one of your readers will welcome these segments with enthusiasm for as long as it takes to exhaust the topic (or the author). I can also guarantee two other dedicated readers. Come on, give the silent minority a chance!

Sincerely yours,  
Tom Howell

It might make more sense if you knew that Dr. Howell is Kimball's thesis advisor for his doctoral dissertation at UCLA.

Although I know that between Henry Childs and Kimball Garrett, not to mention Hal Baxter, Sandy Wohlgemuth, and Wanda Conway, I haven't lacked the material to fill a *Tanager* each month, I am getting worried. My pile of unused articles has hit a new low point. So if you have any suggestions, ideas or articles please send them my way: Fred Heath, P.O. Box 5036, Chatsworth, CA 91311.

## Bob-O-Link, Inc.

by Harold Swanton

If you haven't heard of NARBA, pull up a chair and pay attention. NARBA is the acronym for North American Rare Bird Alert, the brainchild of the man who brought you Wrangler Jeans. We ran into him in the upper reaches of Garden Canyon, above Fort Huachuca, early last July — a solid business type with Leitz Trinovids and a determined expression who joined us in our search for the Buff-breasted Flycatcher.

He had brought Wrangler Jeans to their present high profile and then, seeking new fields, had turned his attention to bird-watching. Mr. Wrangler has brought big business methods to birding.

He calls his company Bob-O-Link, and he will sell you four kinds of service — Gyrfalcon I and II and Laysan I and II.

It all centers on Mr. Wrangler's state-of-the-art computer in Jamestown, North Carolina. Reports of rarities flow into his whirring machine — he pays birders \$25 for each confirmed sighting — and subscribers either call the computer or, for a steeper fee, the computer calls them. Gyrfalcons call in, the computer calls the Laysans.

If this sounds complicated, it's only because it is complicated.

We have it all right here in Mr. Wrangler's brochure: for \$12.50 a year, you can be a Gyrfalcon I. You pay the phone toll plus a 50¢ service charge for each call. You can put it all on your BankAmericard. The Gyrfalcon IIs pay \$25 for unlimited calls with no service charge.

Laysans have to wrestle with three lists: Annual Irregulars (#0130 Black-footed Albatross, #2320 Black Rail, #7460 White Wagtail, and 37 others), Occasionals (#0120 Short-tailed Albatross, #3130 Spotted Redshank, and 73 others), and Accidentals (#0110 Wandering Albatross, #5860 Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and 16 others). Annual Irregulars cost \$4 each, Occasionals \$1.50, and Accidentals 75¢.

Think of it! An Ivory-billed Woodpecker (#5860) for only 75¢!

But think again. How many calls is Mr. Wrangler going to make on #5860?

If you're a Laysan I, you have to pick \$25 worth of birds, minimum, along with your \$25 annual fee. If you're a Laysan II, you pay \$300 for the whole enchilada. Mr. Wrangler's computer will call you on a total of 233 rarities, from #0250 Buller's Shearwater to #9830 Common Reed Bunting.

All the birds in Mr. Wrangler's computer have numbers and, I suppose, all the subscribers as well. Likewise birding areas, hot spots, seasons of the year. All God's chillun got numbers.

You can even send Mr. Wrangler your life list and, again for a fee, his computer will custom-tailor a vacation to maximize shots at new birds. You might pick up a 2310, for instance, or a 2320, or maybe a 3030 in Texas in April. Holy Toledo! Maybe even a 1560 in San Francisco Bay or a 4210 in New Brunswick!

Think of the possibilities!

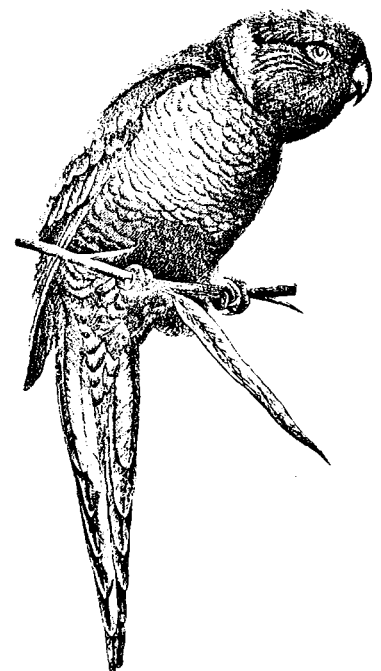
I don't know how to comment on Mr. Wrangler and Bob-O-Link, except to say that times are very tough for purveyors of satire. You can't outfantasize the stuff that rolls out of the news ticker these days. I'll come clean: I made up Bel Air Birdsearch and Ornithowhammy and Threadbare Seekers (see April's *Tanager*). I was only kidding.

Alas, Bob-O-Link is very real. If you don't believe me, write Mr. Wrangler at Box 1161, Jamestown, North Carolina 27282.

I don't know why his new company and his Gyrfalcons and Laysans and whirring wheels in South Carolina surprised me. Bob-O-Link is a logical extension of the lunatic listings and rankings and institutionalized competition that has turned a leisurely, edifying, peaceable kind of nature study into a crazy game.

So, hail to Mr. Wrangler and Bob-O-Link. What he has done for denim britches, he can do for birdwatching. The calls will flow into Jamestown, the computers will hum, and first thing you know, there will be competitors and bidding for crackshot birders and maybe even National and American leagues.

And — don't write this off — Bel Air Birdsearch and Ornithowhammy, too.



# Bah Humbird!!

## Some Holiday Gift Suggestions

### Official LA Audubon Shirts

At long last due to the persistence of our Education Chairperson, Sharon Milder, we now have on sale at Audubon House the Official Los Angeles Shirts. The design is from a specially commissioned painting by Jonathan Alderfer, the illustrator of the upcoming Jon Dunn-Kimball Garrett Identification Notes book. The black and white

illustration on this page doesn't begin to do the full-color rendering of a male Western Tanager justice. There are both T-shirts at \$9.95 and sweat-shirts at \$16.95 made of the finest material known to man. The shirts are in your choice of Snowy Egret White or Clark's Nutcracker Gray.



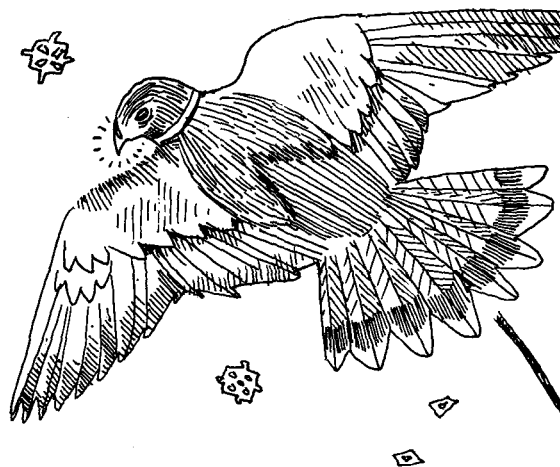
Official LA Audubon Society Shirt  
Illustration by Jonathan Alderfer

### And Now the Official LA Audubon Patch

Rendered from Jonathan Alderfer's illustration.  
\$1.95 each or three for \$5.00



Actual Size



### Take One

by Dorothy Dimsdale

If you're looking for that last minute inspiration for a Christmas gift, this may be for you. Yet another contraption has arrived which is proving itself useful for the average birder.

I had been admiring a lovely singing male Kirland's Warbler in Michigan when the person next to whom I was standing, excused himself and went off about ten feet to mutter into a tape recorder.

On this trip I became aware of a new phenomenon. Travelling periods in the van would be taken up by several birders busily talking into these mini-recorders. Sometimes they would produce them during a conversation of particular birding interest, and just listen and record.

I overheard several people talking into their machines and each one had a personal way of recording their sightings. They varied from very technical descriptions of the bird to wide-eyed delight and general notes on the sighting.

It seemed to me, nevertheless, just an additional piece of equipment to cart around. Then I saw an ad for a mini-recorder at just about half price and—you guessed it—I decided to give it a try.

My first experience with the recorder was in Alaska, and if nothing else, I have an instant replay of the sounds and impressions of that trip. It wasn't well done at all, but it's fun to listen to, even now.

These days I've become more organized and the tapes are much more informative. It has also helped that I am speaking into the microphone and not into the speaker, which I did at first. However, it wasn't a complete waste as I got a lot of background birds calling and other people's comments—some quite illuminating!

When attending lectures the recorder is invaluable. Instead of trying to make notes in a darkened hall, one can concentrate on the lecture and then at home later it is a pleasure to listen to the salient points all over again on the tape.

The fun thing to do is not to play the tape when on an extended trip. Don't play it back

## "Techniques of Birding with Arnold Small"

A Videotape Cassette in VHS or BETA. 70 minutes \$29.95.  
Nature Videos, South Laguna, CA

(A Review by Chuck Bernstein,  
author of *The Joy of Birding*)

First the shotgun was replaced by binoculars. Then came the field guide. Then an avalanche of field guides. And now this. *This*, the most recent advance, a perfectly splendid pioneering effort created by Barry Clark (Director) and Terry Clark (Photographer)

and starring the knowledgeable and authoritative Arnold Small (Actor/Instructor), is a videotape cassette titled "Techniques of Birding with Arnold Small."

Geared for the beginning and mid-level birdwatcher, this is an intensive basic birding course. The best part is you don't have to register at UCLA where Arnold taught the subject to packed classrooms for years. You have him all to yourself and without distraction. And you can take the course over and over again, and introduce others via the tape to your favorite pastime, easily, quickly and painlessly... in fact, enjoyably. As opposed to the field guides, the birds pictured here fluff their feathers and fly and throw their heads back and sing so you can watch them and listen to them at the same time!

This new teaching tool adds a new dimension to the learning and enjoyment of birdwatching and hauls our scientifically ultra-conservative birding community into the real live world of present-day technology. The photography and sound are excellent, and given the hazards known only to those who have attempted to photograph and record bird song in the wild I must classify this effort as phenomenal.

The tape opens and closes with birds in full song and moves from species to species excepting only when flocks are photographed. Arnold's beaming countenance remains pleasant and cheerful and his voice maintains its effortless, calm, unruffled tone

throughout the hour and eight minutes as he elucidates all the "mysteries" of birding from A to Z.

Discussing necessary equipment and clothing, plus certain additions that could increase one's pleasure in the sport, he painstakingly tells how to choose the best binoculars to suit the individual, illustrates all you will ever want to know about magnification by showing the same Chestnut-collared Longspur through three different sized lenses and explains in detail the many facets of lens optics. I was secretly glad when he went on to the next subject, ending the explanation of something called "exit pupil," which I have never nor will I ever really comprehend. Informative and helpful explanations are presented on the use, care and maintenance of binoculars, scopes, cameras and tripods.

As to the field techniques, Arnie explains where to look for particular species by habitat and demonstrates step-by-step just how to go about birding, demonstrating spishing, squeaking and owl-calling, offering worthwhile tips such as how movement is often more easily picked up by peripheral vision, how one should stay on the spot in the shrubbery where the bird went into hiding and outwait it, how to bird through the woods, along the shore and in open areas, how to best use field guides and regional birding guides, bar graphs and checklists. He also talks about Big Days and the Christmas Bird Counts, available tapes and records of bird song for learning, organizations and publications, and emphasises the importance of proper note-taking in the field. "Homework," he states, "is half the battle." Amen.

This piece of videotape is important to the birding fraternity/sorority not just for what it is but for what it may and probably will lead to. The concept is even more important and exciting. Nature Videos, the production company, is already planning identification tapes on backyard birding and pelagic birding as well as birding in Southeast Arizona and the Rio Grande Valley. Not only does this open the door to a flood of new birdwatchers, which is great, but consider the physically and the financially handicapped and those confined to sickrooms who will some day soon be enabled to take tours on tape to birding hot spots all over the world!

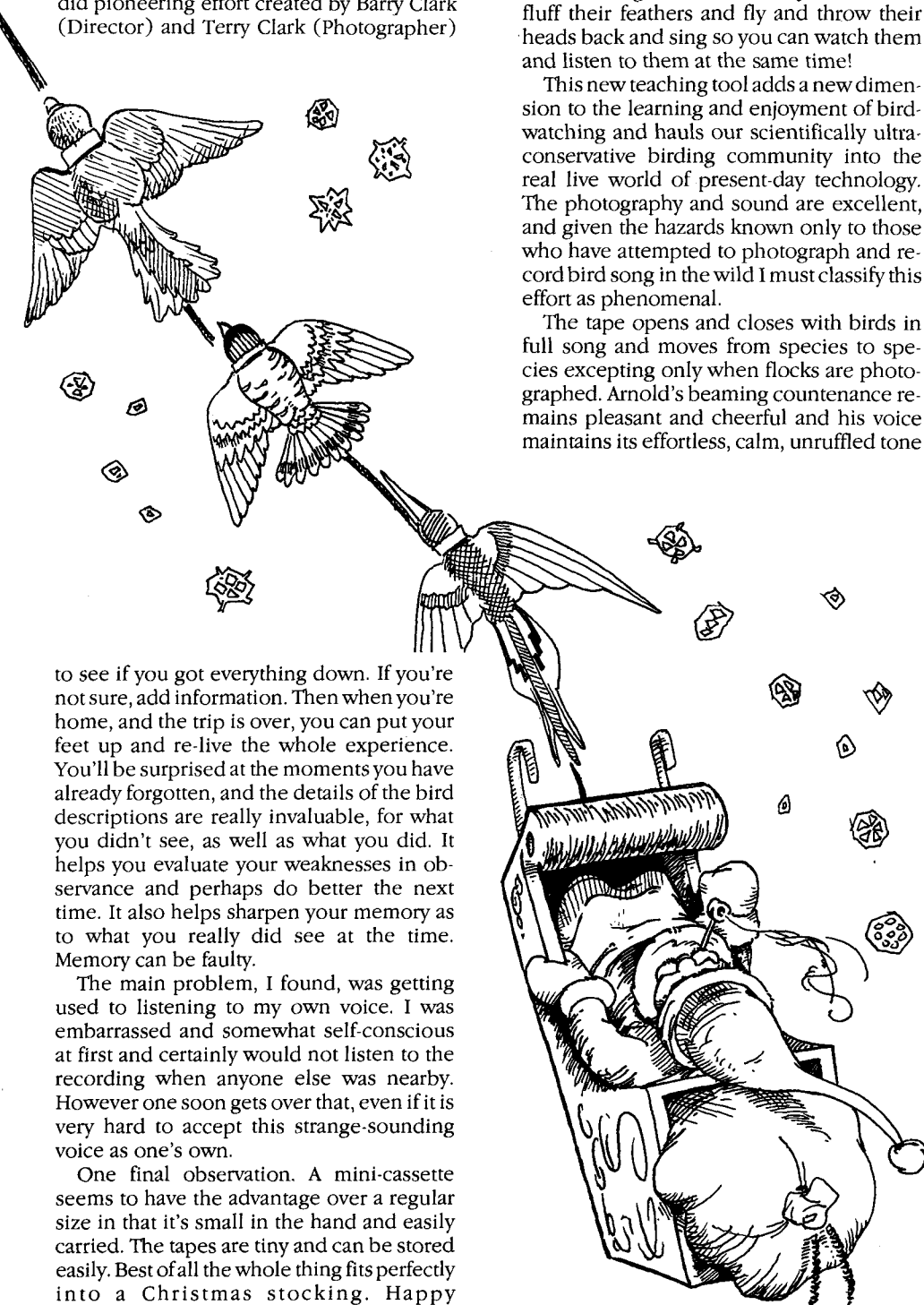
This is a great idea and a terrific tape. The topics discussed and clarified cover the entire field of birding. I can't list them all. But I came away from my viewings of this cassette with the feeling that if anything is missing it is only the wild heart-pounding flush of excitement we all know on finding a new life bird. To show that, you would need an EKG not a VCR.

*Note: This videotape cassette is available from the Los Angeles Audubon Book Store.*

to see if you got everything down. If you're not sure, add information. Then when you're home, and the trip is over, you can put your feet up and re-live the whole experience. You'll be surprised at the moments you have already forgotten, and the details of the bird descriptions are really invaluable, for what you didn't see, as well as what you did. It helps you evaluate your weaknesses in observance and perhaps do better the next time. It also helps sharpen your memory as to what you really did see at the time. Memory can be faulty.

The main problem, I found, was getting used to listening to my own voice. I was embarrassed and somewhat self-conscious at first and certainly would not listen to the recording when anyone else was nearby. However one soon gets over that, even if it is very hard to accept this strange-sounding voice as one's own.

One final observation. A mini-cassette seems to have the advantage over a regular size in that it's small in the hand and easily carried. The tapes are tiny and can be stored easily. Best of all the whole thing fits perfectly into a Christmas stocking. Happy Holidays!





# Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



**B**rer Rabbit never did get unstuck from the Tar Baby. In the old-time children's story, the feisty hero got his come-uppence when he got mad at the inanimate effigy of a baby made of warm tar. He threw a punch at the Tar Baby and his paw stuck. He pulled and twisted. The more he pulled, the more he stuck and the madder he got. He punched again, and again he stuck. Tar Baby just stood there saying nothing. Didn't hit back. Didn't even holler. In a blind fury Brer Rabbit kicked Tar Baby with both hind paws. And there he was with all four paws in tar and none on the ground. For all anyone knows he's still there.

Like Brer Rabbit, we never seem to get unstuck from our problems. Forty years after Hiroshima we still don't know how to get rid of nuclear waste. Acid rain has been destroying thousands of lakes and forests all over the world but we haven't the guts to curb it. We can't get unstuck from the Russians. And vice-versa. (Did we ever truly get unstuck from Vietnam?) And the problem at the root of most of our problems — population, well, we're really stuck!

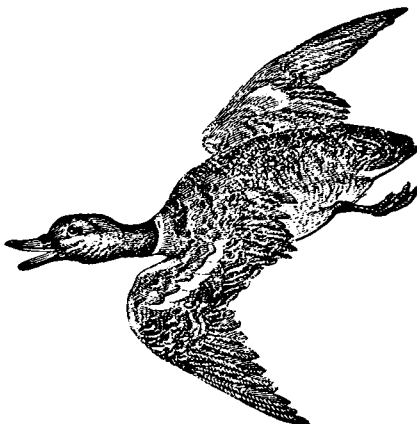
Which brings us to water, another sticky, unshakable problem. Without water small towns do not grow into cities. The tiny Pueblo de Nuestra Señora, Reina de Los Angeles got its water from the Los Angeles River and grew to a respectable size. But without additional water it could go just so far. Pre-Columbian Americans in the Southwest devised ingenious methods of catching infrequent storm water to irrigate their crops, but when drought overtook them for long periods many settlements gave up and vanished without a trace.

Like the pursuit of gold or oil, the search for water has been a deadly serious quest for the last hundred years. Owens Valley and its farmers were sacrificed to the thirst of Los Angeles — 300 miles away — when the city built an aqueduct and bought up most of the land for its water rights. In 1941, the Sierra springs that fed land-locked Mono lake were captured by the city and added to its water bounty.

The great state and federal water projects in California have brought water from the northern rivers to the parched south. Eighty-five percent of this water is used by agriculture, the number one industry in the state. An attempt to satisfy the insatiable demand for water in southern California by building a peripheral canal around the Sacramento River delta was decisively defeated by the voters in 1982. With little prospect for the revival of that expensive project, the solution to the

water question may be what environmentalists and other thoughtful people have been saying for years: Conservation.

The simple idea that reducing consumption and waste might be the way out (rather than multi-billion dollar dams and canals) has been attacked and ridiculed by farming interests, developers and many in the water business. "Simplistic, unworkable, unrealistic, naive, anti-growth" and worse, are some of the epithets that have been flung around. Now that Arizona is about to receive its fair share of Colorado River water, the screws are being tightened even more and conservation is looking better than ever.



The Metropolitan Water District, the six-county purveyor of water for southern Californians, was a powerful proponent of the rejected Peripheral Canal. It has recently embraced a daring suggestion of the Environmental Defense Fund. EDF, one of the most innovative of environmental organizations, has come up with the idea of lining the irrigation ditches in the Imperial Valley with concrete, saving water now lost through evaporation, seepage and run-off into the Salton Sea. MWD is offering to pay the Imperial Irrigation District \$10 million each year for 35 years to build the conservation facilities and take 100,000 acre-feet of water a year. (An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons, a year's supply for an average family of four.) After the facilities are built, the Imperial District would be getting \$100 an acre-foot. Compared to the \$10 an acre-foot paid to the state and federal agencies by the San Joaquin farmers, that seems a great price. But that \$10 water is paid for by the taxpayer and is so cheap that there is no incentive to

save it; it is lavishly wasted. EDF argues that water should be a commodity on the open market where its real value would determine the price; that it is unfair to ask the taxpayer to subsidize agri-business. (University researchers report that in 1984 the cost to the public for California irrigation was \$25 million.) If the farm operators have to pay a reasonable price for water they will soon stop wasting the stuff.

In 1977, the rain gods frowned on California. We'd forgotten the proper rituals and sacrifices and drought crept over most of the state. After much anguish, mandatory controls over water usage were adopted in many towns and cities. Fines were levied for failure to cut back from the previous year's consumption. Water and power companies gave away free shower water restrictors and devices to put in toilet tanks. In Los Angeles, to reduce overuse of water, it was forbidden to hose down sidewalks and driveways. Watering lawns and gardens was limited to hours before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. to minimize evaporation. The city asked for a 10% reduction in water. Though there was minimal monitoring and very few fines, the people responded by using 18% less than in 1976. After the rains came, controls were hurriedly lifted. Yet enough people had become so used to conserving that the saving was still some 7% better than "normal" years. Los Angeles Audubon was one of the few voices in the wilderness that called for resumption of controls to "Save Mono Lake" and to dramatize the idea that water was no longer a limitless commodity. This cry fell on deaf ears.

We have a heritage of inexhaustible abundance in this great sprawling country. Buffaloes and passenger pigeons would go on forever, darkening the prairies and the sky. We had so much land that the government gave it away to anyone who would farm it. With all this wealth of natural resources, the thought of saving it for a rainy day never occurred to us. Water, like air, was free. Perhaps the day of reckoning has arrived, or will be here in a short time.

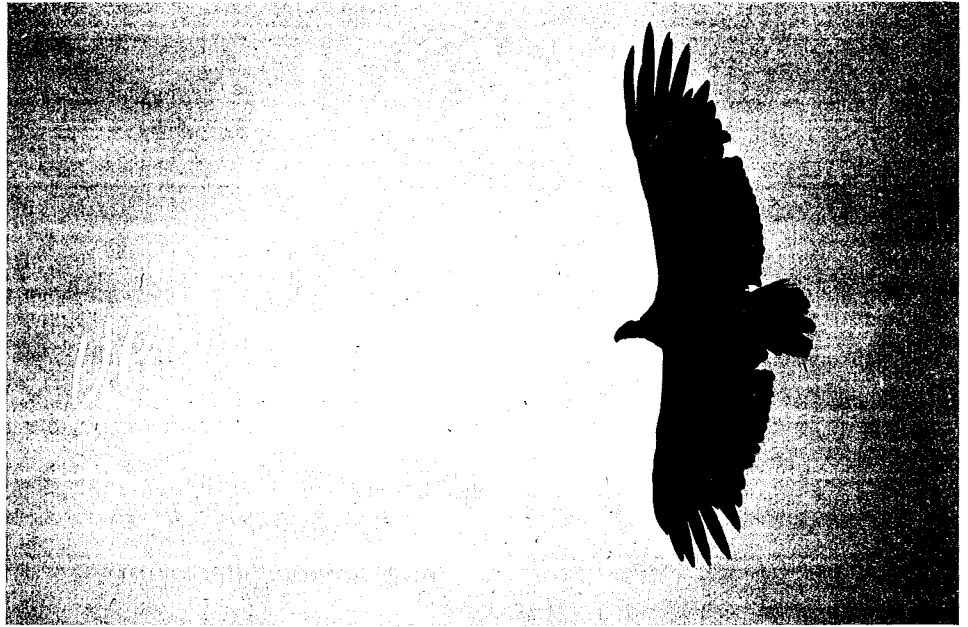
Consider New York City. It has been suffering a serious drought this summer and fall. As the Los Angeles Times said in a recent editorial entitled "Dry Manhattan," "New Yorkers, as the perception goes, are in general a contentious lot, given to scoffing at petty laws and sneering at the idea of sacrifice for the greater good of all. Ask an Archie Bunker to save water and what sort of reply are you likely to get? Not likely a printable answer." To almost everyone's amazement, New Yorkers have responded "with relative enthusiasm" and saved 17%. The mayor gave them a B-minus and said they did well but could do better. Enforcement of the 25% cut for industrial and commercial users has been vigorous, with 7500 violators fined \$800,000.

Consider our near-neighbor, Tucson. Most of the city's water comes from wells. In 1980



they were pumping five times as much water from the aquifers as they replaced. The City Council got tough. It turned traditional water rates upside down so the more water used, the steeper the price increased. The screams were so loud the council was recalled and a new one elected. The new council took a hard look at reality and raised the rates even higher. It initiated a program to convince the public that conservation was the only way to go. Things changed. Instead of green lawns that needed constant watering, desert plants that use little water appeared in residential areas. New subdivisions were required to have desert landscaping. As someone said, "You're going to know you're not in Iowa."

What about LA? Are we living in a fool's paradise? The mayor and our City Council called off the mandatory controls after the drought was over because they were afraid of a backlash from the public. Perhaps their fears were imaginary. The restrictions were relatively mild. The 10% reduction in water use they asked for didn't seem to upset anyone. No one hollered about not being allowed to take a shower. Lawns remained green. No swimming pools were abandoned. There was no sign of a groundswell of protest, no picketing water-militants. Certainly the general public would not complain if the Department of Water and Power charged more rather than less for heavy users. And if the vigorous campaign of education on the necessity of conservation in a desert environment was launched, the citizens of Los Angeles would respond no less than the good people of New York and Tucson. We might even rate a B-plus.



## ANNUAL BANQUET

*Honoring LAAS Past Presidents*

*See what a few years as  
president of LAAS can do to  
a person!!*

*Tuesday, February 11, 1985*

*at the  
FISH SHANTY  
8500 Burton Way  
at La Cienega*

*Cocktails 5 p.m., Dinner 7 p.m.*

*Cost: \$20.00 per person*

**Speaker: Herb Clarke**

*Bird Photographer Extraordinaire  
will present —*

**GALAPAGOS: CROSSROADS OF EVOLUTION**

**ADVANCE RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!  
NO TICKETS SOLD AT DOOR**

*Send check with stamped self addressed envelope to  
LAAS no later than January 31st.*

*Specify Wing, Fin or Hoof  
(Chicken, Fish or Beef)*

# Birds Of The Season

by Hal Baxter  
and Kimball Garrett

Last month's promised crescendo of bird and birdwatcher activity through the month of October never really materialized, and except for one or two flurries of rare migrants, birders agreed that the fall was relatively routine. To an extent, of course, we set ourselves up for disappointment, expecting each migration season to surpass the previous year's in excitement; all will concur, however, that each season, no matter how "dull," adds a few increments to our individual and collective knowledge of the birdlife of southern California.

With each revision of the A.O.U. Check-List, the quasi-official taxonomy of North and Middle American birds, the "flavor" of birdwatching takes on a slight change due to lumps and splits at the species level. Ideally, of course, birders should chart the comings and goings of all identifiable taxa, whether deemed to be at the exalted "species" level or not. But experience shows that distinct forms tend to become grossly under-reported once sunk to "subspecies" status. Likewise, reports begin to spring up like magic once a form is elevated to "species" status. Readers should be aware that the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature has published its Thirty-fifth Supplement to the Check-List, which amends and updates the Sixth Edition of the Check-List published in 1983 (see *The Auk* 102:680-686, July 1985). Changes at the species level which affect North American birds are as follows:

(1) The Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) is considered distinct from the Arctic Loon (*G. arctica*).

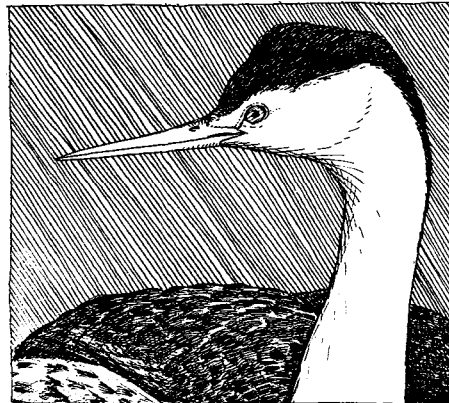
(2) The Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) is considered distinct from the Western Grebe (*A. occidentalis*), rather than merely a "light morph" of that species.

(3) The Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) is considered distinct from the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*S. varius*).

In the latter two cases, convincing arguments for "splitting" have been published in the very recent literature. The first case, involving the loons, required a decision based on Russian literature in the 1970s. How do these adjustments affect local birding at the species level? The Pacific Loon is the only form of the Pacific/Arctic complex to be recorded from California, although the Arctic Loon (of the race *viridigularis*) has been recorded from British Columbia and would be a likely candidate as a winter stray to California. Unfortunately, field identification of Arctic and Pacific Loons is

yet in its infancy, and Arctics may be overlooked here for some time.

The Clark's Grebe is widespread in California, but usually far less common than the Western Grebe, particularly among the coastal wintering flocks. Large colonies of Clark's Grebes appear on a few lakes of northern California. Careful field work in the coming seasons will help elucidate the relative status of these two grebes; observers should try to make careful counts of the two species at all localities covered, and forward them to appropriate *American Birds* country coordinators. Clearly, such counts should include some indication of how the birds were identified. The best single field mark of the Clark's Grebe is the bright orange-yellow beak (duller yellow-olive in the Western Grebe); this mark should be corroborated by the more subtle plumage characters: Clark's has paler back and flanks, a narrower black stripe down the back of the neck, and more white around the eye. Beware plumage change due to wear, and keep in mind that face patterns (pattern of black and white around the eye) can vary somewhat between individuals and between seasons. Our first post-split report of a **Clark's Grebe** comes from Ballona Creek (Bob Shanman, 12 October).



Clark's Grebe

Illustration by Jonathan Alderfer

The last "split" involves the Red-naped Sapsucker, the Great Basin/Rocky Mountain member of the large Yellow-bellied Sapsucker complex. This species nests locally in the mountains of easternmost California, and occurs in fall and winter farther west and south (particularly on our deserts and our southernmost coastal areas). Remember that the Red-breasted Sapsucker (*S. ruber*) was elevated to species status earlier. These decisions represent judgement calls in a species complex where limited hybridization is well documented. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is a casual fall, winter and spring vagrant to California and should be identified with caution in the state. Among the **Red-naped Sapsuckers** reported was one on 7 October in the Laguna Road tamarisks near Pt. Hueneme (Wanda Conway).

Pelagic birds remained rather scant of southern California in October. The 5 October L.A.A.S. trip yielded three probable

**Craveri's Murrelets**, five **Rhinoceros Auklets** and over 25 **Pomarine Jaegers**, but no storm-petrels (most Ashy and Black Storm-Petrels are in Monterey Bay and other central California areas at this season). On-shore, a juvenile **Parasitic Jaeger** was closely studied at Malibu Lagoon on 14 October (Greg Homel *et al*). The **Olivaceous Cormorant** was still being seen at the north end of the Salton Sea into late September. A male **Wood Duck** was at Whittier Narrows on 3 October (Mickey Long), and a female was at Doheny State Beach on 8 October (Mickey Long), and a female was at Doheny State Beach on 8 October (Doug Willick). The male **Tufted Duck** returned for its third consecutive winter to Quail Lake in the extreme western Antelope Valley (Bob McKernan, 15 October); a male was also present here during the winters of 1978-1979 and 1979-1980, but no bird was found the subsequent three winters. The first **Merlin** reported was in Bob Neuwirth's Arcadia yard on 8 October.

Two **Solitary Sandpipers** were at a pond near the Mission Viejo Golf Course on 23 September (Doug Willick). Exceptionally late was another Solitary at the Sepulveda Recreation Area in Encino on 17 October (Chris Floyd). Exceptional inland was a juvenile **Western Gull** at the north end of the Salton Sea on 21 September; also present was an early adult **Herring Gull** and a **Parasitic Jaeger** (Brian Daniels and Curtis Marantz). A Franklin's Gull was along the Santa Ana River in Anaheim on 6 October (Doug Willick). Fred Heath took time out from his editorial duties on 12 October and picked out a **Long-eared Owl** from the numerous Common Barn-Owls at Linda Mia Ranch, east of Lancaster. A **Short-eared Owl** found by Greg Homel at Malibu Lagoon on 14 October was perhaps the first record for that well-worked area since 1970. As expected, **Vaux's Swifts** were noted sporadically, but often abundantly in late September and October, e.g. "hundreds" near Elysian Park on 17 September (Mary Carmona) and 150 at Echo Park on 8 October (Bob Neuwirth). At least 3000 Vaux's were over the Los Angeles River near the L.A. Zoo on the rather late date of 20 October (Kimball Garrett); this is the same spot where concentrations of up to 20,000 were reported early last October.

A rather late transient **Western Wood-Pewee** was at the mouth of Topanga Creek on 14 October (Kimball Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer). amazingly, the only local report of a **Tropical Kingbird** came from San Joaquin Marsh, Irvine, on 14 September (Doug Willick). The adult **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was still being seen near Lompoc on 6 October. A first for Orange County was a **Great Crested Flycatcher** at Doheny State Beach on 30 September (Doug Willick).

While looking for **Le Conte's Thrashers** in the Antelope Valley on 12 October, Fred and Carolyn Heath stumbled into a **Ben-dire's Thrasher** where Big Rock Creek

crosses Ave. O. The **Bell's Vireo** noted last month from Huntington Beach Central Park was present at least through 7 October. A **Yellow-throated Vireo** was at the same locality 26-28 September (Brian Daniels). "**Plumbeous**" **Solitary Vireos** were at Harbor Lake on 1 October (Gayle Benton) and at Huntington Beach Central Park on 4 October (Doug Willick).

San Luis Obispo County in mid-October was definitely the place to be for rare warblers. Oceano Campground, near Pismo Beach, had the following amazing assortment on 13 October: **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, **Canada Warbler**, **Prairie Warbler**, and **Connecticut Warbler** (Brad Schram, *et al*). The Connecticut Warbler remained to 14 October. To the north, in the willows at Cambria, was a **Prothonotary Warbler** on 13-15 October, and the most unusual warbler of the fall, an immature male **Cerulean Warbler**. The Cerulean was found on 12 or 13 October, but first identified on 14 October by Jim and Karen Havlena; it remained until 15 October.

The rest of the warbler story is as follows. In addition to the **Virginia's Warblers** mentioned last month, one at Huntington Beach Central Park on 14 September was joined by a second the next day (Brian Daniels). Additional **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were at the Arboretum in Arcadia (28 September, Barbara Cohen) and at Huntington Beach Central Park (3 October, Arnold Small). A **Magnolia Warbler** was at Harbor Lake 2-3 October (Jon Atwood), following the appearance there of a **Canada Warbler** on 28 September (Don Sterba). The **Black-throated Blue Warbler** mentioned last month was matched on the same day (19 September) by another at the Yucca Valley Golf Course (Doug Willick). The only reports of **Blackpoll Warblers** received were from Camp Pendleton (21 September, Dan Guthrie) and from Huntington Beach Central Park (5 October, Brian Daniels). Surely many others must have gone unreported. Likewise with the **Palm Warbler**: We learned only of Wanda Conway's 7 October sighting of one on Hailes Rd. on the Oxnard Plain. An **Ovenbird** was at the Turtle Rock Nature Center 25-28 September (Doug Willick). The latest **Northern Waterthrush** sighting was of one under the bridge in Big Sycamore Canyon 29-30 September (Bert Glass). A phone call from Nora McClung on 18 October told of a bright male **Prothonotary Warbler** in her Inglewood yard that morning. A migrant **Yellow-breasted Chat** was at Huntington Beach Central Park on 19 September (Gayle Benton). Adult male **American Redstarts** were at the following localities: Huntington Beach Central Park (through late September); Malibu Lagoon (29 September, Kimball Garrett); and the South Coast Botanic Garden (6 October, Mark Kincheloe).

A male **Summer Tanager** was along Bonsall Dr. in Zuma Canyon on 5 October (Bob Hansen), and another Summer Tanager



Tufted Duck

Illustration by Jonathan Alderfer

was in a Pomona cemetery after 5 October (Milt Blatt). An immature male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was in Tapia Park, Malibu Canyon, on 25 September (Wanda Conway). **Brewer's Sparrows**, always scarce migrants on the immediate coast, were found at the South Coast Botanic Garden (23 September, Arnold Small) and along the Santa Ana River in Anaheim (26 September, Doug Willick). Like the Brewer's Sparrow, and many other interior montane or sagebrush breeding species, the **Green-tailed Towhee** is also a scarce migrant coastally. One was at the Newport Environmental Nature Center on 22 September (Loren Hays). A **Lapland Longspur** was at Desert Center on 16 October (Bob McKernan).

A post-script to the story of the discovery of the Elkhorn Slough Little Stint mentioned last month: Don Roberson's careful and methodical work notwithstanding, the bird had actually been found the previous day by John Mariani.

As noted before, many of the birds found during late November and December will remain through the entire winter. But, surprisingly, a great many do not. Distributional treatments are full of records of "late fall vagrants," seen for short periods as late as Christmas Count season, but not thereafter. Are these birds really on the move, extremely late on their southbound migration? Or are they attempting to winter locally, but unsuccessfully? Only careful, continued coverage of your regular birding spots can help answer these questions. Many of these birds may, in fact, spend much of the winter (but this cannot be documented if coverage is limited to Christmas Count day!). So we plead again for observers to help out their Christmas Count compilers by increasing their efforts during the critical early winter season.

Send any interesting bird observations to:  
**Hal Baxter**  
 1821 Highland Oaks Drive  
 Arcadia, CA 91006  
 Phone # (818) 355-6300

## The President's Corner

by E.H. "Ken" Kendig Jr.

With this month's issue we start our annual solicitation for the California Condor. Each year we have raised several thousand dollars which has been presented to the representatives of the Condor Recovery Program, a team consisting of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, our own National Audubon Society and the California Fish and Game Commission, further augmented by the Los Angeles and San Diego Zoos.

In spite of the losses of wild condors in the past year, we believe our support should continue more vigorously than ever. The captive program has been spectacularly successful and we should not give hope for continuance of a wild population.

Several possibilities exist, including the addition of the Hudson Ranch to the existing condor refuge. Or the transfer of the remaining birds to a safer area. All of these things take money and a great deal of it. So, please give as you have before and make this our biggest year. Use the convenient envelope which is enclosed in this issue of the *Tanager*.

**EDITOR** Fred Heath

**DESIGN** etc. graphics inc.

**PRINTER** Artisan Press

**CONSERVATION EDITOR** Sandy Wohlgemuth

**ORNITHOLOGY CONSULTANT** Kimball Garrett

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**1st VICE PRESIDENT** Carol Friedman

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY** Marge Wohlgemuth

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Los Angeles Audubon Headquarters, Library, Bookstore and Nature Museum are located at Audubon House, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046. Telephone: (213) 876-0202. Hours: 10-3, Tuesday through Saturday.



# CALENDAR

## CALL THE TAPE!

Before setting out for any field trip, call the Audubon Bird Tape, (213) 874-1318 for special instructions or last minute changes that may have occurred by the Thursday before the trip.

## FIELD TRIPS

**EVERY SUNDAY** — A state naturalist leads a bird walk at **Lake Perris** at 8 a.m. from October through March. Expect many species of ducks, also grebes and some winters a Yellow-billed Loon, Tufted Duck or another variety appears. Scopes desirable. (Please add this to your regular birdwalk list published in the September issue.)

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14** — Join **Bob Shanman** for a morning walk at the unique **Ballona Wetlands**. This is peak season for viewing shorebirds, waterbirds and residents. Take Marina Fwy. 90 west to Culver Blvd., turn left to Pacific Ave., then right to footbridge at end. Meet at **8 a.m.** \$3 parking. (More info: 213-545-2867 after 6 p.m.)

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15** — **David White** will lead his monthly trip at the **Whittier Narrows Regional Park**, in search of a good variety of residents in addition to returning waterbirds and raptors. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave., So. El Monte, off Fwy. 60 between Santa Anita and Peck Dr. exits, west of Fwy. 605.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18 through SUNDAY, JANUARY 5** — **Christmas Bird Counts**. Your help is needed! Please see listing in November *Western Tanager* of 43 counts and make a commitment to the leaders to share in this enjoyable and worthwhile annual event. Note the Malibu count is alive on Sunday, December 22. See page 4 for details.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 11** — **Ballona** with **Bob Shanman**. Same as Dec. 14 listing.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 12** — Spend a morning birding **Malibu Lagoon State Beach** with **Dennis Morgan**. This should be a prime time to see numerous ducks, gulls and other waterbirds. Beginners welcome. Bring a scope if possible or we'll be glad to share. Meet at the kiosk by the parking lot at 8 a.m. (More info: call (818)883-1413 after 6 p.m.)

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 18** — **Whittier Narrows** with **David White**. Same as Dec. 15 listing.

NOTE: By popular demand, save Saturday, February 1 for another chance to try your hand at **bird sketching** with artist **Jonathan Alderfer**.

## RESERVATION TRIPS: (Limited Participation)

**FRIDAY EVENING/SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13-14** — **Gull and Tern Identification Seminar and Field Study with Arnold Small**. A slide show lecture will be held in the San Fernando Valley in preparation for a day of local field study. Numerous plumages of California Gulls and Terns will be carefully studied to determine age as well as species differences. The approach will be gradual and **beginners** are encouraged to attend, but there will be much information for **intermediate** and **experienced** field birders. Gulls and Terns are notoriously confusing and this is an excellent opportunity to advance your skills with these difficult birds. Dr. Small has extensive experience and knowledge in the birding world and is widely known for his marvelous collection of "full-frame" bird slides, many of which appear in the recent "Audubon Master Guide." He is a former LAAS President, a former President of the American Birding Assoc., has authored "The Birds of California" and co-authored "Birds of the West," is a Biology Professor at L.A. Harbor College and teaches three different UCLA extension classes on California Birds per year. \$26/person.

**WEEKEND, JANUARY 11-12** — Spend a marvelous birding weekend with local naturalist **Rob Hansen** in several wildlife areas of the southern **San Joaquin Valley**. Some highlights: a wide variety of ducks, geese and raptors, including Rough-legged, Ferruginous and Golden Eagle plus Mt. Plover and Sandhill Cranes. Mr. Hansen is Manager of two Nature Conservancy Preserves — Creighton Ranch and Kaweah Oaks. This is his third trip for LAAS. He works closely with the local Audubon Chapters, giving programs (also for LA in May 84), heading Christmas Bird Counts, compiling bird lists and status and distribution information for the area. \$25/person.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 19** — **Pat and Paul Nelson** will lead a morning walk around **Norconian Lake**, a limited access Naval facility. A wide variety of numerous ducks in a lovely, quiet setting is the highlight. Bring picnic lunch if you wish. \$5 per person, refundable to attendees at the facility. (Cameras permitted in the wildlife area, but no children please.)

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 25** — **Hal Baxter** will lead this popular annual jaunt to the unique **Salton Sea Area** for a long day of unforgettable birding. The large quantities of ducks and geese are the highlight. Other birds to be looked for Abert's Towhee, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Yellow-footed Gull, Mountain Plover, Sandhill Cranes and other waterbirds. Mr. Baxter is an outstanding birder and knows the area and its birds thoroughly. \$15/person.

Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

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Los Angeles, CA

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2** — Spend a morning birding **Pt. Mugu Naval Air Base**. Shorebirds and other waterfowl will be the highlight with White-faced Ibis a probability and a chance for rarities in this coastal location. Carpooling on the base required. As the base desires ensured participation, a \$5 fee is being charged and will be refunded at the beginning of the trip. (Please, no children or cameras and if not a U.S. Citizen, please give date and place of birth with reservation.)

## RESERVATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

Reservations will be accepted **ONLY** if ALL the following information is supplied: (1) Trip desired; (2) Names of people in your party; (3) Phone numbers (a) usual and (b) evening before event, in case of emergency cancellation; (4) Separate check (no cash please) to LAAS for exact amount for each trip; (5) Self-addressed stamped envelope for confirmation and associated trip information. Send to: Reservations Chairman Ruth Lohr, LAAS, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046.

If there is insufficient response, the trip will be cancelled two weeks prior to the scheduled date (4 weeks for pelagics) and you will be so notified and your fee returned. Your cancellation during that time will bring a refund only if there is a paid replacement.

If you desire to carpool to an event, Ms. Lohr (usually in office on Tuesday) can provide information for you to make contact and possible arrangements.

## EVENING MEETINGS

### Meet at 8:00 P.M. in Plummer Park

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10** — **Bob Dickson**, natural history cinematographer from BBC will speak on **Bird Behavior**, illustrated by three short films.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 14** — **Fourth Annual Membership Slide Contest**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11** — **Annual Banquet**, See page 9 for details.

**CARPPOOLING:** IS encouraged to reduce gas consumption and air pollution whenever possible. While the IRS allows business to reimburse car expense at the rate of 20¢ per mile, a recent study shows that the average cost *per mile* to own and operate a new subcompact car was 34.6¢ and a standard car was 55.4¢. One suggestion has been for riders to at least share the 4-5¢ per mile gasoline expense.