



# WESTERN TANAGER

**Los Angeles Audubon Society**

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Jabiru, egrets, spoonbills

## **The Pantanal — Brazil's Avian Paradise**

*Article and photography by Herbert Clarke*

**I**n the geographic heart of South America is a vast primeval marsh known as the Pantanal.

This region lies between the Brazilian plateau to the east and north, and the foothills of the Andes to the west, stretching south into Paraguay. The Pantanal is part of the central plains of South America called the Gran Chaco.

The Pantanal marshes are only a few hundred feet above sea level and are seasonally flooded and drained by a complex network of streams and rivers. The ebb and flow of water, along with the nature of the soil (sand, silt, and clay), prevent the extensive growth of forests. But this phenomenon in turn creates ideal conditions for specialized wildlife making it possible to witness a spectacular panorama of South American water birds. The variety of birds and other creatures is further highlighted by its abundance and visibility on the veldtlike terrain.

In July, 1986, under the leadership of my wife Olga, Arnold Small and me, a group from Los Angeles briefly visited the northern portion of the Pantanal during an intensive three week birding tour to Brazil. This section has become accessible to tourists only in the last few years when a raised 80 mile dirt road called the Trans-Pantanal highway with its 126 crude wooden bridges were completed.

Despite its natural wonders and relatively easy access, the Pantanal remains largely undiscovered by Americans. Perhaps the best way is to go there with an organized tour, but you can travel on your own. Either way I recommend that arrangements be made through Mr. Christoph Hrdina, c/o Andre Safari & Tours Ltda., C.P. 7020, Lago Sul 71619, Brasilia, D.F., Brazil. Chris is the epitome of efficiency. He organizes trips for groups and individuals, not only for the Pantanal, but anywhere else in Brazil. He

specializes in nature oriented travel. Also, keep in mind the language of Brazil is Portuguese and not Spanish, and English speaking individuals are rare indeed away from popular tourist centers.

Our starting point was Cuiaba, a city of some 300,000 people and is the capital of the state of Mato Grosso, a rich ranching and farming area. The richness of the soil, nurtured by a myriad of rivers flowing off the Andes and the broad plains support the extensive farming industry. The sweetness of the native grasses and lack of diseases that affect livestock make the Pantanal particularly good for ranching.

Brazil is fortunate in having a very efficient internal airline system, so getting to Cuiaba and most cities in the country can be done easily.

Brazil being in the southern hemisphere has seasons the reverse of ours. July is mid-winter and is perhaps the best time to visit



Trans-Pantanal Highway

the Pantanal. This is the dry season and the wildlife draws close to the roadway as the natural wet areas dry up. The depressions evacuated for roadfill still retain some water, making it easy to see and photograph an incredible array of birds and other wildlife without leaving the road.

As a contrast, the summer (our winter) is the rainy season and is hot and sultry, so mosquitoes are a nuisance and the bridges frequently wash out. Also, the water is high and the food is so abundant that most of the animals disperse and move deep into the marshes, as far as 50 miles away from each side of the highway.



Jabiru

The paved road from Cuiaba ends at Pocone, a booming little town. About 30 miles down the dirt road from Pocone is the inexpensive Pixaim Inn which offers good food and simple lodging in cabins connected by walkways built on stilts. The Pixaim is set right in the marsh, along a stream that often overflows, so you are literally sleeping and eating amid the swamp life.

At the end of the unpaved road, 50 miles from the Pixaim, is Porto Jofre on the Cuiaba River, less than 30 miles from the Bolivian



Hyacinthine Macaw

border. In a grassy clearing nearby is the Santa Rosa Hotel, which offers pleasant motel-like rooms along with an adequate restaurant.

Perhaps the most desired bird to see in this area is the Hyacinthine Macaw, a magnificent deep blue, large member of the parrot family, a specialty of the Pantanal. We were fortunate in seeing, well, three pairs. Although Brazil prohibits the commercial export of birds, there is a clandestine business in shipping these macaws to Europe and the United States where each bird retails for about \$2,000. As a consequence the numbers of Hyacinthine and other macaws are declining every year.

In addition to macaws there are many varieties of easily seen birds such as Jabirus, a huge stork standing about five feet tall with a wingspan of some eight feet. We saw this species by the hundreds. A partial listing of other waders includes thousands of Wood Storks, Plumbeous and Buff-necked Ibis, various species of herons and egrets, spoonbills, and Southern Screamers. Also, viewed in large numbers were several species of kingfishers (Amazon, Ringed, Least), birds of prey (Snail Kites, Black-collared Hawks, Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures, and others) ducks (Muscovy, Brazilian, White-faced Whistling), Crassids (Chaco Chachalaca, Bare-



Capybara

faced Curassow), and so on. All of these plus many land birds such as thornbirds, antbirds, finches, toucans, and parrots were tallied.

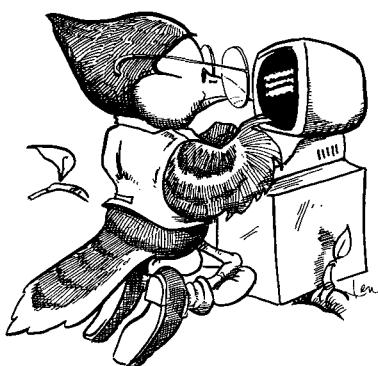
If the amount of birds appears overwhelming, consider that the Pantanal is also home to huge numbers of fish, caiman, animals such as capybaras (the world's largest rodent), anacondas (constrictor snakes attaining lengths up to 25 feet), insects, as well as many kinds of flowers and other plants.

Our group entered the Pantanal from the north. The Trans-Pantanal highway goes from the city of Cuiaba and ends at the Cuiaba river 80 miles due south. However, it is possible to visit the southern portion of the Pantanal using the city of Corumba as the starting point. Accommodations are available at the Fazenda Santa Clara, a working ranch some 60 miles from Corumba. Transportation is available but extremely limited. Here again it is highly recommended that prior arrangements be made through Christoph Hrdina, or at least go with an organized tour group. The habitat in the south is similar to that in the north but is a little more varied with more woodland. The Hyacinthine Macaws are not as certain to be found in the south because of the greater trapping activities, and perhaps the spectacle of masses of waders is not quite as immense as in the north, but likely a greater number of land bird species can be viewed.

Whichever area of the Pantanal you visit, by whatever method, you will be rewarded with an avian spectacle you will never forget and as if this were not enough, the photographic opportunities are limitless.



Caiman



## Computers Are For The Birds

by Steve Hartman

### Part 4 — Measuring Occurrences

Although a yardlist can measure how many species are seen each month, it doesn't measure how many birds of each species occur. However, the data recorded each month in a yardlist does yield two important pieces of information regarding the status of particular species: the average number of species seen each month (species abundance) and the average number of months seen per year for each species (species frequency). But the mere marking of species seen each month provides no information about the abundance of a particular species (species population), nor does it record the number of days a particular species of bird occurs (population frequency). Thus we are presented with the challenge of developing a computerized system which will measure occurrences.

Now it's not like I had already figured out what the best system was, mind you, so I called upon Kimball Garrett at the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum and requested some references on this topic. He referred me to three sources, the first of which I turned to is the recently published *Iowa Birds*.<sup>1</sup> I felt an eerie foreboding when I began the chapter entitled "Definition of Species Status," which starts off by stating that ". . . it is useful to classify the occurrence of species, using well-defined categories, even though application may be somewhat arbitrary and limited to available data." Then my worst fears were met by this comment about frequency terms:

"The definitions of terms such as common or rare . . . are variable, and the application of such terms is judgemental."

**Numerical Rankings** I then turned to the earliest published work that Kimball recommended, *Birds of The New York Area* by John Bull, published in 1964. The chart reproduced in Figure 1 is labeled "Abundance." Far out, I thought; here is a simple, straight-forward numerical scheme for ranking. But wait a second, what does the term "locality" mean? The dictionary defines it as a "place; region; one place and the places

ABUNDANCE	
1 Very Abundant	— Over 1000 individuals per day per locality (often in large flocks)
2 Abundant	— 201-1000 individuals per day per locality
3 Very Common	— 51-200 individuals per day per locality
4 Common	— 21-50 individuals per day per locality
5 Fairly Common	— 7-20 individuals per day per locality
6 Uncommon	— 1-6 individuals per day per locality
7 Rare	— 1-6 individuals per season
8 Very Rare	— Over 12 records, but of very infrequent occurrence
9 Casual	— 7-12 records
10 Accidental	— 1-6 records
Regular	— reported annually (applies to 1-7 above) — not reported annually (applies to 8-10 above)

Figure 1

From *Birds of the New York Area* by John Bull, 1964, page 51.

near it." Therefore abundance rankings must be linked to a defined locality if the definition is to mean anything at all. And of obvious equal importance is the time of year.

That is why it is so important to read the "Introduction of Species Accounts" in each particular guide or checklist in order to understand the *unique* meanings different authors attach to various "standard" terms. But even then one must expect the unexpected: John Bull cautions that "species in the categories from rare to very abundant are subject to fluctuations from time to time, and thus may 'shift' from one category to another."

A chart similar to Figure 1 is found in *Iowa Birds*. It is entitled "Frequency<sup>2</sup> Terms Applied to Species" (see Figure 2). The authors preface this chart by stating that the "number of birds required for a particular frequency term should be judged by the standard of a

hypothetical competent and active field observer in appropriate habitat at the appropriate time of year without recourse to netting." Thus we not only need to be at the right place at the right time, but we have to be *competent* and *active*! (Imagining a journal entry stating: "Sunny, 75 degrees, wind from the northeast, observer moderately competent, lethargic . . . Few birds seen today.") All kidding aside, numerical data is a direct result of the methods used in obtaining it, and an important "rule" to remember is that the more detailed the data one wishes to collect, the more important it is to collect data consistently.

In retrospect, the nice thing about a yardlist is that one isn't counting numbers of birds, just different species. But as soon as one enters the realm of counting birds per day, the amount of time *spent per day* must

Figure 2

From *Iowa Birds*, 1984 by Dinsmore, Kent, Koenig, Petersen, and Roosa.

FREQUENCY TERMS APPLIED TO SPECIES	
Term	Definition
ABUNDANT	50+ per day or 250+ per season
COMMON	6-49 per day or 25-249 per season
UNCOMMON	1-5 per day or 5-24 per season
RARE	0-4 per season

CATEGORIES OF OCCURRENCE OF SPECIES IN IOWA	
Category	Definition
REGULAR	Seen every year or nearly every year somewhere in the state. Reliably reported for at least 9 of the last 10 years.
CASUAL	Seen in the state many but not all years. Reliably reported in 5 to 7 of the last 10 years.
ACCIDENTAL	Seen in scattered years, once to occasionally. Reliably reported for 3 or fewer of the last 10 years.
EXTINCT	No longer seen anywhere.
EXTIRPATED	Formerly regular or casual in Iowa but no accepted records in the last 50 years.

be consistent if one wants to collect useful results: obviously the more time spent observing the greater chance there is to see more birds. One should first figure out how many hours per week one thinks he or she can spend observing and recordkeeping, and then try it for a month. Divide the time that can be conveniently spent into a few days per week; even one hour per week on the same day each week in the same locality creates informative and accurate data.

**Seasonal Occurrence** In the last issue we calculated the average monthly frequency (per year) for each species, separated the residents from the migrants and winter visitors, and sorted each group by frequency. Rankings from Common to Casual were used to describe birds sharing similar ranges of monthly frequency. It is important to point out that there is no way to determine *seasonality* from the average monthly frequency calculation; I used my judgement to assign the seasonal classifications. So how can one measure seasonal occurrence? Getting back to Figures 1 and 2, even though both of these schemes for ranking abundance (numbers seen per day) are similar in numerical levels, Figure 2 introduces a new kind of measuring: number seen per season.

Although one might think that seasonal occurrence can be easily defined, it is surprising to find out otherwise. One category is clear: *permanent residents* are those species present all year. *Migrants*, generally described as those species observed as they pass through a locality during spring and fall (although shorebirds seen in Southern California migrate in the summer), can be sub-classified as *pure migrants* (i.e. warblers which are not seen in winter or summer), *predominantly migrants* (such as many of the ducks), and *spring-only migrants* (a few species take a different route in the fall). So much for simple definitions. There is no consistent usage of the terms "resident" and "visitor" when it comes to birds which are present only during winter or summer. The authors of *Iowa Birds* recommend that species which nest and are present only during the summer might be better termed *summer residents*, and that species that are present but don't nest be called *summer visitants*.

Basically the controversy boils down to these two questions:

1. Do birds reside where they nest?
2. Do birds reside where they spend the greatest amount of time?

What about birds that spend half the time one place and half the time in another place? They can't always be visiting! Therefore they must reside where they nest; without nesting ground a species is sure to perish. But isn't that true for the locations migrating birds spend during their non-breeding season?

**Irregularity** In some years a particular species of bird is abundant during a particular season — like the Pine Siskins that sometimes find their way to my yard — yet most years

ABUNDANCE DESIGNATIONS (in a given district)	
COMMON to ABUNDANT	Almost always encountered in proper habitat, usually in moderate to large numbers.
FAIRLY COMMON	Usually encountered in proper habitat at the given season(s), generally not in large numbers.
UNCOMMON	Occurs in small numbers or only locally under the indicated conditions.
RARE	Occurs annually (or virtually annually) during the season indicated, but generally in very small numbers.
CASUAL	Records at the season indicated are few, but not cited individually.
INDIVIDUAL RECORD	Used for species which have been recorded about 10 times or fewer.

Figure 3 From *Birds of Southern California — Status & Distribution*, by Kimball Garrett and Jon Dunn, 1981.

they don't show up. These birds are *irregular* (refer to bottom of Figure 1). This concept is further elaborated in the bottom half of Figure 2 under the title "Categories of Occurrence of Species<sup>3</sup>." The terms *casual* and *accidental* are used for irregularly occurring species; that is, ones that do not occur every year. The authors of *Iowa Birds* are clear on this matter, though, and they explain that:

As species whose normal range, whether it be in winter, summer, or migration, overlaps with a geographic area is said to be "regular" in that area. The term "casual" is often used to describe a species whose range is nearby or sometimes overlapping with the area under consideration. Two terms are applied here to species that are found definitely out of their normal range: "vagrant" and "accidental." The term *vagrant* puts more emphasis on the bird being away from its usual location; the term *accidental* emphasizes that the bird is unlikely in the area to which it wandered.

When contemplating a computer program, one begins to see the problems encountered when trying to consistently measure the occurrences of bird populations with different lifestyles. One must devise a system which can accumulate consistent data (actual number of birds observed for each species per time period) which then can be summarized in a "three layer" system of occurrence definitions. The first layer provides information about population abundance. The second layer attempts to classify seasonal occurrence. The third layer describes the frequency of irregular birds. The problem is that historical records don't necessarily indicate the chances that a birder (in particular location during a particular time of year) has seen of a particular species. Thus many Birder's Guides, such as those authored by James A. Lane of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, use terms such as "Hard to Miss," "Should See," "May See," "Lucky to Find," and "How Lucky Can You Get."

**Ranking Without Numbers** "Status" is the term Don Roberson uses in his *Monterey Birds* (1985) to describe the first two layers of the system (abundance and frequency), which is based on the ease or difficulty in observing a particular species:

**COMMON** — Present in good numbers and generally easily located in the proper habitat at the proper time of year.

**UNCOMMON** — Present in fair numbers and generally locatable upon a search of its preferred habitat at the proper time, but usually few enough present so that an observer can easily keep track of the exact total of birds found. The species is to be expected at the right place and time, but in comparatively small numbers.

**RARE** — Present in very small numbers at specific locations at specific times of year. Ease of locating may depend on the bird's habits, but often an observer may need specific directions to a particular habitat or site to find the species. Despite the small numbers, it is regular and expected at the correct place and time.

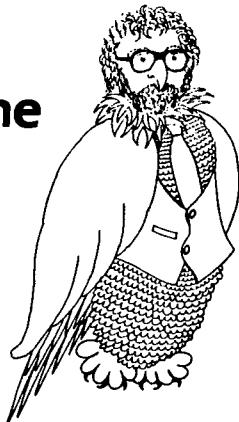
**VAGRANT** — A bird well outside its usual, regular areas of occurrence. Some vagrants are unexpected and may never occur again, but other species . . . occur every year at the same time of year.

This system is similar to what Kimball Garrett and Jon Dunn, in their *Birds of Southern California, Status and Distribution*, use for their "Abundance Designations;" (Figure 3). Since Southern California is such a large area and covers five "districts," Garrett and Dunn provide separate abundance designations for birds whose rate of occurrence varies in different districts. Not only are abundance designations given for

each month, but *individual records* are noted and cited. Finally, 14 different habitats are described and indicated for each district a species occurs. And it is the relationship between bird and its habitat that we are interested in, after all, because without habitat there are no birds. Are bird populations dwindling? Only with accurate and consistent observations can we be sure, and a computer is the best tool for record keeping currently available.

## From the Editor

by Fred Heath



**B**ecause we've got another jam packed *Western Tanager* I'm going to keep this editorial down to the bare minimum. Although I have gotten a fair amount of material in the last few months, I still need bunches more. I especially need a few more lead articles. We would like line art. Note that I am dropping the P.O. Box shortly, so please send all material to my home:

Fred Heath,  
6218 Cynthia Street,  
Simi Valley, CA 93063.

The only thing I wanted to cover in this issue is the new Conservation Fund that we have set up. I know you are as horrified as I am, month after month, reading in Sandy Wohlgemuth's column about this area being bulldozed or that bird becoming endangered, etc. Obviously, as we've pointed out, writing letters to your representatives in government is one good way to affect the outcome of legislation. But many conservation tasks require good old U.S. dollars to have any impact. Please read the *President's Corner* in this issue of the *Tanager* to get an idea of some of the projects that Los Angeles Audubon has been involved with.

I've chosen to use the Dodo as the symbol for this fund. I know that a number of my faithful readers think I should use the Dodo as the symbol for my column instead.

1. *Iowa Birds* — Dinsmore, Kent, Koenig, Petersen, Roosa (1984).

3. Here the authors of *Iowa Birds* could have used the title "Categories of Frequency of Species."

2. The use of the word *frequency* to describe the number of birds per day or per season is incorrect; the dictionary definition "rate of occurrence" is not appropriate to define number of birds per day, which is *abundance*.

4. Coast and Ocean; Mountains; Desert; Salton Sea; Colorado River.

## ANNUAL BANQUET

Tuesday, February 3rd, 1987

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

Cocktails 6 p.m., Dinner 7:30 p.m.  
Cost: \$19.00 per person

**Speaker: Robert Dickson**  
UCLA Special Film Maker

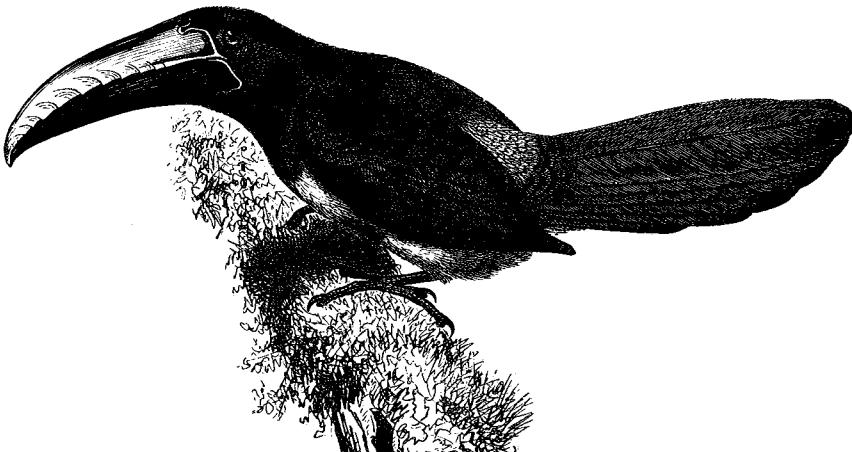
will present the film —

**THE APLOMADO FALCON IN VERA CRUZ**  
with some other short bird films

ADVANCE RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!  
NO TICKETS SOLD AT DOOR

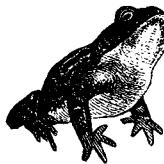
Send check with stamped self-addressed envelope to  
LAAS no later than January 23rd.

Specify Fin or Hoof  
(Fish or Beef)



# Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



In your mind's eye a lovely canyon takes form. Gentle foothills slope up from a fertile valley with the peaks of a mountain range sharp and formidable in the background. Winter and summer a quiet stream flows through the valley, willows and cottonwoods marking its path. When the rains arrive the creek swells and growls a bit as it picks up the pace of its journey to the sea. The brown hills turns a magical green almost overnight. The clumps of live oaks on the hillsides seem brighter as the rain washes away the dust of summer. Red-tailed Hawks sit on the telephone poles waiting for the sun to rise above the hills. The warming earth creates updrafts that send the big birds soaring into the sky in their daily search for food. Meadowlarks call from the fenceposts, a Black-shouldered Kite circles on pointed wings, then hovers with yellow feet extended over a weedy field before it drops like a gray meteor on some unsuspecting mouse. The "kronk!" of a Raven or the wild scream of a Red-shouldered Hawk may add to the background music for this idyllic pastoral scene.

This picture in your mind is real. At least it was until recently. Nor is it hundreds of miles away in some fortunate hinterland far from the madding crowd. Allowing for a dash of poetic license, we're describing Las Virgenes Canyon, just over the hill from the west end of the San Fernando Valley. It stretches from the Ventura Freeway (Hwy 101) south to Tapia Park and then narrows into the rugged, winding vault of Malibu Canyon to end at Malibu Lagoon and Santa Monica Bay. Las Virgenes is hardly a pristine wilderness. A two-lane road runs through it, becomes Malibu Canyon Road and runs into the Pacific Coast Highway. But the hand of man, though evident, has been benign. Twenty-five years ago there was little to disturb the view; a few weathered old houses (since gone), a small school near the freeway, the unobtrusive Claretyville Seminary, the old Hope Ranch with the house nearly hidden by great valley oaks, and the Twentieth Century Fox ranch. None of these spoiled the marvelous feeling of a natural place, an island of genuine "country" a stone's throw from the whizzing freeway or a homerun blast from a couple of million people. There was no cluster of gas stations and fast-food joints then as you turned off 101. Tapia was a pleasant little park where you could picnic under the sycamores without the clatter and the stench of the sewage plant that later moved in just across the creek.

And for one magic moment, great things happened. The Fox ranch became Malibu Creek State Park, bought with bonds passed by the voters. Environmentalists fought off concessionaires eager to make a buck as well as determined promoters of a movie museum. The movie sets (including the ancient "Mash" lot) were phased out, campgrounds were developed, and every effort has been made to preserve the wild and scenic quality of a splendid park.

When the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area was established by Congress in the state parks were included in its boundaries, though the parks are still run by the state. The National Park Service has been trying mightily to buy more land to expand the Recreation Area but the Reagan administration has been reluctant to release money already voted by the Congress. One of the choice parcels sought by the feds was almost half of Las Virgenes Canyon and included flatland, Las Virgenes Creek, the hills and the oak savanna. Negotiations were

only two weeks from completion when Interior Secretary James Watt (can we ever forget that name?) cut off all funds for urban park acquisitions. The land was lost forever. The Currey-Raiche company bought it from Bob Hope some time later and now the bitter fruit of that loss is being tasted. The once-inspiring trip through the canyon has become a depressing journey. Bull-dozers and earth-movers have already leveled great swatches of land. The oak savanna is as yet untouched but it is probably a matter of time before the trees and the hills will go.

The plans are horrendous. (The virgins are to be violated with concupiscent relish.) Thirteen hundred single family units are in the blueprints. A 200-unit motel is to be built along with an undetermined number of apartments and condominiums. To serve this staggering influx of bodies there will be industrial and commercial buildings and a civic center. A city will appear almost overnight "where once the sweet birds sang." Where rare Ferruginous Hawks occasionally wheeled over the pleasant valley.

The population boom will give renewed impetus to the cherished Caltrans (Dept. of Transportation) goal of widening Las Virgenes Road to four lanes. With the residential growth of Thousand Oaks, Agoura, Camarillo and the West Valley itself, Las Virgenes Road has become a well-traveled conduit to the beach cities. What will be the effect of road-expansion on spectacular Malibu Canyon? What sort of technological mayhem will it take to add two lanes to a road just barely chiselled into the sheer cliffs?

We must thank our lucky stars and the foresight of the State Park Department for saving the marvelous reaches of Malibu Creek State Park from the unquenchable greed of development. There are acres of wide flat land that would make prime residential, industrial and commercial property. Think of the high-rise offices and apartments nestling by Malibu Creek with the mountains in the background. The trees, the wild-flowers, the open space and the wildlife would dwindle while the sales pitch would tout the benefits of comfort, convenience and "the superb view of Nature." More homes, more jobs, making more money are important; they are the very fabric of our life. They spell out what many call Progress.

We must not give in to despair. Enlightened planning must be accelerated to set aside more unspoiled areas before they go the way of Las Virgenes Canyon. The creation of the state parks was not a one-time phenomenon. It can happen again if we remain strong in our conviction that the concept of Progress is no longer appropriate for our times. We must convince others that *Homo sapiens* is an animal that arose out of a natural environment, that the taste of wildness in his genes is not to be denied. And that he needs some contact with that wildness to retain his humanity.



## Least Bell's Vireo Critical Habitat Needs Protection

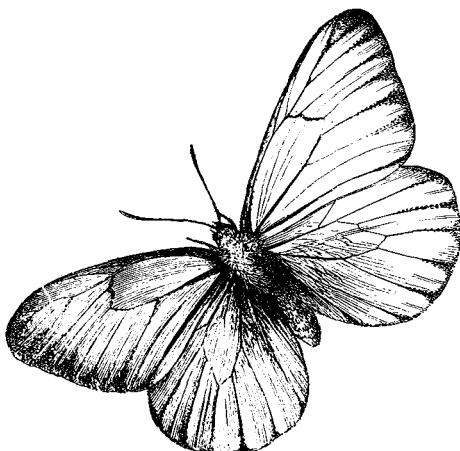
Present regulations do not prohibit destruction of the Least Bell's Vireo *critical habitat* while the species is absent from this region during the winter. The bird's *critical habitat* needs year round protection. It is essential that federal regulations include year round *critical habitat* protection if the species is to continue in this region. It is essential that *critical habitat* be *listed* under the Endangered Species Act. Seventy-five percent of the entire U.S. population nests in these areas: Tijuana River, San Luis Rey River, Coyote Creek (San Diego Co.), Jamul and Dulzura Creeks (San Diego Co.), Sweetwater River (near reservoir), San Diego River, Santa Margarita River, Prado Basin, Santa Clara River (L.A. and Ventura Co.'s), and Santa Inez River in Santa Barbara Co.

The Regional Director, U.S.F.W.S. may recommend to the Director that Least Bell's Vireo *critical habitat* be *listed* under the Endangered Species Act. The Director has discretionary authority to *list critical habitat* under the Endangered Species Act. Your letters on this vital issue must be in the Regional Directors Office before the comment period ends on December 31, 1986. Stress preservation of *willow riparian habitat*.

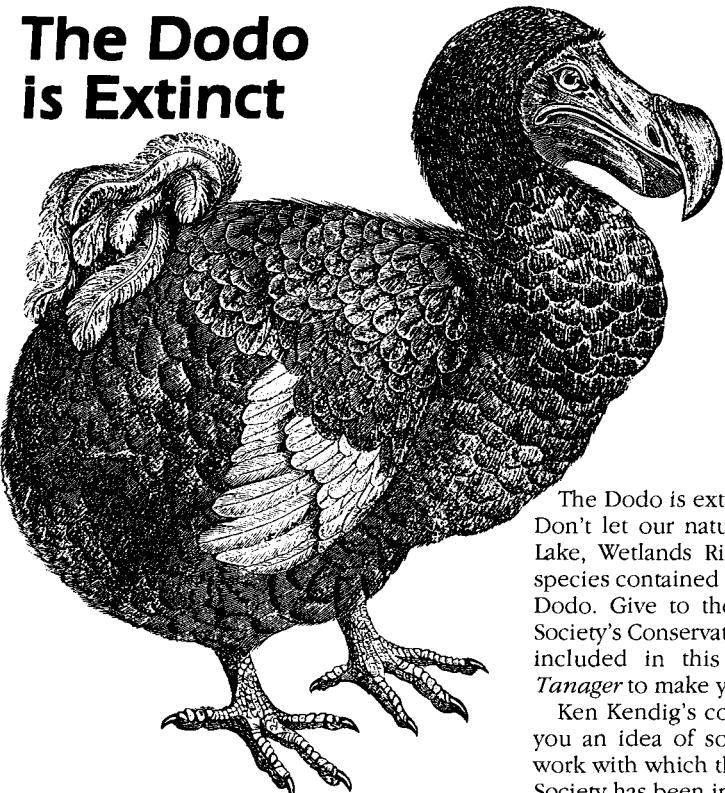
Send your letters to: Mr. Rolfe Wallenstrom, Regional Director, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 500 N.E. Multnomah St., Suite 1692, Portland, Oregon 97232.

A U.S.F.W.S. decision on this matter may effect other endangered species' critical habitat in the future. Write today.

Information provided by Gordon Ruser, 1221 South Sycamore Street, Santa Ana, CA 92707. Telephone: (714) 541-9044.



## The Dodo is Extinct



The Dodo is extinct at the hands of man. Don't let our natural environment (Mono Lake, Wetlands Riperian Habitat) and the species contained therein go the way of the Dodo. Give to the Los Angeles Audubon Society's Conservation Fund. An envelope is included in this issue of the *Western Tanager* to make your giving easier.

Ken Kendig's column in this issue gives you an idea of some of the conservation work with which the Los Angeles Audubon Society has been involved.

## President's Corner

by E.H. "Ken" Kendig, Jr.

It has come to my attention that many of our members have no idea of the substantial sums raised and distributed by our organization on behalf of the environmental movement. Just in the past year we have contributed \$10,000 to the Mono Lake lawsuits thus bringing our total investment there to an amount in excess of \$50,000 over the last 7 years. This has contributed to some important interim victories. The possibility of a reasonable compromise end to the litigation actually exists in the foreseeable future. In addition, we have made substantial contributions to the Environmental Defense Fund, National Resources Defense Counsel, The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, Santa Cruz Peregrine Fund, Catalina Bald Eagle Project, National Audubon Wildlife Projects, Bolsa Chica Lagoon and Santa Margarita River Conservation Projects, The Bottle Bill and Whittier Narrows Improvement Fund and placed the Audubon Adventures Program in over 40 third to sixth grade classrooms, all costing an additional \$24,000. We have further pledged financial support over the next three years to the fabulous new bird hall being constructed at the County Museum of Natural History.

We wanted to do more, but the funds were not available. This coming year even less will be available because of increased overhead. The largest expense item is insurance, the cost of which has dramatically increased, as most of you probably realize from personal experience and newspaper publicity. We

also face reduced income in dues sharing with National Audubon, some of which can be rectified by bringing in new members for which we get a special bonus amount starting July 1, 1987. Finally, interest rates are down and we are receiving much lower income from our reserve savings.

As a result of all this, we are appealing for contributions from all of our members specifically for conservation projects. For those who may not know, all such contributions are tax deductible because of our legal status. A convenient envelope is enclosed so you can help us continue to support these and other important environmental programs. Take advantage of the tax law this year as the new law does place some limitations on what can be deducted next year, depending on the type of form that is used. If there is a project in which you are particularly interested, please let us know and we will put it on the agenda of projects we consider for support.

As of this writing, the Condors have all been captured or will be shortly, and we are not making our usual appeal for money to aid them. We are currently holding a fund for that purpose to use at the appropriate time and will advise you when that is done. Please send us what you would have donated to the Condor Fund and more for use in our other conservation projects. If every member gave only \$10, we could accomplish even greater things than ever before.

# I Hate Seagull.

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

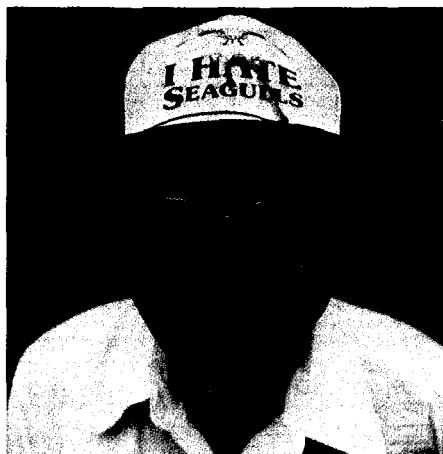
**D**on't be misled by the title. I really like gulls of all species because of their interesting plumages which drive my students (and me) crazy trying to identify them (see Childs, *Western Tanager*, December 1985). What I don't like is the name SEAGULL! Common names, particularly when they are used incorrectly, go against my scientific grain.

The implication of the term "SEAGULL" is that the sea is where gulls spend all or most of their life. That is simply not true. Go 50 miles offshore and it will be a long time between gull sightings. Go to Great Salt Lake and see lots of them, including a statue to one species!

No gull nests on the ocean or on water. All nest on land, be it an island, cliff or sandbar (in a river!). Many nest in areas many miles from a sea or ocean — LANDGULL.

Many migrate along the coasts to their nesting grounds. Others fly inland to such non-sea localities as Mono or Great Salt Lake — LAKEGULL. Some follow rivers — RIVERGULL. Some nest in the deserts high in the Andes — MOUNTAINGULL (Andean Gull to some).

Many scavenge for food along the seashore — SHOREGULL. Others find dumps — DUMPGULL, school yards — SCHOOLGULL, parkinglots — PARKINGLOTGULL, behind the plough — PLOUGHGULL, (FARMGULL to some) equally as productive.



The Gullible Author

Some roost on the water in bays — BAYGULL. Others find roof tops — ROOFGULL, light poles — POLEGULL, sage brush — SAGEGULL, boats — BOATGULL, convenient and safe.

All things considered, most species of gull spend most of their life on or over land. So why SEAGULL and not LANDGULL?

Some non-birders, not acquainted with the facts of gull plumages, mistakenly call some SHEGULLS and BOYGULLS (in some cases BOUYGULL) even though there is no sexual dimorphism.

A Jewish friend of mine defined a seagull for me as "a Jewish bird!" Webster's defines it as a gull cf. (see) gull.

Nowhere have I heard the term "SEATERN", "SEABRANT", "SEALOON", "SEAPLICAN", "SEAPUFFIN", "SEAMURRE". I have heard "SEADUCK" but usually in a taxonomic sense. So why do we need the misnomer, SEAGULL?

We don't. Let's not! Please!

Parking Lot Gulls, Bodie, CA



## Christmas Bird Count Update

The following updates the information contained in the November *Tanager*.

### Granite Woody — New compiler

Rick Saval  
2304 Mandeline Court  
Bakersfield, CA 93304  
(805) 831-2014

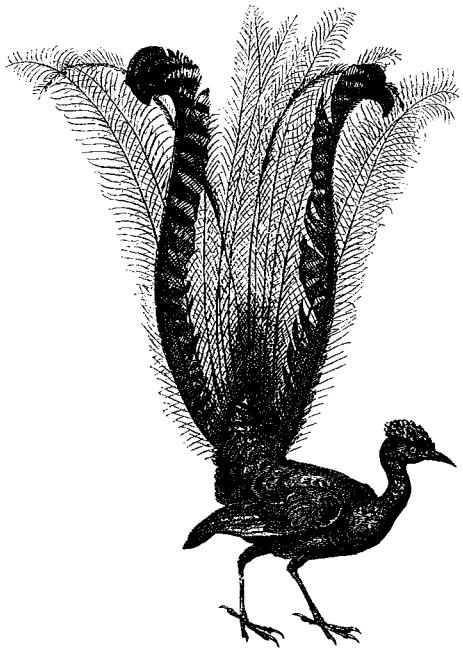
### San Bernardino Valley — New Contact Morongo-Whitewater

Gene Cardiff  
San Bernardino County Museum  
2024 Orange Tree Lane  
Redlands, CA 92373  
Day: (714) 825-4825

### Grass Mountain — Date Set Saturday, December 27

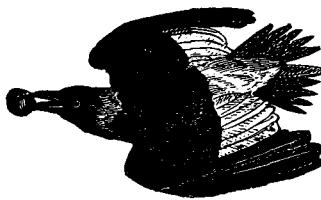
The Grass Mountain Count in the Lake Elizabeth, Green Valley and Bouquet Canyon area is one of the unique and most undermanned counts which is close to the Greater Los Angeles area. If you can make this count it would be a good one where you can make a significant contribution.

Don't forget the L.A. Audubon Society Sponsored Counts: **Lancaster**, Saturday, December 20; **Malibu**, Sunday, December 21; **Los Angeles**, Sunday, January 4.



# Birds Of The Season

by Hal Baxter  
and Kimball Garrett



October of 1986 provided a little bit of everything for southern California firsts (Gray-cheeked Thrush) and seconds (Lesser Black-backed Gull), dull local pelagic trips contrasting with "birdier" boat trips up north (could that really have been a *Procellaria* petrel on the 19 October trip out of Bodega Bay?), long chases north for ultra-rarities (Dotterel and Purple Gallinule), shorter chases for local "ticks" (how about that cooperative backyard Kentucky Warbler!), odd exotics (munias, waxbills, Red-crested Pochards and the like), invading northerners (such as siskins, waxwings and Evening Grosbeaks), plentiful pelicans, and, naturally, a lot of routine days interspersed with the above. Stick with us through the rest of this column and we'll explain this run-on opening sentence.

Just prior to press time, we learned of California's second **Purple Gallinule** — and it's been a quarter of a century since the last one. This year's bird, an immature, was found in a ditch in Fremont, on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay, on 16 October, and was seen by numerous observers the following weekend. It was 1 October 1961 when a Purple Gallinule crashed into Pt. Loma, establishing the first state record. Purple Gallinules seem particularly prone to long distance vagrancy, and additional California records must surely be anticipated.

Nuttall's Woodpecker — Illustration by Lee Jones  
from **Birds of Southern California**



We've also just learned of California's first **Chuck-Will's-Widow** a bird brought into a rehabilitation center in coastal San Mateo County; this record, if accepted, will add fodder to the suggestion that, ultimately, nearly every migratory bird species in North America (and adjacent regions) will be found as strays in California.

The rarest bird of the season in southern California was the **Gray-cheeked Thrush** seen only briefly by Richard Webster on Pt. Loma on 1 October. This fits into the seasonal pattern of vagrancy of this species to California, but previous records have been from the central California coast (especially Southeast Farallon Island). Have we been overlooking this species in southern California among its closely similar congeners? The rarest shorebird of October was Orange County's first **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**, a striking juvenile found at Upper Newport Bay on 13 October (Dorothy Dimsdale). The bird was seen by numerous observers over the next couple of days. Remarkably, this is one of the very few "ultra-rare" shorebirds ever to have been found at productive Upper Newport Bay (perhaps there are just too many birds to look through?).

Though the vagrants steal the birding spotlight through the month of October, a more biologically interesting development is the pattern of dispersal found in our irregular montane and boreal bird species. Each late fall and winter period shapes up a little differently, and only a continental-scale effort (such as that attempted by the mid-winter Christmas Bird Counts) can help us analyze these patterns. How is this winter shaping up? Certainly we have experienced some of the highest fall counts of **Cedar Waxwings** in many years, and it will be interesting to see if numbers build through the winter (numbers of this species in southern California often peak in spring). Many observers have commented on the relatively high numbers of **Red-breasted Nuthatches**; for example Jean Brandt found them "as common as Pygmy Nuthatches" at Chilao, in the transition zone of the San Gabriel Mountains, on 18 October; these numbers cannot be accounted for by a simple down-slope movement of the San Gabriels breeding population (which is quite small). This begs the age old question: where DO they come from? We offer the age old answer: we don't know. Small numbers of **Lewis' Woodpeckers** have been reported, including three at California City on 3 October (Bob Pann); while this doesn't amount to an "invasion," it suggests that higher than average numbers might be ex-

pected this winter. Among our winter finches, **Pine Siskins** have been present in the lowlands in good numbers, and a mini-invasion of **Evening Grosbeaks** seems to be shaping up: single birds flying over Lake Palmdale on 5 October, Malibu Lagoon on 12 October, and Pt. Fermin on 15 October (all by Kimball Garrett, who suggests listening for the clear, whistled "tew" call given so frequently by this fat finch). As of this writing it has become clear that yet another fall has gone by without a "corvid" invasion (the 1972-1973 flight has yet to be repeated).

Perhaps the most "out of place" waterbird of the season was a **Black Storm-Petrel** at the north end of the Salton Sea on 28 September (Guy McCaskie). While we may only speculate on what caused the appearance of this marine bird on the Salton Sea, we should point out that it is not the first, but rather the seventh (!) species of "tube-nose" to find its way to that inland sea. Many observers commented on the exceptional abundance of **Brown Pelicans** along our coast this fall (with several hundred also present on the Salton Sea). Some 2000 (about half of them birds of the year) were estimated on the Marina del Rey breakwater on 19 October (Kimball Garrett). This would suggest that nesting success in the Gulf of California was high this year (the gulf is the source of most of our fall Brown Pelicans), but may also indicate a good year for our increasing Channel Islands populations. Two pairs of **Wood Ducks**, along with two additional immatures, were at the Arboretum in Arcadia on 12 October (Virginia Escher); just one pair was there three days later. Sandy Wohlgemuth was surprised to find an **Osprey** perched on an oak in Tapia Park on 12 October; so were the local American Crows, which repeatedly mobbed the big fish hawk. Among the **Merlin** reports to begin to come in was one over the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on 3 October (Bob Pann). At least five different reports of **Peregrine Falcons** were received, spanning the coast from McGrath to Bolsa Chica.

A rather late **Solitary Sandpiper** was along the creek in Tapia Park on 12 October (Sandy Wohlgemuth). A **Red Knot** was found inland at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on 4 October (Jim and Ellen Strauss); four juvenile **Sanderlings** were at that locality on 5 October (Jon Dunn). The highest count of **Pectoral Sandpipers** received was fifteen at Harper Dry Lake, near Barstow, on 12 October (Jonathan Alderfer). What must have been a striking bird was an almost pure white **Long-billed Dowitcher** seen by Milt Blatt along Cucamonga Creek in Chino. Of six **Parasitic Jaegers** found at the north end of the Salton Sea on 28 September (Guy McCaskie), three were still present on 30 September, and one was seen through October. A **Franklin's Gull**, in a plumage transitional to first winter, was on the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on 4-5 October (the Strausses, Cal Yorke). One Franklin's

was at the north end of the Salton Sea on 9 October (Bob McKernan), and another was found on the Saticoy Ponds in Ventura County on 15 October (Sandy Wohlgemuth). The **Glaucoous Gull** seen at the north end of the Salton Sea on 11 October was most likely the same bird that was there last June.

One of the few **White-winged Doves** reported coastally this year was at Doheny State Beach, Orange County, on 21 September (Brian Daniels). A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was seen off and on in late September along Carpinteria Creek, and we have received a report of a **Black-billed Cuckoo** north of Big Sur, Monterey County, 2-4 October. October seems to be the month when **Common Poorwills** appear in the oddest places, demonstrating the migratory nature of many populations of this species. One was flushed in the early morning of 9 October at the Hughes Market at National and Sawtelle in West Los Angeles (Bob Pann); we assume it was flushed from the parking lot (or maybe produce? frozen foods?). Another was at the Los Angeles Zoo (outside the cages) on 14 October. And a phone call today (23 October) tells of one behind Sinbad's Restaurant on the Santa Monica Pier! A caprimulgid found by Daniel Cooper in his yard in San Marino on 9 October fits the description of a **Whippoor-will**, a species which has been encountered as a migrant in California on only a handful of occasions. September is a month that **Vaux's Swifts** seem to come down people's chimneys, although this phenomenon is perhaps even more common during inclement weather in spring. Over a hundred swifts were chased from a chimney in Ontario on 24 September, a garage full was reported from Los Angeles, and large numbers entered a Whittier house through a chimney on 23 September. This Clausian

behavior causes considerable grief to the few victimized homeowners, especially those with white drapes. A rather late **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was at Huntington Beach Central Park on 9 October (Doug Willick). Gene Cardiff and his crew found quite a concentration of woodpeckers at Kelso, San Bernardino County, on 5 October, including ten **Red-naped Sapsuckers**, a **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, one Red-naped X Red-breasted hybrid, a **Williamson's Sapsucker**, and a somewhat out of range **Nuttall's Woodpecker**. Note that the ratio of Red-naped to Red-breasted Sapsuckers was just what is expected out on the deserts, whereas this ratio is reversed in most of our coastal regions. A male "**Yellow-shafted**" Northern Flicker was at the Shipley Nature Center in Orange County 6-9 October.

A **Least Flycatcher** was found along the Santa Ana River in Anaheim, near Lincoln Ave., 16-18 September (Doug Willick). One of the few **Eastern Kingbirds** reported was at San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego County, on 4 October. A **Winter Wren** was at Doheny State Beach on 5 October (Wayne Gochenour). **Townsend's Solitaires** were scattered through the deserts, including one at Morongo Valley on 13 September (Charles Hood) and two at Harper Dry Lake on 12 October (Jonathan Alderfer). Jan Tarble had a **Gray Catbird** in Tecopa in early October. A **Brown Thrasher** was seen at the Pt. Loma Cemetery in San Diego on 21 September (Jim Morris and the San Bernardino Audubon Society). Up to three **Red-throated Pipits** were below Imperial Beach in mid-October. Among the scattered "**Plumbeous**" **Solitary Vireos** reported was one at the Turtle Rock Nature Center, Orange County, on 2 October (Doug Willick).

Warblers always highlight the fall "vagrant parade," and this fall was certainly no exception.

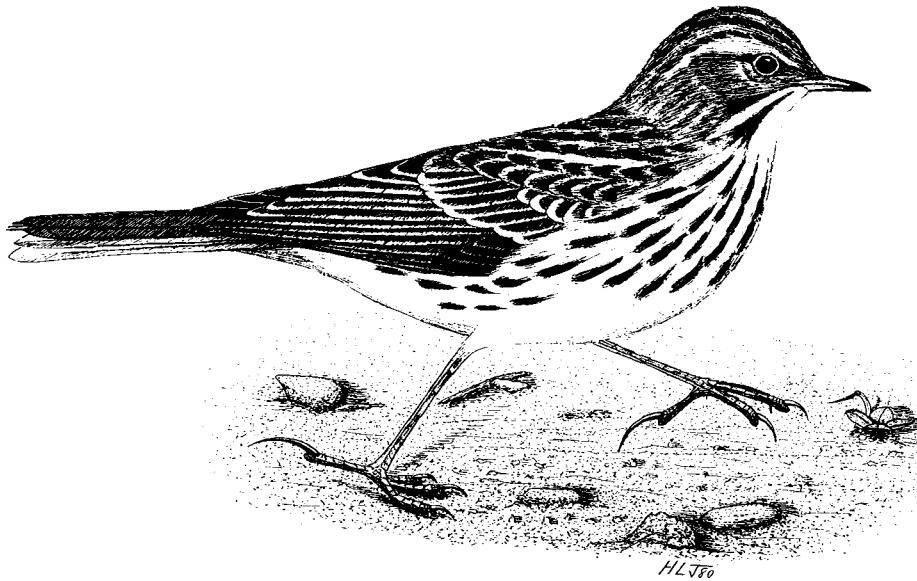
In recent years a couple of trends have become apparent. First, the central and northern California coasts are producing an ever-increasing share of the warblers (apart from the Farallones which have always produced). In recent years excellent coverage of the San Luis Obispo County coast has paid off with increasing records of many rare warblers. Such trends can almost completely be explained by trends in observer coverage. What is more difficult to explain is the increasing percentage of vagrant warblers of the more "southerly" species (e.g. Prothonotary and Yellow-throated), while some of the boreal species (Cape May, Blackburnian, etc.) seem to be reported relatively less frequently. Migration through our region is so dynamic that we'll probably be reassessing these "new" trends in another couple of years. A **Northern Parula** at Oceano Campground on 5 October (Brad Schram) may have been the same bird that had been there in early August. A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at Doheny State Beach on 14 September (Wayne Gochenour). Female **Black-throated Blue Warblers** were at Yucca Valley on 7 October (Chet McGough) and Huntington Beach Central Park after 15 October (Brian Daniels). A male Black-throated Blue was at Horse Thief Spring, Inyo Co., on 18 October (Dan Guthrie). The only **Blackburnian Warbler** reported was at Oceano Campground on 5 October. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was at the Torrey Pines Visitor Center, north of San Diego, on 8-9 October. An immature **Pine Warbler** was at Huntington Beach Central park on 29 September (Hal Baxter). **Palm Warblers** were at the Pt. Loma Cemetery on 20 September (Roger Linfield and Charles Hood), and at two different places on the Oxnard Plain in mid-October (Hal Baxter, Wanda Conway).

Is there a correlation between the abundance of "green leaf-hoppers" which live on tamarisk foliage (entomologists will have to pardon our primitive classification here) and the number of migrant warblers using these trees? Such a correlation makes intuitive sense, and is supported, qualitatively, by Sandy Wohlgemuth's observations of leaf-hoppers and warblers in the various groves of tamarisks on the Oxnard Plain. Not surprisingly, the groves in which Sandy could find few leafhoppers were the ones shunned by the warblers. We're sorry to have missed the sight of Sandy gleaning the tamarisk foliage for his leafhopper count! A few **Blackpoll Warblers** were found on the Oxnard Plain after early October, and these were in the "buggy" tamarisks. Among the **Black-and-white Warblers** reported was one in Chuck Murdoch's La Crescenta yard on 25 September (found by Bill and Coleen O'Connell, who were presumably there looking for the **Kentucky Warbler**; the Kentucky, by the way, was present at least through mid-October). Another Black-and-white was along the south shore of Lake Palmdale on 5 October (Kimball Garrett et al), further suggesting that this "off-limits"

Blackpoll Warbler — Illustration by Lee Jones  
from **Birds of Southern California**



Red-throated Pipit — Illustration by Lee Jones  
from **Birds of Southern California**



area may have potential as a "vagrant trap." An immature male **American Redstart** was at the mouth of Zuma Creek on 4 October (Kimball Garrett and Jon Dunn); it was obviously not the same individual as the female there on 20 September. **Prothonotary Warbler** sightings seem to be on the increase. One was on Pt. Loma on 21-22 September (Richard Webster), and another was at the willows at the northwest end of Harbor Lake for several days after 16 October (Brian Daniels). An **Ovenbird** was on Pt. Loma 11-13 October.

A **Connecticut Warbler**, one of our rarest species, was reported at Scotty's Castle, Death Valley National Monument, on 23 September (Bert Mull). A **Mourning Warbler** was reported from Laguna Rd. on the Oxnard Plain on 27 September (Arnold Small). A Del Mar, San Diego Co., yard had both a **Hooded** and a **Canada Warbler** between 11 and 13 October; assuming that the ubiquitous Wilson's Warbler was also present, this made for a "clean sweep of *Wilsonia*," not an easy feat in a California yard. An immature Canada Warbler was at an Oceano Campground on 5 October. Two **Painted Redstarts** were apparently nominate *rubra* (or were assumed to be); an immature male found by Chuck Bernstein in Tapia Park on 11 October was evidently a different individual than the one seen there a week earlier by Jon Dunn (which in turn had been found a few days earlier by Sandy Wohlgemuth). A **Scarlet Tanager** was found at Thousand Palms Oasis in early 6 October (Jon Dunn and Doug Willick). **Dickcissel** reports include on Patterson Road in Goleta through late September, and one on Pt. Loma on 4 October (Wayne Gochenour).

Intriguing was a report of a "**black-backed**" **Lesser Goldfinch** in Huntington Beach Central park on 1 October (Dorothy Dimsdale and Barbara Elliott). Black-backed birds are not known from our *hesperophila* race, although they crop up frequently in

nominate *psaltria* in extreme east-central Arizona (and become the rule farther east and south). Given the erratic movements undertaken by other cardueline finches, the occurrence of black-backed Lesser Goldfinches in southern California is certainly not out of the question (but we must also examine the possibility that adult males in our local populations could rarely show excessive saturation to their back pigments).

Escaped finches of note included two **Orange-cheeked Waxbills** at the Arboretum in Arcadia 4-8 October (Betty Vermyre and Chuck Hamilton) and a **White-headed Munia** at the mouth of Zuma Creek through late September.

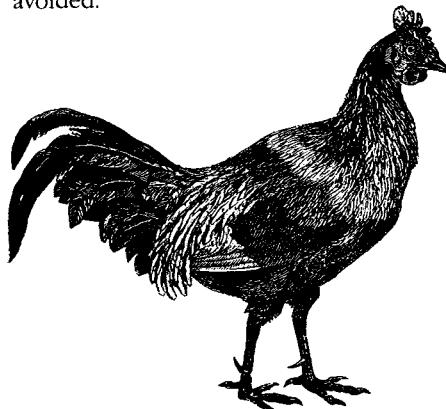
In the last couple of columns we have been leading up to the notion that December is the month for Christmas Bird Counts, and that birdwatching activity through the month will be dedicated to scouting, then conducting, these counts. As always, get in touch with the compilers early and be generous with your services.

Send any interesting bird observations to:

**Hal Baxter**  
1821 Highland Oaks Drive  
Arcadia, CA 91006  
Phone (818) 355-6300

## Renew Your Membership Through LAAS

When you receive your annual renewal notice from National Audubon, we strongly urge that you complete the form and send it along with your dues check to Audubon House rather than directly to National Audubon. National has been having difficulties with the data processing firm handling membership. This has led to many errors in chapter records across the country, including ours. It has also resulted in some of our members missing issues of the *WESTERN TANAGER*. By sending your renewal directly to us, many of the problems should be avoided.



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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dec. '86

## EVENING MEETINGS Meet at 8:00 P.M. In Plummer Park



Examples of some of the exciting slides to be shown by Hartmut Walters during his December presentation.



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9 — Hartmut Walter**, Professor of Biogeography at UCLA will present a program on Venturing Into Central Africa. Rift Valley lakes, swamps, rainforests and towering volcanic highlands characterize much of Burundi, Rwanda and eastern Zaire. Visit Lake Tanganyika and the chimpanzees of Gombe Stream N.P. Akagera N.P. with its lions and whale-headed storks, and see what some 60,000 hippos have done to Virunga N.P. in Zaire. Join the pygmies their forest hunts and share the unforgettable experience of stalking a mountain gorilla family in the picturesque highland forest of Rwanda's Mt. Visoke.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 13 — Annual Members Photo Contest.** Bring your three best bird slides to be judged by the experts (??). First three winners will receive book store prizes. Bring your slides before 8:00 p.m. This annual event has proven to be one of the most popular programs of the year. Cheer your favorites, boo the judges.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 — Annual Banquet**  
see page 5 for the details of this exciting evening.

## WORKSHOPS

Workshops will be held one-half hour before the regular monthly program from 7:30 to 8:00 p.m. Everyone is invited.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9 — Fred Heath: Field Guides.** Fred, in his own inimitable style, will delve into some of the limitations of these books we all rely on.

## FIELD TRIPS CALL THE TAPE!

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

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7** — In cooperation with the Santa Monica Mountain Task Force, meet leader **Gerry Haigh** for his monthly morning walk through **Topanga State Park** at 8 a.m. Spend the morning birding in lovely oak woodlands, meadows and chaparral. From Topanga Canyon Blvd. take a very sharp east turn uphill on Entrada Dr. (7 miles So. of Ventura Blvd., 1 mile No. of Topanga Village.) Keep bearing left on Entrada Dr. at various roadforks to parking lot at end. \$3 fee.

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**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13** — Join **Bob Shanman** for a morning at the unique **Ballona Wetlands**. This is an excellent marshland site practically in our back yard. Take Marina 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: call (213) 545-2867 after 6 p.m.)

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21** — Meet **David White** at **Whittier Narrows Regional Park** for his monthly morning walk through a good diversity of habitats in search for a variety of residents, water fowl, and wintering birds. 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.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 — Gerry Haigh** at **Topanga State Park**. See December 7 trip for details.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 — Bob Shanman** at **Ballona Wetlands**. See December 13 trip for details.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 — Bob Pann** for a morning at **Malibu Lagoon State Beach**. This is a popular spot for viewing waterbirds of all types. Excellent opportunity for beginners. **Tapia Park** is a second target time allowing 8 a.m. at State Beach entrance.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 17 — David White** at **Whittier-Narrows**. See December 21 trip for details.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 17 — Meet Joe Zell** for a morning of birding at **McGrath Beach State Park**. This is an excellent stream mouth estuary location (which last summer produced a Mongolian Plover). We will try to arrange access to sewage treatment ponds. Bring your scope, warm clothes and sharp eyes. Go north on Ventura Fwy 101 past Oxnard to Victoria Ave. exit. Go left under the Fwy approx. 1 mile to Olivas Park Dr. and go right to Pacific Coast Hwy. Turn left and shortly after crossing bridge turn right into the day parking lot. 8:00 a.m. Fee \$3.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 24 — Loren Hays** will lead a walk at **Bolsa Chica Lagoon**, an outstanding place to view waterbirds of all types. (No where else can you get so close!) Take Seal Beach Blvd. exit from Fwy 405 to Coast Hwy, then south past Warner to marked parking lot across from state beach (between Warner and Golden State). 8:00 a.m. Bring scopes.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 — David White** at **Whittier-Narrows**. See December 21 trip for details.

**ANTICIPATE** a reservation trip to **Pt. Mugu Naval base** sometime in February to be led by Joe Zell. Details in the January *Tanager*.