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The Joys of Tropical Birding

or

Reminiscences of Southeastern Brazil

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Birding various exotic places around the world has been a major activity of mine during the last few years as readers of the *Western Tanager* can attest. A lot of beautiful scenery and Great Birds have been observed and photographed. Time and money are running out so, in this article, I'll try outline some of the trials and the triumphs of this kind of activity as well as describe some of the birds and activities on a recent trip to southeastern Brazil.

FIRST, trials, the bad news.

1. You pay. The trips cost money. A 2-3 week trip will run from \$2000 to over \$5000 if you go with any of the first line birding tour companies
2. You obtain passports and visas, sometimes a pain to obtain.
3. You suffer. No matter how you get in shape, they'll run you into the ground to get that last rare bird! Heat and humidity can be unpleasant and high altitude debilitating. Not to worry, by the time the trip is over you ARE in shape! Bugs (flies, mosquitoes & chiggers) keep you scratching
4. You worry. Health. There are the shots you need to take before you go. Malaria pills before, during and after. Don't drink the water (but beer's cheap). Watch the food and don't eat green salads or uncooked fruit, unless you peel it yourself. Will the coronary be this week?



Scale-throated Hermit

Photo by Shinichi Hamashige

5. You bird under difficult conditions. Vegetation is dense. Light is bad. Binoculars better have an exit pupil of 4 or better. Leaders use tape recorders to lure the shy and skulking birds out for a quick glimpse. Then someone moves!
6. You use available field guides. Some areas have none but this is becoming less of a problem. For most identifications, you rely on the leader. He must be GOOD, very, very GOOD!

SECOND, triumphs, the good news.

All the above sounds awful. It is NOT!

1. You meet new friends with the same philiias(sic), phobias and intense drive to see the fabulous birds which are to be found in the area. Each has their own real life experiences, life lists and one upmanship to share. Some will even buy a Ministrap!
2. You enjoy! Each trip and each day is a new adventure. So, the day may start at 3 a.m. with two hours travel in a cramped vehicle to the dawn chorus. 12 hours of birding with a list of over 150 species, a beer, dinner, a shower and

you're ready to do it all over again! Is there a better Heaven on Earth?

3. Your life list increases by leaps and bounds! I insist that I am not a compulsive lister. I do not drop everything and chase the latest bird on the Rare Bird Alert! I'd rather go on a trip and get 350 lifers, some 50 a day! Give me a crippling view of a Red-breasted Toucan and you can have the Skylark at Pt. Reyes!

THIRD, the trip. So much for fun and frustrations. Here's what the trip to southern Brazil in October was like and some of the birds we saw

Our leader, Dr. Robert Ridgely of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, is the author of the "Birds of Panama." He has exceptional eyes and ears as well as an encyclopedic knowledge of the South American avifauna.

The tour was operated by Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours (VENT) out of Austin, Texas. I've never been disappointed by a VENT tour in planning, food, accomodations or leadership. Victor Emmanuel runs the trips on time!



Black-necked Aracari

Ridgely, by the way, is presently writing a four volume field guide to the 3200 species(!) of South America, the first volume of which will come out sometime in the next year. Contrary to general practice, this first volume will deal with the more difficult and less well known groups of passerines. I've seen the proofs of text and illustrations and can attest to its excellence. Audubon House, you have my prepublication order!

Most of us met in Miami and departed in the evening for Rio de Janeiro, arriving there early the next morning. There were no customs problems. Bob Ridgely and Ina Hrdina of Andre Safari & Tours of Brazilia were there to meet us. A short wait and we're off on a flight north to Victoria where we transferred to a bus for Santa Teresa, the home of the famous hummingbird expert, Arturo Ruschi. It has been 40 hours since California and with but little sleep; however, there were birds to be seen a short walk from the hotel. It was still daylight so we went after them!

The swam of hummingbirds at Ruschi's make Mile Hi seem pretty dull (sorry, Debbie). Rufous-breasted & Planalto Hermits, Swallow-tailed Hummer, Black Jacobin, Glittering-bellied Emerald, Violet-capped Woodnymph, White-throated Hummer, Versicolored Emerald, Sombre Hummer, Brazilian Ruby, White-vented Violetear and the Filled Coquette! 12 species of hummingbirds in the first hour in the field! And that does not include some of the lesser lights like Masked Water and Cattle Tyrants, Yellow-legged, Pale-breasted and Creamy-bellied Thrushes and White-browed Blackbird, the latter seen at the airport at Victoria.

At the Nova Lombardia Reserve next day we became acquainted with such exotic sounding species as Black-billed Scythebill (a woodcreeper), White-collared Foliagegleaner, Pale-browed Treehunter (funarids), Hooded Berryeater (Cotinga), Sharpbill (only member of the family Oxyruncidae), Azure-shouldered and Golden-chevrons Tanagers and a host of flycatchers and others. The mud nest builder, the Rufous Hornero, scolded while we got fleeting glimpses of the Blackish Rail around the edges of a pond. The best

bird, perhaps, was a Short-tailed Anthrush, a bird that is a real challenge to see although it can be heard easily.

A half-days drive north brought us to Linhares and to the lowland Sooretama reserve. Three days of birding in the tropical spot provided us with a wealth of species guaranteed to pop your buttons! It took us two dawns to see the rare and endangered Red-billed Curassow but the early risings were worth it. Ochre-marked & Maroon-faced Parakeets, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Yellow-fronted and Yellow-eared Woodpeckers, Striated Softtail (funarid), antbirds galore, and Flame-crested Tanager were just some of the species seen. The last morning turned up the spectacular White-fronted Nunbirds (a puffbird, family Bucconidae).



Walking Stick

A travel day found us with an overnight at Victoria (Common Waxbills in the parking lot!) and a stop at Bela Horizonte before arriving at Brazilia.

The country is prosperous, agricultural land as seen from the air and Brazilia, a city constructed in four years, is a joy to behold. Contrary to what I had read, the city was not cut out of the "jungle" but is located at 3000 ft. on rolling hills with scattered, open woodland and grasslands. The six lane, each way, freeways were more than ample for the handful of alcohol burning cars using them. A real change from most large cities.

We did some touristy things, like the cathedrals, while on our way to the White-throated Kingbird seen on one of the federal buildings. Grey Monjitas, Little Nightjars and Burrowing Owls(!) were in town residents, the latter being seen at almost every airport enroute.

Most of our birding here was done at the Brazilia National Park in the cerrado, a

closed shrub community, which was separated by campo, a grassland community, each with its avian specialists.

Two flycatchers were especially outstanding. A pair of Streamer-tailed Tyrants displayed continuously for us while duetting, a sight you have to see and hear to believe. Each did his part in bowing and spreading wings and tail while doing his part in the two part duett, an absolutely delightful sight.

Later, on the campo, the rare and endangered Cock-tailed Tryant performed with his DC-10 silhouette. This little bird has its central rectrices enlarged and upturned so that, in profile, it looks like a large tailed airplane. When we first heard of the bird, we expected it to active in late afternoon. We learned differently.

Other highlights of Brazilia were the incredible Red-legged Seriema (a 30 in. tall guiriforme bird which looks like a rhea and isn't), the beautiful Campo Flicker, my first sighting of a tinnamou, the Red-winged; the Firewood-gatherer, whose nest is a 3 foot mass of sticks; the Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch; the endemic White-striped and White-bellied Warblers; the Straight-billed Streamcreeper and the Horned Sungem, an extraordinary hummingbird.

Foz Do Iguacu to the southwest lived up to its reputation. It is some waterfall! Not only that but Ashy-tailed Swifts nest and roost in large numbers under the falls as do the Black Swifts of California. Curl-crested Jay, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Saffron Toucanet, Guira Cuckoo, Blond-crested & Robust Woodpeckers, Surucua Trogon, Tuco Toucan and a host of other species made this an exciting place to bird. The three foot Tupinambus Lizard residing near the trash area out back of the Hotel Cataracus got our heads out of the trees for a short while.

Rufous-tailed Jacamar



Photo by Shinichi Hamashige

During siesta (can you believe it?) some of us took the time to visit Argentina one day and Paraguay the next. We were able to find Brazilian made rum (rhum) in Argentina for 85 cruzados (\$4.10) and in Paraguay for 35 cruzados (less than \$2) and that tells you something about the three countries involved as we could not find Brazilian rum in Brazil! 1000 cruzeiros = 1 cruzado. In Miami, the exchange rate was 23 to the dollar. A 100,000 cruzeiro bill was worth about \$4!

Flying to Porto Alegre in the southernmost state of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul, was followed by a short drive north to San Francisco do Paulo where we stayed in a lovely country inn, the Hotel Veraneio Hampel. Conifers of the genus Araucaria were beginning to dominate the landscape. It was a peaceful, lovely countryside. Many species new to us were seen on the well kept grounds, the Araucaria Tit-Spinetail being one of abundance. The Slaty-breasted Wood Rail scurried out of sight when observed from our window!

Our destination from San Francisco do Paulo was the Aparados da Serra National Park. Driving there took us across open grasslands where such species as the Whistling Heron, Buff-necked Ibis, Straight-billed Reed-haunter (described by Charles Darwin), Blue-indigo Grosbeak, Black & White Monjita, Saffron-cowled Blackbird were seen.

In the park was an immense canyon, not as large as the Grand Canyon but just as spectacular. It is the home of the large Biscutate Swift, Chestnut-backed Tanager and another of the unbelievable hummingbirds, the Black-breasted Plovercrest. The dense, undisturbed forest of Araucarias was a pleasure to see.

We nest stayed in Rio Grande as our base of operations to the marshes at Taim to the south. We are now less than 100 miles from Uruguay.



Maguari Stork

As we drove out of the city the next day, our first stop yielded great views of the Scarlet-headed and Chestnut-capped Blackbirds, the former a most outstanding bird while the latter had to be seen in proper light to see the chestnut. In view of the spectacular coloration of the male Scarlet-head, it is surprising that it is apparently monogamous unlike the closely related, polygamous North American blackbirds . . . and living so close to Rio!

The marshes at Taim spread to the horizon. The number and variety of species is mind-boggling. Maguari Storks were the first of an extensive list of long-legged waders which included Buff-necked and Bare-faced Ibis, White-faced and Whistling Herons, and a number of old friends from North America. Coscoba and Black-necked Swans head the list of waterfowl, followed by 100's of Southern Screamers, aberrant members of the Anseriformes, White-faced Whistling Duck, Rosy-billed Pochard, Brazilian Duck and the rare Ringed Teal.

The Giant Wood Rail walked on the matted duckweed and aquatic ferns while

Olivaceous and Great Grebes fished the lateral canals. It was a big day for Gruiformes: 3 life species of coot, Red-gartered, White-winged and Red-fronted plus Spot-winged, Common and Purple Gallinules! Across the marsh a gigantic Capybara, the world's largest rodent (300 lbs.) was seen grazing at the edge of the marsh.

At the research station, a Long-tufted Screech Owl was found while we searched for the Red-crested Cardinal. Enroute back to Rio Grande, colonies of Monk Parakeets were seen as we viewed the Bay-winged Cowbird.

An early morning flight from Porto Alegre to Rio, followed by a three hour bus ride brought us to the resort Hotel Ype in Itatiaia National Park in the mountains southwest of Rio. Several well placed feeders had regular swarms of hummers during all the daylight hours. These provided the opportunity to waste the remaining film producing pictures of hummingbird silhouettes!

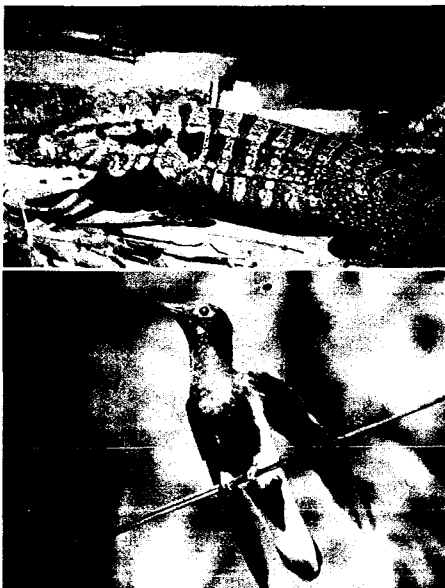
In the paramo-like grasslands near the mountain top we found the Itatiaia Spinetail, a very restricted endemic. Lower down the mountain we heard the zinging of and finely found the rare and beautiful Black and Gold Cotinga. Three more tanagers, the Brassy-breasted, Magpie and Gilt-edged, were added to our list, some of them out of the window of the hotel!

Such exotics as the Serra do Mar Tyrannulet, Rufous-backed Antwreio, Slaty Bristlefront, Brown-breasted Pigmy Tyrant, and Orange-headed Tanager finished off the list which, for me, totaled 504!

I arrived back home on Nov. 6th, exhausted, exhilarated and ready to quit birding . . . until the next trip! My classes at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden started 6 days later. "Now what is a bird? . . . "

Tupinambus Lizard

Black Jacobin



Southern Screamers



1987 Audubon Camp in the West Programs

Audubon Camp in the West for Adults

Geology speaks from the massive rock walls, and petroglyphs stir your curiosity in sessions on native American culture and wilderness values. Unique birds, mammals, insects, and flowers are tools in the art of understanding this rugged mountain environment. There is also time for hiking, rock climbing, square dancing, canoeing, and volleyball — plus an optional float trip down the spectacular Snake River in Grand Teton National Park. 3 two-week sessions and 1 one-week session are available.

Dates: Session 1 June 26 - July 3, 1987

2 July 5 - July 17, 1987

3 July 19 - July 31, 1987

4 August 2 - August 14, 1987

Cost: \$425 (one week), \$650 (two weeks)

Nature Photography in Wyoming:

The Wind River Mountains, Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park are the settings for this field seminar on the use of 35mm camera equipment. Professional photographers led by Perry Conway (producer of a dozen educational filmstrips) will guide you in photographing mountain scenery and wildlife. Five days are spent at the Audubon Camp, three days in Yellowstone and one day in Grand Teton National Park.

Dates: June 19 - June 28, 1987

Cost: \$750

Wilderness Research Backback Trip

Participate in an extensive, ongoing research effort by Audubon biologists while backpacking in the spectacular Wind River Mountains and/or Absaroka Mountains. Learn the skills of bird and mammal censusing, bird banding, insect survey and collection, plant identification, and herbarium collection. Small groups of 10 persons (maximum) will accompany our research staff on 12-day expeditions. Moderate hiking ability needed to cover 5-7 miles daily.

Dates:

Session 1A Wind River Mountains

June 21 - July 3, 1987

1B Absaroka Mountains

June 21 - July 3, 1987

2A Wind River Mountains

July 5 - 17, 1987

2B Absaroka Mountains

July 5 - 17, 1987

Cost: \$550.

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The Breeding Season of Los Angeles County Birds

by Lloyd Kiff and Douglas Irwin
of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology

Museum bird egg collections represent more than just a bunch of pretty objects. Scientific egg set specimens are accompanied by data cards which contain information that can be used for many purposes other than those concerned with the eggs themselves. For example, the compilers of state or regional bird lists routinely consult the data associated with egg collections for historical distributional records. Students of natural history pore through the data cards to obtain information on breeding times, clutch sizes, and nest sites and types. Currently, egg collections are serving as mother lodes of data for compilers of breeding bird atlases throughout North America. This list was compiled to assist participants in the proposed Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Since the data upon which the breeding season designation are based are drawn from the entire southern California coastal region, the list should be of value to participants in atlases in adjacent counties as well.

In many ways, egg collection data catalogues serve a role similar to that of contemporary nest record programs. In fact, the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology is presently embarking on a cooperative project with the biologists at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology North American Nest Records Program to compare the two types of data sets and to determine ways in which they can or cannot be used together effectively. It is probable that we will find that both approaches share some of the same strengths and biases. For example, nest record cooperators, like the old-time egg collectors, are probably more effective at delineating the *beginnings* of breeding seasons than their ends, and the data for species with easily found nests are doubtless more reliable than those for the more elusive species. The Cornell North American Nest Record Program provides an immensely valuable service to the research community, and all participants in the Los Angeles atlas project could make a further contribution by submitting nest record cards for each of the nests that they find. This is a popular activity among the memberships of many Eastern bird clubs, but there has always been a dearth of nest record card material from the western United States.

The breeding seasons summaries presented here are based on detailed breeding phenology data compiled several years ago by Irwin (then an undergraduate student at Colgate University) from the egg

collection data catalogue of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology. More voluminous breeding season data for all California breeding birds are being compiled from the catalogues of the major California egg collections by Dr. Howard Cogswell in connection with his forthcoming book on the land birds of California.

The list of breeding species is based upon the check-list of Dunn et al. (1982) with minor (mostly nomenclatural) modifications. Species which they list as scarce or irregular breeders are included for the most part, and those not regarded as breeding species by them, but which may eventually nest in Los Angeles County, are indicated by asterisks. The "best" month(s) for finding nests with eggs of each species, as indicated by the mode of the WFFVZ egg record, is given first. This is followed by the range of local breeding dates, excluding isolated extreme records, and the number of records upon each assessment is based. The data utilized included records from Ventura County south to San Diego County and east to the non-desert portions of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. We have no local egg set records for some species, and in these cases probable breeding season dates bases on specimens from other parts of California are given. Since the collection data include only records of nests with eggs, an attempt was made to add nestling periods onto the latest egg dates available in order to approximate the actual ends of the respective nesting seasons. However, the latter are inevitably poorly defined.

Literature Cited

- Dunn, J., K. Garrett, and L. Jones. 1982. Los Angeles Audubon Society field list of the birds of Los Angeles County. L.A. Aud. Soc., Los Angeles. 6pp.
Garrett, K., and J. Dunn. 1981. Birds of southern California, status and distribution. L.A. Aud. Soc., Los Angeles. 408 PP.



SPECIES LIST

Species	Best Months & Range of Dates	No. Records
Pied-billed Grebe:	April (Late March to late July)	56
Eared Grebe:	June-July (Early June to late July)	67
Least Bittern:	May (Early May to late July)	22
*Great Blue Heron:	March-April (Early March to late May)	50
Green-backed Heron:	May (Mid-April to mid-July)	38
*Black-crowned Night Heron:	May (Early May to late June)	8
Gadwall:	May (Early May to mid-July)	14
	(from entire state)	
Mallard:	May (Late March to late June)	6
Cinnamon Teal:	May (Late April to mid-June)	25
Redhead:	May (Early April to late June)	11
Ruddy Duck:	May (Early May to late June)	26
Turkey Vulture:	April (Early March to early June)	138
Black-shouldered Kite:	March-April (Late February to late July)	108
*Northern Harrier:	April (Late March to late May)	48
Cooper's Hawk:	April (Early April to mid-June)	92
Red-shouldered Hawk:	March (Early March to early June)	375
Swainson's Hawk:	April-May (Mid-April to late June)	39
Red-tailed Hawk:	March (Late February to early May)	202
Golden Eagle:	February-March (Early February to mid-May)	206
American Kestrel:	April (Mid March to mid-June)	349
*Peregrine Falcon:	March-April (Early March to early June)	55
Prairie Falcon:	April (Late March to early May)	20
California Quail:	April-May (Early April to early July)	98
Mountain Quail:	May (Late April to early June)	15
Virginia Rail:	April-May (Early April to mid-June)	11
Common Moorhen:	May (Mid-April to early June)	26
American Coot:	May-June (Late March to mid-July)	61
Snowy Plover:	May-June (Late March to late July)	101
Killdeer:	April-May (Early March to late June)	58
Black-necked Stilt:	May (Early May to late June)	54
American Avocet:	May (Early May to late June)	6
Least Tern:	June (Mid-May to late July)	380
Band-tailed Pigeon:	June (Mid-March to mid-November)	24
Spotted Dove:	March-May (Late February to mid-August)	5
Mourning Dove:	April-May (Late March to late August)	137
Greater Roadrunner:	April (Early March to mid-July)	92
Common Barn-Owl:	March (Late January to mid-May)	118
Flammulated Owl:	No California Records	
Western Screech-Owl:	April (Early March to mid-June)	64
Great Horned Owl:	February-March (Late January to mid-May)	174
Northern Pygmy Owl:	April (Mid-April to mid-May)	3
Burrowing Owl:	April (Early April to late June)	55
Spotted owl:	March (Mid-March to early May)	13
Long-eared Owl:	March (Early February to mid-May)	133
Lesser Nighthawk:	May (Late April to late July)	62
Common Poorwill:	June (Late March to early July)	10
Black Swift:	June (Early June to late July)	6
White-throated Swift:	May (Early May to early July)	32
Black-chinned Hummingbird:	May (Mid-April to mid-June)	275
Anna's Hummingbird:	February (Mid-December to late June)	190
Costa's Hummingbird:	May (Mid-April to mid-July)	118
Calliope Hummingbird:	June (Mid-June to late July)	6
Allen's Hummingbird:	April-May (Late February to late June)	62
Belted Kingfisher:	April (Early April to late June)	22
	(from entire state)	
Acorn Woodpecker:	May (Early April to late June)	42
Red-breasted Sapsucker:	June (Late May to late June)	4
Williamson's Sapsucker:	June (Late May to late June)	30
	(from entire state)	
Ladder-backed Woodpecker:	April (Early April to early June)	7
Nuttall's Woodpecker:	April (Mid-April to late June)	59
Downy Woodpecker:	April (Early April to late May)	36
Hairy Woodpecker:	April (Early April to mid-June)	14
White-headed Woodpecker:	May (Mid-May to late June)	10
Northern Flicker:	April-May (Early April to early June)	142
Olive-sided Flycatcher:	June (Early June to late July)	17
Western Wood Pewee:	June (Mid-May to late July)	100
*Willow Flycatcher:	June (Late May to late July)	112
Dusky Flycatcher:	June (Late May to late July)	44
Western Flycatcher:	May (Late April to late July)	81
Black Phoebe:	April-May (Mid-March to late June)	124
Say's Phoebe:	April (Late March to late June)	18
Ash-throated Flycatcher:	May (Early May to early July)	98
Cassin's Kingbird:	May (Late April to late June)	26
Western Kingbird:	May (Late April to early June)	70
Horned Lark:	April (Late March to early June)	80
Purple Martin:	June (Mid-May to mid-July)	20
*Tree Swallow:	May (Late April to mid-July)	26
Violet-green Swallow:	May-June (Early May to early July)	23
Northern Rough-winged Swallow:	May (Late April to mid-June)	29
Cliff Swallow:	May (Late April to early June)	75
Barn Swallow:	May (Mid-April to mid-July)	33
Stellar's Jay:	May (Late April to late June)	42
Scrub Jay:	April (Mid-March to late June)	280
Clark's Nutcracker:	March (Late February to mid-April)	5
American Crow:	April (Late March to early June)	149

Species	Best Months & Range of Dates	No. Records
Common Raven:	March-April (Early March to late May)	73
Mountain Chickadee:	May (Mid-May to early July)	29
Plain Titmouse:	April (Late March to early June)	67
Verdin:	April (Mid-March to late May)	64
Bushtit:	April (Mid-March to late June)	186
Red-breasted Nuthatch:	May-June (Mid-May to early July)	21
	(from entire state)	
White-breasted Nuthatch:	April (Late March to late June)	24
Pygmy Nuthatch:	May (Mid-May to early July)	44
Brown Creeper:	June (Late May to early July)	6
Cactus Wren:	April (Early March to late July)	207
Rock Wren:	April (Late March to mid-June)	17
Canyon Wren:	April (Late March to late July)	48
Bewick's Wren:	April-May (Mid-March to early July)	71
House Wren:	May (Early April to mid-July)	92
Marsh Wren:	May (Late March to early July)	42
American Dipper:	May (Mid-April to early July)	14
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:	May (Mid-April to mid-July)	70
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher:	April (Late March to early July)	38
Western Bluebird:	May (Mid-April to late June)	42
Townsend's Solitaire:	June (Late May to early July)	5
Swainson's Thrush:	May (Early May to mid-July)	65
Hermit Thrush:	June (Early June to mid-July)	110
	(from entire state)	
American Robin:	June (Mid-May to late July)	21
Wrentit:	April-May (Late March to mid-July)	95
Northern Mockingbird:	April (Late March to late July)	108
California Thrasher:	April-May (Mid-February to early July)	117
Le Conte's Thrasher:	February-April (Early February to mid-June)	100
Phainopepla:	June (Early May to late June)	141
Loggerhead Shrike:	April (Late February to late June)	161
European Starling:	April (Early April to mid-June?)	6
Bell's Vireo:	May (Late April to late June)	67
Solitary Vireo:	May-June (Early May to mid-July)	57
Hutton's Vireo:	March-April (Mid-March to late June)	20
Warbling Vireo:	May (Mid-May to early July)	18
Orange-crowned Warbler:	May (Late April to early July)	9
Yellow Warbler:	May (Early May to early July)	49
Yellow-rumped Warbler:	June (Late May to mid-July)	11
Black-throated Gray Warbler:	May (Mid-May to early July)	18
Hermit Warbler:	June (Late May to mid-July)	7
	(from entire state)	
MacGillivray's Warbler:	May-June (Early May to late July)	47
Common Yellowthroat:	May (Mid-April to early July)	46
Wilson's Warbler:	April (Early April to late June)	29
Yellow-breasted Chat:	May (Late April to mid-July)	99
Western Tanager:	June (Late May to early July)	34
Northern Cardinal:	April (Early April to late May)	5
Black-headed Grosbeak:	May (Late April to late July)	101
Blue Grosbeak:	May-June (Early May to late July)	44
Lazuli Bunting:	May (Early May to early July)	41
Fox Sparrow:	May-June (Mid-May to early July)	52
Song Sparrow:	April-May (Early March to late July)	255
Lincoln's Sparrow:	June (Late May to early July)	9
Dark-eyed Junco:	May (Late April to late July)	64
Chipping Sparrow:	May (Late April to late July)	35
Black-chinned Sparrow:	May-June (Late April to early July)	46
Savannah Sparrow:	April (Mid-March to mid-July)	288
*Grasshopper Sparrow:	April-May (Mid-April to late May)	12
Lark Sparrow:	May (Early April to early July)	147
Black-throated Sparrow:	April-May (Late March to early July)	30
Sage Sparrow:	April-May (Late March to late June)	85
Rufous-crowned Sparrow:	April (Early April to late June)	38
Green-tailed Towhee:	June (Late May to early July)	41
Rufous-sided Towhee:	May (Early April to late July)	132
Brown Towhee:	April-May (Mid-March to mid-July)	170
Hooded Oriole:	May (Mid-April to early August)	82
Northern Oriole:	May (Late April to early July)	44
Scott's Oriole:	May (Early May to late June)	68
Yellow-headed Blackbird:	May (Mid-May to late June)	30
Red-winged Blackbird:	April-May (Late March to late June)	239
Tricolored Blackbird:	April-May (Mid-April to early June)	126
Western Meadowlark:	April (Mid-March to mid-June)	50
Brewer's Blackbird:	April (Late March to early July)	152
Brown-headed Cowbird:	May-June (Late April to early July)	136
Pine Siskin:	June (Mid-April to late July)	59
	(from entire state)	
American Goldfinch:	May (Mid-April to early August)	123
Lesser Goldfinch:	May (Early April to mid-July)	73
Lawrence's Goldfinch:	May (Early April to late July)	41
Purple Finch:	May (Late April to late June)	39
Cassin's Finch:	June (Early June to late July)	5
House Finch:	April-May (Late March to mid-July)	148
Red Crossbill:	One exceptional breeding record from March 1967 (Garrett and Dunn 1981)	
House Sparrow:	April-May (Mid-March to early July)	47

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 — Meet **Dr. Elton Morel** at **Mojave Narrows**, a marvelous 800 acre desert oasis where spring migrants congregate. We will also look for Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Gambel's Quail and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Take Hwy. 15 toward Victorville exiting at Bear Valley Rd.; go east 3.9 miles to Ridge Crest Rd., turn left 2.6 miles to park entrance. (\$2 fee for day use or camping.) Meet at clubhouse at 8 a.m. Dr. Morel will also be at the clubhouse at about 3 p.m. Saturday for those who might be camping and interested in a late afternoon birdwalk.

SATURDAY, MAY 2 — **Jean Brown** will lead a morning walk through the beautiful California Sycamores of **Placerita Canyon**. This is a lovely place with steep canyon walls and a babbling brook. Take the 5 Frwy. North to the 14 (Antelope Valley Frwy) and get off at Placerita Canyon Rd. Meet at the nature center at 8 a.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 3 — **Jerry Haigh** at **Topanga Canyon**; see Sunday April 5 for details.

MONDAY, MAY 4 — **Ojai Loop Trip**. Join **Guy and Louise Commeau** in search of riparian species and migrants along the Ventura River riparian area: Hutton's Vireos and other oak woodland birds in the valley's magnificent Live Oak stands and a wide variety of other stops including Matilija Lake and Lake Casitas. Go north on 101 then turn inland on Rte. 33 exiting at Foster Park. Meet beyond the bridge of the Ventura River in park. Bring lunch and plan to carpool. Camping available at Foster Park. 8 a.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 9 — **Morongo Valley Refuge** - **David Koeppel** will lead a walk through this wonderful Nature Conservancy refuge. We will search for specialties such as Lucy's Warbler, Brown-crested and Vermilion Flycatchers, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak and many migrants. Take Hwy. 10 East to Hwy. 62; go North 10 miles to park sign (in the town of Morongo Valley) and turn right to Covington Park. Meet at 7:30 a.m. near Park Rec. Center. Bring lunch. Camping/Motels available in Yucca Valley. Approx. 3 hours from LA.

SUNDAY, MAY 10 — Meet **Zus Haagen-Smit** for a special morning walk through the magnificent gardens of the Huntington Library. You'll be privileged to walk and bird the garden before the place opens to the public. (In the past this has been run as a reservation trip, this time it's all comers.) Meet at the Oxford Rd. entrance. Take Frwy. 110 North till it becomes the Arroyo Pkwy. continue North to California Blvd. turn East (R) through Pasadena. Take Allen Ave. South (R) to Orlando Rd. Turn East (L) to Oxford Rd. This goes to the entrance. On a map look for the town of San Marino. Say the secret password "Audubon" and the guard will let you in. 8 a.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 23 — Join **Rusty Scalf** for a visit to **Chilao** at 5000 ft. in the Angeles National Forest (or as proposed, Ronald Reagan National Forest). Chilao is a beautiful open park-like Ponderosa Pine area home to many mountain birds including a good population of White-headed Woodpeckers. We will visit several bluebird nestboxes which should be full of hungry young. Last year all of the 13 boxes contained an active nest (Titmouse and Pygmy Nuthatches as well). Take the 210 Frwy. to the Angeles Crest Hwy. (2) and plan on an hour's drive through the mountains to the Chilao Visitors Center just off the Hwy. on the left. 8 a.m.

Trips to anticipate this Summer:

Santa Anita Canyon with **Jean Brown**, June 6.

San Geronio Canyon with **Tom Keeney**, June 20.

Topanga Canyon with **Jerry Haigh**, July 5.

Mt. Pinos with **Jean Brandt**, July 18.

Santa Ana Canyon with **Tom Keeney**, July 25.

RESERVATION TRIPS: (Limited Participation)

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.

All refundable reservations contracted and then cancelled (except by LAAS) will be charged a \$5 handling fee.

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 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.

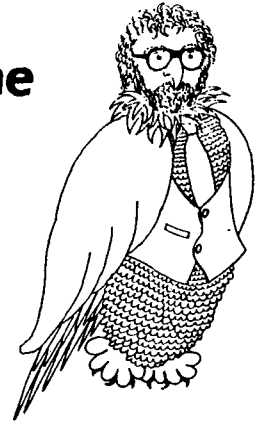
SUNDAY, MAY 10 — **Pelagic** towards **Santa Barbara Island**. 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Expected birds: Shearwaters — Sooty, Pink-footed; Jaegers — Pomarine, Parasitic; Storm petrels: Terns and Gulls — Arctic, Black-legged Kittiwake; Alcids — Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemont, Xantus Murrelet, Cassin's Auklet, Rhinoceros Auklet; Shorebirds — Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird, Red Phalarope, Wandering Tattler, Rarities (seen twice in 10 yrs.): So. Polar Skua, Puffins, Sabine's Gull. Possible mammals: Pacific Pilot Whale, Gray Whale, Dahl Porpoise, Risso's Dolphin, Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin, Pacific Common Dolphin.

SATURDAY, MAY 16 — Join **Tom Keeney** for a visit to the **Lower Santa Ana River** and **West Prado Basin** in search of riparian forest specialties such as Yellow-breasted Chat, Willow Flycatcher and (with some luck) Yellow-billed Cuckoo. This area is not accessible to the general public. Take the 91 Frwy. to the 6th/Maple offramp and meet at the Denney's at the base of the offramp. 8 a.m. We will also visit some grassland and agricultural areas. No Fee. Limit of 15 people.

WEEKEND, JUNE 27-28 — Join **Bob Barnes** on his annual extravaganza in the **Kern River/Greenhorn Mtn. Area**. Some possibilities: Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grouse, Pinyon Jay, Gray Flycatcher, Williamson's Sapsucker. \$25 per person. A possible third day extension \$10 more.

From the Editor

by **Fred Heath**



Immediately, you can't help but notice that the irrepressible Hank Childs is back with another one of his voyages to a far off land. This time it's Brazil. If you've been paying attention, the last couple of issues of the *Tanager* had an article on Chile. Hank has suggested that I should rename the *Western Tanager* to the *South American Tanager*.

Actually, a better suggestion is not quite that far south. We might call it the *San Diego Tanager* if I am to continue to be the editor. This is because that's where I'll be residing after July 1 of this year. But I have this strange hunch that the Board of Directors of the *Los Angeles* Audubon Society might find that name change a bit much. So the July-August issue will be my swan song.

Now I know an announcement like this shouldn't be put in the April issue *Tanager*. In the past, I've been known to celebrate my favorite holiday, April Fool's Day, in the pages of the *Tanager*. But this time, unfortunately, I'm not kidding. Trust me. By the time you read this I hope to have some poor, ignorant soul convinced that the editorship of the *Tanager* is for him or her. But maybe no one I can think of is that much of a masochist. So if it's your life-long ambition to be the editor, please let us know as soon as possible. You can't do much worse than I have.

Speaking of typos, my last column had a beauty. The end of a sentence cautioning about approaching nests, read: ... take care so a predator can follow your scent to the nest, etc. Obviously the *can* should be *can't*. Makes a world of difference.

Another less demanding typo consists of my spelling *Vireo* as *Viereo* in the list of breeding L.A. County birds.

Luckily you can take that hastily thrown together list and dump it. Lloyd Kiff, the Director of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, has been kind enough to put together a real fine list of the breeding birds of the county with probable nesting dates. We've published this with Lloyd's introductory notes in this issue. I have not as yet (March 3) received any post

cards with the evidence of breeding birds noted. I expect by my next column I should have a bunch.

Speaking of breeding birds, I mentioned in the last *Tanager* that San Bernardino County has started their Atlas project this year. I recently read the packet which they sent out to participants. It is a real fine job and gets me excited all over again. I would suggest that if you have any interest, this looks like a worthwhile and fun project to be involved in. With an investment of only about 20 hours of time a person could do a real credible job on an atlas block. Contact the Coordinator for the Atlas:

Barbara Carlson
P.O. Box 1015
Upland, CA 91785
(714) 982-3739

I don't feel like my editorial is complete until I've begged for material. Presently I don't have enough articles to get me through my retirement day. I'd hate to leave the *Tanager* with my last issue being nothing more than an Announcement page. This is not to mention the fact that we don't want the new editor to become discouraged. As always, send articles, photos, drawings to:

Fred Heath
6218 Cynthia Street
Simi Valley, CA 93063

Audubon House — HELP!!!

Most who receive and read *WESTERN TANAGER* have never been to Audubon House, where all L.A.A.S. activities happen.

From the House, the *Tanager* is addressed and mailed; books are ordered, packed, shipped and sold over the counter; Pelagic and Field Trips coordinated; Bird Tapes recorded and transmitted; membership records updated and maintained and valued library services provided.

All this and even more happens in but three cheerful, comfortable rooms in Great Hall in Plummer Park, West Hollywood. We are grateful to that city for our home.

This sometimes frenzied, always massive work load is coordinated and efficiently carried by Carol Niles, the Society's sole full-time employee. Carol is on hand every work day every week and is the only one who knows who, what, why, when and where.

Joe Cavanagh, who joined us last spring, spends three days each week — mostly with our computer. Joe has proven to be a great asset in keeping L.A.A.S. on track.

Volunteers provide all other services of the Society. Some have contributed their time and efforts for many years and have held several office positions. Others, equally valuable, donate a day's time for a scheduled period and work for various committees.

If not for loyal volunteers the Society could not function, or would have to pay salaried employees, thereby draining funds earmarked for education and conservation.

Volunteers derive great satisfaction in furthering the aims of their organization. Without them, these goals would be severely limited.

Unfortunately, our volunteer staff has decreased.

Ours is the only Southern California Audubon Society maintaining an office functioning five days a week. Our phones begin ringing at 10 AM and continue until closing time 3 PM.

Who's calling, how can we help?

A film company wants to rent a specific bird.

A Great Blue Heron has been feeding in someone's prized koi pool.

What does one do for an injured bird?

How does one feed an orphaned baby chick?

What is Audubon doing about the wetlands?

I just saw a condor over Malibu.

What bird is grey, with maybe some white?

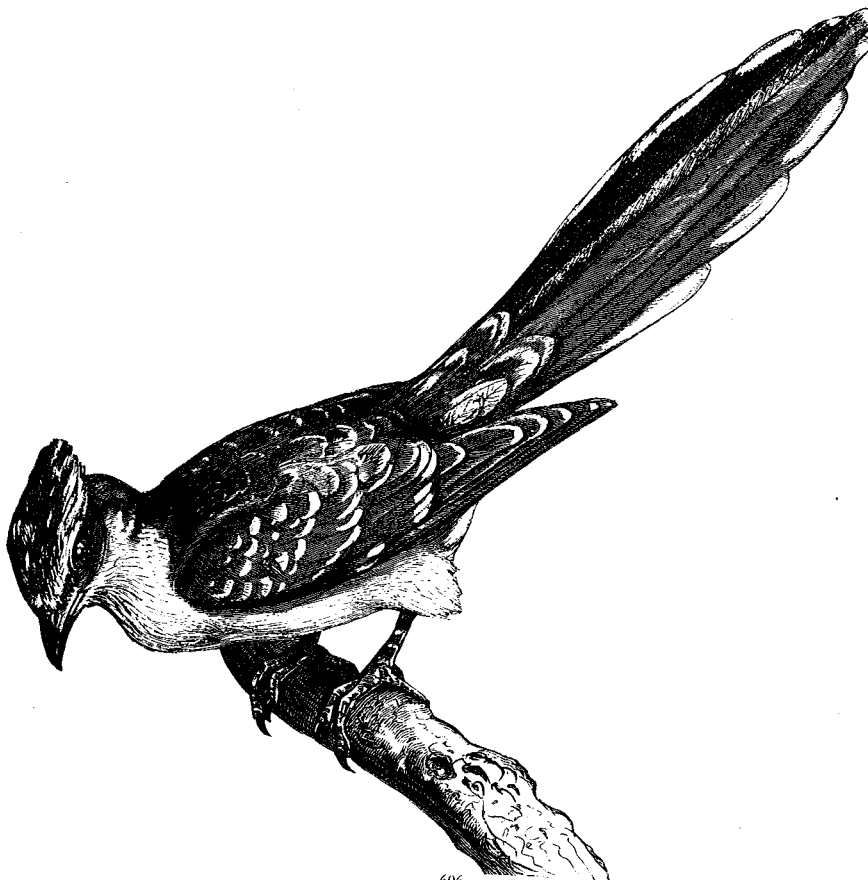
Is the number of birders increasing . . . are they younger?

Every call is answered, the caller instructed or mollified or given a referral and, we hope, satisfied. Every call is handled with all possible efficiency and courtesy. Every call takes time . . . precious time.

To sum it up . . . more help is needed at Audubon House! There's no contract for volunteers — tell us when you can give time; when you cannot.

Lunch is a bring-your-own pleasant time where there is lively conversation and camaraderie. A few hours at Audubon House can be rewarding — many have been here for over ten years and some as long as twenty! Requirements are minimal, although office skills are appreciated.

If you'd like to volunteer, please call Carol Niles at the House.



Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



You know the Goodrich tire commercial that goes something like, "We're the one without the blimp?" Well that's the way some of us react to Ballona Lagoon. You may well ask, "Ballona Lagoon? You mean Ballona Wetlands, right?" Wrong. There *is* a Ballona Lagoon, and it's north of the entrance channel to Marina del Rey, out of sight of the jetties and the familiar wetlands alongside Ballona Creek. The important point is, it is a small but thriving wetland with great birds and fish and invertebrates. The endangered Least Tern nests on Venice Beach half a mile north and raises its young with fish it catches in the lagoon.

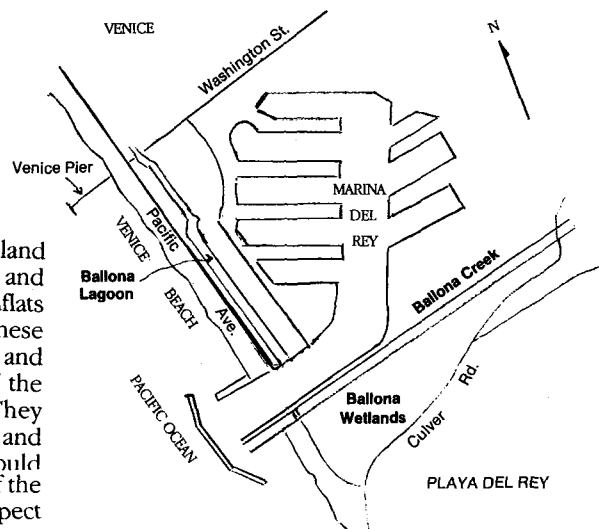
Do you wonder why we're telling you this just now? Do you have a sinking feeling of foreboding? An ominous sense of de ja vu? If you answered "Yes" to all of the above, your environmental perceptions are in good health. Alas, another rare and precious ecosystem is under the gun. The Silver Strand Marina Association, Inc. is reviving a decades-old dream of a private marina that would essentially wipe out this small (16-acre) remnant of salt-water marsh. The Silver Strand Marina Association is made up of owners of 184 waterfront lots in a subdivision where new homes have been selling for \$700,000 to \$1 million. Members have anted up \$10,000 apiece for an impressive study by Engineering-Science of Pasadena. The plan calls for building 450 new boat slips with fingers jutting into a deepened and enlarged lagoon, adding bulkheads, piers and walkways. The lagoon, which is connected to the Venice Grand Canal, is separated from the main Marina del Rey channel by a seawall that is perforated by a 7-foot conduit which permits tidal flows from the channel. The proposal would breach this seawall to allow boats to leave their new slips and sail into the Marina and then the ocean. Two busy streets - Pacific Avenue and Via Marina - that now form a wide loop around the lagoon by passing over the seawall would be cut off and become dead ends, creating serious traffic problems. The only bridge across the lagoon, which affords access to Venice Beach, would have to be torn down.

Engineering-Science claims that their plan would be beneficial by increasing "...the surface area and volume of open water..." which "could provide additional habitat for bird feeding and resting, and fish spawning and nursery." They concede that "The acreage of wetlands would be greatly reduced by the proposed dredging...and revetment of all side slope areas..." and that "The most significant impact to birds

would be related to the loss of wetland areas." In regard to the gulls, terns and shorebirds that, they note, use the mudflats for roosting and feeding, "Most of these species are limited to this habitat type and would likely not frequent this area if the mudflat vegetation is removed." They recognize that the construction of slips and "the expected increase in boat traffic would have long-term disruption of the use of the open water habitat." Is it wrong to expect a commercial environmental concern to lean somewhat towards the interest of its clients? Engineering-Science has been as objective as possible in its evaluation of the impact of this project. Reasonable people, after reading these statements, cannot be faulted for the conclusion that Ballona Lagoon simply will be destroyed.

Awhile back, Ballona Lagoon was declared an "environmentally sensitive habitat" by the California Coastal Commission. The estuary of Ballona Creek a century ago contained over 2000 acres of what must have been incredibly rich salt marsh. There are photographs of the area taken before the Marina was built in the late 50s that reveal a wealth of waterfowl in an expanse of marshland that would make a birder weep. When the Audubon-administered sanctuary is finally built in the Ballona Wetlands, less than 200 acres of this once vast wildlife paradise will remain. The shocking extent of loss of wetlands in this century demands that every surviving morsel be cherished and protected. The grebes and gulls, the egrets and terns, the transient shorebirds and ducks must have a place to feed and rest. We have narrowed their choices close to the vanishing point and we are honor bound to save what is left.

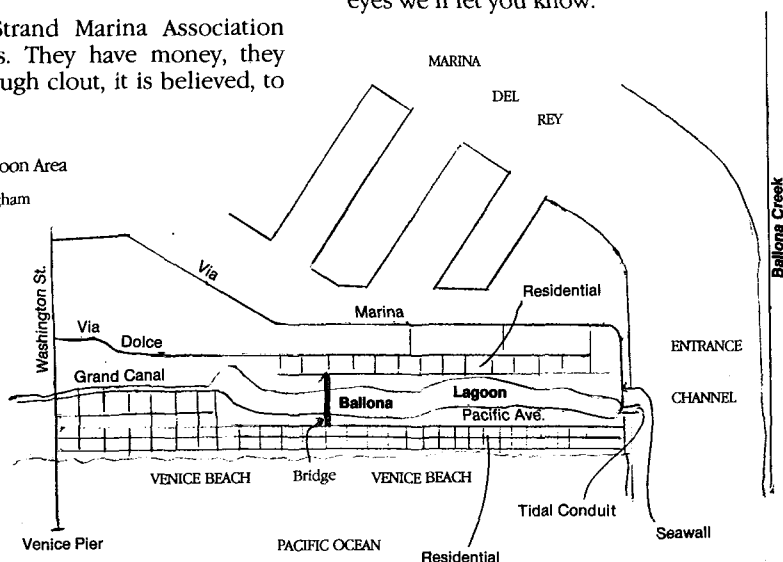
The Silver Strand Marina Association means business. They have money, they have clout. Enough clout, it is believed, to



Marina Del Rey Area
Map by Glenn Cunningham

shove their plan through most of the governmental agencies involved. The assistant director of the county Department of Beaches and Harbors, for example, has been quoted as saying, "We had tentatively agreed they could cut through (into the Marina del Rey channel) where Via Marina turns" and added that the Army Corps of engineers said the idea was practical. Pat Russell, the City Councilwoman for the area, is hardly an environmental activist, and does not seem to be a potential ally against the development. But it is the Corps that has the final say. The Federal Clean Water Act makes the Corps of Engineers responsible for all wetlands and must issue permits for changes that affect wildlife. An environment impact statement is now being composed and in a few months the Corps will release it and call for public comment. This will be the moment of truth. When that moment arrives letters could well make a difference in the decision. The Corps is sensitive to public opinion. Hold your fire; when we see the whites of their eyes we'll let you know.

Detail of Ballona Lagoon Area
Map by Glenn Cunningham



A Resolution on the California Condor

by David White

After publication of David White's article on the California Condor (*Western Tanager*, November 1986), your Board of Directors spent much of the December meeting discussing pros and cons of a resolution on the matter. Action was postponed awaiting additional responses from the membership. In January, a motion was made only to be tabled following lengthy

and heartfelt discussion; the sense of the Board was that more information was needed before reaching a decision. At the February meeting, Lloyd Kiff (Director of the Condor Recovery Team) met with the Board for a detailed discussion. Afterwards, the motion was re-introduced; it passed by a large majority. The decision was not an easy one, and the Board will continue to

monitor the situation and watch for new information which might lead to reconsideration of the position taken. At the present time, though, the majority of Board members believe the approach indicated by the resolution provides the best hope for the survival of the California Condor. As always, comments from LAAS members are welcome.

Resolution

In consideration of recent findings on California Condor mortality and prospects for survival of the species, as described in the *Western Tanager* (November 1986), the Los Angeles Audubon Society does hereby declare and resolve:

That the authorized agencies should proceed as expeditiously as possible, without endangering the birds, to capture all remaining wild California Condors and bring them into the captive population for breeding purposes;

That future releases of California Condors should consist entirely of captive-bred birds, and that releases should occur within the Los Padres National Forest and/or other suitable release sites which can be demonstrated to be safe from all known hazards, with whatever provisions are necessary for supplemental feeding of the population;

That the California Department of Fish and Game should initiate a request for regulatory clearance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, allowing the interim release of captive-born Andean Condors

(females only, to prevent breeding and establishment within the range) in order to test the safety of future release areas for California Condors;

That upon authorization of Andean Condor release, the appropriate agencies should undertake acquisition of Andean Condors from zoos, for release;

That the National Audubon Society should consider adoption of a position substantively similar to that expressed herein; and

That research and management plan for the California Condor should be expeditiously developed, involving input from all concerned public and private agencies and taking into account the various factors discussed in the referenced issue of the *Western Tanager*.

— Motion made by David White, seconded by Bob Shanman, passed by Los Angeles Audubon Society Board of Directors on Thursday, February 5, 1987, at the regular board meeting



Photo by Eric Johnson

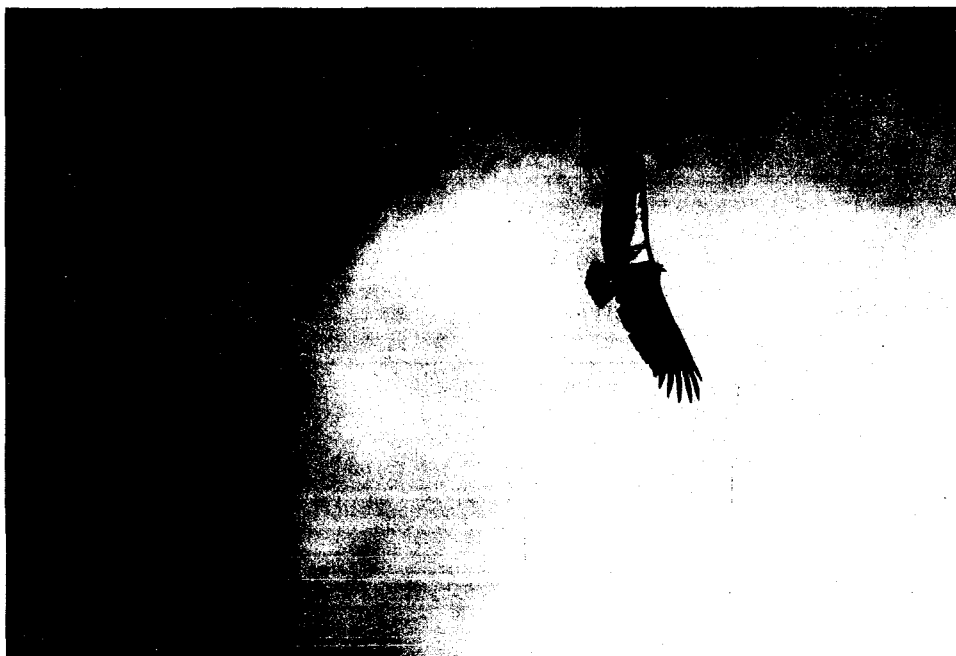
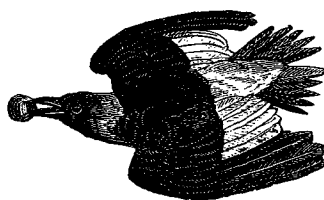


Photo by Eric Johnson

Birds Of The Season

by Hal Baxter
and Kimball Garrett



Bird sightings reported in the "Birds of the Season" column have generally not yet been reviewed by the American Birds regional editors or by the California Bird Records Committee. All records of rarities should be considered tentative pending such review.

The brevity of this month's column can be explained by the relative inactivity of local birders through doldrums of late January and February, as well as by the travels or other commitments of the two authors. But with spring migrants arriving even as we write, most notably Tree, Violet-green and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and with the promise of a flood of activity through the weeks ahead, we expect to be back to a full verbiage by the next issue of the Tanager. The late winter period is traditionally a "slow" one for local birding, with the fury of Christmas counting and post-count chasing having come to a halt, and the real buildup of spring migration yet to come.

There was a definite highlight to the local birding scene during the period however: the first Los Angeles County record of the **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. We hasten to add that it was a highlight only for Ted Kinchloe, who found the bird at Malibu Lagoon on 19 January, since the bird could not be found subsequently despite considerable searching. The bird, nicely documented by a series of excellent photos, was in near-adult plumage, but showed some black smudging through the red mark on the mandible and the typical fine streaking on the neck of a winter bird. In southern California, Lesser Black-backed Gulls have previously been reported only at the Salton Sea (one bird during the winter of 1985-1986, and at least two individuals during this winter). It is interesting that, in spite of the intensive birding coverage that Malibu Lagoon receives, that locality has produced just a small handful of ultra-rarities over the years, this gull being one of them. Other gulls at Malibu Lagoon were more routine, with one or two **Thayer's Gulls** through the period (they have been quite scarce in southern California this winter), and a single **Black-legged Kittiwake** seen late in January. Birders "spoiled" by the series of kittiwake invasions in the 1970's must certainly be struck but the scarcity of this species along our coast the last few winters. Most or all of this scarcity can be explained by poor reproductive success of the species in its Bering Sea colonies in recent summers.

The California birding highlights through the season continued to be the two Siberian visitors in northern California: the **Brown Shrike** at the bottom end of Tomales Bay in Marin County, and the **Oriental Greenfinch** (back in its favorite haunts at the Arcata Oxidation ponds). We add, of course, that we can no more than speculate at this time as to the origin of the greenfinch.

Speaking of uncertain origins, an odd heron south of Brawley at the south end of the Salton Sea (late January; Hal Baxter et al) was identified as a **Chinese Pond Heron**, a species suggestive of a Cattle Egret but with much chestnut and chocolate color in its plumage and a longer bill. How such a bird got to the Salton Sea can only be a matter of guesswork and wonderment (nobody is suggesting it was wild, however).

Jonathan Alderfer's intensive coverage of Castaic Lake (and the adjacent Castaic Lagoon and Elderberry Forebay) on 24 January yielded three species quite rare on our inland waters: a **Pacific Loon**, a male **Surf Scooter**, and a female **Red-breasted Merganser**. Jonathan also saw and photographed a **Western Gull** there (again, rare inland), and a **Thayer's Gull** (the first for the lake's growing gull list). Another Red-breasted Merganser was on

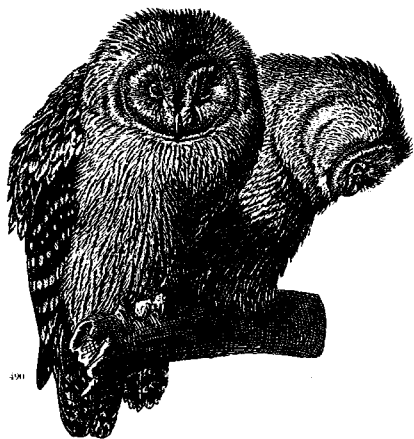
Quail Lake on 24 January (Kimball Garrett, Art and Janet Cupples), and the male **Tufted Duck** was still present that day. These sightings were all part of an effort to census Los Angeles County lakes and reservoirs, an effort made by about fifteen local birders. More detailed results of this census are to be published in the next *Tanager*.

Somewhat out of characteristic habitat was a **Great Egret** that spent 26 January to 7 February in Exposition Park in central Los Angeles. The bird took advantage of the temporary closing of the park's Rose Gardens (for pruning and fertilizing) to get fat off the goldfish in the garden's pond. Bob Pann was surprised to find a male **Eurasian Wigeon** in with a group of American Wigeon on Malibu Creek at the upper end of Tapia Park on Valentine's Day. A **Merlin** seen in mid-February at the Arboretum in Arcadia had very dark plumage and was judged to be of the northwestern *suckleyi* race (Barbara Cohen). Zus Haagen-Smit's San Gabriel Valley yard hosted a probable male **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** on 22 January, but the bird was never refound.

Most of the birding activity in the area seemed to be in Orange County, where Doug Willick provided us with a series of reports. An adult male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (the rarest sapsucker species in California) was in Newport Beach after 1 February (Brian Daniels). An **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, very rare in California in winter, was at Newport Back Bay after 24 January (Tom Wurster). Doug Willick mentioned that the **Mountain Chickadee** present in Oak Canyon, east Anaheim, 24-30 January was only the second he has seen in winter in Orange

Lesser Black-backed Gull





County away from the highest parts of the Santa Ana Mountains. A **Brown Thrasher** in Huntington Beach 10 January to 4 February (Brian Daniels) was only the second to be recorded in Orange County. The **Lucy's Warbler** wintering in Corona del Mar was still present in mid-February, and there were at least three **Palm Warblers** wintering in Orange County (Doug Willick). Charlie Collins found a **Harris's Sparrow** on the Orange County side of the San Gabriel River, Seal Beach, on the new El Dorado Christmas Count, and the bird was present at least to mid-February. A female **Black-headed Grosbeak** was in Seal Beach on 1 February (Tom Wurster).

Quite amazing was a total of four **Orchard Orioles** wintering in Orange County. An immature male was found in Newport Beach on 29 January (Brian Daniels); a female was at the Newport Environmental Nature Center on 31 January (Jeff Boyd); and an adult male and an immature male were both on the U.C. Irvine Campus after 1 February (Dick Veit). The immature male found on Pt. Dume on the Malibu Christmas Count has not been seen since New Year's Day.

About the only other wintering bird of note closer to home was a female or immature male **Summer Tanager** in Marc Better's Hollywood Hills yard from 26 December to at least the end of January.

April will bring a flurry of migration — not the spectacular waves to which Gulf Coast or other eastern birders might be accustomed, but a dependable yet variable tickle. Things are likely to seem "slow" to birders through much of the month, but the birding spirit is invariably lifted on some late April morning when a live oak dripping with Townsend's and Black-throated Gray Warblers is encountered, or when one stands before the lush spring annual growth of as recently burned ridge as Lazuli Buntings sing vigorously from seemingly every bush top. The more time spent afield, the more often these rewarding moments will happen.

Send any interesting bird observations to:

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

Golden Trout Workshop

Three one-week Golden Trout Workshops will be held in the Sierra August 2 through August 22, 1987. It is sponsored by members of the Eastern Sierra, Pasadena, San Bernadino Valley, San Fernando Valley, Santa Barbara, and Tulare County chapters of the National Audubon Society. An informal field natural history program, consisting of naturalist-led hikes by resident naturalists, will be offered, with visiting guest naturalists at some sessions. The Camp is located in the Golden Trout Wilderness, in the southern portion of the High Sierra, on the eastern watershed, at an altitude of 10,000 ft. For details, write or call: Cindi McKernan, 40 Sherril Lane, Redlands, CA 92373, 714/793-7897. If interested, reservations should be made as soon as possible.

Art Wanted

LA Audubon Society Wildlife and Environmental Art Show will be held September 11-18, 1987. Open to all U.S. artists, all fine arts media, except sculpture and photography. Show selections juried by slides. Awards juried from actual artworks in 4 categories: landscape, seascape, animals and birds. \$5,000.00 in Cash Awards, plus Merit and Special Awards. Entry fee \$5/slide, 3 minimum, no maximum. Slide deadline July 15, 1987. For information: send SASE to LAAS Art Show Prospectus, D.R. Kendig, 603 S. McCadden Pl., L.A., CA 90005.

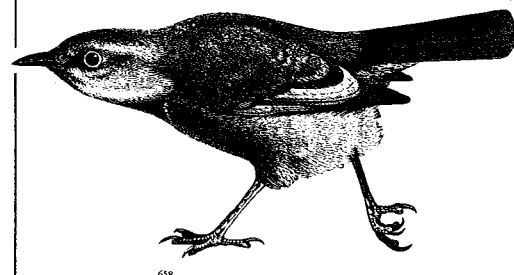


Membership Notes

The National Audubon Society is computerized through the Neodata Company in Boulder, Colorado, so it is no longer advisable to renew through the Los Angeles Audubon Society. The only advantage in renewing through the Los Angeles Audubon Society is if your membership has lapsed. At that time it would expedite receiving the next Western Tanager.

Neodata has a system of sending multiple notices commencing four months prior to your membership lapses. Frequently, there is an overlap from the time you mailed your dues and the next scheduled renewal reminder. Many people have received notices after they have remitted their dues because of this.

Subscribers who are members of another Audubon Chapter should not send their renewals to the Los Angeles Audubon Society.



EDITOR Fred Heath
TYPESETTING Etcetera Graphics
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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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 1987

EVENING MEETINGS

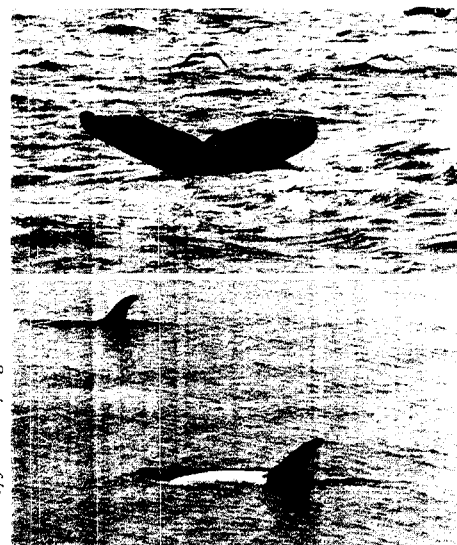
Meet at 8:00 P.M. in Plummer Park

Bird Identification Workshops — Workshops will be held one-half hour before the regular monthly program, from **7:30 to 8:00 p.m.** A variety of topics are planned and we intend to continue the workshops as long as members are interested. Because of time constraints each workshop will focus on a single species, a small group of species or some other aspect of birding. The workshops will be geared for the beginning to intermediate birder, but should be of interest to just about everyone. The programs will be led by some of our best local birders, many of whom are familiar as field trip leaders. So come a little early to the regular monthly meeting and catch-up on some of the finer points of bird study.

TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 7:30 p.m. — Workshop: **Kimball Garrett: Shearwaters.** Learn to identify some of these difficult species with your feet on solid ground.

TUESDAY, APRIL 14 — **Dr. John Heyning**, Assistant Curator of Mammals at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History will present a program on **Whales and Dolphins of Southern California.** Dr. Heyning will discuss both the natural history and identification of these fascinating mammals.

Flukes of a Humpback Whale



Grampus, also known as Risso's Dolphin

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, APRIL 5 — 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.

SATURDAY, APRIL 11 — Join **Bob Shanman** for a morning at the unique **Ballona Wetlands.** This is an excellent marshland site practically in our backyard. 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, APRIL 12 — Join **Kimball Garrett** for an informative afternoon of migratory seabird viewing at **Pt. Dume.** This promontory provides

an excellent vantage from which to view loons, Brant, scoters, gulls, terns and occasional shearwaters. Unless you're an expert in gull I.D. (sure?) you might find this a profitable outing. Meet at the end of Westward Beach parking lot. Take Pacific Coast Hwy. to Westward Beach Rd. (at south end of Zuma Beach). Take Westward Beach Rd. downcoast to the end of the parking lot. Latecomers will find a group on top of the bluff. 1 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 12 — **Antelope Valley.** Plan to join **Fred and Carolyn Heath** as he attempts (for the third year) to find her a life Le Conte's Thrasher. Even if he blows that, there will be lots of other desert specialties to look at. A visit will be made to the famous Piute Pond and Marsh on Edwards Air Force Base. This should be the peak time for wildflowers, so bring your camera. Meet at the Lamont Odett Overlook (of Lake Palmdale) on Highway 14 just south of Palmdale at 7:30 a.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18 — Join **Marge Pamias** for a morning of birding in the varied habitats of **Santiago Oaks Regional Park.** This area offers chaparral, riparian and oak woodland habitats along with various introduced plantings around an old citrus farm. A great place for nesting and migratory birds. Take Interstate 5 south to the 22 east to the 55 north and get off at Chapman Ave.

Go east (R) on Chapman to Santiago Canyon Rd. Turn left on Santiago Cyn. Rd. and drive about 2½ miles past a small residential area. At the sign for the Regional Park turn right and go for about a mile. (On a map of Orange County one can find Santiago Oaks just NW of Irvine Park.) Meet at 8 a.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18 — **Paul Fox** will lead a morning bird walk for beginners in the **Santa Ynez Wilderness Park.** This beautiful chaparral site will be "in full swing" with birds and flowers. From L.A. take Sunset Blvd. to Palisades Blvd. (the last traffic light before Pacific Coast Hwy.) and turn Right. Go two miles to just past the Palisades Highland entrance. Park on either side of the road. You will be treated to a two hour walk through Santa Ynez Canyon. 8 a.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 19 — 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 migrants. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave., So El Monte, off Frwy. 60 between Santa Anita and Peck Dr. exits, west of Frwy. 605

FRIDAY, APRIL 24 — Join **Allan Keller** for prime migration birding at **Chatsworth Park South.** In addition to resident chaparral species we will seek warblers, orioles and grosbeaks. From Topanga Canyon Blvd. go west on Devonshire, continuing into parking lot near Rec. center. 8 a.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 — **Dan Guthrie** will lead us through the **San Antonio Canyon** for a trip through varied and rich habitats from chaparral to pine forest as we work our way up canyon toward Mt. Baldy. If you love the song of the Canyon Wren or get a kick out of bobbing Dippers, come right along! (There should be plenty of migrants as well.) Take the 10 Frwy. east to Indian Hill Blvd. Exit. Take Indian Hill north 2 miles to Memorial Park between 8th & 10th streets in Clairmont. Park on the east side of Indian Hill Rd. 8 a.m. Pack a lunch.

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