



WESTERN TANAGER

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Australia: Fun to Bird, Inexpensive Too

*by Richard & Beatrice Smith
photographs by Beatrice Smith*

Most professionally led tours to Australia are well executed. But they are continent-wide and cost too much for the average birder. We have very recently discovered that there is another and less expensive way to see a great many of Australia's birds. From November 1-24, 1986 we visited the island continent, where we searched for birds, found them, and photographed many. We identified 250 of Australia's 700 birds, 186 of which were Life Birds. And it cost us about one half of what the professionally organized trips currently cost.

We began by purchasing Qantas South Pacific Excursion Airfares, which permitted us stop-overs at Cairns, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. In general, these stopovers took us near to where Australia's birds can be reached. From our first stop at Cairns, we branched out North, South, East and West. Our principal resource was the expertise of John Squire at Cassowary House. This delightful, rainforest center is located near Kuranda in Queensland. From there with John's help we saw 135 Life Birds, including such fascinating species as the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Magpie Goose, Scrub Fowl, Sarus and Broglia Cranes, Australian Bustard, both species of Kookaburra, Paradise Rifle Bird, Great, Golden and Green (Catbird) Bowerbirds, endemics such as Atherton Scrub Wren and Fern Wren, Brilliantly colored Pigeons such as Wompoo and Superb Fruit,

Black-necked Stork, both Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills, 17 species of Honeyeaters, etc., etc. . . Actually, we saw 200 species with John Squire - and had the additional pleasure of sampling - no devouring Rita Squire's good cooking! Further, the Squire's accommodations are more than adequate - and they will meet your plane at Cairns and return you when your search is over.

From Cassowary House our search continued Southward by rented car to Mission Beach. Cassowaries are actually seen, but very rarely, in the vicinity of Cassowary House - but definitely more certainly at Lacey Creek State Park near Mission Beach. Because of drought conditions and habitat disturbance, these giant, primitive birds have been fed from a bin off and on. On the day of our visit there was no food in the bin. But an immature bird hadn't heard the news yet and appeared in the clearing. Bea followed him around and took pictures at will.

After this memorable encounter, we returned to Cairns and immediately bought tickets for the next morning's catamaran's trip to Green Island, an important part of Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Once there,

we proceeded to the Eastern point, where we enjoyed watching both Eastern Reef Herons and Torres Strait Pigeons servicing their nests - and saw a new Life Bird: a diligent Sooty Oystercatcher. Entering the warm waters there on an incoming tide, Dick had a close encounter of a different kind: a 5-6 foot shark approached and was frightened away! Near the Green Island Pier, as we boarded the catamaran for the return trip, were both Crested and Black-naped Terns. A female Great Frigate Bird circled overhead.

On November 10th, we flew with Qantas to Brisbane. Then, from the airport we drove a rented car to O'Reilly's Green Mountain Resort. We arrived just in time for one of the scheduled Annual Bird Week minibus trips. Who should be aboard but both field guide authors, Graham Pizzey and Peter Slater. For us this trip netted 9 Life Birds, including Wedge-tailed Eagle, Grey Goshawk, Topknot Pidgeon, Superb Blue Wren, as well as both Regent and Satin Bower Birds. Later, near O'Reilly's we examined two Satin Bower Bird's avenue - typed bowers, where blue objects (bits of glass, plastic, etc.) dominated the scene.

Kookaburra





Green Island Coral Reef

But on the spacious lawns at O'Reilly's the prominent color was definitely red! At times, flocks of 25 or more gorgeous Crimson Rosellas took over. They begged at the windows, sat on shoulders and heads. With no encouragement at all, they entered and alighted on beds and dressers. Only a little less reluctant were brilliant, orange and black Bower Birds and arresting scarlet and black King Parrots. Wonga Pigeons also wandered about the inviting lawn, as did a number of Pademelons - forest dwelling kangaroos - some carrying young ("Joeys") in their pouches.



Crimson Rosella

During our three-day stay at O'Reilly's, we nest-watched (White's Thrush, Eastern Yellow Robin), unsuccessfully searched for the resident Albert's Lyrebird, briefly disturbed the sleep of an Owllet-Nightjar and were successful in briefly sighting

certain noisy, but hard to see, tropical rainforest specialities: Noisy Pitta, Eastern Whipbird and Southern Longrunner.



Kookaburra Pair

After breakfast on November 15, we reluctantly left the 80 birdwatchers at O'Reilly's and headed for Brisbane. Enroute we detoured in search of Pink-eared Duck, Chestnut Teal and Red-necked Avocet - all at which we saw at a sewage complex near Helensvale, Queensland.

From Brisbane, Quantas took us to Sydney and from there we detoured widely to visit friends in Canberra. From the



Regent Bowerbird

national capital, we went again by air to Melbourne. With rented car, we then drove South and East to the Blue Meadow Ranch, near Wilson's Promontory. Here we easily saw 50 of the endangered Cape Barren Geese, which Bea photographed. We also saw 5 colorful Chestnut-breasted Shelducks. After first photographing our first Koala, we then motored to Philip Island for the celebrated Blue Penguin Parade at dusk. Indeed it was one of nature's great spectacles as several hundred came ashore in small groups to take their turn brooding eggs or young.



Koala Bear

Returning to Melbourne, we boarded Quantas for Sydney, where we once again rented a car and headed South. We detoured slightly so that Bea could photograph an engaging Musk Duck at Sydney's Centennial Park. Our destination was a neat little motel complex with restaurant called The Oasis at Windang, south of Wollongong. From here a local ornithologist, David Fischer, took us on two memorable, short field trips to three nearby reserves: Barren Grounds, Bass Point and Hoskins. Exciting new birds at these reserves included Little Eagle, Flame Robin, Eastern Bristlebird, Dusky Woodswallow (nesting), Crescent and New Holland Honeyeaters, Blue-billed Duck and the Brown Falcon, our 2000th Life Bird.

On November 23, we went out into the Tasman Sea on a pelagic trip from Wollongong. Sixteen of us saw 6 varieties of Shearwaters, 5 Black-browed Albatrosses, at least 6 Great-winged Petrels, 1 Black Petrel, at least 2 White-faced Storm Petrels and 3 Wilson's Petrels. In addition, following in the well-suited wake of the "Sandra Kay", we noted both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, as well as a variety of Gulls and Terns. David Fischer, organizer of the trip, said the Black Petrel and the Buller's Shearwaters were the best birds of the day.

Our departure from Sydney on the 24th of November took us up to 41,000 feet in a Quantas 747 Special and kept us up there all the way to the approaches of Los Angeles. But our spirits went even higher! Our time and money had, indeed, been more than well invested!

United States Rare Bird Alerts

Reprinted from The Quail, the Bulletin of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

Alaska: 907-274-9152
Arizona: Tucson, 602-798-1005
California: Los Angeles, 213-874-1318
 Modesto, 209-571-0246
 Monterey, 408-499-6100
 Morro Bay, 805-528-7182
 Northern Calif., 415-528-0288
 Sacramento, 916-481-0118
 San Bernardino, 714-793-5599
 San Diego, 619-435-6761
 Santa Barbara, 805-964-8240
Colorado: Denver, 303-759-1060
Connecticut: 203-572-0012
Delaware: 301-652-1088, 215-567-2473
District of Columbia: 301-652-1088
Florida: 305-644-0190
Georgia: Atlanta, 404-321-6079
Illinois: Central Illinois, 217-785-1083
 Chicago, 312-671-1522
Iowa: 319-622-3353
Kansas: 316-343-7061
Louisiana: Baton Rouge, 504-927-2134
 New Orleans, 504-246-2473
Maine: 207-781-2332
Maryland: 301-652-1088
Massachusetts: Boston, 617-259-8805
 Western Mass., 413-569-6926
Michigan: 616-471-4919
 Southeast Michigan, 313-592-1811



Minnesota: 612-544-5016
 Duluth, 218-525-5952
Missouri: 314-499-7938
 Kansas City, 816-795-8177
New Hampshire: 603-224-9900
New Jersey: 201-766-2661
 Cape May, 609-884-2626
New York: Albany, 518-377-9600
 Buffalo, 716-896-1271
 New York, 212-832-6523
 Rochester, 716-461-9593
 Schenectady, 518-377-9600
North Carolina: 704-875-2525

Ohio: S.W. Ohio, 513-277-6446
 Cleveland, 216-289-2473 and
 216-861-2447
 Columbus, 614-221-9736
 Toledo, 419-867-9765
Oregon: 503-292-0661
Pennsylvania: West, 412-963-6104
 Philadelphia, 215-567-2473 and 652-1088
 Wilkes-Barre, 717-825-BIRD
Rhode Island: 401-521-4252
South Carolina: 704-875-2525
Texas: Austin, 512-451-3308
 Northcentral, 817-237-3209
Texas: Rio Grande Valley, 512-565-6773
 San Antonio, 512-699-3013
 Texas Coast, 713-821-2846
Utah: 801-530-1299
Vermont: 802-457-2779
Virginia: 301-652-1088
Washington: 206-526-8266
Wisconsin: 414-352-3857
Wyoming: 307-265-BIRD

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.

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 Sap-
sucker. \$25 per person. A possible third day
extension \$10 more.

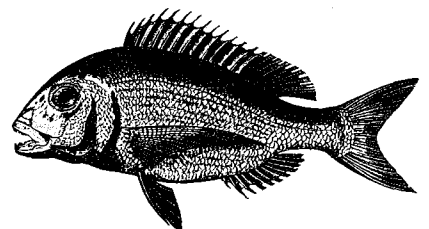


Art Wanted

LA Audubon Society Wildlife and Environ-
mental 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 maxi-
mum. 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.

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.



Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



The Carrizo Plain. Forty miles of magnificent vistas. Names out of Steinbeck: the Temblor Range, Shandon, Elkhorn, the Caliente Range. Memories of the early condor men: Koford, McMillan. Driving through the Carrizo is a taste of the Old West. The long wide valley, the dusty rutted road that can become a quagmire after a rain. Endless reaches of grass rising gently into the brown hills. Beef cattle here and there, some standing heavily in the road looking at you with that stupid bovine stare, then trotting out of the way abruptly as the car moves within a few yards. An occasional pickup passes by, its driver under a western hat waving at the city folks. Cattle guards rumble under the tires. You pass an empty corral with a weathered barn and a white ranch house in the distance.

Distance. Carrizo is distance. Get out of the car and climb a small hill just off the road. You can look for miles and miles in all directions, sensing the power of the earth, a solitary human in the midst of an enormous empty valley. It is exhilaration difficult to describe.

Like the desert, that to some seems lifeless and sterile, the Carrizo is not empty. Huge flocks of Horned Larks criss-cross the road, swirl around the car, then disappear in the brown grass like flying fish slipping back into the sea. This is raptor country. Stunning Ferruginous Hawks, piercingly white underneath, wheel confidently overhead, their rusty legs outlined against the whiteness. Rough-legged Hawks hover like Kestrels over the fields. Kestrels abound. A Prairie Falcon dashes through the clear air. A Golden Eagle drifts lazily across the valley, lord of the flesh eaters. With luck, Mountain Plover are seen, running a bit, then stopping in ploverish fashion to look about, alert to possible intrusion of the strange bipedal mammal emerging from its metallic vehicle. Mountain Bluebirds hover close to the ground, dazzling the observer with their incredible, ethereal hue. For the birder, the unique attraction of the Carrizo must be the flock of Sandhill Cranes that winter there, feeding in the plowed fields and resting in the protection of alkaline Soda Lake. There may be 6000 of them in January, flying in at dawn, trumpeting their wild call as they circle, necks and legs outstretched, wings beating slowly and powerfully.

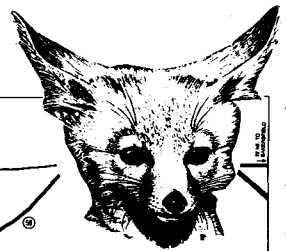
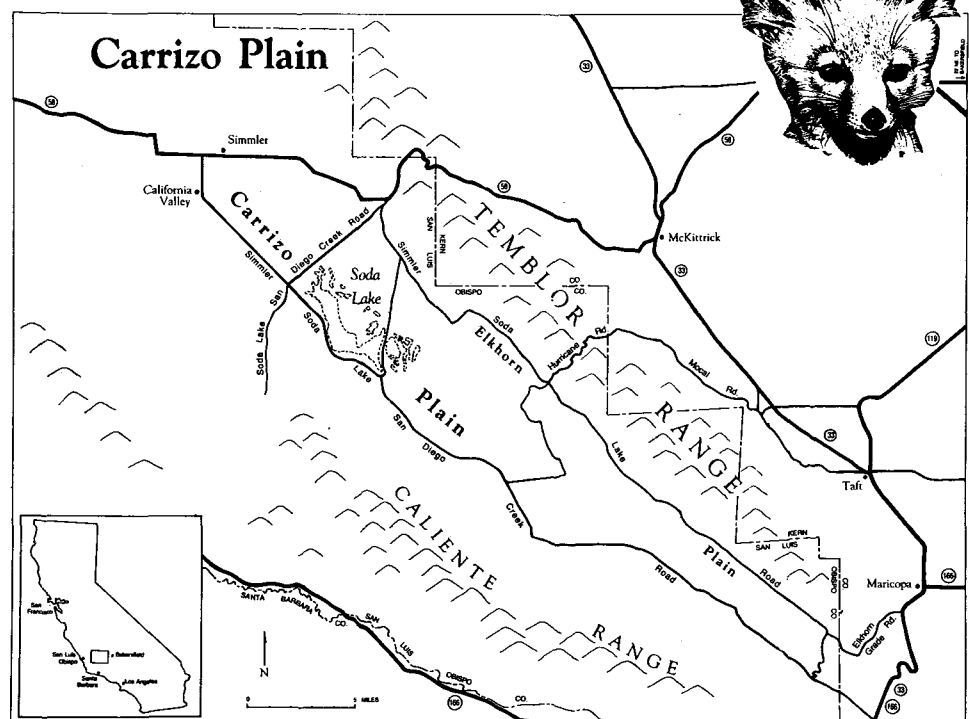
"In the spring, native bunch grasses, reaching as tall as the side of a horse, grew thick on the undulating land, turning to

naturally cured hay in the summer. Wild horses, elk, deer and antelope were abundant in the plain." This is a description of the Carrizo Plain in the San Luis Obispo Tribune, 1886. Before the white man arrived the entire San Joaquin Valley was like this idyllic picture. It was an ecosystem in balance: hawks and ground squirrels, bobcat and elk, kit foxes and kangaroo rats, condors and carrion. With agriculture, the grasses were plowed under. With ranching, they were consumed and then replaced by exotic, invading grasses. The habitat was destroyed or left in such small fragments that it could no longer support the wildlife which was gradually driven off or extirpated. Cities and towns appeared and industry followed, compounding the problem.

The Carrizo is the largest remnant of the habitats that sustained life in the San Joaquin Valley. Within its borders, in addition to the more successful species, are many of those declared threatened or endangered under the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts. These include the San Joaquin Kit Fox, the Blunt-nosed Lizard, the Greater Sandhill Crane, the Bald Eagle, two species of kangaroo rats and three species of plants. Some of us, in the past, traveling perhaps

200 miles to experience this unique environment, may have wondered how long it would resist development. We know about California Valley, the residential tract at the north end of the Carrizo, which (to our relief) never seemed to grow and expand. Still, here was a lot of flat open land, waiting to be exploited, though it seemed so far away, a never-never land immune to population pressures.

We weren't the only ones who wondered. The Government was thinking hard. Not too long ago we might have expected the Agencies to be hinting at strip-mining or exploitation of the alkali around Soda Lake, with big mining interests pushing them along. In fact, as recently as 1981, a serious proposal was made to dump toxic wastes from oil drilling into Soda Lake. Times have changed and perhaps the environmental ethic has made a difference. In 1985, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop the Carrizo Plain Macropreserve, now called the Carrizo Natural Heritage Reserve. The primary objective is "to preserve a representative sample of the historic southern San Joaquin flora and fauna." Great idea! The big question is who owns the land and how we get it? Most of the land is owned by ranchers who are engaged in dryland farming and livestock grazing - and are willing to sell. The hitch is, that the mineral rights are held by several big oil companies.



The BLM has taken the lead in forming a Steering Committee which includes representatives of the three signatory agencies, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon, San Luis Obispo and Kern counties, UC Riverside and the oil companies. Perhaps the most important function of this committee is to devise a plan that will enable the companies to extract the oil without destroying the habitat. This sounds like a neat trick, though we're told that the oil fields along the road from Maricopa harbor a surprising number of animals including the endangered kit fox. In the Carrizo "the companies are willing to adopt adequate mitigation measures for any future drilling activities to ensure protection of threatened, endangered and sensitive species." The companies *own* these subsurface rights and have the inalienable right to explore for oil. Since it is simply too expensive to buy the rights, a compromise is essential. Fortunately, all members of the steering committee (except Chevron, at the moment) agree that the protection of this nearly pristine habitat is a worthwhile goal.

The plan envisions 180,000 acres, a lot of land. The BLM, CDFG, and the Conservancy already own 25,000 acres, most of it at Soda Lake. Over a ten-year period, with federal and state money, land exchanges with the oil companies and Nature Conservancy, it is hoped that the project will be completed. Biological monitoring of plant and animal species will be done by FWS and CDFG which will also make recommendations for habitat preservation and improvement. Guidelines for these agencies will be the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts. Research by university scientists is to be encouraged and could be a positive factor in constructive changes.

One of the most exciting objectives of the plan is to re-introduce the Tule Elk and the Pronghorn Antelope. Both animals had occupied the Carrizo for two million years but both had been shot into extinction in the early 1900's. Habitat enhancement would include restoration of some native vegetation, grain cultivation for the cranes and improvement of overgrazed rangeland.

All in all this project is a most welcome development. The BLM, which at one point in the past was considered by environmentalists as somewhat less than an ally, has undertaken a well-motivated, well-organized plan to establish a genuine refuge for wildlife. Getting the oil companies to sit down with National Audubon, The Nature Conservancy and a full spectrum of government agencies is a major achievement. Unlike the dismal disappearance of natural areas and open space near our great cities, we can look forward to a Carrizo Plain where the hawks and eagles will fly for generations and where someday we may see the elk and the antelope play.

Source: *The Carrizo Natural Heritage Reserve*, Plan Overview, March 1, 1987

The California Condor (On Ecological Retribution)

by Ian Austin

The California condor
is predisposed to wander
in a manner egalitarian
in search for age'd carrion

The nose most offended
by this search for those intended
to swell the vultures gizzards
seem to be financial wizards



Reprinted from U.S.A. Today



Cynics heard to mutter
"this avies would be butter
off in a zoo exhibited"
want no real estate inhibited

If in mountains it is seen
the condor is magnificene
up close its friendly features
terrify smallish creatures

To cure babys wailing vision
is not the zoo's intended mission
hence the need to reinstate
the condors right to real estate

Given a chance to digest
the views within a developers chest
the condor will gain at least
food for thought and a glorious feast

Lessons with Calidris and Larus

by Ian Austin

It stands forlorn on a rock far away
Sure its a Larus, what more can you say?

Well, maybe its a worn second-year
Western
showing slight signs of the affection
of a Glaucous-winged parent or some
albinism

or a possible case of true atavism
it could be an immature hybridized
Thayer's
who's background includes a host of
players.
or maybe its simply an intergrade Herring
or a vargrant Iceland well past caring.

But look at the wingtips, the mantle and
feet
the length of some primaries and the cast
of the beak
its obvious it really can't be any of
these . . .

All this while gazing into the sun?
Who can you be with but Garrett & Dunn!

You sink to your neck, stiffled by sewage
cursing the calidris that you're in pursuage
of, the four thousandth today but damn the
pain
you'll get a scope on it while frying your
brain

trying to remember the squeaks and the
plumage
of peeps (various) and accidentals in
gloomage.

You consider sandpipers; Western and
Bairds
Semi-palmated, White-rumped, and stare
at the antics, habits and feeding behavior
hoping that one of them will be your
savior
is it a Temmick's or maybe a Least Stint
a Red-necked? A Long-toed? My scope for a
hint!

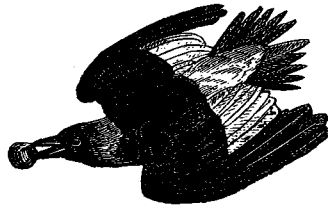
Exhausted you halt, no longer you care
so the b--- flits over to give you a stare
and reveal at last (having finished its feast)
a sandpiper, muddy, and definitely Least.

What can you do but grin and bear it
and attend to the lessons of Dunn &
Garrett

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.

April is an exciting birding month in southern California because of the consistent day-to-day turnover in activity. So many birds are on the move that there is always a degree of surprise on any birding outing, and with each glance to the back yard. The birds encountered are not rarities, but there are renewed acquaintances with transients and summer residents, and last-chance looks at wintering birds. While thrilling, April birding doesn't generate much news, so once again we present a rather brief column.

The most unusual bird of the season was the **Sandwich Tern**, seen off and on in the San Diego Bay area. There are now three or four sightings of this species there (perhaps involving just one or two individuals), indicating its tendency to travel on occasion with its close relative, the Elegant Tern. **Elegant Terns** have continued to expand in numbers in southern California, and spring flocks should always be checked for Sandwich terns. Four Elegants were at Bolsa Chica on 27 March (Jim Halferty), and numbers there rose through the month of April. Nesting at that locality is eagerly anticipated this year. Until recently quite rare along the Los Angeles County coast prior to the June/July post-breeding dispersal, Elegant Terns continue to increase here in spring. Eighteen were flying past Pt. Dume on the L.A.A.S. field trip on 12 April (Kimball Garrett), their destinations unknown.

As usual, large numbers of loons were moving up our coasts in April. **Common Loons** were the most numerous species on the 12 April Pt. Dume field trip (115 of these "big-footed loons" were counted during the afternoon). **Pacific Loons** peak a little later than Common Loons; only 18 were counted on the 12 April Pt. Dume trip, but a half-hour's viewing at Leo Carrillo State Beach on 17 April yielded 252 birds

(Kimball Garrett). Two adult **Wood Storks** were flying over Irvine on 25 March, a quite unexpected addition to Dick Veit's "yard list". **Brant** were migrating in good numbers in April, but a flock of twenty was also found at the north end of the Salton Sea on 3 April (Hank Childs).

A handful of migrant **Swainson's Hawks** were reported, including one over Larry Sansone's Hollywood Hills yard on 14 March, one over Descanso Gardens on 10 April (Gayle Benton and Barbara Elliott), and three over the east end of the Ontario Airport on 7 April (Hank Childs). April is the prime month to encounter flocks of migrant **Whimbrels** (almost anywhere!); 225 were at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on 5 April (Kimball Garrett and Rob Hofberg). A **Baird's Sandpiper** (rare in spring) was at Furnace Creek Ranch on 29 March (Doug Willick). A few adult and immature **Yellow-footed Gulls** were at Salton City on 5 April (Wanda Conway and Irwin Woldman); they also had a first-winter **Glaucous-winged Gull** at the north end of the Salton Sea, and provided an excellent description of an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** there as well (4 April). At least thirty **Black Skimmers** were south of the bridge at Anaheim Bay on 6 April (Jerry Freedman); maybe they'll nest (alongside the Elegant Terns?) at nearby Bolsa Chica.

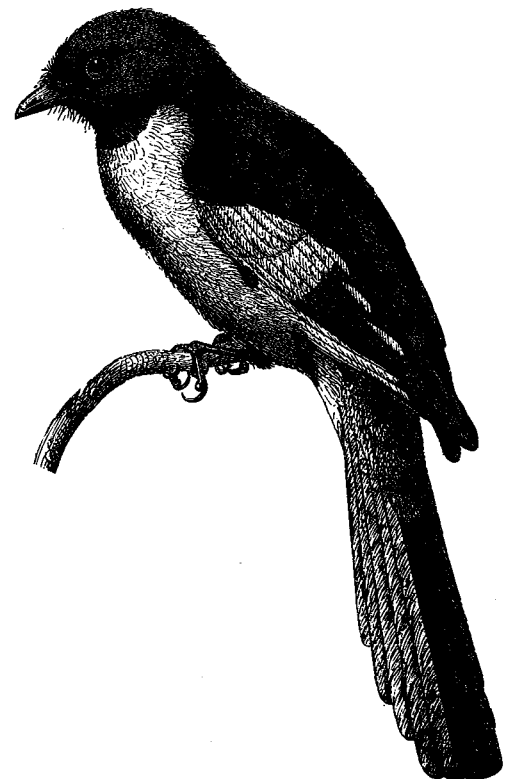
Out of habitat was a **Spotted Owl** roosting from mid-March through at least April in the ivy on Carnegie Hall on the Pomona College campus in Claremont (Steve Marks, *fide* Dan Guthrie). Small numbers of **Calliope Hummingbirds** were moving through the lowlands in April, as is annually the case; for instance, one was in Aliso Canyon on 7 April (Sandy Wohlgemuth and Bud Swanton). Lee Jones found what he felt to be a hybrid **Downy X Nuttall's Woodpecker** at Lee Lake, Riverside County, in early April; this hybrid combination is known previously from San Diego County.

Two migrant **Gray Flycatchers** were at Morongo Valley on 3 April (Hank Childs), and at least three **Vermilion Flycatchers** were there the next day (Wanda Conway, Irwin Woldman). An out of state birder reported a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** at Morongo on 26 April (*fide* Mickey Long). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was at Charmlee

County Park in the Santa Monica Mountains on 6 April (Mickey Long). No **Gray Vireos** could be found at the usual Bob's Gap locality on 5 April, but at least three were there by 15 April (Sandy Wohlgemuth). A very reddish **Fox Sparrow** (presumably of the boreal *iliaca/zaboria* group, often referred to as "Eastern" Fox Sparrows) was at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden on 5 April (Hank Childs). A male and female **Great-tailed Grackle** were at the base of the Balboa Pier, Orange Co., through the month of March.

The final chapter of this month's installment concerns **Evening Grosbeaks**. They were present in large numbers last fall in some of our mountains (with a few also scattered through the coastal lowlands). Then we didn't hear much about them through the winter (probably due to poor coverage in the mountains at that season). Now we are receiving more reports; for example one was in La Crescenta on 26 March (Jack Nash). Andy Starrett tells of up to one hundred in the Big Bear Lake area on 11-12 April, and of up to 200 in Frazier Park on 26 April. After invasion winters, this species is sometimes encountered as late as early June.

There WILL be rare and unusual birds to report in our next column; the month of May always produces something. But we can only report them if we hear about them, so once again we urge you to document and report your findings. Let us know, let your county co-ordinators (for *American Birds*) know, and, for the ultra-rarities, let the California Bird Records Committee know. And good luck!



From the Editor

by Fred
Heath



Talk about calling your own shot. I started off my last editorial by disclaiming all responsibility for typos in the May issue. Needless to say there were the typical scattering of errors around the issue like calling Arnold Small's May program a *proram* (Arnold may well be a fan of the Anaheim Rams football team, but his *program* dealt with Antarctica, not Anaheim), the mention of Tom Keeney's trip to the *nerby* (rhymes with nerdy) Santa Ana Canyon instead of *nearby* or the spelling of *andas aand* in Kimball Garrett's book review (maybe it serves him right for having so many double letters in his name).

But the worst screw-up of all was right in the middle of my very own column. Here I am trying to gin up interest in L.A. breeding birds and Gary Brower sends me four wonderful records and we only get one right. The only correct one was the record for the *American Crow*. A Bushtit and an Anna's Hummingbird hybridized to become an *Antit!* And a Mourning Dove had reason to mourn as it was left out altogether. We're going to try one more time. I write slow this time:

Gary Brower turned up a bunch of records in San Gabriel:

Anna's Hummingbird-March 1-29, one pair at nest.

Mourning Dove-March 8, one bird gathering nest material.

Bushtit-March 29, one pair building nest.

American Crow-March 31, three birds gathering nesting material from Date Palm!

Excellent, we made it!

I haven't had any other reports of breeding birds so I had to develop my own evidence while leading an L.A.A.S. field trip in the Antelope Valley on April 12th. The following were found:

Common Raven-Bird on nest.

Cactus Wren - Nest building.

Marsh Wren-Many, building nests.

Loggerhead Shrike-Pair around and on what appeared to be a finished nest.

House Sparrow-A few pair nest building.

Please keep sending those records in. If we count Kimball Garrett's Pigeon we have a whole eleven breeding records. We don't even have a Starling yet.

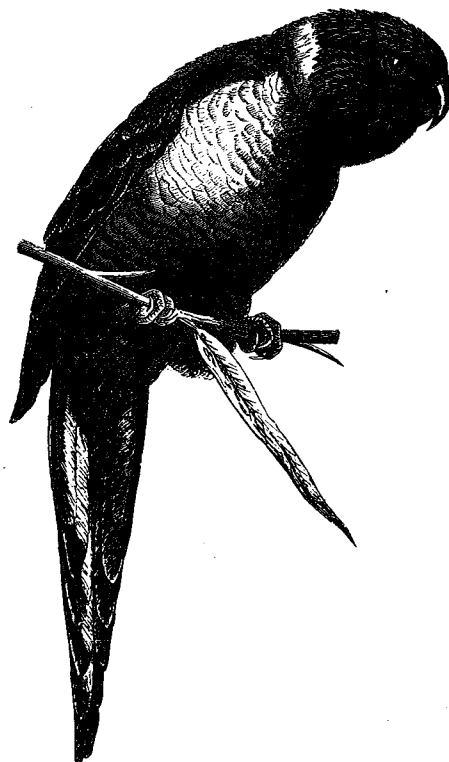
One problem of course, is to whom do you send these records. By the time you read this issue of the *Tanager* I will have just about finished the July-August issue... my last and I will be just a couple of weeks away from heading to San Diego. The day of reckoning is upon us.

Luckily there is a solution. Larry Steinburg has graciously (or maybe foolishly) agreed to take on the mantle of editor of this world renowned (for something other than typos, I hope) newsletter. The name may ring a bell for some of my faithful editorial readers. Larry was the guy who used to send me copies of the *Tanager* with all the typos neatly circled. His taking on the *Tanager* sounds like poetic justice to me.

Larry's job may be easier than it has been in the past. you'll note that this issue of the *Tanager* is only eight pages. At this point it looks like the July-August issue may also be that length. This is because I have had very few answers to my pleas for more articles. Doesn't anyone but Hank Childs go on birding trips?

One last time: Please send articles, notes, suggestions for articles, drawings, photographs, etc. But from now on send them to:

Larry Steinburg
10336 Cheviot Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90064



Membership Note

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.



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Audubon membership (local and national is \$30 per year (individual), \$38 (family), \$18 (student), \$21 (senior citizen) or \$23 (senior citizen family) including AUDUBON Magazine and THE WESTERN TANAGER. To join, make checks payable to the National Audubon Society, and send them to Audubon House at the above address. Members wishing to receive the TANAGER by first class mail must send checks for \$5 to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

Subscriptions to THE WESTERN TANAGER separately are \$12 per year (Bulk Rate) or \$17 (First Class, mailed in an envelope). To subscribe, make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

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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

June 1987

EVENING MEETINGS

Meet at 8:00 pm in Plummer Park

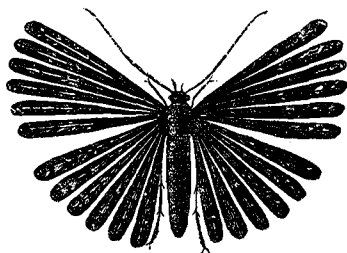
TUESDAY, JUNE 9 — Gene Cardiff, Curator of Natural History at the San Bernardino County Museum, will present a program on the birds and natural history of **The Sea of Cortez and Baja California**. The desert islands in the biologically rich Sea of Cortez are the breeding grounds for thousands of gulls, terns and boobies, some of which are post-breeding visitors to Southern California. The peninsula itself has a number of endemic bird species and many endemic plant species. Join Gene Cardiff at our June Meeting for a look at these diverse areas just to the south of us.



Brown Booby

Photo by Gene Cardiff

Identification Workshop, from 7:30 to 8:00 pm, will precede the regular program, please check the tape (874-1318) for details.



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.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6 — Join Jean Brown for a walk through **Santa Anita Canyon**. This canyon is one of the loveliest birding spots in Los Angeles County. (As an adolescent the Canyon gave me one of my most memorable days with the 'life' Black Swift, Purple Martin and a day of pure magic.) Take the 210 Frwy to Santa Anita Ave. going North. This straight N-S Avenue eventually becomes the twisty, windy Santa Anita Canyon Rd. Go all the way to the end at Chantry Flats and park. Bring lunch and hiking shoes. 8 a.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 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.

SATURDAY, JUNE 18 — Join Jean Brandt for a trip to **Mt. Pinos**. This beautiful mountain top is known to many as the traditional Condor lookout, and we shall earnestly hope it will yet be again. Meanwhile, Mt. Pinos offers some of the most accessible (subalpine? Hudsonian?) well anyhow 'mountain top' birding around. I love to watch and listen to the nesting Green-tailed Towhees, and Calliope Hummers are there as well. Take Hwy 5 to the summit of Tejon pass and get off at the Frazier Park offramp. Turn left (East) and drive several miles up the lovely Cuddy Valley. Follow the signs to the parking lot at the summit trailhead. 8 a.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 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 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

SATURDAY, JUNE 27 — Join Tom Keeney for a birding hike up **Santa Ana Canyon** in the San Bernardino Mountains. This is the first of two canyon trips to be led by Tom to seldom visited canyons in this wonderful (and nearby) mountain range. A variety of habitats from chaparral to coniferous woodland and commensurate variety of birds await us. Meet at the San

Bernardino County Museum at 8:30 a.m. Take the 10 Frwy to the California St. offramp in Redlands. The museum is clearly visible from the freeway. (July 25 we meet at the same time and place for a trip up Banning Canyon.) Bring lunch and hiking shoes.

SUNDAY, JULY 5 — Jerry Haigh at **Topanga State Park**. See June 7 for details.

SATURDAY, JULY 25 — Join Tom Keeney for a birding hike up **San Geronio Canyon**. This day hike will take us up to 7000 ft. and through a variety of habitats including riparian woodland, mixed chaparral, mixed coniferous woodland and culminating in White Fir forest. This is a 'behind locked gates' situation and will be difficult to duplicate by yourself, so don't miss this opportunity! Meet at the San Bernardino County Museum at 8:30. Take the 10 Fry to California St. Offramp in Redlands. The museum is clearly visible from the Freeway. Bring lunch and hiking shoes.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2 — Jerry Haigh at **Topanga State Park**. See June 7 for details.

CORRECTION: Wanda Conway was inadvertently and incorrectly listed as a co-leader for the May 17 field trip to O'Melveny Park and Bee Canyon.

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

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Continued on page 3.

James A. Lane died March 27, 1987. He was a well known birder and author of the series of "Birder's Guide to" books, as well as several text books. Jim also lead birding tours for Massachusetts Audubon Society for years.

He invented the popular "Tucker hummingbird feeder" at the Tucker Bird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon, California. He was instrumental in the early development of the Sanctuary.

He was born in Oklahoma on July 14, 1926, and lived until his death in Cathedral City, California.

His friendly smile and extensive knowledge of all aspects of nature, readily shared, will be sadly missed.