



WESTERN TANAGER

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A Preliminary Waterbird Census Of Los Angeles County Lakes And Reservoirs

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Section of Birds and Mammals
Natural History Museum
of Los Angeles County

Coordinated efforts by bird-watchers to undertake local surveys and censuses have long been popular, although such efforts in western North America have been largely limited to Christmas Bird Counts and, more recently, a few fledgling Breeding Bird Atlas projects. Highly suitable for such mass census efforts are mid-winter waterbird populations on lakes and reservoirs. Waterbirds are relatively easily counted and identified, populations of most species in southern California are rather stable for a period in mid-winter, and they occur in limited, easily identified patches of habitat so that a comprehensive survey is feasible. Local

Christmas Bird Count circles incorporate many lakes and reservoirs, but among the important Los Angeles County bodies of water excluded are Castaic Lagoon and Reservoir, Pyramid Lake, Quail Lake, and Lake Palmdale; the need for a census of all of the county's lakes and reservoirs therefore became clear.

The two fold purpose of the Lake and Reservoir Census is (1) to establish the relative importance of the county's various bodies of water to wintering waterbirds, and (2) to obtain, as accurately as possible, absolute counts of various waterbird species wintering on inland bodies of water in the county. A third, related goal was to clarify our understanding of the inland distribution of primarily coastal waterbirds such as Horned Grebe, Red-breasted Merganser, loons, and certain gulls.

Methods

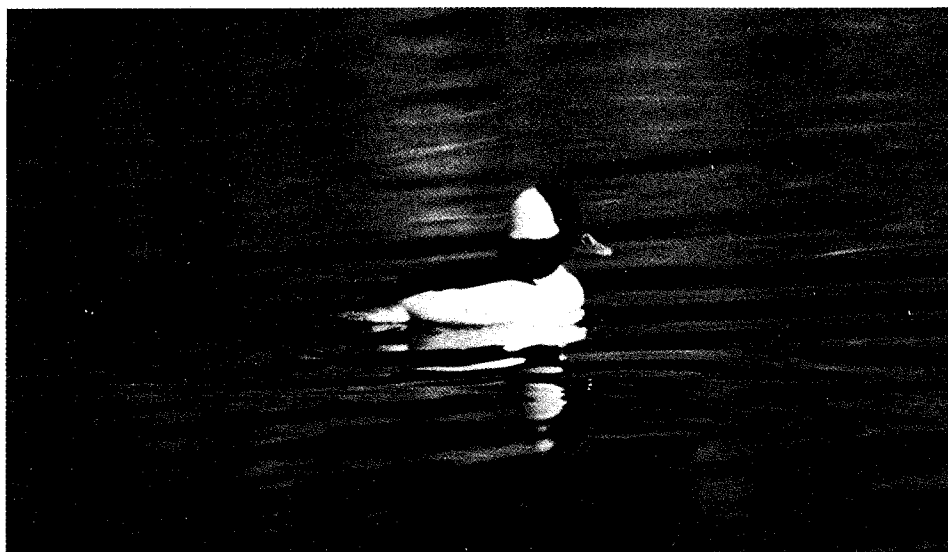
The 1987 preliminary census took place on 24-26 January, with the cooperation of the following observers: Jonathan Alderfer, Jean Brandt, Bruce Broadbooks, Hank Brodtkin, Barbara Cohen, Wanda Conway, Art and Janet Cupples, Tom Frillman, Kimball Garrett, Chuck Hamilton, Fred Heath, Jerry and Laurette Maisel, Tom Martin, Bert Mull, Bob Pann, Phil Sayre, Mary Thompson, Betty Vermiere, and Sandy Wohlgenuth.

We targeted all lakes and reservoirs within Los Angeles County sufficiently deep to harbor diving species. Heavily vegetated shallow ponds, coastal marshes, and all marine habitats were excluded. Species censused included all loons and grebes, Double-crested Cormorants, all waterfowl, Osprey, American Coot, Common Moorhen, and all gulls and terns. Each reservoir or lake was censused as completely as possible, with census time varying from 0.1 hr to 6 hr, depending on access and reservoir size. Observers were asked to record sex of waterfowl and age of gulls, where known, but incomplete reporting of age/sex categories precluded any analysis.

Results

Thirty-four bodies of water were censused during the three day count period. They were broken down geographically roughly as follows: ANTELOPE VALLEY (Piute Ponds, Lancaster Sewage Ponds, Doheny/Wagas hunting ponds, "Hwy. 14 pond", Cook Bros. hunting pond, and Apollo Lake); NORTHWEST COUNTY (Bouquet Reservoir, Elizabeth Lake, Lake Hughes, Holiday Lake, Quail Lake, Cleveland Pond, Pyramid Lake, Castaic Lagoon, Castaic Lake, and Elderberry Forebay (Castaic)); SAN FERNANDO AND SAN GABRIEL VALLEYS (Puddingstone Reservoir, Legg Lake, Peck Pit, Santa Fe Dam, L. A. Arboretum, Los Encinos Pond, Chatsworth Reservoir, and Hidden Lake); SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS (Las Virgenes Reservoir, Lake Calabasas, Westlake, Malibu Lake, Lake Lindero, and Seminole Hot Springs); and LOS ANGELES BASIN (Hollywood Reservoir, Silver Lake, Echo Park Lake, and MacArthur Park Lake).

Several key bodies of water could not be covered, mainly because of access problems or lack of observers: Lake Palmdale,



Los Angeles/Van Norman Reservoirs, Encino Reservoir, Stone Canyon Reservoir, and several reservoirs in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Because of these omissions, the results reported here are preliminary and incomplete. This year's exercise should simply be considered a dry run for more complete efforts in future years.

Because coverage was incomplete, I have presented results below in an annotated list of species, rather than a more quantitative matrix of species and reservoirs. The total number of individuals recorded is given in brackets after the species name (except for Mallards and gulls, whose complications are discussed below). Following the total is a brief annotation.

Diving Birds

Pacific Loon (1) - on the Elderberry Forebay of Castaic Lake. This individual was carefully described and drawn by Jonathan Alderfer; there are few inland records for Los Angeles County.

Common Loon (4) - Two on Castaic Lake and two on Pyramid Lake; this is the only loon normally seen on inland bodies of water in the county.

Pied-billed Grebe (272) - High count was 45 at Peck Pit, near Irwindale.

Horned Grebe (36) - All but four were in the Castaic/Pyramid Lake area. The greatest concentration was 23 on the Elderberry Forebay. Though unprecedented in the county, this number is not unexpected in light of the species' increase on inland deep-water reservoirs in winter.

Eared Grebe (531) - High count of 360 on Castaic/Elderberry.

Western Grebe (386) - High count of 307 on Elderberry Forebay. Interestingly, all *Aechmophorus* grebes were identified to species; are we that keen, or unwilling to acknowledge being stumped? On the other

hand, bill color seems to be an excellent identifying character when the lighting is good.

Clark's Grebe (59) - High count was 32 on Elderberry Forebay. Only five were reported away from the northwestern part of the county and the Antelope Valley.

Double-crested Cormorant (680) - High count was 355 at Peck Pit; the increase of this species around stocked fishing lakes in the San Gabriel Valley has become a cause of concern to the Department of Fish and Game.

Greater White-fronted Goose (76) - All but ten were on Quail or Holiday Lakes. These were undoubtedly spring migrants; apart from the odd individual, the species does not normally overwinter in the county.

Canada Goose (2770) - High count at Chatsworth Reservoir of 1500. The Sepul-

veda Basin/Encino Reservoir wintering group was not counted. Since this species roosts on reservoirs but feeds in fields, many were undoubtedly missed due to restriction of coverage to bodies of water.

Wood Duck (3) - L. A. Arboretum only.

Green-winged Teal (761) - 650 of these were on the hunting ponds in the Antelope Valley.

Mallard (?) - It proved impossible to distinguish feral birds (the majority) from truly wild wintering birds; thus, while the species was widely recorded, a count of wild birds was not possible.

Northern Pintail (454) - All but about 40 were on hunting ponds in the Antelope Valley.

Cinnamon Teal (119) - High counts were 32 at Quail Lake and 28 at Legg Lake; most or all birds recorded were spring migrants.

Northern Shoveler (3507) - High count of 2000 at Piute Ponds on the Edwards AFB near Lancaster. *Gadwall* (672) - High count of 600 at Piute.

American Wigeon (226) - This species was perhaps the most "under-counted" duck (exclusive of the marine species), because of its grazing habits and affinity for small ponds on golf courses, in parks, etc.

Canvasback (103) - High count of 44 at Malibu Lake.

Redhead (58) - All were at Piute Ponds.

Ring-necked Duck (528) - High count of 139 at the L. A. Arboretum.

Tufted Duck (1) - the perennial wintering male on Quail Lake.



Lesser Scaup (2735) - High counts of 989 on Pyramid Lake and 820 on the Elderberry Forebay; males and females in equal abundance on these lakes. Interestingly, at Quail Lake 600 males and only 75 females were recorded.

Surf Scoter (1) - A male at Elderberry Forebay; this species is scarce inland in the county, with very few mid-winter records.

Common Goldeneye (5) - All on Quail Lake.

Bufflehead (539) - High counts of 194 at Pyramid Lake and 105 at Castaic Lagoon.

Hooded Merganser (1) - A male at Chatsworth Reservoir.

Common Merganser (254) - High counts of 60 at Bouquet Reservoir and 53 at Elderberry Forebay.

Red-breasted Merganser (2) - Single birds at Quail Lake and Castaic Lagoon; this species is quite scarce inland in the county.

Ruddy Duck (2978) - High counts of 700 at Piute Ponds and 400 at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds.

Miscellaneous

Osprey (4) - Legg Lake, Peck Pit, L. A. Arboretum, and Castaic Lake.

Common Moorhen (1) - Castaic Lagoon; this species is more widespread in the county in summer and migration.

American Coot (6596) - High count of 1950 on Pyramid Lake; thousands of coots wintering in marshes, small ponds, and estuaries in the county were not recorded on this census.

Gulls and Terns

Note: While one of the goals of this census was to gain an understanding of the interior distribution of gulls in the county in mid-winter, this proved difficult because



the daily movements of many gull populations would have necessitated multiple visits each day to each site. It emerged clearly that the California Gull is the dominant wintering gull in the interior part of the county, although birds from feeding areas on the coastal slope appear to return to the coast each evening. Night roosts were present on some of the large interior reservoirs, notably Castaic Lake.

Ring-billed Gulls were numerous on a few reservoirs (e.g. 120 at Westlake); these birds do not appear to commute to and from the coast with the California Gulls.

Some significant gull records are listed below, along with the few terns recorded:

New Gull - Fifteen at MacArthur Lake in downtown Los Angeles indicate that significant numbers occasionally enter the L. A. basin with California Gulls.

Herring Gull - Two were recorded at Castaic Lagoon, where the species is regular in small numbers with California Gulls.

Thayer's Gull - One first-winter bird was at Castaic Lagoon; this species is scarce inland in the county.

Western Gull - One first-winter bird was at Castaic Lagoon; this species penetrates the L. A. basin in small numbers in winter with commuting California Gulls, but there are few records for the far interior of the county; it appears to be regular at Castaic Lagoon, however.

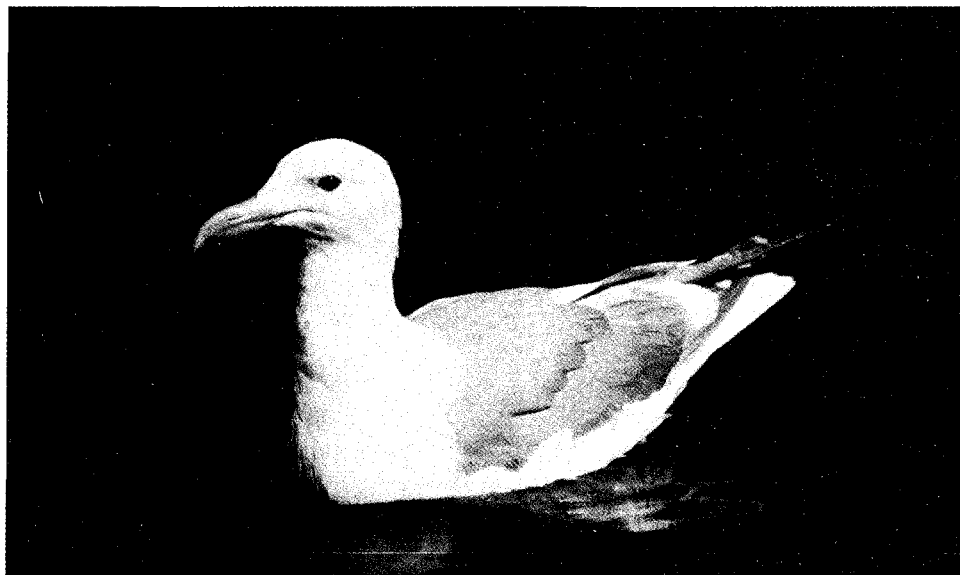
Conclusions

Results from this preliminary census suggest that the combination of greater observer effort and more preliminary planning (e.g. obtaining advance DWP permission) would yield a clear and informative picture of mid-winter waterbird distribution in the county. An accurate census of gulls would seem to require a different methodology because of their commuting habits, but could be worked into the overall census if observer cooperation is sufficient.

It is clear that there are very productive waterbird habitats within Los Angeles County, and that many details of waterbird distribution remain to be learned.

In closing, I would like to thank Jonathan Alderfer for his help in organizing the census; Jonathan's contributions included the drafting and printing of a special field check-list for the census. I would also like to thank Burt McKee, for his assistance in providing access to certain hunting clubs in the Antelope Valley, and Bill Morong of the United States Forest Service for providing boat transportation on Pyramid Lake.

Details of plans for a 1988 census will be published in an up-coming issue of the *Western Tanager*.



Random Thoughts of an Incoming Western Tanager Editor

I've been very impressed with the high quality of the Western Tanager under the tutelage of Fred Heath, our outgoing (and now outgone) editor.

Of course, he did have a few things going for him. Like... enormous energy. I remember, as being very typical, a dawn-to-dusk birding day with Fred. As the last rays of light were inexorably leaving the sky, Fred was still rallying the troops with cries such as "Come on, let's stay with it. We haven't even seen a yellow-headed blackbird yet."

And he is a very fine birder. And he knows most of, if not all, the topnotch local bird people. That's a real factor in their writing for the Tanager.

And Fred also writes well and has a great sense of humor. If, as is bound to happen once in a while, something went a bit awry, he made an opportunity out of a potential problem.

He also understands page layout very well, and can measure to a hair the amount of space any given amount of text and illustration would take. This may sound like a minor talent, but it's very useful.

Most of all, despite a seemingly casual manner, he understands intimately the needs, activities and goals that make Los Angeles Audubon tick...

Oh well... I may not (and don't) have quite all the virtues and qualifications, chronicled and unchronicled, that Fred has... (No, I'm not going to specify which of these I think I have or don't have).

But still, I have a number of blessings (which Fred also had), these include, among others, the following. And they may stand me in excellent stead...

Item: a wonderful, large, and lively membership which when called on almost always responds in the very best ways.

Item: the same terrific bird people and bird writers, who I can hope will go on writing for the Tanager. (Note to each of the writers: consider this my direct invitation and encouragement to do so, because that's precisely what it is. And to Fred: this means you specifically too. How about an article on some aspect of birding in your new San Diego haunts? Or on a breeding census? Or whatever?)

Item: Some great departments which provide our readers with ornithological help and stimulation month after month. These include:

Birds of the Season, by Hal Baxter and Kimball Garrett. This gives us all an overview of what is being seen locally, provided by absolutely top-notch birders. Save these for a year or two, and you have invaluable forecasts of what is likely to be around at any particular part of the year.

Our **Calendar**, which sets out our trips and meetings in the most useful and pleasant way. Rusty Scalf (who also has helped coordinate and obtain leaders for the trips) manages and writes this department.

Conservation Conversation provides us with material of real substance each month on nature in general, and conservation in particular. Sandy Wohlgemuth gives us this in a remarkably pellucid and thoughtful way.

Item: The technical and physical help from so many people. As examples only... Tony's

and Etcetera Graphics' excellent layout and typesetting... The beautiful printing by John Parque and Beacon Litho. The selfless and appreciated mailing by some of our very best people, including coordinator Bob Van Meter.

Item: The flow of good ideas from within the chapter's officers and chairs (I use the term "chair" because chairman, chairperson, and chairwoman all have their detractors too)...

Our president, Ken Kendig, provides ideas and insights in just about every area. Ken is likely to be in substantial part the associate editor or co-editor who would be so desirable.

What this means is that I can hope for a lot of friends in this job. If that works out, I'll get by with a little help from my friends.

Or, rather, a lot of help from my friends...

POST SCRIPT: Next time, I'll talk about some pet projects. One is Letters to the Editor. In fact, we'd welcome one from you right now. On anything relevant.

Thanks.

Larry Steinberg

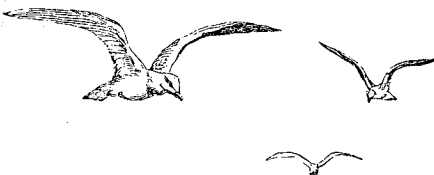
Current List of Los Angeles Audubon Society Officers and Committee Chairs

We are thankful that so many good people are members of Los Angeles Audubon. Your memberships of themselves help give strength and usefulness to our activities, and make possible individual pleasure for each member.

But we can use and do need active participation by as many of our members as possible in order to improve the chapter's functioning for the benefit of us all.

We are especially grateful to those who provide their time and skill in the useful committee work and as officers.

In this issue we publish a list of all the officers and committee chairs of Los Angeles Audubon. All will welcome your comments on chapter activity; and will welcome also your participation in the activities of the chapter.



Officers of Los Angeles Audubon Society Chapter

Ellsworth H. Kendig, Jr. *President*
Robert Van Meter *First Vice President*
James Jennings *Second Vice President*
Andrea Kaufman *Executive Secretary*
Evelyn Weiskopf *Registrar*
Tom Frillman *Treasurer*
Robert Shanman *Immediate Past President*

Chairpersons and Other Personnel

Larry Steinberg *Editor, Western Tanager*
Rusty Scalf *Field Trip Chair*
Sanford Wohlgemuth *Conservation*
and David White *Co-Chairs*
Pat Little *House Chair*
Johnathan Alderfer *Program Chair*
Gary Brower *Education Chair*
Sharon Milder *Grant Chair*
Olga Clarke *Bookstore Manager*
Jean Brandt *Publications Chairs*
Glenn Cunningham *Librarian*
Kimball Garrett *Scientific Adviser*
Wanda Conway *Social Director*

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



Summertime. Lazy time. Vacation time. How do you write about conservation in the summertime? There is a nagging feeling that you're spreading gloom, that you're Mr. Downbeat, spoiling everyone's day when you bring up the unwelcome facts of life. The unwelcome facts are pervasive, inescapable - if you read the newspapers or watch PBS. Chernobyl and Bhopal are far far away and it's fairly easy to view them as you would another flood on the Ganges with five or six hundred dead. Terrible, you say, as you shake your head over the headline. But it's forgotten in a few days. Besides, it happened to strangers, unfamiliar people in unfamiliar places. Is there a light-hearted way to write about acid rain, toxics in the drinking water, ozone depletion, nuclear winter?

I'm sitting here looking at a print of "The Lake," a painting by Corot (1796-1875) on the bulletin board above my typewriter. It's been there so long I scarcely notice it, but searching for words I stare ahead and see it almost for the first time. It is a mild, quiet scene with a handful of gauzy trees against a gray sky. A few cows, one scarcely noticeable man, and a small lake in the background. Nothing spectacular, just a simple rustic landscape. An ordinary place in the mid-19th century, but a rare sight for a city-dweller in the 1980's.

* And most of us are city-dwellers. We live in a world of freeways and high-rises, of maxi-malls and mini-malls, of fast food joints, police helicopters, leaf-blowers, punk rock and gridlock. After a week's work we've had it. We want - we *need* - a change. Some go to Las Vegas, poor souls. But most of us want to get indoors without a roof overhead. It may be a city park and a picnic on the grass. It may be the beach or a Dodgers game or a dirt-bike ride or a walk around the reservoir. If we can help it, we usually don't spend our two-week vacation sitting at home watching television. We want something different. Do we still carry ancestral genes that remember our natural origin and propel us into the sun? Whether science ever isolates those hypothetical genetic particles or not, it's a safe bet that a great many of us are strongly attracted to the quiet and the nerve-soothing aura of an unspoiled landscape. A familiar birder's comment after an uneventful day is, "Well, we didn't see much but I'm glad I went." Sometimes this might be hiding disappointment, putting a brave face on a wasted day. But you *did* get away, you *did* see some greenery. It was a change and it

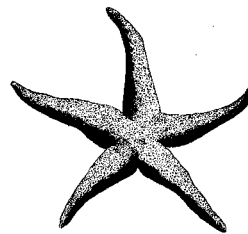
was a bit of the natural world. Whether you were aware of it or not, in some small degree the spirit was refreshed. It wasn't a total loss.

In mid-June, a friend and I walked down the Santa Clara River near Valencia in old sneakers and rolled-up pants, with a million to one chance of finding a Yellow-billed Cuckoo or a Bell's Vireo. Though for many years people had looked at this riparian habitat and thought it might have good possibilities, we had no illusions about finding these rare birds. It offered a small adventure so we said, what-the-hell, let's do it. We didn't see many birds: a lone Great Egret, half a dozen Blue Grosbeaks, a passel of Green-backed Herons, a nest on a sheer cliff wall with two nearly-fledged Red-tails and a pair of Spotted Sandpipers who behaved as if they had a nest hidden in the weeds. We had a great time. The willows and the cottonwoods were lush and green. The river was swift in places and we struggled to keep from falling in, binoculars and all. We met no one. In fact there was little of the trash that decorates so many of our local birding places, and some of what was there may have been washed downstream. There was a wonderful feeling that we had just discovered a river unknown to the geographers. We even wondered if the Nature Conservancy had ever thought of buying it. After about two miles we turned back, this time pushing against the current, and reached our car uneventfully. Somewhat tired and bug-bitten, we hadn't seen or heard a vireo or cuckoo. Not a nesting Yellow Warbler, a glimpse of an empidonax or even the expected cry of a Red-shouldered Hawk. But it was fun. For a moment we came close to an unstructured wildness. We had escaped the humdrum world and its problems.

And yet... environmental concern slithered into the mind like an unwelcome guest. Was it imagination, or did the river smell like septic tanks had overflowed and trickled into it? I thought nostalgically of the great field trips we use to run every spring up nearby Elizabeth Lake Canyon (much of it now forever under the waters of Castaic Lake) where we *did* have nesting Bell's vireos. And today, the startling, unnerving view of housing developments on both sides of I-5 above Castaic on the way to Mt. Pinos.

Inescapable. Not just the hideous worries about Chernobyls and population bombs and slaughtered rainforests. We are confronted by local, more tangible insults:

wetland loss, smog, disappearing open space, sewage in the bay, traffic. Perhaps the answer is a kind of benign schizophrenia. There is no light-hearted way to talk about conservation. To maintain sanity, as with most ways of coping with life, we have to shut out the bad and savor the good. When you stroll through a canyon in the Santa Monicas, enjoy the Lazuli Buntings, the wild flowers and the butterflies. Try not to think about some cockamamie councilman's proposal that the canyon should be made a landfill. But if you want to look for migrants next spring, think about it tomorrow. Fight the landfill tomorrow.



Chapter Comments

By Ken Kendig, President

Those who were present at our regular meeting in June heard me say that our old and dear friend, John Borneman, was to be a victim of the sharp cutback by National Audubon, caused by their financial pinch.

We are happy to report that, primarily because of strong public concern, John has been retained, even though the Ventura office of National Audubon has been closed.

He will be affiliated with the western regional office in Sacramento. As before, he will travel widely, and happily will be available for our quarterly Coordinating Council meetings, and for other direct contact with the chapters.

I want to thank all of the volunteers who work so tirelessly and with limited recognition by the general membership.

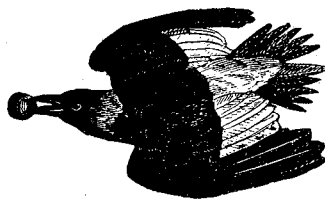
Elsewhere in this issue the names of our officers and chairs appear. We still need a publicity chair. When and as you find an area of particular interest to you among the titles of the committees, please contact me or the committee chair directly.

All of their phone numbers and addresses are available through Audubon House.

The bookstore particularly needs volunteers. Even a few hours a month would help here; and in most areas of our activity it takes even less time than that to help out.

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 abbreviated nature of this month's column is occasioned by travel by the authors and, perhaps more importantly, by this year's particularly severe case of "summer doldrums"; simply put, there weren't very many sightings of interest. There are always exceptions, of course, to such generalizations, and these are recounted below.

Renamed the "Condor Wait," the annual informal "Condor Watch and Tequila Bust" failed for the first time in a decade and a half to produce a condor this year. Not that those in attendance on Mt. Pinos on 1 August had any real expectations of seeing a condor (the last wild individual was captured on 19 April). But the tradition continues, and the more optimistic among us see this year's washout as a mere hiatus before the second phase of the condor's occupation of the California wilds.

The rarest bird to turn up this summer was the **Black-backed Wagtail** near Port Hueneme in Ventura Co. (Randy Moore, 2 August). Most records of White/ Black-backed Wagtails have been of immatures in fall — impossible to assign to species — so this was a rare opportunity to see an older bird which could actually be identified. The bird remained for several days, and was still present at this writing. Another rarity in that same general area was an adult **Rufous-necked Stint** at the Santa Clara River estuary on the Fourth of July (Jim Royer); that bird was far less cooperative, remaining only a few hours.

Salton Sea birding, often the hottest birding in the region in summer, was hot only in a literal sense this year. There was, however, a **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** which eluded most birders and delighted a few near the mouth of the New River (found by Guy McCaskie, 25 July).

The first **Magnificent Frigatebird** reported along the coast this year was seen over the Rand Corporation parking lot in Santa Monica on 24 June (Roberta Shanman); late that same afternoon another bird (or the same individual?) was seen at the Santa Barbara Harbor. Three **American White Pelicans** were at Buena Vista Lagoon, Oceanside, on 12 June (Bob Neuwirth). A small handful of **Brant** were at Malibu Lagoon in early June, with

one still present on 7 June (Bob Pann). An **Osprey** was catching fish (and startling the gulls and terns) at Malibu Lagoon on 26 July (Kimball Garrett).

As evidenced by the Rufous-necked Stint noted above, and as promised in last month's column, shorebird migration was in full swing through the region by the first of July. Two **Whimbrels** (scarce fall migrants through the interior) were at Piute Ponds near Lancaster on 12 July (Jon Dunn). A **Red Knot** was there on 30 July (Bruce Broadbooks), and another Red Knot was along Ballona Creek on 30 June (Irwin Woldman). The first **Baird's Sandpiper** report of the fall came from Piute Ponds (Bruce Broadbooks, 30 July). **Black-necked Stilts** nested in the Lancaster area, and two adults with six half-grown young were along the Santa Ana River in Yorba Linda on 30 June (Bob Neuwirth).

Charlie Collins' counts revealed sixty-three **Caspian Tern** nests at Bolsa Chica, along with fifteen **Elegant Tern** nests (the first breeding record north of San Diego County). Up to eighty **Black Skimmers** were there, but there were no signs of nesting. Jerry Johnson recorded ten skimmers at the Santa Clara River estuary on 21 June.

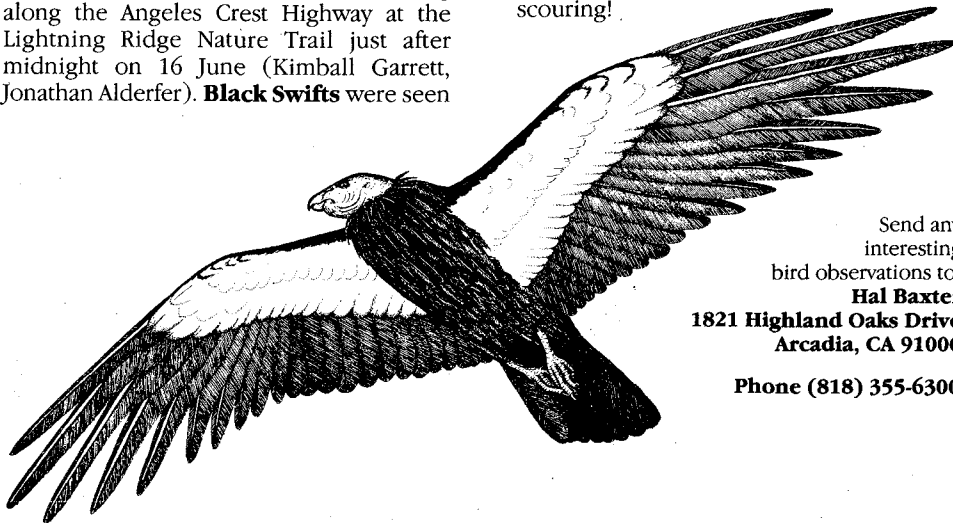
The bizarre behavior of the month award goes to Bernard Wilets of Pacific Palisades, or, more correctly, to the **Great Horned Owls** he observed as they foraged by running along the ground, robin fashion, on the polo fields at Will Rogers State Park. One or more pairs of **Spotted Owls**, plus **Poorwills** and **Whip-poor-wills** were found in Santa Ana Canyon, San Bernardino Mountains, on the 27 June LAAS trip. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was calling along the Angeles Crest Highway at the Lightning Ridge Nature Trail just after midnight on 16 June (Kimball Garrett, Jonathan Alderfer). **Black Swifts** were seen

at their usual haunts at Sturdevant Falls in Big Santa Anita Canyon, with several there on 14 July (Bob Pann). A female or immature **Purple Martin** was over Hal Baxter's Arcadia house on 30 June.

An Adult **Purplish-backed Jay** was in Sally Pearce's Claremont yard on 30-31 May. Though the bird was almost certainly an escapee, one might reflect that Allan Phillips still considers the Arizona record of San Blas Jay (which would seem to be far less likely to occur at our latitudes) to pertain to wild birds. Hmmm. Three **White-breasted Nuthatches** at the arboretum in Arcadia on 5 July (Barbara Cohen) suggest nearby breeding. An American Dipper with two young was seen along the stream at Buckhorn Campground on 8 June (Wanda Conway). A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** near Buckhorn on 16 June was the first mid-summer record for the San Gabriel Mountains (Kimball Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer).

Late spring vagrant, unreported in the last column, included a **Gray Catbird** and an **American Redstart** near Mojave on 5 June (John Wilson), a singing **Northern Parula** in Irvine Regional Park on 13 June (Doug Willick), and a singing **Black-and-White Warbler** there on the same day (Loren Hays). A male **Indigo Bunting** was along Hwy. 38 two miles north of the Mill Creek Ranger Station on 6 June (Hank Childs); this species has summered regularly at this locality. Twenty pairs of **Great-tailed Grackles**, with many additional males, were at the Prado Basin through July (Loren Hays).

More than any other time of year, September (and on through the rest of the fall) marks a great time to bird along the immediate coast. The mouths of coastal canyons, well-planted coastal points, and clumps of trees along coastal plains will harbor a tremendous diversity of migrants through the period, and shorebirds will be teeming at coastal estuaries. Forego a few long trips to exotic birding locales in order to give these more local areas a thorough scouring!



Send any
interesting
bird observations to:

Hal Baxter
1821 Highland Oaks Drive
Arcadia, CA 91006

Phone (818) 355-6300

Consider this

your warm personal invitation to attend
as often as possible, but at least once, our very own
Wildlife and Environmental Art Show
from September 12 to September 18,
from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. each day, at
Wilshire Ebell, 4400 Wilshire Boulevard
(at Lucerne), Los Angeles.

This large, excellent and lively show is entirely free of admission charge at all times, with only two exceptions for special receptions.

The Awards Reception, in the latter part of the Saturday, September 12, session, will provide an exciting and classy dinner with music and entertainment in addition to the awards presentation to a farflung group of fine artists. The Awards Reception will have a \$50⁰⁰ charge, and requires reservations.

The General Reception, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 13, 1987, has a \$5⁰⁰ charge, with hors d'oeuvres and a no-host bar.

With membership support, this event is going to be a big success. And you may see a few celebrities too—our own top birders, or possibly some showbiz or political big names; and of course, top-notch art and artists.

Wildlife and Environmental Art Show Notes

Some exciting news! Nina Foch will be the Mistress of Ceremonies for the Award Reception, September 12, 1987.

Our thanks to Ellene Mertens, Lawry's Prime Rib, The Westside Broiler, Les Mitchell's Orient Express, Gulliver's, Louise Scott, Teri Sushi Restaurant. The Beth Vacanti Studio, and San Jose Studios for the raffle items they have contributed. Plus thanks to The Martin/F. Weber Co. for their Product Award just received.

The 1285 (!) entries have now been juried and the 300 selections made for the Art Show. Notification of the artists is in the mail.

We welcome Mayor Tom Bradley, Councilmen Alatorre, Bernardi, Braude, Garrell, Ferraro, Holden, Wachs, Woo and Yaroslavsky, and Councilwomen Flores and Picus, plus Co. Supervisor Edelman, Jon Dunn, Mr. & Mrs. John F. Harrigan, Mr. &

Mrs. Arte Johnson, Dennis M. May, Mayor pro tem Etta Simpson, Morris & Perron, Inc., Robert E. Morrison, Judge Rudof, Dr. & Mrs. Ralph Schreiber, Arnold Small and Jeffrey Adrian Villagran to the Honorary Committee. Howard Hughes Properties, a Division of Summa Corporation, is now an Underwriting Sponsor.

For the Awards and General Reception, we still need floral displays or the loan of flowering plants or shrubs. Plus, we need volunteers to assist in unpacking and hanging the art works on September 11 and to help during the Receptions and hours of the Show, 11:00 to 8:00 daily from the 12-18th.

If you can assist with any of these things, please call Doni or Ken Kendig at (213) 931-6692. Please let us hear from you, and see you at the Art Show!

Clean Air—It's Worth Saving!

We've borrowed the Mono Lake Committee's slogan (Mono Lake, It's etc.) to catch your attention. I think we'll all agree that clean air is not only worth saving but it's good for you. The Clean Air Act is up for renewal this year in Congress and the good guys are trying to make it stronger and more effective. There are two Senate bills already introduced that include strong controls on acid rain, urban air pollution, air toxics and protection of the stratos-

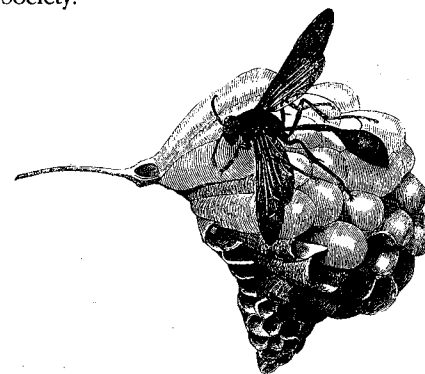
pheric ozone layer. If you know what's good for you (and even if you don't but want to be a nice guy) write to your Representative (House Office Bldg D.C. 20515) and ask him to work for the passage of a Clean Air Act. And it would be great if you wrote to Alan Cranston and Pete Wilson (Senate Office Bldg, D.C. 20510) urging them to co-sponsor S.300 and S.321. After that, take a deep breath and hope for the best.

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

September 1987

EVENING MEETINGS

Meet at 8:00 p.m. in Plummer Park

Tuesday, September 8 — **Peter Robinson** the Senior Investigations Officer for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and author of *Bird Detectives* will give a unique talk. RSPB is like a cross between the Audubon Society and the FBI. Among other things they investigate trappers, hunters, egg collectors (especially for faconry) which has become a big time international business. Please join us into a look into this shadowy world. It should be quite an adventure.

Tuesday, October 13 — Three or four of the LAAS **Research Award** winners will give brief presentations on their research. Should be a different, informative and fun evening. Details in future *Tanagers*.

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.

September 12-18, each day. Los Angeles Audubon Wildlife & Environmental Art Show, chaired by Doni Kendig. Our first of what we expect will be many annual art shows. 11:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day. At **Wilshire Ebell**, 4400 Wilshire Boulevard (at Lucerne), Los Angeles. For further details and the two receptions, see story elsewhere in this issue, and also July-August issue.

Sunday, September 6 - In cooperation with the Santa Monica Mountain Task Force, meet leader **Gerry Haigh** for his monthly morning walk through **Topanga State Park**. Spend the morning birding in lovely oak woodlands, meadows and chaparral. From Topanga Canyon Blvd. take a very sharp turn east on Entrada Dr. (7 miles south of Ventura Blvd., 1 mile north of Topanga Village). Keep bearing left on Entrada Dr. at various road forks to parking lot at end. 8 a.m. \$3 fee.

Saturday, September 12 - Join **Bob Pann** for a morning in **Malibu Creek State Park**. This is a beautiful area of grassy meadows, willow lined streams and oak covered hills. Some of the most spectacular oaks anywhere in the county are found here (both deciduous and evergreen). It should be a good day for migrant as well as resident birds. Take Pacific Coast Hwy. (1) north to Malibu Canyon; Or take the Ventura Frwy. (101) north to Los Virgenes Rd. and turn left into the canyon. The entrance to the park is 3/4 mile south of the intersection of canyon Rd. (Las Virgenes) and Mulholland Hwy. 8 a.m.

Sunday, September 13 - Join **Bob Shanman** for a morning at the unique **Ballona Wetland**. This is an excellent marshland site practically in our own backyard. Take Marina 90 west to Culver Blvd., turn left to Pacific Ave. then right to footbridge at end. 8 a.m. (More info: call (213) 545 2867 after 6 p.m.)

Saturday, September 19 - **David White** will lead his monthly walk through a good diversity of habitats at the Whittier Narrows Regional Park in search of a wide variety of land and water birds. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave., So. El Monte, off Frwy 60 between Santa Anita and Peck Drive Exits, west of Frwy 605.

Sunday, October 4 - **Topanga State Park** with **Gerry Haigh**. See September 6 for details.

Monday, October 5 - Join **Ed Navojosky** for his annual jaunt from **Malibu Lagoon to McGrath State Beach**. Participants will be treated to a large variety of land and water species. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking area behind the market, across the street from Malibu Lagoon entrance. Bring a picnic lunch for a stop at **Big Sycamore**.

Sunday, October 11 - **Ballona Wetlands** with **Bob Shanman**. See September 13 for details.

Friday, October 16 - **Allan Keller** will lead a morning walk at **Chatsworth Park South** looking for White and Golden-Crowned Sparrows, both phoebes, both towhees, Red-Shouldered Hawk, Flicker and other migrants and winter visitors. From Ventura Frwy. 101, go north about 6 miles on Topanga Cyn Blvd., or from Simi Frwy. 118 go south about 1 mile on Topanga Cyn. Blvd. to Devonshire: Turn west to street's end at park. 8 a.m. Recreation Building parking lot.

Sunday, October 18 - **David White** at **Whittier Narrows Regional Park**. See September 19 for details.

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

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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, 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.

PELAGIC TRIPS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 - Join **Herb Clarke** and **Brian Daniels** for a visit to **San Clemente Island (Tropicbird Search)**.

Price: \$28
Time: 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11 — Join **Arnold Small** and **Kimball Garrett** for a trip to **Santa Barbara Is.**

Price: \$24
Time: 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15 — Join **Herb Clarke** and **Brian Daniels** for a trip towards **Channel Is.**

Price: \$22
Time: 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Pelagic Trip — Off Morro Bay — Saturday, September 26. 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A trip sponsored by the Morro Coast Audubon Society and led by **Jon Dunn** and **Brad Schram**. Possible species which have been seen on similar trips include Flesh-footed Shearwater, Skua, Long-tailed Jaeger, Craveri's Murrelet, Arctic Tern and Sabine's Gull. For reservations send a \$23.00 check payable to the Morro Coast Audubon Society and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Tom Edell, 46 8th Street, Cayucos, CA 93430, (805) 995-1691.