WESTERN TANAGER

Los Angeles Audubon Society Volume 55 Number 1 Sept.-Oct. 1988

Destination Hudson Bay

Dorothy Dimsdale

It's that time of the year again. Birders are preparing to go off to see specialties all over America. One of the most delightful and productive trips is to Churchill, Manitoba, with the prime objective, the Ross's gull. If, like me, gulls overall give you a big yawn, prepare for a surprise. The Ross's is a beautiful, delicate-looking bird, and unmistakable to spot. I saw it last year, and it was all and more than I had hoped.

This isn't going to be a blow by blow account of all the birds seen on the trip, but enough, I hope, to set the juices flowing. Like the Great Gray Owl sitting on its nest on top of a dead stump in Riding Mountain National Park, and the Bufflehead flying into its nest hole in a dead tree trunk, which stick out over the water one one of the park's ponds. The tour started in Winnipeg, where there's plenty of good birding, both in the city parks and in the outlying areas. Of course it's over 80 degrees there in June, and the necessity for taking light summer clothing, along with warm thick layers and boots for Churchill, makes closing the suitcase a challenge.

Birding in the early morning S.E. of Winnipeg in oak and jackpine forests, we had excellent views of the Golden-winged and Blackburnian Warblers. Driving along we heard a "thunk" and had a fleeting view of a Ruffed Grouse as it veered off into the woods. We had unwittingly flushed and hit the bird. Its tail feathers were in the grill and on the ground. We gathered up the feathers and felt glad that the bird had obviously not been badly hurt.

Later in Shiloh Plains on the way to Brandon, we stopped by the side of the road. There were Chestnut-collared Longspurs perched on the barbed wire fence edging a field. They were in glorious breeding plumage, so different from the drab birds we see (if we're lucky) in Southern California in winter.

Jan Pierson, one of our leaders, heard a Le Conte's sparrow out in the field and called it in. It approached little by little, running through the grass, as he said - just like a mouse. We could see the movement, but not the bird. It stopped to look up as it neared the source of the call, and finally it was only 12 feet away in the short grass, from where we stood. We had a great view.

When the Le Conte's had flown we entered the field, being careful where we stepped as this was a nesting area for Longspurs. We heard, then saw a Sprague's Pipit displaying. It soared way up high into the sky, then with a series of fluttering and gliding from side to side, it slowly descended to earth. The display started almost too high to see, and took about 20 minutes for the bird to reach the ground. Suddenly a Baird's Sparrow was heard singing. This is another very elusive bird. We walked about an eighth of a mile further into the field and finally the bird came up on a low shrub about a foot off the ground. It sat while we all looked and silently cheered. This species is uncommon and unfortunately declining, so I was particularly glad to see it, though to the casual glance it's just another little brown job.

Treading carefully as we retraced our steps, we accidentally flushed a Chestnut-collared Longspur which had been sitting on its nest. The nest was almost invisible under a few leaves of grass, but there lay one chick, not more than a day old. How vulnerable it looked, down by our heavy boots! We moved on even more carefully and came upon another Chestnut-collared Longspur nest. This one had six eggs in it and I wondered how many had originally been in the first nest, and what had happened to them.

That evening we donned our waterproof boots and sprayed to fend off the mosquitos which we expected to find at Douglas Marsh. We were going to look for the Yellow Rail. It was about 9.p.m. when we got there, and the marsh was very soggy, with water over a foot deep in places. The mosquitos began to swarm around us and got thicker as we stepped from tussock to tussock. This was a wetting procedure if one became too energetic in waving off the bugs. We walked in this fashion for about a quarter of a mile to locate the Yellow Rails, several of which were calling (as well as other marsh birds).

One rail was pinpointed, and sixteen of us made a circle around it, about 150 feet in diameter. John Coons, our other leader, played the tape with long pauses between plays. The rail gave occasional reply calls. We stood this way for about forty minutes, still and quiet. It was interesting, during this waiting period, to see the varying intensity of the mosquito clouds round each person. One poor woman was almost invisible. I was just about completely enveloped by my clothing, which made for heat of tropical intensity, but at least I got no bites. Then, gradually, we closed in, until the circle was very small, maybe only 6 feet in diameter, at which point we saw the rail moving in the reeds. It flushed and flew over our heads, out of the circle to another spot, about 20 feet away. The white secondaries were very clearly seen in flight. This time we knew exactly where it had landed and closed in quickly. There it was, in the reeds, directly below us, seeking an escape route.

I heard a whisper and suddenly, Art Edwards, one of the men on our tour, dived for the rail, falling flat in the marsh, and caught it - unhurt - and lifted it for us all to see. He extended the wing for a moment as Jan held the flashlight (it was now almost dark), and we looked closely at the secondaries. The bird seemed unafraid and even gave Art a gentle peck. This was a very rare, close look at a bird which affords one, at best, only a very brief glance, and is located, by and large, simply by its calls. A couple of photos were taken, then Art held the bird high, opened his hands--the bird took off. Lovely! We became aware again of the mosquitos and the soggy marsh, and strode back across the tussocks to the road. It had been a superb experience.

After we flew from Winnipeg to Thompson and birded round the incredibly beautiful Pisew Falls, we had the good fortune to be able to follow a Ruffed Grouse and her six chicks a little way along the river. Those of us who had missed seeing the one struck by the van were very happy.

From Thompson we boarded an overnight train for Churchill. It was my first train trip on the American continent and I was delighted with my single sleeper. There was a toilet and washbasin ensuite, and I lay in bed and looked out of the large window at my side, for hours. We had lots of daylight now. I saw the transition to real taiga landscape - unending miles of it, and an occasional caribou to add to the magic.

The following morning we had a super breakfast on the train. While eating bacon and eggs, saw our first Willow Ptarmigans. What a leisurely way to bird! All told we saw twenty-one Willow Ptarmigans from the train. We passed close by and they were very easy to see. Mostly the birds were in transition from the white winter, to the rusty brown summer plumage. We saw some of each, though most were piebald. In all plumages their strong feet and white feathered legs looked very powerful.

Churchill itself is a dreary looking town from a casual viewpoint, though to me, it looked wonderful. We dropped our baggage at the Tundra Inn and immediately set out to seek the Ross's Gull. We were optimistic as it had been seen the previous day at Granary Ponds. However, after a long search in every possible area there was not a sign. The horrible thought that of course, the bird couldn't be guaranteed and might just have taken off, was uncomfortably at the back of my mind. However we kept up the search. We saw some lovely husky dogs on very long leashes, tied up near the ponds. The barked and wagged their tails as we drove by. We looked out over the broken ice pack floating in the bay, and in the area where the birds had tried to nest (unsuccessfully) the previous year. Still no Ross's gull.

The next day found us down by Granary Ponds early - no luck, but we sought and found what must be the loveliest longspur of them all, in breeding plumage. The Smith's Longspur is absolutely magnificent. Its breeding plumage colors are vivid and elegant. No field guide sketch, or even photograph, seems to be able to do it justice.

After lunch we drove to Point Merry, to look for sea birds, shore birds, mammals, and of course, the Ross's Gull. I was really beginning to try to reconcile myself to not seeing the bird on this trip - it would not be for want of trying, though it would be a big disappointment. Oh, pessimist that I am! At that very moment Jan saw what he termed "a possible Ross's" in the distance, flying towards land. We leaped into the vans and started off in different directions in an effort to cover all possible locations. As our van drove past Granary Ponds, we saw two small gulls, standing on a rock in the water. We yelled, "Stop!" though John Coons, who was driving, already had his foot on the break - and no doubt, a song in his heart.

There they were. A pair! John quickly called Jan over the intercom, and we watched and prayed that the others would arrive in time to see the birds. They did.

The gulls slipped into the water, and it was very evident that they were in a courting mood. They touched bills constantly and pushed their tails up out of the water. Every second or two the male took sips of water, all the while making little "tuck, tuck" sounds. At the approach of any Bonaparte's Gulls which inadvertently came their way, the male would aggressively chase them off. With each sip of water the male submerged his breast. As he surfaced, the pink blush became more obvious, and was more so when the sun was obscured by the clouds. The birds then climbed out again on the rock where we had first seen them and the male regurgitated, whereupon they both ate the mess together (tea for two?). We were too enchanted to even think "Yeck!" They returned to the water and we continued to watch them for an hour. They are, by far, the most beautiful gulls I have even seen. Our dinner that night was a glorious celebration.

The next day we saw Little Gulls at Landing Lake - they too are distinctive with their all dark underwings with white trailing edges. Nearby, outside the entrance to a fox's den we found wings and feather's scattered about, together with a Mallard's head, but no sign of the fox.

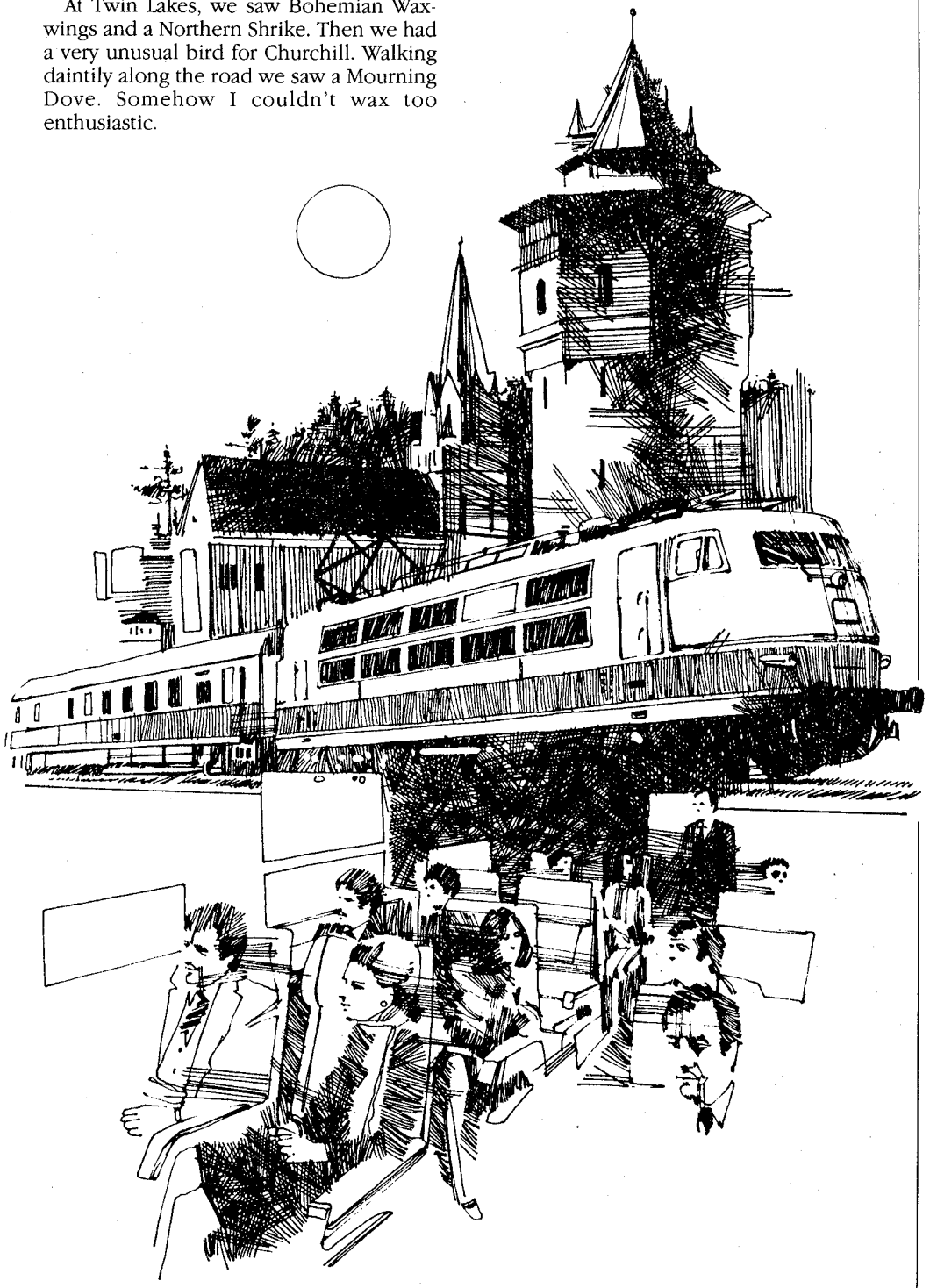
Now there was time to visit the museum, which is small but gives a comprehensive display of local history and in particular of the life cycle of the Polar Bear, together with some impressive ancient ivory carv-

ings. The Hudson Bay Company store was, for me, somewhat disappointing and, I suspect, a shadow of its former grandeur.

That afternoon, at Point Merry, we saw the first Beluga whales of the year arrive - the same day as they had reappeared the previous year. These are small white whales and there were eight at first, including a couple of gray juveniles. They seemed to stay together in pods.

At Twin Lakes, we saw Bohemian Waxwings and a Northern Shrike. Then we had a very unusual bird for Churchill. Walking daintily along the road we saw a Mourning Dove. Somehow I couldn't wax too enthusiastic.

The rain started to pour down as we left Churchill, wet and windy at 38 degrees to arrive at 90 degrees and sunny in Winnipeg. See what I mean about a variety of clothing? The next morning we flew home. What a trip!



Whittier Narrows Bird Records Sought

A complete annotated writeup on the birds of the Whittier Narrows area, So. El Monte is now being finalized. This includes about 262 bird species known from the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area from the 1930's to present. Areas especially included are the Nature Center-Wildlife Sanctuary, Mitigation Lakes (= New Lakes), Legg Lakes and the adjacent San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers.

Names of a number of Los Angeles Audubon birders appear in the species files already but there are undoubtedly more. I would appreciate hearing from anyone with records of birds for the area with special emphasis on early or late dates for migrants, rare birds, unusual numbers of any species, any breeding/nesting observations. Please include specific locality, number of individuals, date and observer. Observers for any records used will be acknowledged in the text.

Please send records to:

Mickey Long
Los Angeles County Natural Areas
1750 N. Altadena Dr.
Pasadena, CA 91107

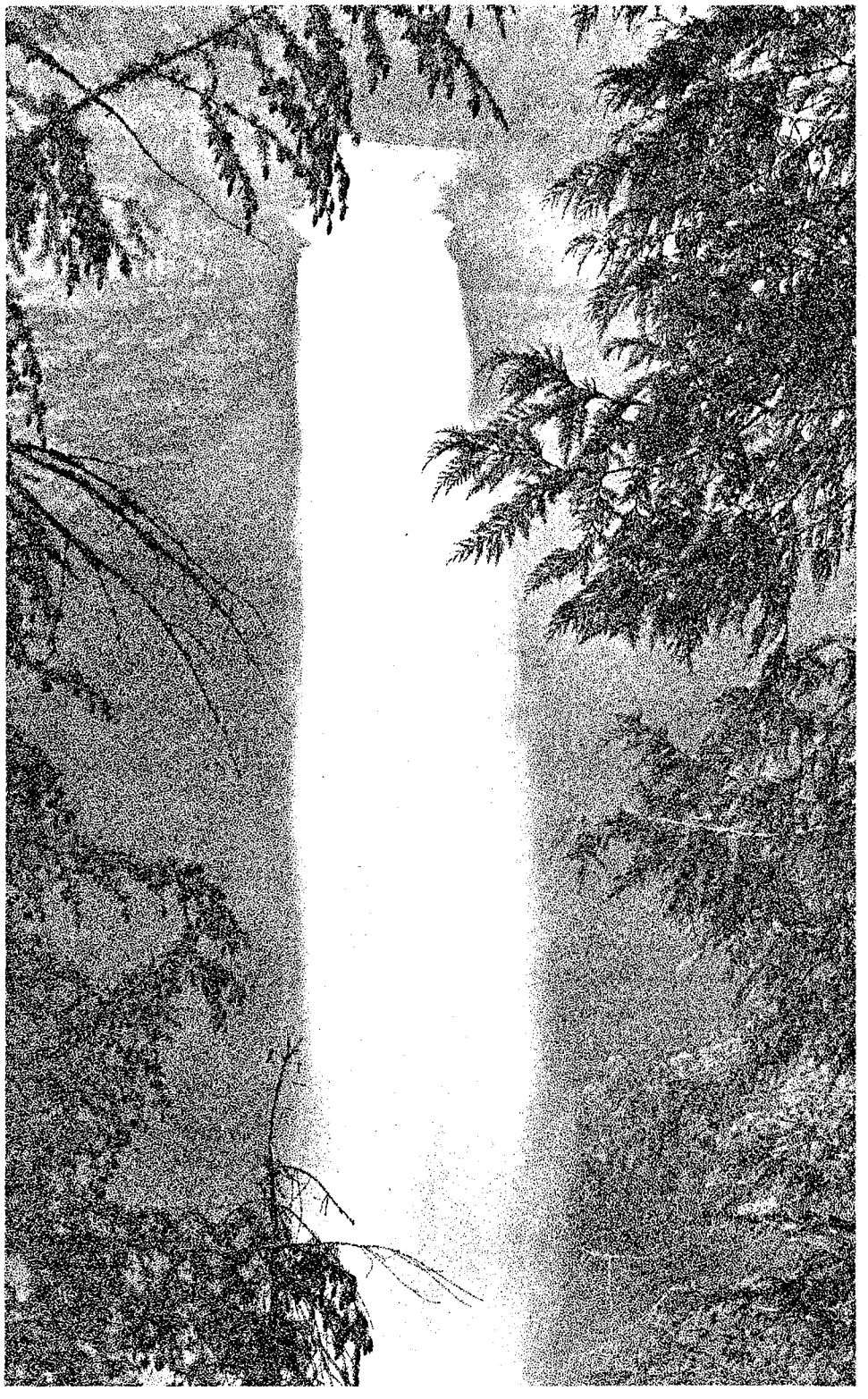
An Invitation

If you're a new member or just haven't attended one of our monthly meetings please join us this Fall. The Society's meetings are an entertaining and informal way to spend a Tuesday evening. Catch up on the latest conservation issues and birding news, visit our famous bookstore, and enjoy an illustrated talk. The evening meetings this year will feature speakers from our own backyard talking about local topics to speakers from the ends of the earth (see this month's evening meeting announcement!). From 7:30 to 8:00 p.m., before the main speaker, we feature an illustrated bird identification workshop (for all levels of birders) presented by a local expert. **It's all free and everyone is invited, even if you're not a member**. So set aside the second Tuesday of the month and join us in Plummer Park this Fall. If you need directions call Audubon House at 876-0202, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tues.-Sat.

Costa Rica-A Birder's Paradise

by Olga L. Clarke

Costa Rica is located in the southeastern portion of the Central American landbridge, and receives its avifaunal influence from both North America and northern South America at approximately San Jose, in the central part of the country where there is considerable overlap of species. The cordilleras, (high range of mountains that divide the country), act as natural barriers to most species of birds and animals on both the Caribbean and the Pacific slopes. This phenomenon results in small regions with completely different avifauna in close proximity to one another.



This tiny country, about the size of West Virginia, boasts a recorded 800 species of birds, almost 2000 species of plants and orchids, well over 300 species of reptiles and amphibians, along with numerous butterflies.

Your first visit to this tropical paradise, will not at all be as preconceived. San Jose, the capitol, is a fairly modern, clean bustling city. Although cars and busses jam the narrow one-way streets, most people walk because the cost of owning a car is so prohibitive. It is not unusual to see the "Ticos" standing in lines a block long waiting for a bus. Everyone seems to be dashing to or from someplace with a purpose, not just "hanging around".

All major roads lead out from San Jose, and driving will take you by little villages and through the countryside where cattle ranching is predominant. Within an hour or so's drive, no matter which direction you choose, you will come to some type of tropical forest. In Daniel Janzen's book COSTA RICAN NATURAL HISTORY, 19 types of forest are indicated on the ecological map of Costa Rica. These include lowland tropical, ranging from very wet to very dry; foothill and mountain, also receiving varying amounts of precipitation; and at the higher elevations, subalpine rain paramo. My favorites are the rain forests in the lowlands; the wet forests at mid-elevations; cloud forests at about 5,000 feet; and the paramo-like habitats without trees around 11,000 feet. All of these are rich not only in birdlife, but this great diversity of habitats gives you an astounding wealth of other wildlife not found in temperate climates.

Sadly, much of the land has now been deforested. Extensive forests once containing massive trees and a great variety of other vegetation supported a delicately balanced ecosystem on relatively poor soil. Settlers cleared the land and for a short time grew crops of manioc and maize. As the soil died and crops failed, they moved on, destroying more forest and wildlife as they went. Cattle ranchers then took over most of the depleted land. However, the remaining protected forests, still demonstrate tropical nature at its best. At least 26 national parks and preserves have been established in Costa Rica, each on unique on its own right. So rich is the wildlife, one could spend days in each of the national parks, preserves and reserves, and still not have seen all that these areas have to offer.

An ethereal feeling overcomes you when you first enter a primeval forest such as at Rara Avis on the Caribbean slopes, or Las Ventanas de Osa Wildlife Refuge in the Pacific southwest. The giant trees reaching 150 feet up into the canopy, the absolute greenness that surrounds you, the flutelike calls of the wrens, the blue of the Morpho

Butterflies, and the jewel-like colors of the birds that challenge identification, is an experience not to be missed.

The cloud forest at Monteverde, with its forest clothed in mist from the trade winds blown in from the Caribbean, is another high point for birders. At times the trees literally drip not only with moisture, but with birds as well. Laden with ferns, mosses, orchids, and epiphytes, forests are virtually growing on top of forests.

Tree-fall gaps in a Costa Rican rain forest are responsible for many trees becoming established and reaching maturity. Penetrating sunlight produces micro-habitats on the fallen logs themselves, and in the immediate vicinity. Seedlings struggling to reach to canopy, grow rapidly and spread their leaves into a broad crown to catch maximum sunlight. Unusual flowers, and fruiting and flowering trees, all well adapted to living in the shadows of tropical forests, take advantage of birds, insects and animals by offering these mobile creatures nectar and nutrients, in exchange for pollination and seed dispersal.

Strangler figs, one of the most characteristic trees in the neotropical forest, begin their lives by bird or animal dispersed seeds high up in the canopy. Receiving more sunlight, these seedlings send down roots at an enormous rate of speed. Some roots attach themselves to the host tree, others root in the ground, usurping the host tree of its nutrients and eventually killing it. Since the lumber is of poor quality, good for little else than firewood, it is sometimes the only tree left after a forest is cleared. The ficus, of which there are probably 900 species, provides shade, food and homes to untold numbers of birds and mammals. A tree laden with fruit can be a spectacle unsurpassed, with the sights and sound of noisy flocks of parrots, tanagers, and monkeys.

Ants play a dominant role in a rain forest. There are many different kinds of ants found in the tropics, and it is wise to look before you step, lean, or sit. Leafcutter or parasol ants are usually the most visible, and frequently you see them marching across your path carrying bits of leaves and flowers many times larger than they are. Their colonies sometimes contain over a million workers, with different sizes specializing in certain functions. The smallest care for the eggs and larvae, the medium-sized one forage, while the large soldiers with huge heads and mandibles defend the nest.

Army ants present an awesome sight in a rain forest. Columns of hunters and soldiers advance on the forest floor, and one can hear scuffling of insects trying to get out of the way of the oncoming hordes, as well as the sounds of the chattering and peeping of attendant birds as they pick off the fleeing insects. These columns, consisting of hundreds of thousands of ants, can sometimes grow into a fan-shaped swarm up to a hundred feet wide at the front. Several species of woodcreepers, cuckoos, motmots and members of the large antbird family are the most conspicuous army ant followers, gleaning insects flushed by the advancing swarms.

Even beautiful butterflies can be seen hovering around the area of an army ant invasion. Some of these butterflies have an unpleasant taste so the birds don't eat them. The odor of the ants is a signal that there will be a trail of antbird droppings in the vicinity that provide nitrogen-rich food for the butterflies.

One butterfly that attracts your attention winging its way along forest trails, is the spectacular blue Morpho. This sight must also catch the eyes of predators. In order to protect itself, the Morpho caterpillar eats milkweeds, storing the toxins in its tissues, rendering both caterpillar and adult very unpalatable to birds.

The apparent scarcity of large animals can be disappointing, because most of them are nocturnal, and unless perhaps searching for owls, one does not unnecessarily wander around in a rain forest in the dark to look for animals. But even in the daytime there are smaller creatures all around you, may of them so camouflaged they can easily be overlooked.

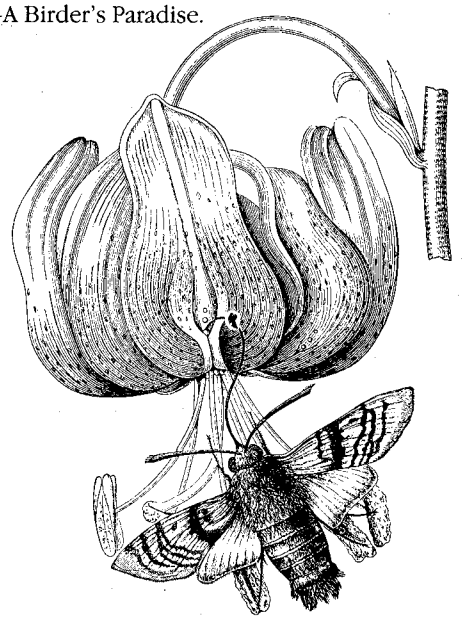
There are insects and frogs so brilliantly colored with reds, yellows and oranges, they cannot escape attention. Generally, these beauties feed on poison-laden plants, concentrating the toxin in their bodies, or some have glands in their skin to produce defensive toxins. The tiny poison-arrow frogs are known to carry enough toxin to kill a thousand people. Consequently these spectacular, eye-catching creatures have no fear of predators and not only make no attempt to remain out of sight, but rather seem to draw attention to themselves. In addition, other butterflies and frogs mimic their distasteful relatives by sporting the same colors in order to hopefully escape predation. Birds have evolved remarkably sharp vision, about eight times greater than our own, in order to cope with such cryptic prey.

A first-timer visiting the tropics in our winter season will be surprised at the number of warblers, tanagers and flycatchers with which he is familiar at home in spring and summer, not realizing that these species are actually residents of the tropics most of their lives. Ecologists have found that there is no simple explanation to the phenomenon of the arduous twice a year migration. But the probable reason is the availability of food. In our temperate zone, there is an abundance of prey in the springtime as well as new plant growth, providing food for greater numbers of young. Most birds hunt during daylight hours. Day length is constant in the tropics (6:00 am to 6:00 pm) and there is no lingering dawn or dusk regardless of season or habitat. It stands to reason therefore, that about 18 hours of daylight would afford birds much more time to attend to parental duties. Lowland tropical rain forests do not experience seasonal changes that produce this tremendous burst of productivity. Although rainfall varies from season to season, temperatures are generally constant throughout the year.

Birding in a rain forest can be a frustrating, and at the same time an exhilarating experience. After spending fruitless hours walking through habitats that should be teaming with birds, suddenly, there is a chattering, buzzing, whistling flurry of activity. Everywhere you look tanagers, woodcreepers, flycatchers, antbirds, and myriads of other birds, are flitting by, constantly in and out of sight, until suddenly they are gone. There is no time to stop to check your field guide (if there is one), or you miss the whole thing. You have to zero in on any and every species that you can get in your binoculars, making mental notes as you savor each jewel. If you happen to be with a group or people, everyone will be excitedly describing a different bird. When the flock has disappeared, you will be left with a feeling of "run that by me again" because you may only have identified ten percent of the birds. How thrilling! Fron the ecstasy to the agony and back again in a twinkling of an eye.

These mixed-species foraging flocks are one of the most exciting aspects of birding in the tropics. to actually see with your own eyes the beautiful colors of such a variety of avian creatures against the greenery of the forests, is something no one should miss.

All of this, coupled with the friendliness of the Costa Rican people, will keep you longing to return once you have experienced it. Don't wait until it is all gone and you have missed a high point of your lifetime. Now is the time to visit Costa Rica--A Birder's Paradise.



Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

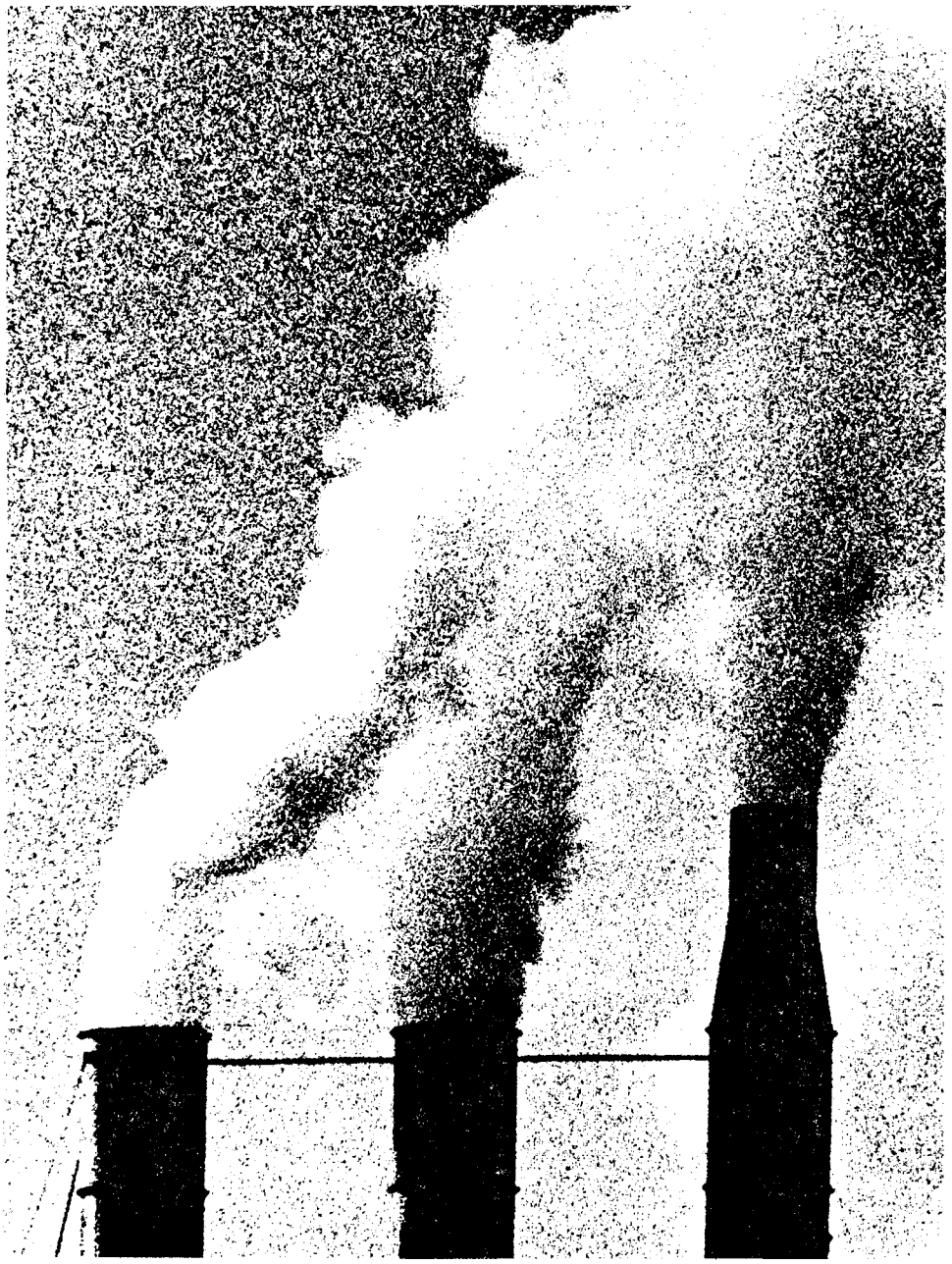
In the midst of a blizzard of election campaign charges and promises, perhaps a chilly survey of the environmental snows of yesteryear is in order. How has the climate of the last eight years affected us?

Before we pull on our galoshes and venture into the snow drifts, let's consider the philosophy of the Reagan era. Government should be mimimal; the armed forces, international relations, maybe even the post office are legitimate functions of government-- but not much more. "Freedom" is emblazoned on the banners. Freedom from taxes, from bureaucratic snoopers, freedom to do anything you please with your own property. Business must be liberated from insidious government regulations and that will cause a thousand flowers to bloom--for all Americans. If we grant this basic "ideology" then the environmental atrocities of this administration begin to make some sense.

"Government is not the solution to our problem; government *is* the problem." (Ronald Reagan, Jan. 20, 1981.) There it is, straight from the horse's mouth--and on inauguration day! So an early start was made toward a wistful dream reminiscent of the days of the robber barons of the 19th century, when competitors were literally sabotaged before they were driven out of business. When workers asking for an eight-hour day were shot down when they went on strike. When ten-year old kids worked in the coal mines. Of course there was no expectation of achieving this dreadful scenario in the 1980s. But the nostalgia for this kind of unhampered "freedom" was related to drive to DEREGULATE, to remove controls that protect the powerless. To the "malefactors of great wealth" (Teddy Roosevelt, Republican) their new freedom meant not only lower taxes in the upper brackets but an environmental field day.

The public lands--forests, grasslands, coal and oil resources belonging to all of us--were given away at bargain prices to private interests. Roadless areas being considered for wilderness were turned over to the timber companies for exploitation. Not only did the taxpayer foot the bill for most of the logging roads but he lost money when the trees were sold below cost. The effect on wildlife habitat and the future of our wild heritage was hardly given a second thought.

The Superfund law was passed by Congress in 1980 in an attempt to clean up toxic dumps that poisoned ground water and streams and permitted abominations like the miscarriages, deformities and cancers at Love Canal. Lack of enthusiasm for the job, underfunding and undermanning of this enormous project has cleaned up a mere handful of the thousands of affected dumps. This illustrates a tactic that has become all too familiar. When the regulatory agencies are in place and cannot be eliminated because of widespread public support, leave them in place but castrate them by cutting off their funds. Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Anne Gorsuch Burford, in the name of the sacred budget, reduced her spending by 40% so that her dedicated staff was decimated and unable to accomplish anything of consequence. In the words of the unlamented former Secretary on the Interior, James Watt, "we will use the budget system as an excuse to make major policy decisions."



Watt and Gorsuch came to symbolize the contemptuous attitude of the Administration toward the environment and environmentalists. Said Watt, "[environmentalists] are political activists, a left-wing cult which seeks to bring down the kind of government I believe in." They use their issues ". . . as a tool to achieve a greater objective" which is "centralized planning and control of society." It is interesting that Watt lost his job not because of his outrageous acts but because he insulted a popular icon, the Beach Boys. When both Watt and Burford resigned, the President praised them highly and regretted their departure.

The smoke pouring from midwestern plants contains sulfur dioxide which, blowing across the continent, forms acid rain that destroys lakes and forests in Canada and our northeastern states.

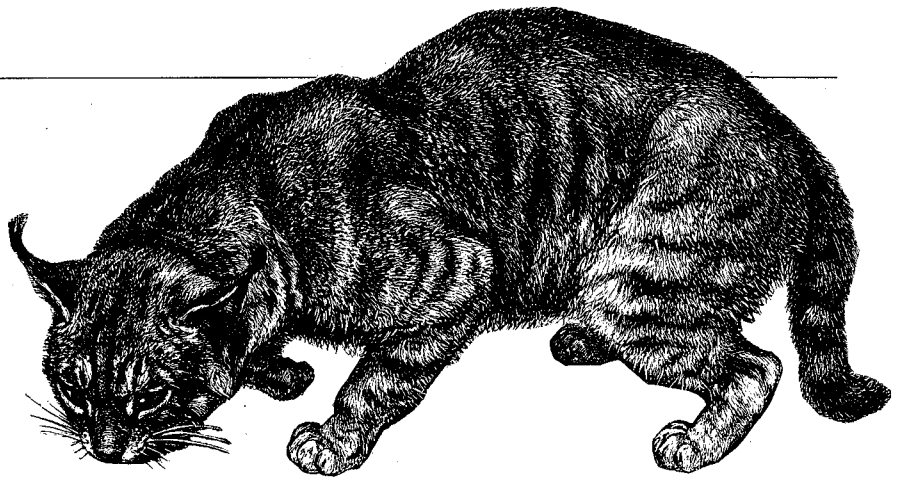
Despite anguished cries from governors of those states and the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Reagan asked for more research: a classic stalling device. Why the reluctance to act? Curbing the acid pollutants requires expensive equipment and the owners of the factories and utilities are reluctant to spend the money. Like the tobacco executives who are still denying the hazards of their product, the midwesterners are saying there is yet no conclusive proof of their responsibility for acid rain. In the interim, the President, with a choice between the public welfare and private gain, lines up with his friends while more trees and lakes expire.

Mr. Hodel, our current Interior Secretary, seems to be a worthy successor to Mr. Watt, though apparently he is not concerned about the return of the Messiah in the near future. His predecessor told Congress that with a straight face, saying that there was no point in worrying about the environment, Judgement Day was coming. A political cartoon of the day showed Watt carrying a sign reading, "Why save it? THE END IS NEAR" The caption read, "Onward Christian Soldier!" Hodel exhibits an unconquerable drive to see that oil rigs decorate all our coastlines and invade the Alaskan wildlife refuges. He became the laughing stock of the editorial pages when his answer to the global danger of the loss of the protective ozone layer was that all you needed were hats, sunglasses and suntan oil. The Administration did not take a particularly aggressive role at the UN Montreal meeting that placed some mild, inadequate curbs on the production of CFCs, the chemicals responsible for the problem.

However, in another international arena, a most aggressive position was taken. The United States had for years supported family planning around the world, especially in Third World countries where the birthrate is highest. In response to its constituency in the Radical Right, the Administration refused to contribute to any organization which in any way suggested abortion as a last-resort alternative to birth control. Our official delegate to this international assembly astonished the world by denying that there was an overpopulation problem. Most reasonable people agree that overpopulation is perhaps the primary cause of the world's difficulties: hunger, the energy crunch, the greenhouse effect, water shortages, homelessness, pollution, rain-forest decline--*ad infinitum.*

Much more could be said about the disaster of the last eight years. There isn't time or space to do more than make a list: endangered species, refusal to acquire new parkland, relaxation of auto emission standards, nuclear wastes, the fox-guarding-the-henhouse syndrome, refusal to enforce environmental laws, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. From inside the government, Anne Burford said it best: "The Administration has no commitment to the environment and no environmental policy." From the outside, listen to Stewart Udall, Interior Secretary in the Kennedy Administration. In a new edition of "The Quiet Crisis" coming out this year, he writes, "It is clear that on environmental issues, Ronald Reagan rowed against the American mainstream for eight years." And, "I am convinced historians will not only indict the Reagan administration for its lack of vision concerning resources and its abdication of the traditional U.S. role of leadership in global environmental matters, but will conclude that Ronald Reagan's negative legacy is a gargantuan debt that restricts the action options of his successor and of the American People."*

*Quoted in *The Amicus Journal*, Summer 1988, quarterly publication of the Natural Resources Defense Council.



A Changing Policy on Predators in Sequoia

George L. San Miguel

From our earliest childhood years, we were taught to fear wild beasts. Our culture retains admiration for "useful" animals such as deer, waterfowl and fish and dreads the flesh eaters like wolves, bears and snakes. During the early years of Sequoia and General Grant National Parks, wildlife management reflected society's view of "good" and "bad" animals. Most other parks followed this philosophy. Predation was looked upon with horror as evil, wasteful and repulsive. In time, the parks shed this antiquated and emotional approach in favor of a scientifically sound policy. Preserving wilderness in today's national parks would be a failure without a strategy which includes protecting all indigenous organisms including the predators.

When the first national park, Yellowstone, was established in 1872, park land was set aside to be " . . . maintained in a natural condition . . . " to save " . . . the natural curiosities and wonders." Wildlife management was important, but secondary. Without a park service agency, stewardship fell upon the army. In 1890, the primary task in newly created Sequoia and General Grant National Parks was to save the spectacular Giant Sequoias from lumbermen.

The military superintendents realized, however, that the wildlife could not be protected in the tiny, fledgling parks. Much more land was needed and soon. Since the 1870's, literally hundreds of thousands of domestic sheep roamed over the higher mountains each summer, land destined to later be added to the parks. Backcountry travelers on horseback often had to turn back or risk starving their horses since the sheep had cropped virtually all the available wild forage. The stockman's rifles were also responsible for declines in local deer populations. Furthermore, severe hunting and trapping persisted on adjoining lands where park wildlife might seasonally wander. Poaching within the parks was also a big problem since the troopers did not stay the whole year.

The cavalry officers in charge saw the wildlife role of national parks as fully protected reserves for game animals. Poaching problems relaxed as the years passed. Attention was then focused on those carnivores which were thought to heavily prey upon game. In 1904, permission was given to park guardians to kill coyotes, bobcats and mountain lions. By 1910, wolverines, foxes, skunks, snakes, even porcupines were added to the "vermin" hit list. Owls, hawks and eagles were also thought of as undesirable. Recognizing black bears as little more than occasionally bothersome, they were usually treated with indifference, but were

persecuted never the less. Based on ignorance, prejudice, folklore and hearsay, predators were systematically exterminated.

Meanwhile, the game animals, mainly deer, quail, doves and grouse, were strictly protected. In addition, alien game species were actively introduced to the parks' habitats. Hundreds of thousands of trout were planted in high country lakes and streams that were naturally barren of fish. Asian pheasants and wild turkeys were set free in the foothills. A herd of elk was translocated to the Potwisha area and plans for adding bison and pronghorn were endorsed. Wildlife management in the two parks ironically encouraged the propagation of game which no one was allowed to hunt. The national parks certainly needed better direction with a much more sound and consistent plan for wildlife.

The National Park Service was established in 1916 to staff the parks with dedicated, civilian professioanls. Clarification of park goals was also provided: "... to conserve the scenery and the natural historic objects and the wildlife therein ..."

It was not until 1918 that wholesale predator eradication finally ceased in Sequoia. Over the next fifteen years, predator control was gradually phased out of all national parks. Wildlife conservation in the parks was to preserve primitive America rather than an arbitrary ideal. Carnivorous animals would now be recognized as intrinsic parts of the wildlife resource protected within national parks. In 1931, predator protection became official policy except in individual cases where public safety or a rare species was threatened by a particular animal.

But old ideas die hard. When Sequoia began protecting predators, an immediate storm of opposition arose from local stock ranchers, farmers, hunting clubs and developers despite ample contemporary, scientific studies which had already showed that widespread predator control is usually unnecessary and, in national parks, inappropriate. One of the major objections to the creation of Kings Canyon National Park (1940) was the policy of predator protection. For the two parks, this emotionally charged issue was difficult to explain to a misinformed public.

Modern ecological principles were already formulated and understood among most biologists in the mid-1930's. Nature was seen in a state of balance which could be ruined by man's tampering. Unforeseen side effects would then create more problems than were originally faced. It was with this knowledge that superintendent John R. White successfully fended off numerous attempts to reinstate predator control in Sequoia from 1918 into the 1940's.

In more recent times, National Park Service goals became even more specific. The landmark Leopold Report of 1963 recommended "... the biotic associations within each park be maintained, or where necessary, recreated, as nearly as possible in the condition when the area was first visited by the white man." However, much had changed in those first one hundred years including the drastic reduction of many predator populations within and immediately adjacent to the national parks. During the winter of 1924-1925, a single trap line in Mineral King (long before it finally became part of Sequoia in 1978) killed 2 wolverines, 6 fishers, 13 mountain coyotes, and 96 pine martens! A few years before Kings Canyon National Park was established, one trapper took over 200 pine martens in this area over one winter!

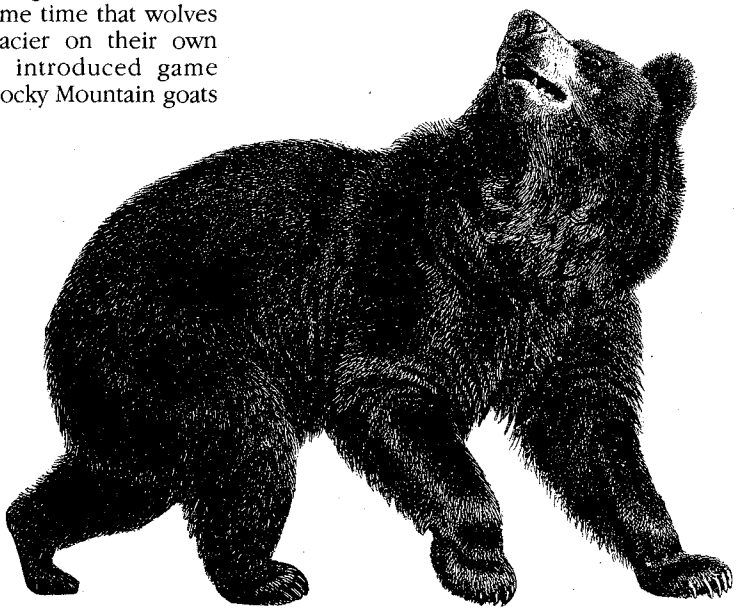
Today's goal in the national parks emphasizes allowing natural, ecological processes to continue without interference. Simply stated, Nature is permitted to take her course whenever possible. Events previously considered alarming such as cougars hunting deer, insects nibbling on trees and fires consuming fuel may now be termed natural phenomena. Nature is always ready to counterbalance each event. Without these endemic processes, we could not experience the natural scenery the parks try to preserve.

Even without predator control, the parks have some of the healthiest populations of "game" left in California. Think about this point. Left to their own devices, flesh eating animals rarely wipe out their prey. Their presence also adds to our experience when we visit national parks.

National park policy has now come full circle. Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks and other wildlife agencies and conservation groups are trying hard to find ways to save the grizzly bear both inside and outside the parks. Serious plans are being drawn up to bring wolves back to Yellowstone at the same time that wolves have recolonized Glacier on their own from Canada. Even introduced game species, such as the Rocky Mountain goats in Olympic National Park, are seen for what they are; aliens disruptive to the local ecosystems.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks have long been without grizzly bears and will not likely ever support them again. Though more research is needed, it is quite possible that the wolverine and the native race of the red fox may soon become extirpated from these parks. Fortunately, the introduced elk, turkeys and pheasants did not survive. A very bright note is that Peregrine Falcons are once again taking up residence among the towering cliffs of Kings Canyon. Signs indicate that breeding may take place in 1988. Perhaps, with a lot of luck, we may even see the California Condor fly again over the wild Sierra Nevada one day.

With growing scarcity of wilderness, people now actively seek these sanctuaries to enjoy the fascinating wildlike that was once persecuted. Sequoia and Kings Canyon are wild places and remain ever exciting to explore. In these rugged, evergreen canyons one may still hear the thrilling sounds of howling coyotes, the barking hoots of Spotted Owls and the piercing cries of the Northern Goshawk. Anyone can still come here and watch a majestic, soaring eagle, glimpse a swiftly running fox, or perhaps encounter the deep malevolent stare of a mountain lion. Now, more than ever, predators are a national resource well worth preserving.



Bookstore News

Your bookstore continues to grow apace: new titles are constantly being added in order to keep up with the proliferation of birdfinding and bird identification guides. The sport/hobby continues its extraordinary rise in popularity as more and more people become environmentally aware and take up a pastime that is both conscientious and fun. As we become more skilfull at identification, the demand for more sophisticated guidance grows. Simultaneously, the broadening high standards of living and the shifting of our national demography toward the retirement end of the age scale expands the market for guides to birding around the world.

Of course, with this plethora of popular literature, the birder must become more selective in his purchases, from both the qualitative and financial standpoints. In purchasing for the bookstore stock, we examine as many of these new publications as we can obtain, looking for those that offer our members value for dollar in terms of completeness of coverage, accuracy of text and illustration, and production quality.

Following are new titles that have become available since the issuance of our latest saleslist (May '88):

Bird-Walker, *Jean Roche.* A set of three cassettes covering bird sounds of 400 species in Britain, Europe and North Africa. $29.95

A Dictionary of American Bird Names, *Choate.* An interesting little volume for the etymolophile--the meaning and derivation of birds' common and Latin names, and mini-biographies of the people many were named after. 226 pp. hdbd. $9.95

A Guide to North American Bird Clubs, *Rickert.* Published in 1978 and still a valuable reference for the traveling birder. Out of print; limited supply. 565 pp. hdbd. $4.67.

Birds of Sonoma County, CA, *Bolander & Parmeter.* An annotated checklist and birding gazetteer at last back in print. Brief summaries and bar graphs of seasonal distribution, relative abundance, breeding status and habitat for all species recorded in the county, plus a dozen pages of birding spots. 93 pp. $5.50.

The Birder's Handbook, *Ehrlich, Dobkin & Wheye.* This exciting manual is the essential companion to your North American field guide. Using Bent's monumental volumes as a basis and updating from numerous sources, the authors have encapsulated on the left hand pages the natural history of all our breeding birds, supplying the information on display, nest, eggs, diet and behaviour that indentification guides omit. Meanwhile, on the right hand pages run fascinating essays on virtually every aspect of avian biology. All of this in a manageable and reasonably-priced single volume! 785 pp. $14.95 softcover and $24.95 hdbd.

Bird Songs of Southeastern Arizona and Southern Texas, Keller. Voice recordings of all those specialty birds you're after.
Record or cassette $12.95.

Birds of Prey of the World, *Weick and Brown.* A concise guide to all the world's diurnal raptors. Forty coloured plates of 1144 figures, including distinctive races, sexes, and adult and immature plumages. Brief tabulated text in German and English. 160 pp. hdbd. $48.00 Special order.

A Birdwatcher's Guide to Japan, *Mark Brazil.* An excellent new birdfinding guide to this archipelago, by one of its most experienced birders. Covers 60 principal sites, primarily on the main islands, with information for each on species, birding season, transportation and accommodation, and a map of each site. Also includes a checklist current to July 1987. Softcover pocket guide $13.95. (Special order).

Birds of the Middle East and North Africa, *P.A.D. Hollom, R.F. Porter, et. al.* This is subtitled and intended as a companion volume to the field guides to Britain and Europe (in particular the Peterson Series guide). It covers farther afield to all of Africa north of the Sahara, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. 700 species, 350 colour illustrations, 510 maps. Price TBA. (Special order).

Hawks in Flight, *Pete Dunne, et.al.* This is a 'holistic' guide to field identification of all the widespread North American diurnal raptors, showing you the approach to identification at great distances and under adverse conditions. Excellent reading! 254 pp. hdbd. $17.95.

In addition, we continue to offer a revolving and evolving stock of out-of-print and hard-to-find volumes, as well as binoculars and scopes, other birding aids, and gift items; so come and see us, or call at (213) 876-0202.

Book Review

The Complete Birder

by Jack Connor

Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston 1988.
$8.95 softcover.

Review by Charles Harper

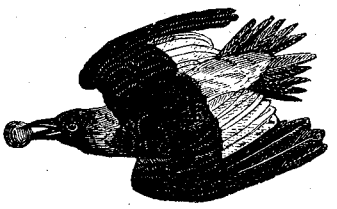
The unimaginative title is a facade for this excellent little book. It is not comlete, but it certainly hits the high points, and well: it is concise, lucid, witty and informative. The new birder will find answers to many of his basic questions about the hobby, and consolation for many of his fears. The intermediate birder will pick up some good pointers toward refining his skills, and a few warnings which he might well heed.

A chapter on optics is a good overview of how binoculars, scopes and tripods function, and how to judge them. A chapter on acoustics will get you comfortably started into learning birdsong. Three chapters ('Migration' 'Summer' and 'Winter') introduce you to the strategies of birdfinding; they include such topics as migration traps, corridors and funnels, species irruptions, expansions and contractions, and ornithometeorology.

Half of the book (Chapters 7-11) is a bold plunge into learning how to approach identification within our most difficult groups: the warblers, hawks, shorebirds, gulls and terns. The author helps you mentally organize the members of these groups, sorting shorebirds into sizes, clarifying gull plumage sequences, coining mnemonic phrases to remind you which species show which characters; he boosts you over that wall of panic created when you find yourself alone with a beachful of peeps or a tree flickering with warblers, not merely by supplying a comprehensive list of fieldmarks, but by preparing you psychologically for the frustration of uncertainty that is inherent in the sport.

In fact, Connor's final chapter, 'The Inner Game' is an elegant summation of his raison d'etre for writing the book: to get you well started into the 'sporting science' but with the warning and assurance that in birding as in bodybuilding--no pain, no gain.

Birds of the Season



Hank Brodkin

Records of rare and unusual bird sightings reported in this column should be considered tentative until they have been reviewd by the **American Birds** *regional editors or, if appropriate, by the* **California Bird Records Committee.**

I would like to begin this, my first column, with a short discussion of the above disclaimer. I certainly do not wish to discourage any of you from sending your sightings into Birds of the Season. Indeed, without your cooperation there would be no column. So please send me your observations--not only of rarities but anything in the local bird world that strikes you as interesting or unusual--with as many details as you can remember.

American Birds also deserves our support. This magazine, published by National Audubon, documents the ebb and flow of North American bird life and contains many articles of interest to birders. Guy McCaskie is the Southern Pacific Coast Regional Editor. You can send your observations *with documentation of all rarities* to him at the San Diego Natural History Museum, PO Box 1390, San Diego, CA 92112. L. A. County sightings should be sent to Kimball Garrett, the L.A. County Coordinator, at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007. Guy will forward a copy of documentation of really rare birds to the California Bird Records Committee.

Remember, the more observers who can verify your rarity the better. Please call L.A. Audubon (213) 876-0202, of Jean Brandt or myself (phone numbers below) as soon as possible after the sighting.

This has been quite a summer. The most exciting bird was a dark phase **Wedge-tailed Shearwater**, found July 31 at the north end of the Salton Sea by Guy McCaskie and Richard Webster. It was not refound. This is only the second California record of this warm water species.

Almost as unusual was the adult **Little Stint** found at Upper Newport Bay on July 9 by Matt Heindel. This bird proved just as elusive as the shearwater and could not be found again in spite of a large crowd of eager birders. There were two sightings of the uncommon **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**, one in Santa Barbara on July 21 and another (the same bird?) seen at Batequitas Lagoon by many observers on July 24 and 25. Both sightings were of adult birds and are the first summer sightings of this species in California. An atypically large number of **4 Solitary Sandpipers** were found at the Baker sewage ponds August 11 by Charles Hood. About **10 Semipalmated Sandpipers** were reported--about usual for this time of year--the first one by Jon Dunn at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on July 30, and **Bairds Sandpipers** were right on schedule with the first reported by Bruce Broadbooks at Edwards Air Force Base on July 28.

Unusual Larid sightings were another highlight. Doug Willick found an adult **Long-tailed Jaeger** on August 14 and an adult **Laughing Gull** on August 16, both on the Santa Ana River in Anaheim. At least three juvenile **Franklin Gulls**--one at Bolsa Chica on July 17, one at Edwards, July 23 through at least August 18, and one at Malibu on August 9 (Kimball Garrett). But the most exciting for an inland area was the adult **Sabine's Gull** found on August 13 at Tinemaha Resevoir near Big Pine by Tom and Joe Heindel. **1500 Elegant Terns** were seen at Malibu on August 10 by Bob Hoffman, perhaps reflecting the successsful breeding season to the south. Information from Bolsa Chica biologist Bill Shew through Loren Hayes describes 426 successful breeding pairs of **Forsters**, and 3 pairs of **Royal Terns** representing the first successful breeding of Royals north of San Diego. These terns along with 80 pairs of **Black Skimmers** somewhat inundated the usual nesting colony of Least Terns at Bolsa Chica, forcing them to nest in an area where most of the young were destroyed by predators. Hopefully they did better elsewhere. A pair of **Gull-billed Terns** nested successfully in southern San Diego Bay for the first coastal California breeding record.

Apparently **White-faced Ibis** has bred in Los Angeles County for the first time. In late Spring Arnold Small noted courting pairs at the Edwards Air Force Base marsh, and only July 28 three newly fledged birds were found here by Bruce Broadbooks.

These overcast mornings
we should keep our
eye on the sky
wherever
we are.

On August 1 Kimball Garrett saw a pair of **Chimney Swifts** over the Rose Garden in Exposition Park.

Our last group of sightings have to do with "Eastern" warblers that apparently spent all or at least part of the summer in our area. The most interesting of these is the male **Chestnut-sided Warbler** that has been at Turtle Rock Nature Center in Orange County since June 29 and has not (August 18) molted into basic plumage. A young male **American Redstart** spent July 18 through 28 at Cal State, Long Beach (Brian Daniels) and a female has been in the willows at the mouth of Zuma Creek since July 31. Also a **Black-and-White Warbler** was reported from the L.A. County Arboretum on July 30 by Lois Fulmer.

The challenging Fall season is now upon us. This is the most rewarding and exciting time of the year to be in the field, when at any moment that rare and usually cryptically marked immature vagrant may pop out of the next bush. The coastal canyons, especially where there is a little water, will be best, but wherever you are--be alert and have your notebook ready!

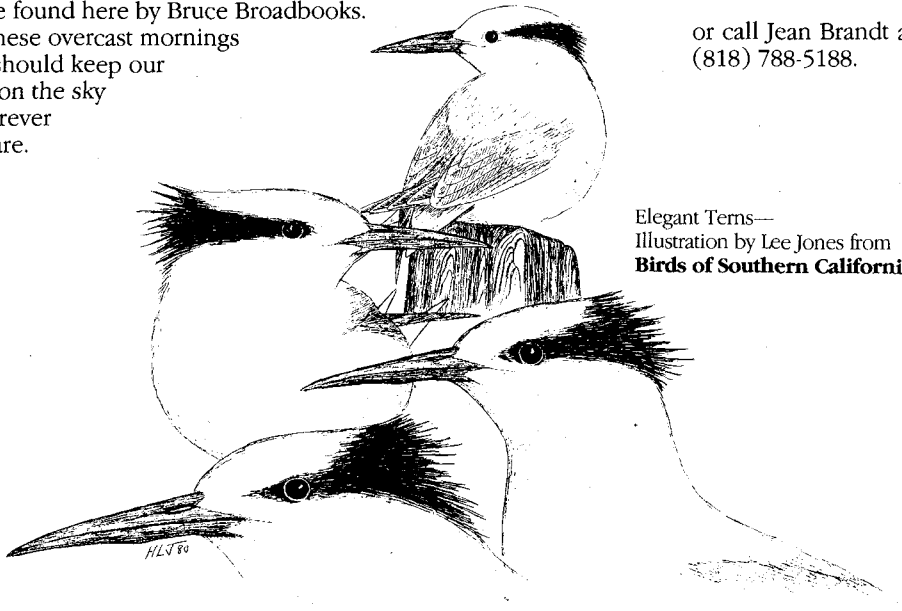
Before I close I'd like to recommend THE BIRDER'S HANDBOOK, by Paul Ehrlich, et al. For $14.95 you get 785 pages crammed with more information about North American birds than I've ever seen in any book. This is not an identification or distribution guide--that information you can find in your field guide--but almost everything else you may have wondered about the birds you see plus a lot you've never thought of is in this book. It is available at L.A. Audubon.

* * *

Send your bird observations with as many details as you can to:

Hank Brodkin
27½ Mast Street
Marina Del Rey, CA 90292
Phone (213) 827-0407

or call Jean Brandt at
(818) 788-5188.



Elegant Terns—
Illustration by Lee Jones from
Birds of Southern California

From the Editor

First I want to explain that the delay in the Tanager schedule has been occasioned by my illness and subsequent surgery, plus the need to recover to a degree before assuming editorial duties and efforts again.There have also been complexities in the printing.

I am doing better now, and hope and expect that in the future we will be able to keep the publication of our journal on schedule. All our LAAS members are certainly entitled to this, and that is our intention and effort. Occasionally, as explained above, emergencies may and do override the planned regularity.

Due to severe schedule constrictions Kimball Garrett will no longer be able to author the BIRDS OF THE SEASON. We will all miss Kimball's lucid and scholarly treatment of this TANAGER tradition and still look forward to other work by him from time to time.

Taking over will be Hank Brodkin, an old friend of LAAS, who started birding in 1946. Please send your bird observations to Hank at 27 1/2 Mast Street, Marina Del Rey, CA, 90292 or call (213) 827-0407. Or you may call Jean Brandt (who will help Hank gather information for the column as well as for the Bird Tape) at (181) 788-5188. Please leave a phone number where you can be reached and include as many details as you can. The success of this column depends on you, and it is one of the Tanager's most valuable features.

Even as the redoubtable Fred Heath, the previous editor, I find that the insatiable requirements of the TANAGER for articles and useful material require constant attention and effort by the editor.

We are gratified to have such a splendid replacement; our society is fortunate to have so much talent.

This thought leads naturally into the next topic of this column.

AS ALWAYS, WE NEED ARTICLES.

WE NEED ARTICLES.

IN FACT, WE DO NEED ARTICLES.

Although occasionally we do run articles by outside authors, a substantial majority of our materials come directly from our membership. Such articles, and of course our regular features, are the lifeblood of the TANAGER, and always will be.

We have so many capable people within our own thousands of members that potentially we can thus fulfil and over-fulfil our needs.

I do have promises of several excellent planned articles already; but timing is a problem, and in any case there will be the continuing need.

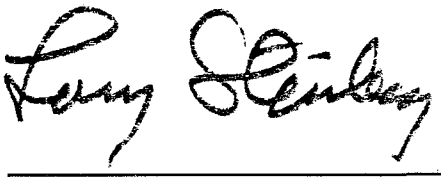
What sort of articles do we need, and what would we like from you - and you -- and you? Yes, specifically you.

The field is quite broad, and I will mention only a few types. One is studies of local birding areas. Another is scientific material on breeding, bird behaviour, and status and distribution of various species in the area. The exciting tales of great safaris in Africa, Canada, South America, and Asia, etc, are always welcome. And so many more, on conservation, equipment, books, and on and on ...

We accept lots of articles that have never been prediscussed. But if you wish, I will be delighted to discuss ideas with anyone who wants to write an article. Publication is satisfying, and a source of pride; pitching in makes you feel good.

and remember ---WE NEED ARTICLES.

I await your response expectantly.



Reservation Policy and Procedures:
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:
  Charles Harper, Reservations Chair
  LAAS
  7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
  Los Angeles, CA 90046.

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

If you desire to carpool to an event, Mr. Harper can provide information for you to make contact and possible arrangements.

RESERVATION TRIPS: (Limited Participation)

Monterey Pelagic trips will be offered regularly through the Fall by **Debra Love Shearwater**. We do not yet have the schedule for her 1989 trips. Most trips are around $44; some overnight excursions are $120. Trip dates are too numerous to allow listing them. Write or phone Shearwater Journeys, P.O. Box 1445, Soquel, CA 95073, phone #(408) 688-1990 for a listing and specifics.

Membership Memo

A recent letter from National Audubon advises of a new policy that has been enforced since September, 1987. Chapter memberships have been changed automatically, when a person moves into the area of another chapter.

It is suggested that if you move, and wish to remain affiliated with Los Angeles Audubon, you request that your chapter not be changed when you send in your address change.

EDITOR Larry Steinberg
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Doni Kendig
TYPESETTING & LAYOUT Etcetera Graphics
PRINTING Beacon Litho
CONSERVATION EDITOR Sandy Wohlgemuth
ORNITHOLOGY CONSULTANT Kimball Garrett

Published ten times a year by the Los Angeles Audubon Society. 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046.

PRESIDENT Ellsworth Kendig
1st VICE PRESIDENT Bob Van Meter
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Andrea Kaufman

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 must send checks for $5 to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

THE WESTERN TANAGER received the 1987 Special Conservation Award and 2nd place honors for Newsletter, Chapter with more than 900 members from the National Audubon Society.

Subscriptions to the 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.

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-October 1988

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

Tuesday, September 13--Ian Strange will present **The Falkland Islands and Their Natural History**. Ian Strange has resided in the Falkland Islands for nearly 30 years. During this time he has been deeply involved with the continuing conservation of the unique wildlife of this remote archipelago. He is known throughout the world as the author of several definitive books on the Falklands and, as a Crown Stamp designer, has designed some 100 stamps, most of them focusing on the wildlife of the Falkland Islands. Please join us for this special evening: a tour of the Falklands with the man who knows them most intimately.

Ian Strange

Tuesday, October 11-Arnold Small will present **Birding on the Edge of the Arctic**, featuring work from his recent photographic expedition to the Churchill region, located on the Hudson Bay. Arnold, whose skills as a photographer, teacher and writer are nationally known, will show us why the Churchill region is considered one of the premier birding locations in North America.

IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOPS
Precede the regular evening meetings, 7:30-8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 13- Back by popular demand, **Kimball Garrett** will present this month's ID Workshop. His topic will be announced on the bird tape (213-874-1318) the week prior to the meeting.

Tuesday, October 11— to be announced.

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, September 24--San Diego. Join the recently departed (from the area!), but still quite active **Fred Heath** in a morning of birding rife with potential. Peaceful **Pt. Loma** is well noted as a migrant trap, providing a stopover for numerous western and bagrant eastern species each year. Other spots visited may include San Diego Bay and the Tijuana River, depending on Fred's intuitive whimsey. Meet at 8:00 at the Mission Bay Visitor's Center lot, and bring a lunch. To get to the Visitor's Center, take the 5 Fwy. to Clairemont Drive by the Bay. Turn right (west) and parking will be on your right at the end.

Saturday, September 24--Pelagic Trip out of Morro Bay. Leader **Brad Schram** of Morro Coast Audubon Society will be scanning the outer waters of Estero Bay for a myriad of possible seabirds including storm petrels, jeagers, skua, and 6(!) possible shearwaters. Birds should be plentiful all day long. The boat will leave from Bob's Landing on the Morro Bay Embarcadero at 7 a.m., and return at 3 p.m. To reserve, send a self-addressed stamped envelope and a $25 check filled out to M.C.A.S. to Tom Edell at 46 8th. Street, Cayucos CA. 93430; directions, etc. will be mailed with confirmation. For more information, call Tom at (805) 995-1691.

Sunday, October 2--Coastal San Luis Obispo County. Join leader **Brad Schram**, previously of LAAS, as he paruses his present environs for migrating waterfowl, migrants, and misguided vagrants. **Oceano, Morro Bay, Montagna De Oro**, and other local birding sites are famous hotspots for eastern vagrants, having produced Great-Crested Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, and a myriad of unlikely warblers in past years. Brad's knowledge and experience in the area should make this an enjoyable, productive and memorable day. Trip participation is limited, so call Audubon House for reservations and an informative mailer on specifics of lodging, directions, etc. $15 fee.

Sunday, October 2--Topanga State Park. Meet leader **Gerry Haigh** at 8 a.m. For details, see Sept. 4 trip.

Monday, October 3--Malibu Lagoon to McGrath State Beach. Ed Navojosky will be leading this annual jaunt for the seventeenth year running! This is a good time of year to observe a variety of fall migrants, resident species and early wintering birds. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the north corner of the Hughes Market lot across from the Lagoon. After taking in Malibu, the group will stop at Big Sycamore Cyn. for a picnic lunch, and finish up at McGrath with other stops along the way. If this seems a bit much, feel free to wrap up your birding early.

Saturday, October 8--Ballona Wetlands. Meet leader **Bob Shanman** or **Ian Austin** at 8 a.m. For details, see Sept. 10 trip.

Saturday, October 8--Lake Palmdale. Jonathan Alderfer will lead a select few on a tour of Lake Palmdale in the Antelope Valley. Phone reservations to Audubon House to bird this limited access area for waterfowl, migrants and possible vagrants. Take the 5 Fwy. to the 14 Fwy. to the La Mont / Odett Overlook just before Palmdale. Meet here at 7 a.m. sharp, and finish at 1 p.m. Bring a lunch or hit a Palmdale bun-and-run later.

Sunday, October 23--Whittier Narrows. Meet leader **David White** at 8 a.m. For details, see Sept. 17 trip. **Please note date change.**

Sunday, November 6--Topanga State Park. Meet leader **Gerry Haigh** at 8 a.m. For details, see Sept. 4 trip.

Saturday, November 12--Ballona Wetlands. Meet leader **Bob Shanman / Ian Austin** at 8 a.m. For details, see Sept. 10 trip.

Sunday, November 19--Whittier Narrows. Meet leader **David White** at 8 a.m. For details, see Sept. 17 trip. **Please note date change.**

* * *

Bird Class--Dr. Arnold Small will again be conducting his UCLA extension class know to birders as **Field I.D. of California Birds**, and known to clerical sorts as Biology 401.1 (EDP#B2560). Enlightening and enjoyable for all levels of birders. All five lectures will be Wednesday 7 - 9:30 p.m. on campus, starting Sept. 28. All four field trips will be on Saturdays aboard a chartered bus. INquire about seniors discount. To enroll or for information, call Life Sciences (213) 825-9971. ($265.00 including bus.)

RESERVATION TRIPS:
see page 11 for details

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 26974
Los Angeles, CA