



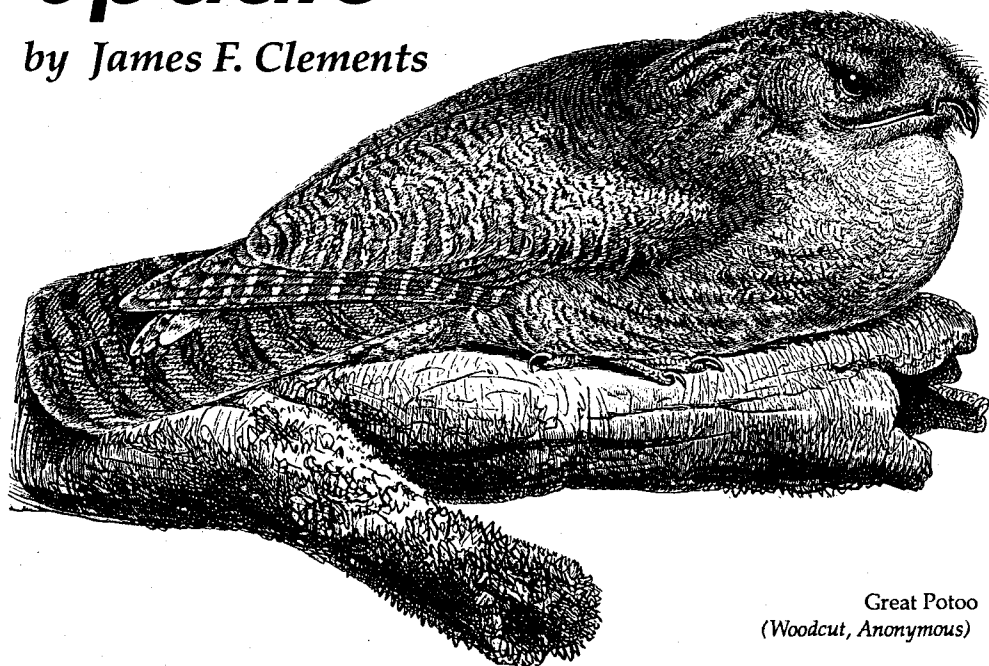
WESTERN TANAGER

The Los Angeles Chapter of
The National Audubon Society

Volume 55 Number 10 September 1989

BirdQuest '89 Update

by James F. Clements



Great Potoo
(Woodcut, Anonymous)

Dr Clements continues a fabulous odyssey to identify 4,000 bird species in 1989. He may have surpassed the current record of 2,800 species in one calendar year by the time you read this. Here he reports his 2,448th bird of 1989 (and his 6,000th life bird)!

Bird Quest is raising funds for the new Ralph W. Schreiber Hall of Birds at the County Natural History Museum. To support the Bird Quest, contact the Museum before the end of the year, at (213) 744-3307. Ask for Agnes Hess.

Venezuela Report

A phenomenal trip to Venezuela concluded the first half of BIRDQUEST '89. Few countries can match this part of northern South America for ornithological thrills. Packed in this Texas-sized nation are almost 1,400 species of birds - almost half the total avifauna of continental South America!

I travelled with my brother Bob and Davis Finch, one of the most accomplished tropical ornithologists. We saw 515 species, of which 267 were new for the year. This brings the BIRDQUEST '89 total

to 2,227 species for the first six months of the year . . . right on schedule!

Our three-week Venezuela itinerary included the coastal cordillera of Henry Pittier National Park, Guatopo National Park, the Guyana rain forest at Rio Grande in extreme eastern Bolivar, and the incomparable escalera in the tepuis of southern Venezuela on the Brazilian border.

Hato Piñero was a new location for me in Venezuela, and it lived up to its reputation. This 80,000-hectare working ranch has been closed to all hunting for 35 years, and boasts an incredible fauna, including a number of nocturnal ocelots

and the spectacular Yellow-knobbed Curassow. Almost as exciting as our three views of the mighty cracid was a night drive in which we counted ten Striped Owls. In addition to photographing this elusive species, Bob also photographed both Common and Great Potoos at point-blank range!

Guatopo National Park, one of the largest reserves in a country that has set aside eight percent of its land as national parks, yielded us magnificent views of yet another elusive nocturnal inhabitant. . . the Mottled Owl. Our first two attempts ended in failure, but Davis' determination paid off with a 4 a.m. visit to the park. This gave us a total of 16 nocturnal birds - nine owls and seven caprimulgids for the trip.

Our visit to Rio Grande was marked by the brief appearance of one of Venezuela's rarest and most beautiful birds - the striking Blue-backed Tanager. This and the arid littoral's dashing Vermillion Cardinal were two of my most memorable life birds.

But the *pièce de résistance* again this year was our visit to the escalera. The road leaves the lowland tropical jungle, climbs through rain-drenched cloud forests, and dramatically breaks out into an immense upland savanna.

Twenty-three of the 34 pantepui endemics are known from the escalera, so in addition to providing a spectacular drive through a fascinating subtropical forest of immense botanical interest, this single stretch of road offers an unexpectedly complete cross-section of Venezuela's most unique bird fauna.

Even though the pantepui region stretches for more than 800 kilometers from the western reaches of the Orinoco to the Merume Mountains of Guyana and embraces at least 28 major mountain masses, this is the only patch of highland forest touched by a road! It already enjoys legal protection as part of the Gran Sabana National Park, but it will require the active vigilance of the park authorities to keep it intact. It has already been subjected to depredation by wood cutters and unscrupulous orchid collectors. In 1977,

they violated the forest with at least five different trails that they had cut for such purposes.

The recent spate of mining activity at the bottom of the escalera at Las Claritas has also had an effect on the forest. Water contamination has reached such dangerous levels that when we were there last week, a moratorium was in effect in many areas and all foreign miners were being asked to leave the country.

Our first morning on the escalera, Bob spotted a magnificent male Cock-of-the-Rock feeding 30 feet from us on an exposed limb - right alongside a handsome Guyanan Toucanet! But this experience was nothing compared to the two species of bellbirds that continuously sent their stentorian calls ringing above the subtropical forest canopy. We watched in fascination as a male White Bellbird opened his black-lined mouth, emitted his bell-like call, and then flicked his head to one side to allow the incredible wattles to rock from side to side.

Other exciting birds of the escalera included the Roraiman Barbtail, Tepui Goldenthrout, Flutist Wren, Green-bellied Hummingbird and Roraiman Antwren, not to mention another five species that begin with "Tepui."

I would be remiss not to mention the outstanding job Davis did in getting us superb looks of 30 different species of antbirds, including an incredible eight species of antpittas and anthruses! I spent two hours last year chasing a chestnut-collared Antpitta, with only a quick desultory look. Yet Davis has one singing on a raised perch in plain view after only a ten minute session with the tape recorder!

So it's off to Peru next week for the beginning of the second half of BIRDQUEST '89. With a published list of almost 1,700 species, Peru could certainly prove to be the most exciting chapter to date in my 1989 odyssey.

—June 2, 1989.

Peru Overview

Peru lived up to its reputation as the bird paradise of the world! Boasting almost 1,780 species, this roughly Texas-sized South American country contains the highest diversity of animal and plant species on earth.

Our three-week BIRDQUEST '89 Odyssey concentrated on the southeast corner of Peru in the recently created Manu National Park, which the World Wildlife Fund appropriately labels, "the most important rain forest in the world!"

Manu is the only park in the world with over 1,000 species of birds and 15,000 species of plants. The 4.5 million acre Manu National Park ranges from the lowlands of the western Amazon basin to over 13,000 feet in the montane grasslands of the Andes.

UNESCO declared this an International Biosphere Reserve in 1977, emphasizing its importance as one of the only reserves in the world that protects an entire unhunted and unlogged watershed of this size.

Because of this protection, the biosphere reserve contains many rare and fascinating species of animals and trees that humans have already eliminated from most parts of the Amazon basin and surrounding mountains.

During our three-week stay, we were treated to intimate views of the rare Black Caiman; Giant Otter; tapir (swimming across the river); nine species of brilliantly colored macaws; Orinocco Geese; and a flock of Pale-winged Trumpeters meandering along the forest trail in front of us like some tame barnyard fowl!

Dazzling Cock-of-the-Rock were often conspicuous in fruiting trees, and we were treated to a male Umbrellabird on an exposed perch that my brother Bob photographed 30 feet away.

But his crowning photographic moment came the final day when Mark Smith spied a Gray-breasted Mountain Toucan perched along the road. The cooperative bird allowed Bob to shoot a full roll of 36 exposures, turning to expose every facet of its outrageous plumage like a professional model. If that shot doesn't qualify for front cover of *American Birds*, they ought to advertise for a new photo editor!

When I first visited the Manu in 1979, the distinguished primatologist John Terborgh told me, "No other place in the Amazon lowlands is as utterly pristine. While this may seem surprising in view of the vast expanse of primary lowland forest that remains in Amazonia to this day, the fact is that nearly all of it has been exploited in one way or another for game, furs, rubber, Brazil nuts, timber, gold, etc. Never before had I seen so many monkeys of so many species that did not flee at the first hint of human beings."

How well I remembered Professor Terborgh's words as we ascended the Pilcopata Road. Never have I had the pleasure of returning to a pristine environment ten or twenty years later to find it virtually untouched. Where else in the world can you look down a forested slope and watch a Solitary Eagle on the nest as we did at 2,750 meters in a magnificent

subtropical forest dripping with mosses, epiphytes, orchids and bromeliads?

While I did record 597 species of birds on the Peru portion of BIRDQUEST '89, only 202 species were added to the year list, bringing the count to date to 2,448 species. A highlight for me was seeing my 6,000th life bird, the Rufous-capped Thornbill. But this hummingbird couldn't hold a candle to the three endemic hummingbirds we saw on the trip: Koepcke's Hermit, the rare Peruvian Piedtail I discovered feeding in a bosky dell (and photographed by Bob), nor the Bearded Mountaineer that Richard Webster and I watched exercising his dominance over a Sparkling Violetear and a much larger Giant Hummingbird in a patch of tree tobacco near Laguna Huaparcay on the outskirts of Cuzco.

We also recorded two of the rarest birds in Peru, the Black-faced Cotinga (life bird for Dr Robert Ridgely), a peculiar cotinga described by Lowery and O'Neill in 1966, with all the known sightings coming from the Manu-Cocha Cashu region.

Another treat was our sighting of the Rufous-fronted Anthrush (life bird for everyone), a rare formicard described by E.R. Blake in 1957, that escaped detection by ornithologists until rediscovered by Ted Parker in 1982.

The wren family has always fascinated me, and the song of the Chestnut-breasted Wren reverberating through the subtropical forests at dawn got the day off to a resounding start.

But the ornithological event of the trip was Bob Ridgely's discovery of the Andean White-winged Potoo, a nocturnal species known from a handful of specimens, and probably seen in life by at most one or two ornithologists. We used up every flashlight battery we had getting good looks at the bird (fortunately we found it on the last night of the trip), and my brother took what were the first photographs ever of the bird. Interestingly, Bob has now photographed three species of potoos, all within the last month!

In all we counted 24 Peruvian endemics, scattered among such diverse families as ovenbirds, hummingbirds, toucans, parrots, manakins, flycatchers, antbirds, finches and tanagers.

With one more trip to south America coming up in September (to Brazil with Bob Ridgely), my count of neotropical avifauna after Ecuador, Venezuela and Peru is astounding. The list included 22 toucans, 34 cotingas, 38 wrens, 83 antbirds (including 17 anthruses and antpittas alone), 92

(continued bottom of page 3)

Birdathon '89 Raises More Than \$8100 for Environmental Education

by Melanie Ingalls

Congratulations and many thanks to the L.A. Audubon members and supporters who made Birdathon '89 a success!

National Audubon Society and local Audubon chapters cosponsor the Birdathon each year. This year, between April 30 and May 20, two hundred chapters across the country participated, raising more than \$300,000 for environmental causes.

Dozens of L.A.A.S. birders, with pledges from supporters, took to fields, mountains, seas and backyards to raise money for environmental education. They raised \$8138.93 that will provide the award-winning Audubon Adventures education program to 3rd through 6th grade classrooms in the L.A. schools.

National Audubon Society awards prizes to chapters which raise the most money; among chapters with more than 1,000 members, L.A. Audubon placed second in the Western Region and first in California. Chapters will get the prizes at the national convention in Tucson in September, and LAAS will pass them along to local winners at our October meeting.

The Los Angeles Audubon Society would like to thank Chuck Bernstein and Kimball Garrett for leading field trips;

Walter Williams, for adapting the T-shirt design; and the Birdathon '89 committee, Charles Harper, Steve Hirsh, Ken Kendig and Melanie Ingalls, for organizing the event. Birdathon participants, and sponsors who contributed \$50 or more, received a blue Birdathon '89 t-shirt.

A final note of thanks is due to the businesses which generously donated prizes for this year's event:

Birders' Buddy
Bird Watcher's Digest
Hummingbird Heaven
TAMRAC
WildBird Magazine

This year's prize winners are listed below. (Prizes will be awarded at the LAAS meeting in October.)

DAY EVENT

MOST MONEY RAISED

Kendig.....	\$2045
Ingalls/Alderfer.....	\$817
Van Meter.....	\$761

MOST SPECIES IDENTIFIED

Ingalls/Alderfer.....	135
Van Meter/Earle/Thompson/Moorman.....	119
Freeman/Harper/Newton.....	118

MOST SPONSORS

Van Meter.....	21
Ingalls/Alderfer.....	18
Freeman/Harper/Newton.....	17

ROOKIES OF THE YEAR

MOST MONEY

Larry and Jennifer Schmahl.....	\$376
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MOST SPECIES

Rob Hofberg.....	88
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FIELD TRIPS

MOST MONEY RAISED

Pat Heirs.....	\$1057
Karen Kluge.....	\$445
Chuck Bernstein.....	\$179

MOST SPONSORS

Karen Kluge.....	51
Barbara Courtois.....	22

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

MOST MONEY

Barbara Courtois.....	\$168
Helen Papietro.....	\$124

BACKYARD BIRDERS

MOST MONEY RAISED

Ellen Newton.....	\$63
Ruth Remington.....	\$58
Paula de Merieux.....	\$58

MOST SPECIES SEEN

Paula de Merieux.....	29
Pat Lindquist.....	20
Mary Kate Steffens.....	15

MOST SPONSORS

Ellen Newton.....	6
Ruth Remington.....	5
Mary Kate Steffens.....	2
Marie McNally.....	2



hummingbirds, 123 tanagers (including a mind-boggling assortment of 27 gaudily colored Tangaras), plus a grand total of 10 mostly nondescript tyrant flycatchers.

Lying on the cool sands in our bivouac near Boca de Manu, I watched the full moon illuminate the distant snow-capped crest of the Andes. It was difficult to imagine that over that ridge millions of people were struggling with rampant

inflation of over 4,000 percent a year, a reported unemployment of some 68 percent of the population, and the infamous Sendero Luminoso spreading terror through the countryside.

Manu was certainly the highlight of my three trips to South America this year, and while the emphasis on a trip to the Manu is as much mammal oriented as it is to birds, I cannot recommend it highly

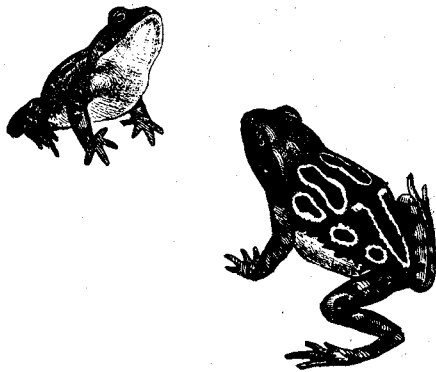
enough for anyone interested in seeing what completely unspoiled wilderness is really all about.

It's home for exactly a week, then off to New Guinea, New Britain, the Solomons, and a week in the Cape York Peninsula of northern Australia.

—July 25, 1989

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



Out of the past, a less than admirable past, comes this cry from the heart. Today the eloquence strikes home with overwhelming poignancy. What have we done to this virgin magnificence - the land, the animals, the clear air and water? Perhaps it is not too late to save what remains and to teach our children "that the earth is our mother," that "whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth."

Chief Seattle Speaks

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth, and it is a part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man - all belong to the same family.

So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. He will be our father, and we will be his children. So we will consider your offer to buy our land. But it will not be easy. For this land is sacred to us.

The shining water that moves in the streams and the rivers is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred,

and you must teach your children that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life on my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his fathers' graves, and his children's birthright is forgotten. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind

only a desert.

"I do not know. Our ways are different from your ways. The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the red man. but perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring, or the rustle of an insect's wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by rain or scented with the pine cone.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath: the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white men, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench. But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also received his last sigh. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition. The white man must



treat the beasts of this land as his brothers.

I am a savage, and I do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffalos on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage, and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive.

What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man. All things are connected.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

Even the white man, whose God walks and talks with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see. One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover - our God is the same God. You may think now that you own Him as you wish to own our land: but you cannot. He is the God of man, and his compassion is equal for the red man and the white. This earth is precious to him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt upon its Creator.

The Whites, too, shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.

But in your perishing, you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted out by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone.

In 1854 Chief Seattle wrote this reply to President Franklin Pierce's offer to buy Indian lands in the Northwest in exchange for a reservation. Soon afterward, recognizing the futility of opposing the white men, the Chief signed the treaty. He died on the reservation in 1866.

Reflections . . .

by Jesse Moorman, Editor

We are used to hearing bits of bad news about the environment. How do all the little bits of grim news finally add up? What's the bottom line? Chief Seattle's estimate rings true to this editor.

Either we draw a proper line while we still have some control, or it will be drawn where we might not choose. The whole system, the good and the bad of it together, may pass, just as Seattle said; the tragedy would be the destruction of everything else first. That destiny would be a mystery.

In the alternative, we may find some way to survive. Since nothing like the modern world has ever existed, it is difficult to put into perspective. The human race must find a new balance or return to a more primitive balance. There will be economic and political costs to pay, and we may not have time to haggle for the best deal. So how can we come to terms? How much power, and what kind of power, can we salvage from the disaster?

A world-dominating society has probably never lived within its environmental means. When empires are more economic than military, they overlap and the tribute flows in many directions. To show restraint is to forfeit power to a rival. Sovereigns generally have little regard for their tributaries' environments, but never has an empire had such destructive power over the tributaries that the capital itself was poisoned. It may take a time of complete

crisis, which looms not far away, before we put our cards back on the table. Who then will cut the new deals, and how?

A new stewardship of the earth requires some changes in our legal system and in our standards of justice. American law, with some exceptions, tries to allow anybody to own anything, with the broadest possible license to exploit resources which one owns. The legal rights derived from such a theory contribute, bit by bit, to the poisoning and devastation of the planet. In the final analysis, property rights cannot give such a broad license of exploitation.

Big pieces of the biosphere still fall through the gaps; there is no safety net for the environment. Although the law has changed to limit the taking, use and abandonment of things, there has not yet been an honest attempt to stabilize our society's relationship to the Earth. Even if existing limits were perfectly observed, in letter and spirit, current depredations exceed the Earth's capacity. Even if very thorough and precise rules could be drafted for every jurisdiction, we would need a monstrous bureaucracy, subject to corruption, to manage the scheme. Can we create a self-regulating system that does not take more than its share?

I have more questions than answers.



NAS Convention to Feature Southwest

National Audubon Society's Biennial Convention has the theme "Our Southwest: Challenged by Growth." The gathering will be in Tucson, Arizona September 12 to 16. There will be field trips to some of the southwest's best birding spots, a taste of the region's fascinating history and culture, and an introduction to its environmental challenges. Noted conservationists and public officials will discuss such subjects as wildlife protection, western water resources, forest management, off-road vehicle use, and grazing on public lands.

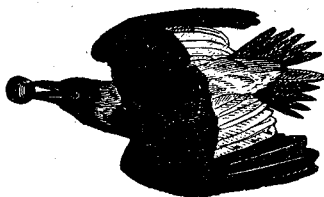
There will also be sessions and workshops on a wide variety of local, national and global environmental problems, including Audubon's high-priority issues - acid rain, the Platte River, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the ancient forests of the Pacific Northwest. Participants are invited to help get Audubon's new society-wide wetlands preservation campaign off the ground.

The convention is being held in the Doubletree Hotel, near Randolph Park in Tucson. Accommodations are available at the Doubletree and Viscount Suite hotels at a special rate of \$50 per night. Registration is \$60 per person. Field trips are extra. For information or reservations, contact:

Audubon Convention Office,
4150 Darley Ave., #5,
Boulder, Colorado 80303;
(303) 499-3622.

Birds of the Season

by Hank Brodtkin



Records of rare and unusual bird sightings reported in this column should be considered tentative pending review by the American Birds regional editors or, if appropriate, by the California Bird Records Committee.

Fall migration will be under way in September. Eager vagrant-hunters, with the hope of adding 'new' birds to their life, state or county lists, will be combing the coastal canyons, parks, and sloughs for out-of-range species, many of which will be in cryptic non-breeding plumages. Although it seems that every possible species that can reach California has already been found here, there is that ever-so-slim chance of making ornithological history by adding a new bird to our avifauna. Of course such a find would have to be confirmed by others and to be thoroughly documented to be accepted.

By the time you read this, there will be two species added to the California avifauna, courtesy of the "Thirty-seventh Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds." More on this in a later column.

Late Spring produced fewer vagrants than normal, considering the increasing numbers of birders covering the desert oases. Here are some of the reports that reached us.

Very unusual was an inland report of a **Least Tern** at Paiute Ponds on 20 May (Ron Hirst). Both a **Red Throated** and a **Common Loon** were on a pond in an unusual inland location, Desert Center, on 30 May (Jon Fisher) and 200 **White Pelicans** were on the south end of Big Bear Lake on 10 June (Hank Childs and Rick Clements). Perhaps the best bird of this period was the **Mississippi Kite** found at Huntington Beach Central Park on 5 June (Jim Pike). A surprise visitor from the nearby mountains was a **Band-tailed Pigeon** in Mojave on 29 May (Hank Brodtkin), and a **Common Ground-Dove** was at Whittier Narrows on 19 May (David White). A **Black Swift** was reported

ed from Santa Anita Canyon, a traditional nesting area, on 17 June (Bob Pann) and two pairs of **Williamson's Sapsuckers** were seen along the Mt Baden-Powell trail above Dawson Saddle on 6 June (Jeff Tufts). This is one of the few Los Angeles County locations where this species can regularly be seen.

A female **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was at Butterbrecht Springs, Kern County, on 3 June (John Wilson). Among the usual spate of reports of **American Redstarts** and **Black-and-white Warblers** was a close-in **B&W Warbler** on 1 June at the Los Angeles Arboretum (Barbara Cohen). A female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was at Mojave on 27 May (Brian Daniels). Three **Ovenbirds** were reported: at Butterbrecht Springs on 2 May (John Wilson); at Furnace Creek, Death Valley on 27 May (Dan Grey); and one at California City on 1 June (Jerry Johnson). One **Kentucky Warbler** was at Butterbrecht Springs on 19 May (John Wilson), and one was at Death Valley on 23 May (Guy McCaskie). A **Hooded Warbler** was at Death Valley on 20 May (Brian Daniels).

An **Eastern Kingbird** was found in the Santa Ana River bottom in Fountain Valley on 12 June (Jim Pike) and a **Bank Swallow** was seen at Doheny State Beach on 2 July (Brian Daniels).

On June 17, nesting **Hepatic Tanagers** were found at Arrastre Creek in the eastern San Bernardino Mountains (where this species has nested before) (Vernon Howe) and a **Summer Tanager** was seen at Huntington Beach Central Park on 18 June (Brian Daniels). Also at Central Park, Brian saw a singing male **Indigo Bunting** on 16 July. **Bronzed Cowbirds** were at Cattle Call Park in Brawley on 22 July (Ned Harris). Apparently they have been summering here for the past few years.

The Fall shorebird migration is well underway. A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at the south end of the Salton Sea on 20 July (Arnold Small), an adult **Baird's Sandpiper** was at Edward's Air Force Base's Paiute Ponds on 6 July (Bruce

Broadbooks), another at Seal Beach on 9 July (Brian Daniels), and 3 **Stilt Sandpipers** were seen near the south end of the Salton Sea on 22 July (Ned Harris). An immature **Little Blue Heron** was on Playa del Rey Lagoon on 22 July (Mr & Mrs Bert Warren) and on the same date 20 **Fulvous Whistling Ducks** were seen at the south end of the Salton Sea (Ned Harris).

A couple of notes before closing. Paul Lehman will now be the Ventura County co-ordinator for *American Birds*. Any rare sightings in that county should be sent, with documentation, to Paul at P.O.Box 1061, Goleta, CA 93116. *An Introduction to Southern California Birds* by Herb Clarke is now available from the L.A. Audubon Book Shop. It does, of course, feature many of Herb's fine photographs.

Good birding!

Send your bird observations with as many details as possible to:

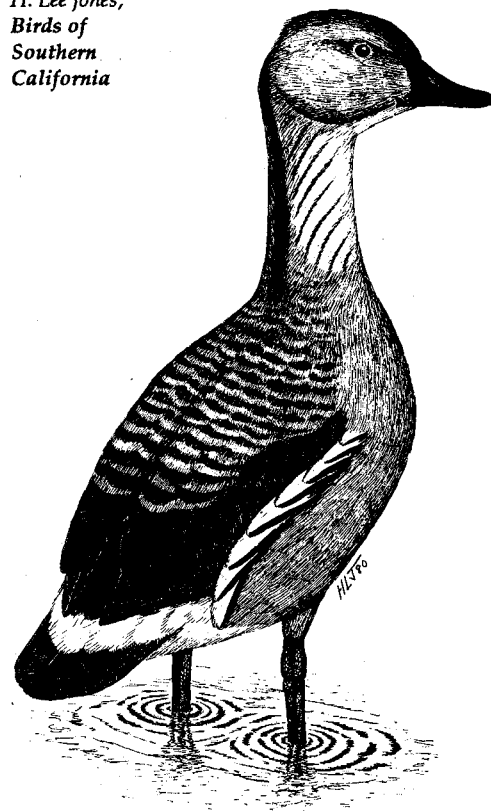
Hank Brodtkin
27 -1/2 Mast Street
Marina del Rey, CA 90292
Phone: (213) 827-0407

OR

call Jean Brandt at (818) 788-5188

Fulvous Whistling Duck

Illustration By
H. Lee Jones,
*Birds of
Southern
California*



Dramatic Declines in Migratory Songbirds

Research announced at the end of July confirms that birds are declining all across the continent. The 20-year study, based on the North American Breeding Bird Survey, was larger and more systematic than any other survey. The methodology overcomes doubts about natural local fluctuations in the populations. The authors of the study attribute most of the loss to deforestation in the tropics, rather than forest fragmentation in North America. The report has been accepted for publication in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The authors are Russell Greenberg of the National Zoological Park, Sam Droege of the U.S.F.W.S. Patuxent Center, Chandler Robbins and John Sauer.

(-L.A. Times, July 30)

NOTICE

Help revise *A Birder's Guide to Southern California*! HARRY HOLT is revising Lane's book, and requests that we locals submit changes or additions that will help make it up-to-date. Address him in care of L & P Press, Box 2104, Denver, Colorado 80221.

Carol Niles

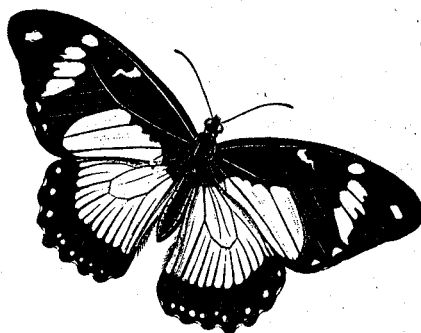
We regretfully report Carol Niles's death on June 27, after a lengthy bout with cancer. Carol was a longtime friend and employee of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Her witty personality and willingness to lend a hand in many little-publicized tasks contributed in a major way to the smooth operation of the Society. Her dedication was such that she rarely missed a day's work in spite of illness, a broken leg, and the fire at Plummer House. Her inner strength right to the very end will always be an inspiration to those who knew her, and she'll will be sorely missed.

In early June, the Executive Board forwarded a gift in Carol's name to the Nature Conservancy.

Bookstore News

by Charles Harper

Now available is a new bird book especially for our area, by our own Herb Clarke. *An Introduction to Southern California Birds* includes 252 striking color photos by the author, accompanied by interesting, non-technical facts about their life histories. The book is organized by habitat type where specific birds are generally seen, with a special chapter on rare birds. The region covered includes the eight southernmost counties of California: Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Imperial, Orange, and the southern half of San Bernardino County. Herbert Clarke lives in Glendale and has been a professional wildlife photographer for many years. *Wildbird* magazine calls Clarke "one of the leading lights in birding on the West Coast scene." Herb is also a past President of the LAAS. The book is 192 pages, and is available in paperback at \$9.95. We are currently accepting orders if you would like to reserve a copy. We will also be scheduling an autograph session at Audubon House.



Reservation Policy and Procedures:

Reservations for LAAS trips will be accepted **ONLY** if ALL the following information has been 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 or emendation;
- (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, Los Angeles Audubon Society, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90046

If a trip is not filling up, it will be cancelled **two Wednesdays** before the scheduled date (four weeks for pelagic trips); you will be so notified and your fee will be refunded. If you cancel a reservation after those times, you will get a refund only if someone takes your place.

Membership Note

Membership in the National Audubon Society is computerized, so it is no longer advisable to renew through the Los Angeles Audubon Society. However, if your membership has lapsed, you will receive the next *Western Tanager* sooner if you renew through LAAS.

The national computer system sends multiple notices commencing four months before your membership lapses. Please excuse notices that may have crossed your check in the mail.

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

If you move out of the LAAS membership area, you are **automatically** changed to the chapter into whose area you moved. If you wish to remain in LAAS and receive the *Western Tanager* please indicate this to the National Audubon Society. You may also subscribe to the *Western Tanager* separately (see below).

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Audubon membership (local and national) is \$35 per year, Senior Citizen \$21, and at present new members are being offered an introductory membership for \$30 for the first year, 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 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, and Bookstore are located at:

Audubon House, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90046.

(213) 876-0202. Hours: 10-3 Tues. through Sat.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 1989

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



Barred Owl

Tuesday, September 12 - Our own Herb Clarke will present "Return to Florida." Last May Herb returned to Florida to photograph birds at the parks and refuges for which Florida is so justly famous, locations such as the Everglades and Dry Tortugas. There will be lots of photos of Florida specialties and much more. As you should know, Herb is one of the premier bird photographers in the U.S. His photos have been published extensively. He will also be autographing his new book, "An Introduction to Southern California Birds," at this time. Please join us for this exciting first meeting of the Fall.

IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP



Bush Key—Dry Tortugas

Precedes the regular evening meetings - 7:30-8:00 p.m.

Everyone is invited to attend. This month's speaker and topic will be announced on the bird tape the week before the meeting [Phone (213) 874-1318]

FIELD TRIPS CALL THE TAPE!

Before setting out on 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.

Friday & Saturday, September 1 & 2 - Shorebird Seminar. Don't miss this in-depth discourse by Jon Dunn, senior consultant of the *National Geographic Field Guide* and co-author of the locally definitive *Birds of Southern California*. Detailed treatment will be given to topics including migration patterns, species i.d., molts and plumages - making considerable use of Jon's fine slide collection. The next morning, there will be a field trip at a fairly nearby shore (possibly McGrath). Details will be announced at the 7:30 p.m. lecture depending on scouting

reports. Contact Audubon House for lecture location in the S.F. Valley. Sign-up with SASE. Fee: \$19 for lecture and field trip, \$8 for lecture only.

Sunday, September 3 - Topanga State Park. Leader Gerry Haigh will be guiding participants through this beautiful nearby area. The group will look at migrants and resident species in the sycamores, grasslands, scrub oak and chaparral. This is an ideal trip for a beginning birder or for someone new in the area. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. From Topanga Canyon Blvd take an uphill turn East on Entrada Dr. (It is a very sharp turn if you're heading S.) (7 miles S of Ventura Blvd, 1 mile N of Topanga Village. Follow the signs to the state park, and meet in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. \$3 parking fee.

Saturday, September 9 - Ballona Wetlands. Bob Shanman or Ian Austin will conduct this monthly walk at our nearest wetlands to celebrate shorebird migration in full swing. Black Oystercatcher is usually seen. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Pacific Avenue bridge. Take the Marina Fwy (Rte 90 West) to Culver Blvd, turn left to Pacific Ave, then right to the footbridge at the end. Street parking is usually available.

Sunday, September 17 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. David White will lead a morning walk at Whittier Narrows to check on the resident birds and the migrants passing through. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Avenue in South El Monte, off Fwy 60 between Santa Anita and Peck Drive exits, west of Fwy 605.

Saturday, September 23 - Big Sycamore Canyon/ Come see what migration is all about with leader Roger Cobb and assistant leader Melody Glover. Roger teaches bird courses at Santa Monica City College, and will be gearing this walk for beginners. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the dirt parking triangle on the right side of PCH. Big Sycamore Canyon is located between Zuma Beach and Pt Mugu on PCH. Bring liquids and a knapsack lunch to eat on the trail.

Sunday, September 24 - Malibu Lagoon. Fourth Sunday of each month. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the lagoon parking lot. The lot is on the ocean side of PCH, just west of the lagoon bridge, but you can turn right into town for street parking. The lagoon lot has a daily fee. this walk is under the leadership of a member of Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society.

Sunday, September 24 - Pelagic Trip East of Catalina and far out to sea. This is a long one. Leaders are Herb Clarke and Jonathan Alderfer. R.V.Vantuna leaves Terminal Island Berth 26 at 5:30 A.M. (board the boat half hour early), returns at 7:00 P.M.; \$35. Reservations required; no refund on cancellations less than two weeks before sailing.

Sunday, October 1 - Topanga State Park. Leader Gerry Haigh. 8:00 a.m. See September 3 for details.

Monday, October 2 - Malibu to McGrath. First Monday in October for eighteen years running! Ed Navojosky will be leading interested parties up the coast from Malibu Lagoon to McGrath State Beach estuary, stopping along the way to bird and picnic at Big Sycamore Canyon and elsewhere. This is an excellent time of the year

to see breeding, migrant and wintering bird species together (with decent vagrant possibilities). Bail out early if a full-day affair doesn't suit you. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the shopping center adjacent to the Malibu Lagoon bridge. Take PCH north over the bridge, turn right and right again into the shopping center across from the lagoon, and meet clear back in the northeast corner of the lot. Bring a lunch.

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Saturday, October 14 - Pelagic Trip to Santa Barbara Island. Leaders are Kimball Garrett and Herb Clarke. R.V.Vantuna leaves Terminal Island Berth 26 at 6:00 A.M., returns at 6:00 P.M.; \$32. Reservations required; no refund on cancellations less than two weeks before sailing.

Saturday, October 21 - Pelagic Trip to Cordell Bank with Madrone Audubon in Santa Rosa. Leaders Kurt Campbell and Roger Marlowe. Leave from Porto Bodega Marina, at north end of Bodega Bay, at 7:00, return at 4:00; \$45. For reservations send check payable to Roger Marlowe, 401 Vine Ave., Sebastopol, CA 95472. For info, write or call him at (707) 829-0705

Please see page 7 for Reservation Policies and Procedure.