



# WESTERN TANAGER

The Los Angeles Chapter of  
The National Audubon Society

Volume 56 Number 4 Jan.-Feb. 1990

## 1st PRIZE

The winner of our 1989 Members' Slide Contest is Cortland Myers, III, for this photograph of a Common Yellowthroat taken at Upper Newport Bay. All winners received gift certificates from the LAAS Bookstore. In addition to the \$50 first prize, he also won in the "most popular with the audience" category (\$20). Second prize (\$30) went to Jay W. Wiley, Jr. for his photograph of a Red-billed Tropicbird at Isla San Pedro Martir (page 2). Third prize (\$20) went to Larry Sansone for his photograph of two Harlequin Quail in Arizona (page 3). David Koeppel won in the new category of "Most Humorous" (\$20) with his photograph of Acorn Woodpeckers (page 5). Approximately 75 entries were submitted and competition was tougher than ever before. This year's judges were Herb Clarke, Kimball Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer. ■



# THE CHALLENGE OF GROWTH

by Paul R. Ehrlich

*Based on a transcript of the Keynote Address, National Audubon Society Biennial Convention in Tucson, September 12, 1989*

Over the years, I have thought of Audubon as an association always on the right side of environmental issues; one that had, as many environmental organizations don't have, a good strong population program. As a dedicated birder, I knew that Audubon put out by far the best of all birding magazines. (If you don't know *American Birds*, you should because it is absolutely fantastic.) Since I have joined the board, I have learned that there is a superb staff working very hard on a huge array of issues, and I have found that Audubon Society has an excellent program of scientific research. That program provides credibility to the stands that National Audubon takes on issues. Those may be the last pleasant things I say this evening, as I am supposed to talk about the state of the world.

It is nice for me to be back in Arizona, where, as a biologist, I have done a lot of field work. It's biologically one of the most interesting states in the union. But I am still appalled by the state of the public lands and some of the private lands in this state.

At the Mexican border, on Audubon's research ranch, I saw the strands of barbed wire that keep the flood of cattle off the property. On one side you have what Arizona used to be, lands rich in wildlife where the grass has come back after 20 years, and on the other side—the overgrazed side—is absolute desolation.

*Continued on next page*



Red-billed Tropicbird (2nd Prize)

Photo by Jay W. Wiley, Jr.

## Growth

*Continued from previous page*

Many naive people think that this desolation represents the natural state of the western United States. It always stuns me that people driving through the West think it is so beautiful. In many ways it is, but it is a beautiful desolation, the remnant of a once-richer system after 100 years of overgrazing. It is visually attractive, but it is not going to support many people or much wildlife. I'm sure you could farm antelopes very nicely in Arizona if you let the lands come back. You would probably get a better yield and better meat than you can ever get from scrawny cows.

In Arizona roughly 1,000 people with political influence, mostly historically based, are destroying the environment of the state by running cattle. What does Arizona get out of it? What does the United States get out of it? There is no benefit from it whatsoever, except for a very small group of people.

The four most arid states in the union supply 1/10 of 1 percent of our beef. The entire West produces something like 2 or 3 percent of our beef. The vegetation is eaten up and broken down, which causes the streams to flow irregularly all year; and when they are flowing, they are dirty. Anglers, campers and municipalities get the short end of the stick. This is being done at public expense.

The average rancher thinks of himself as an independent person, but actually he's

on federal welfare. Most of them run cows on public land at a tiny fraction of the cost of grazing private lands. Grazing, along with logging and mining, gives us the famous U.S. Forest Service policy of "land of many abuses," and the Bureau of Livestock and Mining (BLM) pitches in too. The rights of 99.9 percent of Arizonans and other westerners are being trampled.

Insult is added to injury: your tax money goes to hire people to go out and blow away your wildlife. God forbid that a predator should come along and eat one of the cows being raised on welfare at public expense. American cows cannot be eaten by anyone but another human being, who may get heart disease as a result.

This illustrates one of the most serious political problems we have in the United States. Easterners couldn't care less what happens in western states, and their senators trade votes. They'll support subsidizing ranchers in return for votes for their own boondoggles. This is a situation that requires a lot of citizen action; restoring the wonderful grasslands of the Southwest would be a good thing for the entire United States. When you get home, write a letter to your senator not to trade any more votes with those guys out west to continue ranchers on welfare.

Basically, grazing in the arid West should cease or at least be made **much** less intense. Many of our problems are relatively intractable, very difficult to deal with. Here is a tremendous problem that can be solved by simply changing the ways of

13,000 people. It might be worthwhile simply buying them out. It would make money for everybody in the country in the long run. If each was given a million dollars, on the average, it would cost less than the program to build the useless Stealth bomber.

Now let's look at one of the tough problems. I'll start with the population problem for a couple of reasons. It is very basic and turning it around humanely will take a long time. Moreover, solving the population problem will only buy you a ticket to start solving other problems; it won't solve them in itself.

What is the problem? Four million years ago, the first human beings were the australopithecines, small upright relatives of Lucy. For most of those four million years, the human population remained very small. In the last few centuries, it has been expanding more and more rapidly. The population reached two billion on May 29, 1932 (by pure coincidence, I was the two-billionth human being). When *The Population Bomb* was written in 1968, there were 3.5 billion human beings; the population was increasing by about 70 million each year. Now there are almost 5.3 billion, and about 93 million are being added each year. Since 1968, more people have been added to the population than existed on the planet at the time of the American Civil War. Each year we add the population equivalent of England, Ireland, Iceland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. In less than three years we add the equivalent of the United States.

There are really two kinds of population situations. The first is found in poor nations. Their populations are growing extremely fast; more than 2 or 3 percent a year. Kenya is the leader for the moment, growing by about 4 percent a year. There is no way to get out of poverty with those birthrates, because the nation cannot put aside capital to improve the standard of living of the average person. In Kenya the average family size is seven children. The men lie around and argue with each other all day about how to divide their farms among their sons. The women do all the housework, all the farm work, walk miles and miles to find firewood, and so forth. By empowering women, you can do more for the population problem in poor nations than any other way.

On the other hand, the United States is the most overpopulated nation in the world, because of the disproportionate amount of damage each of us does. The birth of the average baby in the United States is between 40 and 200 times as great an environmental disaster as the birth of a baby in

Bangladesh, Columbia, Peru or any poor country. There is a little equation with which you can calculate the impact of a nation on the environment:  $I = PAT$ . Impact (I) equals the number of People (P), times their average per-capita consumption or Affluence (A), times the damage caused by the Technology (T) that is used to supply each unit of affluence. Standard of living is not a good measure of impact. For example, the Swedes have a higher standard of living and quality of life than Americans while using only 60 percent of the per-capita energy that we do. They are much more efficient at using energy—that is, they have a lower “T.” Per-capita commercial energy consumption is actually a very good index of each individual’s impact. Indeed it is the best national statistic for estimating the product of  $A \times T$ . For instance, the fossil fuels burned in the rich countries are producing carbon dioxide and are the chief cause of the global warming problem. With population growth, the poor countries tend to get poorer; the overpopulation of rich countries simply destroys the planet.

And we’re way behind most of the world on the population issue. Most poor countries have a population policy. The United States Congress is trying to formulate an immigration policy without having any population policy. It is like asking an airplane designer to design a plane onto which you can load 30 passengers per minute, but not to worry about its total passenger capacity. We’ve been going backwards for over eight years on population policy.

What will happen to the world when less-developed countries do develop? Suppose that the Chinese managed to stop population growth at 1.1 or 1.2 billion people. (The Chinese could be underestimating their population; it may already be 1.2 billion.) Also assume that they scaled back their plans for development and only doubled their per-capita energy consumption from 7 percent to 14 percent of the per-capita consumption of the people in this room. Suppose further that they used their enormous coal supplies to achieve that increase. If the Chinese made this sacrifice, stopping development at the level of Algeria’s today, they would nevertheless be putting more additional carbon dioxide into the air than the United States could take out by giving up *all* use of coal and not substituting any other fossil fuel. Giving up coal in this country is a non-trivial exercise; coal now supplies 23.5 percent of our commercial energy.

Suppose that India got its population program going again. There are 835 million



Harlequin Quail (3rd Prize)

Photo by Larry Sansone

Indians now, with a family size of 4.3. Suppose that over the next 30 to 40 years they can bring their average family size down to 2.2, which is replacement reproduction. That would be a stunning achievement for such a diverse country as India. India has a lot of coal too, but suppose also that they were more self-sacrificing than the Chinese and limited their development to the energy consumption level the Chinese have today. They would thus increase per-capita energy consumption in India from 3 percent up to 7 percent of today’s U.S. per-capita consumption. (Yes, it now takes 33 Indians to match one of us in energy consumption.) Then India also would be putting out more additional carbon dioxide than the United States could save by giving up coal. Of course, we would already have sacrificed our coal use for the Chinese, so we would be hard-pressed to accommodate India. There is so much momentum built into India’s population growth that, playing out the optimistic scenario of great success in family planning, India’s population would not top out for another century, when there would be two billion Indians.

The example of carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas shows very clearly the enormous role that population size and growth play in shaping the human dilemma. Even with optimistic assumptions about curbing growth, the huge numbers of people in poor countries, multiplied by modest levels of development, can help bring on catastrophe. The  $CO_2$  situation also high-

lights the compensating changes that developed countries will have to make if poor countries are to be able to increase their use of fossil fuels.

We maintain a population of 5.3 billion persons today only by burning our inheritance from the planet. In evolutionary terms, we are using the fossil fuels and high-grade mineral ores in the blink of an eye. But those are relatively trivial. There are three critical parts of our inheritance, our “capital” whose use will doom us in the next few decades, if we do not act. But most people don’t even recognize them as capital.

One part of our inheritance is deep rich agricultural soils, which we are losing at a horrendous rate—the equivalent of the topsoil on all the wheatlands of Australia disappearing every year. Most soils require centuries or millennia to replace an inch; we allow it to wash away or blow away in as little as a decade.

A second component of capital is the ice-age waters that are collected in underground aquifers. For instance, the southern part of the Ogallala aquifer is being pumped out and lowered by many feet a year, where the recharge rate is a fraction of an inch a year. It is going to be very interesting, as global warming progresses here in Arizona, where they love to have beautiful resorts with swimming pools that make waves and numerous fountains and waterfalls, all based on underground water and on river flows (especially that of the Colorado) that are likely to diminish.

*Continued on page 10*

# Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

The good guys won on the recount! In the October *Tanager* we read about the defeat of the Gorman wind farm at the county Regional Planning Commission hearing. Zond Systems had asked for a conditional use permit to build 458 windmills in the hills above Gorman that would have impinged on the spectacular fields of wildflowers that can be seen from I-5. Opponents of the project argued that birds migrating in the Pacific Flyway through Tejon Pass would be in grave danger, Cuisinart-ed by the mass of whirling blades. When the now-captive California Condors are released and reclaim their ancestral habitat, a wind farm would be an additional formidable hazard.

Environmentalists pointed out that they are not opposed to wind farms as an alternate source of energy, but that the Gorman site was the worst possible place for it.

Zond appealed the Commission's decision to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Although the Commission voted unanimously to reject the permit and Commission members are appointed by the supervisors, there was some apprehension that the board might overrule the decision. (Some supervisors are perceived as leaning perceptibly toward development.) Zond presented a much more acceptable version of their plans by reducing the number of windmills to 145 and the total acreage of the site from 1,630 to 580. (Although the number of mills was dramatically reduced, they would have been larger, so that their total blade area was reduced only 20 percent.)

After listening to arguments at some length, the supervisors voted to reject the appeal 3 to 0. (Two supervisors were absent.) This was a significant victory for National Audubon, the Sierra Club, the Tejon Ranch and particularly for the Save the Mountain Committee, the local group that did most of the work. Congratulations are in order. Break out the champagne!

\* \* \*

Kindly benign Dr. Jekyll swallowed the abominable potion and was transformed into evil Mr. Hyde. One must wonder if someone slipped some of that sinister elixir into William Ruckelshaus's Martini one fateful evening. Ruckelshaus was Assistant Attorney General during the Watergate scandal and resigned rather than fire Archibald Cox, the special prosecutor, when Nixon ordered him to do so. This demonstration of shining integrity earned him the title of "Mr. Clean." Earlier, as Environmental Protection Agency Administrator (1970 to 1973), he was responsible for—among other good things—the epoch-making decision to ban DDT. Environmentalists were delighted.

Ten years later, after the notorious reign of the Ice Queen, Anne Gorsuch Burford, at the EPA, when cozy deals with polluters and flagrant conflicts of interest had become epidemic, Ronald Reagan brought Ruckelshaus back to give the wounded agency a booster shot of the old integrity. After James Watt and Burford resigned (by popular demand) it seemed that with Ruckelshaus in place great things were bound to happen. Alas, it was not to be. His second crack at the EPA job lasted only a year and was somewhat less than distinguished. He had promised to take steps to control acid rain, but nothing came of it. After he was lobbied by Vice President Bush, he relaxed the standards for soot emissions that bothered the steel manufacturers. There were other disappointments for his admirers.

When he quit the EPA, he joined the boards of several construction companies and of Monsanto Chemical. He headed an industry group that tried to emasculate the Superfund law. And in 1988 he became chairman and chief executive officer of Browning-Ferris Industries, a giant, nationwide waste-disposal company with annual revenues of \$2 billion.

In the wake of the public uproar over toxic waste dumps responsible for cancer and birth deformities, Congress passed the Superfund law. Many billions of dollars

were voted to clean up the hazardous sites, and it seemed as though a horrendous problem was on the way to solution. Ten years after Superfund was inaugurated, only a handful of the worst dumps have been cleaned up.

Superfund has been a bonanza for the garbage industry, a relatively new and fast-growing field. With all those tempting dollars available, the waste disposers have profited mightily. The EPA's inspector general told a Senate hearing that the EPA, which administers Superfund, was being clobbered by the contractors. A trash pump that cost \$500 was sold to the EPA for \$4,000. Security guards were paid \$8,000 by a contractor who charged EPA \$20,000. A consulting firm received \$90,000 for a video program that was never made. One recalls the Defense department's \$900 toilet seats and \$200 monkey wrenches. Senator Frank Lautenberg, who conducted the hearing, said the contractors may not have cleaned up many dumps, but they were doing a great job taking the EPA to the cleaners.

Browning-Ferris is right there at the Superfund cornucopia and doing very well, thank you. They have an extraordinary record of unethical practices. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld a \$6 million fine against them for trying to run a competitor out of business with unfair pricing. In Livingston, Louisiana, BFI paid a \$2.5 million fine for environmental pollution. Along with Waste Management, the largest company in the field, they pleaded guilty in Toledo, Ohio for price fixing. BFI seems to regard these crimes and misdemeanors as a minor nuisance, a cost of doing business. In a company where the net profit in 1988 rose 31 percent over 1987, this attitude is not difficult to understand.

Like the generals in Defense, who leave government for lucrative jobs with the arms manufacturers, the waste industry woos the EPA staff with big bucks. Access to the inner workings and plans of the agency is obviously of great value to the companies, and the movement of public employees to

the private sector is a classic case of the revolving door syndrome. The General Accounting Office of Congress estimated that in 1987 one-third of the Superfund staff were looking for jobs in the industry. With the powerful promise of upward mobility dangling before their eyes, it is easy to imagine that EPA people would tend to look kindly upon a potential employer. Sounds great for everyone but the taxpayer and the poor souls waiting for the local toxic dump to disappear. This intimate involvement of the contractors and consultants with the agency has become something of a scandal that seems to be ignored by the media. The companies actually help EPA write its regulations and ghost-write its reports to Congress. Senator David Pryor, in a committee probe, called the waste industry a shadow government.

Mr. Ruckelshaus has done very nicely for himself. BFI is paying him a minimum of \$1,000,000 a year plus incentive bonuses and options to buy up to a million shares of stock. The "Mr. Clean" aura makes him an ideal frontman for an industry with questionable ethics. But this CEO is much more than a front man.

Southern California has not escaped the long arm of Browning-Ferris Industries. Here in our own backyard, in the quiet northeast corner of the San Fernando Valley, is the Sunshine Canyon Landfill. It lies alongside O'Melveny Park, a new and attractive L.A. city park that combines conventional lawns and picnic tables with a more primitive and natural chaparral habitat as one reaches higher elevations. On windy days the dust and debris from the Sunshine Landfill blow into the O'Melveny airspace, festooning the oak trees with those flimsy disposable non-biodegradable shopping bags. Homeowners nearby complain bitterly about the nuisance and even the resident councilman (a former real estate developer) has raised a fuss.

Some time ago, BFI applied for a permit to expand their landfill to adjoining upper Sunshine Canyon which would triple its capacity and further degrade the habitat. The proposed landfill extension would invade an existing Significant Ecological Area that contains over 8,000 oaks, as well as Big Cone spruce, sycamores and California walnut. Also, a portion of the upper canyon lies within the potential boundary of the hoped-for Santa Clarita Woodland Park. This is an amazing expanse of hills and meadows covered with a magnificent array of trees and shrubs. A genuinely pristine place in the midst of a rapidly growing city is so rare that not only environmentalists are pressing for a park, but they are



Acorn Woodpeckers (Most Humorous)

Photo by David Koeppel

supported by all the local legislators, most of them conservative Republicans. BFI is working hard to get the expansion of Sunshine Landfill, sending out cheery newsletters to 50,000 Valley homes, running happy-talk ads in the newspapers and bussing school kids and businessmen to the current site for a propaganda fest. They are offering to plant seedlings to replace the mature trees they hope to cut down. No decision has yet been reached on the permit application.

The scene shifts to Azusa as the plot thickens. BFI wants to develop a huge landfill there that could become one of the largest dumps in California. The company is not deterred by the fact that the site lies above the San Gabriel Basin aquifer that supplies a million people with drinking water. It is common knowledge that landfills are gigantic chemical retorts, mixing and blending thousands of tons of trash, garbage and toxic waste that simmer in the heat, combine and recombine in esoteric combinations to produce an unspeakable poisonous brew. In the porous soil of the Azusa site, the acetone, trichloroethylene, chlorobenzene and others too horrible to contemplate, percolate down to the underground water where they are impossible to remove. BFI's plan was opposed by the San Gabriel water agency, the state Department of Water Resources, the Metropolitan Water District, the state Department of Health Services and the Environmental Defense Fund. As environmental reporter Robert Jones said in the *L.A. Times*, usually nobody

can lick a coalition like this. "But the water boys were about to discover that Browning-Ferris is not just any company. Its chief executive happens to be William D. Ruckelshaus . . . a man with impeccable credentials and considerable Republican clout." Ruckelshaus tried to satisfy the coalition by offering to line the dump with two heavy plastic liners, and when it was pointed out that his own EPA said that all liners leak, he offered to build three water treatment plants for \$20 million in case the liners failed. "The main San Gabriel Basin is priceless and not for sale," said the head of the local agency, as the coalition turned Ruckelshaus down. Giving up on the "Water Boys," Ruckelshaus went where the power was: the state Water Resources Control Board. The Board, appointed by the governor, vetoed the proposal, but said if he came back with changes, they would reconsider. He did so, including the \$20 million plants, and the Board gave him the permit. The coalition sued, and that's where we are at this moment.

Jones of the *Times* concludes, "Perhaps the board could not turn down a man like Ruckelshaus. Perhaps it had something to do with the squad of Sacramento lobbyists the company hired . . . or the \$19,500 the company sprinkled around Sacramento in the way of campaign contributions."

Is Mr. Clean permanently stuck in his alter ego, Mr. Pollution?

#### Sources:

*The Nation*, Nov. 6, 1989, pp. 524-528

*Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 14, 1989, p. A3 ■

# 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 is grinding to a halt. The major irruptive winter birds this year seem to be **Lewis' Woodpeckers**, **Varied Thrushes**, **Pine Siskins** and **Purple Finches**, with a smattering of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **Evening Grosbeaks**. The only report of a **Northern Shrike** was one present most of the month of November at Ridgecrest. (Rick Halowell *fide* David Blue.)

One of the most exciting birds of the year turned up across the Colorado River in Yuma. Jean Braley, an Iowan who winters in Yuma, discovered a **Double-striped Thick-knee** on her golf course around 20 November. The only other U.S. record is a bird shot on the King Ranch in Texas in December, 1961. The bird, a resident of the dry savannahs of Central America, Northern South America and Hispaniola, is known to wander. However, whether this bird is to be considered truly wild will be left up to the appropriate authorities.

This brings up the **Ruddy Ground-Dove**. About three years ago, there was a question in some peoples' minds, including mine, if the first couple of birds that showed up in the desert were indeed wild birds. These doubts were put to rest last Fall and Winter as you will see below; this species indeed seems to be experiencing a range expansion.

Congratulations to Jeff and Becky Boyd of Orange County for this month's best California bird, a **Field Sparrow**, seen by many observers. This will be only the second accepted state record, the first being on the Farallones in late Spring, 1969.

An immature **Little Blue Heron** was reported from Upper Newport Bay on 19 November (Steve Bonso), and a **Reddish Egret**, most unusual north of San Diego, was at Point Mugu on the same date (Eric Brooks).

A **Canada Goose** of the Mallard-sized **Cackling race**, was seen at Santa Fe Dam on 15 November (Leo Best), along with three

immature **White-fronted Geese**. A pair of **Wood Ducks** was on the San Gabriel River on 29 October (Felix Owens). Two male **Eurasian Widgeons** were reported, one at Upper Newport on 19 November (Vernon Hough), and one in Wilderness Pond, Downey, on 26 November (Larry Small). Two **White-winged Scoters**, very unusual inland, were on Lake Cachuma on 5 November (Ed Navajowsky).

An immature **Bald Eagle** overflew Galileo Park in eastern Kern County on 1 November (Bruce Broadbooks). The Santa Clara River estuary hosted two of the more unusual gull species, a **Little** on 26 November (Randy J. Moore), and a **Black-headed** on 10 November (Janet Cupples).

A **Common Ground-Dove** was in Encino on 1 November (Wanda Conway). **Ruddy Ground-Dove** reports at Furnace Creek peaked on 29 October with two males and one female (Hank and Priscilla Brodtkin). Single birds were reported consistently through the period at Furnace Creek. In addition, two individuals were at Bard, Imperial County, on 25 November (Brian Daniels) with one "fly by" near the south end of the Salton Sea on the same day (Doug Willick).

An immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at California City on 1 November (Bruce Broadbooks) and a "**Yellow-shafted**" **Flicker** was at Orchid Park near Canoga Park on 2 October (Wanda Conway).

Thirty-five **Stellar Jays** were at Butterbredt Springs, Kern County, on 29 November (Keith Axelson). If out-of-habitat Stellar Jays are seen, especially in the desert, the forehead should be checked for whitish spots indicating birds of eastern origin. Apparently such individuals have irrupted in Arizona this winter.

A very rare **Rufous-backed Robin** was found at Desert Center on 24 November (Guy McCaskie) and a **Gray Catbird** was reported from Furnace Creek on 21 October (Peter Barnes).

A **Bell's Vireo** was reported from Pierce College, Woodland Hills, on 23 October (Bob Muncie). Also at Pierce on the same day was a **Palm Warbler** (Roger Radd). Another **Palm Warbler** was at the Santa Clara River estuary on 28 November (Bruce Broadbooks). At least four different observers reported seeing an **albino Yellow-rumped Warbler** at the foot of the Mt. Wilson trail in Altadena on 28 October.

A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was at Lake Hollywood on 12 November (Cathy Mish). In addition to the many **American Tree Sparrow** reports from Furnace Creek last month, one was found at Galileo Park

on 28 October (Matt Heindel) and another at Baker, San Bernardino County on 25 November (Mike Patton). A **Field Sparrow** (see above) was found at Irvine Regional Park on 25 November (Jeff and Becky Boyd). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was also at Galileo Park with the **Tree Sparrow** and an illusive **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was seen at Upper Newport on 5 November (Ebbe Barnstrop). **White-throated Sparrows** were at Galileo Park on 29 October (John Wilson) and at Butterbredt Springs on the same date (Abigail King). Two **Harris' Sparrows** were found at Furnace Creek on 18 November (Richard Webster). One **Lapland Longspur** was at Furnace Creek on 18 November (Richard Webster) and another was at Baker on 25 November (Mike Patton).

A **Rusty Blackbird** was reported from the Santa Clara River estuary on 26 November (Randy J. Moore) and, uncommon in our area, a **Common Grackle** was at Indian Ranch in the Panamint Valley on 12 November (Hank and Priscilla Brodtkin).

The sighting of a flock of over 100 **Rosy Finches** in the Inyo Mountains along the Big Pine/Death Valley Road, just east of the Inyo National Forest boundary on 26 November, is a reminder that the Inyo Mountains, especially along the Death Valley Road and the Westgard Pass Road to Deep Springs, is a good place to seek out this bird in winter. Very occasionally an individual of the black race may be found in these flocks.

Another year has slipped by. I would again like to thank all of you who have contributed to this column either by direct communication to me or through Jean Brandt. Special thanks go to Jean Brandt, Kimball Garrett, Bruce Broadbooks, Arnold Small, Brian Daniels, and the Lehman/Finnegans for their advice and admonitions. Also with deep appreciation, I would like to recognize the contribution made by my constant field companion, Priscilla Brodtkin, for her wisdom, patience and adventuresome spirit.

Happy New Decade and 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  
(213) 827-0407

or  
Jean Brandt at (818) 788-5188 ■



## Madrona Marsh Nature Preserve

A 42.9 acre vernal marsh and back dune habitat in the City of Torrance on Madrona Avenue between Plaza del Amo and Sepulveda Boulevard. OPEN: Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Reservations and information for group and school walks, please call the City at 618-2998, or the Friends of Madrona Marsh at 32-MARSH.

**NATURE-BIRD WALKS:** Fourth Weekend Wet Months. 8:00 a.m. on Saturday and 10:00 a.m. on Sunday: January 27 & 28, February 24 & 25, March 24 & 25 and April 28 & 29

### WETLANDS ECOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM

For docents and persons interested in the marsh and dune habitat.

Lectures by Walt Wright, City Naturalist, on the restoration and preservation of the Madrona Marsh, on the geology, soils and oil deposits of the South Bay, and of course on the plants, birds, animals and microbes living in the marshland: 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. for four Wednesday afternoons: February 7, 14, 21 & 28; plus two field trips.

Torrance City Hall Annex, 3031 Torrance Boulevard, downstairs in the Seminar Room.

Call 618-2998 or 32-MARSH to express your interest or to reserve a place. ■

## Tule Lake

The Klamath Basin, along the central California-Oregon border, has several National Wildlife Refuges. Tule Lake, in the southeast, adjacent to Lava Beds National Monument, is the most important of these refuges for winter birding. (I was told that Tule Lake was once a large, shallow lake covering most of the area; it was drained for the greater glory of the American Potato Farmer. The watery areas, now officially designated "sumps," receive the second-hand irrigation water of the surrounding farms. Reliable sources suggest that the water may be high in Selenium.)

Tule Lake Refuge in winter is the greatest place outside Alaska to see Bald Eagles. During the peak months of January and February there may be 600 Bald Eagles around the Klamath Basin, with about 80 percent in the one small area of Tule Lake. Migrant eagles arrive in November and depart by late March or early April. Some eagles nest in forested parts of the Klamath Basin. The eaglets hatch in April.

The basic winter tour is a rather casual drive along a loop of paved road and snow-covered dikes. In the slow hour or two that the drive requires, the visitor has soon seen so many eagles (and Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers, Canada Geese, White-fronted Geese and Ring-neck Pheasants) that it is difficult to take any interest in seeing the next one. I laughed later at the thought of my casual disregard for dozens of Bald Eagles at short distance.

The refuges are also splendid for spring, summer and autumn birding. The greatest numbers of migratory waterfowl are found in the fall, but the greatest variety occurs

during the nesting season in May, June and July. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a modern visitors center and refuge headquarters at Tule Lake, where the avid birder can reserve a blind for close observation of the birds. Visitors are encouraged to contact headquarters or the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for current information on viewing opportunities.

Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge  
Route 1, Box 74  
Tule Lake, CA 96134  
(916) 667-2231

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
4343 Miller Island Road  
Klamath Falls, OR 97601  
(503) 883-5732

### Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference

The 11th Annual Bald Eagle Conference will be held February 16-18, 1990. The theme is *Eagles, Education and the Future*. The conference is sponsored by Klamath Basin Audubon Society with National Audubon, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, USFWS and the Oregon Eagle Foundation. Pre-registered cost is \$20 for the conference, \$30 with banquet. N.A.S. president Peter A.A. Berle is featured keynote speaker. There will be an amateur photo contest for prints or transparencies. Categories include: eagles, birds, wildlife and nature. Contact: Charlotte Opp, Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference, 5873 Estate Drive, Klamath Falls, OR 97603, (503) 883-5732 days or (503) 882-8488 evenings. ■

## Bookstore News

by Charles Harper

We hope you have taken a look through our most recent saleslist inserted in the November *Tanager*. Even after increasing its size from four to six pages, it is full up again with new additions to our stock; and next May, the list will be even longer!

Already added since November are Pettingill's classic volumes, *Guide to Birdfinding East* and *Guide to Birdfinding West*, recently reprinted (only in hardcover, 29.95). While the last revisions of these texts were in 1977 and 1981, respectively, they are still excellent baselines for birding across the U.S. We have also acquired up-to-date birdfinding guides to **Napa and Solano Counties**, the **Delaware Valley** (southeast Pennsylvania, central and south New Jersey and north-central Delaware), the **Denver-Boulder** region, **Oklahoma** and the **Seattle** area. We would like to be able to supply all of the birdfinding guides that are worth their salt, but it is sometimes hard to discover their existence when they are advertised only locally; so if you are familiar with any good ones we don't stock yet, let us know!

We have just acquired the *Facts on File Field Guide to North Atlantic Shorebirds* (19.95), whose drawing card is its fine color photographs of several plumages of each species, and we are now carrying the *Golden Guide to Field Identification: Families of Birds* (9.95), which will give you the "big picture" on avian characteristics and relationships in a simple and concise format.

And for those who have been delighted with the Houghton Mifflin Identification Guide series (Seabirds, Shorebirds, Waterfowl), the fourth volume—*Swallows and Martins* (35.00, just like its predecessors)—is out and looking good!

More and better identification and birdfinding guides are appearing every week, but our saleslist is published only semiannually, so don't hesitate to give us a ring anytime and ask, "What's new?" ■

## Seasons on the Farallon Islands - Life in the California Current

by Susan Claire Peaslee

*Continued from the December 1989 issue of the Western Tanager*

### A Conservation Saga

How far can a wildlife population decline, when natural stresses are compounded by human-caused impacts, and still rebound from the brink of extinction? A goal common to all of PRBO's research is to furnish sound scientific evidence for management, conservation and public policy, and on the Farallones the saga of the Common Murre is a case in point. This population's historical rise and fall illustrates how cumulative stresses can all but overwhelm a species' natural resilience.

Up to 400,000 murrelets may have bred on the Farallones before the Gold Rush. Then between 1854 and 1880, commercial egg companies took about 12 million murre eggs for the booming San Francisco market. Until 1895, lighthouse-keepers and fishermen continued eggging, without leaving an egg for each pair to hatch (Common Murrelets re-lay to replace lost eggs). Another threat, chronic oil spills, struck during the early 1900s. Ships routinely flushed their bilges before entering San Francisco Bay, and there were large spills as well. Heavy human disturbance on the island — resident lightkeepers, their families and domestic animals, and low-flying aircraft — caused extensive nest failure for seabirds. After an El Niño in 1957-58, the Common Murrelets reached a historic low: 6,000 breeding birds in 1959.

Ten years later Farallon populations received a timely reprieve: as a National Wildlife Refuge, the islands were given new, resident stewardship by USFWS and PRBO beginning in 1969. All disturbance of nesting seabirds by human traffic was prohibited, and the murrelets' recovery was dramatic: 20,000 breeding birds by 1972 (in spite of a major oil spill in 1971) and 88,000 by 1982 — a record rate of 15 percent per year! We expected their numbers to continue climbing through this decade, towards hundreds of thousands of murrelets.

An unforeseen reversal in this upward trend began in 1980, when a commercial fishery expanded rapidly out of Monterey Bay and Common Murrelets began drowning in gill nets. Volunteers in PRBO's Beached Bird Survey Project were among the first to identify and monitor the problem. Along the central California coast, over 15,000

murrelets died in gill nets from 1980 to 1982; the toll was 25,000 in 1983; and by conservative estimate, 70,000-80,000 murrelets in all were killed from 1980 to 1986. PRBO worked throughout this period with the California Department of Fish and Game to monitor the loss, with fishermen's organizations and conservation groups to reach a solution, and with federal and state legislators to enact protective regulations in 1987.

While the Farallon murrelet population has begun another recovery, increasing from 34,000 breeding birds in 1987 to 41,000 in 1989, this episode was a very close call. During the same time that gill net mortality was so high, an El Niño of major proportions struck in 1982-83, and many seabirds starved or failed to produce young. The 1984 Puerto Rican oil spill occurred in the fall, just after the birds' most vulnerable season but when Common Murre adults and young were still feeding in coastal waters.

What would have happened if the murrelets had not increased so rapidly during the 1970s? If the Farallon population had started out this decade at a severely depleted level, would it have survived all these natural and unnatural mortality pressures? These are no idle questions, as cycles of scarcity in the marine environment are certain to recur and human-caused accidents and development pressures are likely to increase. For assessing wildlife populations in the balance, PRBO's Farallon research, now spanning two full decades, is fundamental.

### A Refuge in Changing Times

For the moment, the marine environment on which the murrelets and other Farallon seabirds depend seems relatively safe. The islands are a National Wildlife Refuge, the surrounding waters are a National Marine Sanctuary, California law prohibits gill net fishing here, federal legislation may limit offshore drilling here, and the United Nations has designated the entire Farallon system (and nearby mainland coast) an International Biosphere reserve. There is no absolute protection, though, from pollution or accidents at sea: consider just one oil scenario for central California waters — the heavy tanker traffic through the Golden Gate every day of the year.

Nor is there any ultimate settlement to fishery pressures on the food web: marine populations are in flux and so are economics. We witnessed a six-fold increase in sea urchin diving near the Farallones last year, and for the first time there's a potential for commercially harvesting short-bellied rockfish (the key prey for many Farallon seabirds). Anticipating the need for information on seabird foraging patterns and rockfish abundance, PRBO has been cooperating since 1985 in research with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). On summer research cruises, we gather data on birds' diets and distribution throughout the Gulf of the Farallones — in fact, from Monterey Bay to the Cordell Banks — to correlate with NMFS data on rockfish occurrence.

Our background knowledge is already in place: natural variations (other than El Niño) can significantly affect both rockfish availability and the Farallones' breeding seabirds. In 1989, for example, we recorded below-average nesting success for the murrelets, guillemots and cormorants; scarcity of young rockfish was the main cause. NMFS had found rockfish almost absent from their samples in the Gulf of the Farallones, and the short-bellied rockfish that were available were too late for the birds' chick-rearing phase. The season's entire weather regime seemed about one month late, with a late winter storm in March, "spring" winds in June, and very late upwelling.

You can well imagine, then, the fascination hidden in a seemingly endless routine of recording weather and ocean conditions on the Farallones. Direction and period of ocean swells, sea surface temperature and salinity, wind direction and velocity — these data fill the pages of PRBO's Farallon journal day by day. A composite picture emerges of ocean-atmosphere dynamics, vitally important to seabirds, fishermen, wildlife managers, naturalists and citizens of this coast. Along with tales of elephant seals and notes on the well-being of island wildlife, weather makes for ample conversation and speculation among PRBO's mid-winter crew out on Southeast Farallon.

*The author is editor of PRBO's Quarterly Journal, from which much of the information for this article is drawn. You can receive the Quarterly and support PRBO's work by becoming a member at the basic rate of \$35 per year.*

*PRBO Farallon Biologist Peter Pyle will present the featured program at L.A. Audubon's chapter meeting on 9 January 1990. ■*



## Garbage Crisis

These are critical times for garbage policy in Southern California. The City and County of Los Angeles are pressing quickly ahead with plans for the next generation of "sanitary landfills" which may, if we dedicate our remaining local canyons to garbage, accommodate us for fifty years. At two public workshops in November, L.A. County Sanitation proposed filling Rustic, Sullivan, Mission, Blind, Towsley, Elsmere, and northern Sunshine Canyons, among others, as a necessary minimum to meet local garbage needs by the year 2000. Other measures may include widespread incineration and "long-haul" by rail out to the desert. Aside from the environmental damage that more landfills will cause, there

is no planning for the longer term. After we have destroyed the last canyon and further poisoned our ghastly air, what will the next generation do? How much recycling and source-reduction of waste can we achieve, and what will be the benefits of more modesty in trashing our environment?

You are invited to join a new Garbage, Growth and Social Justice coalition to organize a city-wide citizen network and to discuss City and County waste plans. A video entitled "War on Waste" by Dr. Paul Connett of State University of New York, Queens will be presented. Meet on Saturday, January 13, noon to 4:00 p.m. at Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium, 4730 Crystal Spring Drive in Griffith Park, off Los Feliz Boulevard. For more information, contact Sue Nelson, Inter City Green Network, at (213) 250-3233. ■

## Attention

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is working to create Santa Clarita Woodland Park in the Santa Susana Mountains.

In early December the Conservancy acquired the first 145 acres of Towsley Canyon, which Los Angeles County wants for a garbage dump. Further developments, which may lead to a 6,000 acre preserve on the northern edge of Los Angeles city, are expected soon.

Any persons interested in this proposed park should put themselves on the Conservancy's mailing list by writing, indicating interest in Santa Clarita Woodland Park, to:

Sonia Thompson  
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy  
3700 Solstice Canyon Road  
Malibu, CA 90265 ■



Red-headed Woodpecker

## Dear Tanager,

(Edited for brevity)

I wholeheartedly agree with Jim Halferty (*Western Tanager*, November 1989) that bird lists are personal. We can certainly count any bird we want. Birding is a game for us to enjoy and actively to pursue in our own ways.

However, there is another level to this game. Many birders want to compare their list against a known standard. Therefore, the American Birding Association has devised a set of rules for playing that game. Countable birds are defined by the official list for each area of concern: The California state list is controlled by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC).

The CBRC's purpose is not to referee our games. Their search for truth demands skepticism and conservatism. It is much better that some unproved truth be lost than that untruth be propagated. It's only through the rigor of such committees that sight records gain any credibility in the scientific community.

The CBRC cannot abandon the scientific method for the benefit of our games. But Jim, for your list, make up the rules, play the game well, and enjoy. I wish you success.

Dave Blue  
Ridgecrest, CA

*This is a touchy issue for listers. Guy McKaskie, the dean of California listers, submitted his 1988 list to *Winging It* (March 1989) with a letter noting seven species that he would like to count. He noted, "I trust others reporting their lists do not count these birds when making their totals. I am not convinced."*

*A good article on serious listing appears in *The Atlantic*, May 1989 pp. 88-94. Thanks to Sandi Hoover, Director of Houston Audubon for sending a copy. Our most ardent listers subscribe to *North American Rare Bird Alert*, a service run by Houston Audubon. ■*

## O'pinions

by Elwood Suggins

The Fourth Annual Dick Davenport Memorial Bird Walk was held on Thursday, November 9, 1989. As I am sure you will all recall, Dick Davenport was the intrepid birder who passed away in the field, brought low by a coronary as he was photographing a Bachman's Warbler (*Vermivora bachmanii*) in Yosemite National Park.

Several walkers participated in this commemoration, and there were no casualties, although some cases of "warbler neck" were exacerbated by efforts to view an Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*) high aloft. A total of about 32 species were seen, mostly by everyone.

The Walk also added a new bird to the Exposition Park Checklist: Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). Because of aberrant binoculars, however, the leader failed to identify to subspecies. Here, as in other

walks of life, the leaders have the best excuses.

Another disappointment was that we were unable to include the Rose Garden in our perambulation; but as our leader said, he never promised us one (see comment in previous paragraph).

Nevertheless, the catering was outstanding and the badinage exquisite, and this year's participants left with a warm feeling of satisfaction, looking forward to a fifth. ■

# Growth

*Continued from page 3*

Finally, of course, is biodiversity. All those little critters out there, the non-human animals, the plants and the micro-organisms are all working parts of the ecosystems that support our economic system and, through our economic system, us. As that support is increasingly undermined, the economic system will start to collapse, and we will move towards catastrophe. We are now facing the greatest extinction episode, certainly, since that at the Cretaceous-Tertiary boundary, which wiped out the dinosaurs and many other groups 65 million years ago. The rate of regeneration of biodiversity is measured in millions of years.

Basically, we are squandering our inheritance, and economists are calling it "growth." Edward Abbey's message was very eloquent; they don't seem to understand that "perpetual growth is the creed of the cancer cell." Even a 0.2 percent economic growth rate is disastrously high in the long run. It is not remotely possible to double the size of the human population and quintuple the size of the economy, as some people believe will happen.

The food situation alone is especially worrisome. A recent study at Brown University asked how many people could be fed with the record harvests of 1985 if everybody were vegetarian; if food were divided rather equally among all and no grain were fed to animals. The answer was some 6 billion. That's pretty good, we have 5.3 billion now, so we have a long way to go, right? 'Cause everybody is moving to equal distribution, we are not going to feed any more cattle on grain, and we're all going to become vegetarians! Unfortunately, the global harvest in 1988 was 10 percent smaller than in 1985.

A South American diet from the 1985 harvest, with 15 percent of calories of animal origin, could be fed to only 4 billion people. About 1.3 billion would have to disappear right now. A North American diet could be supplied to 2.5 billion, which means that more than half the world would disappear.

Every year the farmers are trying to feed 93 million more people, and they've got to do it with 26 billion tons less topsoil, and of course, trillions of gallons less groundwater. That's the food situation without climate change.

There is, sadly, about a 70 percent chance that we'll see a rise of 2 or 3 or 4 degrees Celsius over the next century, and

this will cause dramatic changes in climate. The best evidence suggests more rainfall on the planet as a whole, but a drying in the continental interiors in the mid-latitudes, which is where our food is grown. Computer models at Stanford have predicted the possible consequences of weather events that damage agriculture about twice as much as the droughts in 1988. Making optimistic assumptions about food production in years with good weather, and assuming about every third year will have bad weather, about twice a decade there will be famines in which somewhere between 40 million and 400 million people starve to death. If you think the social system of the world can stand up to that, particularly when everybody is getting armed with nuclear weapons, you are a bigger optimist than I.

What can we do about this less-than-cheerful picture besides drinking a lot?

We should set a goal of shrinking the world's population as rapidly as possible. Once we halt growth and start downward, we have at least a century to debate where to stop shrinking. Halting growth will be hard to do, especially in the less-developed countries, many of which have 45 percent or more of their people under the age of 15—future parents. Even if they have small families, those populations will continue to grow for a long time.

The best way to halt growth in poor countries is to educate women, give them better health care, give them better opportunities, and get social security systems in place. The rich countries have plenty of resources they can divert to helping the poor control their populations and develop in ecologically sound ways—if they wish to. If they don't wish to, then they will pay a very high price. For instance, carbon dioxide molecules and methane molecules don't know any borders. Our fates are tied to those of poor nations, and we are not giving the help we should be giving.

And so we must work on the P [population] factor, and the A [affluence] and T [technology] factors as well.

We must move toward much more efficient energy use. That can increase the quality of American life. Besides developing more energy-efficient technologies, we need to reorganize our economy and replan our cities. For example, they could be planned so that most people could walk or bicycle to work.

If the climatologists are correct, it is virtually impossible to **stop** the global warming. There is likely to be considerable warming for a very long time, as a result of greenhouse gases already added to the

atmosphere. But it is possible and critically important to slow down the rate of greenhouse gas buildup. If it is slowed down, Tucson people will have time to move away before the water runs out. Farmers can change crops and cultivation techniques more gradually; they can get used to constant climate instability.

One of the best ways to slow down the warming, besides moving toward energy efficiency, is to plant lots of trees, which "eat" carbon dioxide and store the carbon in their wood. We need to establish sustainable forestry in the Northwest, where they're now cutting the forests down as fast as they can. Unhappy loggers curse the Sierra Club and Audubon Society, but they don't see that, at current rates of destruction, they will soon be out of business anyhow.

We are all involved in this disaster. It isn't just ranchers, or timber people, or Exxon executives; we all play in this game. When we decide to rearrange our society, it's got to be done with great care for the people who are going to be hurt. The finger is pointing at all of us. We all have to participate, if only to pay taxes to help other people out. There are lots of things we can do. If we do them, we have to do them with a spirit of cooperation. Not only must we cooperate with each other, but with people of other nations, because these are global problems. The examples of energy development in China and India underline this.

Humanity is thus in a rather interesting position. We will have to live as the great religious traditions have always said we should. We have to learn to turn the other cheek. We must work to stamp out racism, sexism, religious prejudice and xenophobia.

My suggestion to you is, first of all, don't believe a word I've said. I could be a paid agent of the Audubon Green Conspiracy. Check up on me. Everything I have said is easily verifiable in the open literature, UN statistics, Population Reference Bureau data, and so on. Spend part of your time becoming well informed. Don't listen to talking heads, particularly on television. Choose the area where you want to work to make society a better place. Put at least 10 percent of your time into it—that is, tithe to your society. If you are really into birds, you had better get into the fight. Many species of birds will disappear. I'll end with a quote from Ken Brower, Dave Brower's son, about the California Condor: "When the vultures watching your civilization start dropping dead, it's time to pause and wonder."

Thank you! ■

# Military Impacts on the Environment

Dr. Anne Ehrlich, Biology Professor at Stanford, Sierra Club's National Chair of Military Impacts on the Environment Committee, and collaborator with her husband Paul Ehrlich on many books on population and the environment, will speak on Military Impacts on the Environment.

Professor Ehrlich is hosted by the Nuclear Issues Committee of Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter and by the Environment Committee of Santa Monica Unitarian Church.

She will speak at the Unitarian Church, 18th Street and Arizona Avenue, Santa Monica, at 7:30 p.m., Friday, March 16, 1990. For further information, call Florence McKenna of the Sierra Club at (213) 395-6762. ■

## No Banquet

LAAS will not have its customary February banquet in 1990. The Board of Directors decided at the December meeting that we should have a summer picnic outing, not to conflict with the AOU and ABA activities in June. Kimball Garrett, Sharon Milder and Melanie Ingalls have formed a committee to plan the picnic. ■

### RESERVATION TRIPS (Limited Participation) 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 changes
- (4) Separate check (no cash please) to LAAS for exact amount for each trip
- (5) SASE for confirmation and associated trip information.

Send to: Reservations, LAAS, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90046

If there is insufficient response, the trip will be cancelled *two Wednesdays* prior to the scheduled date and you will be so notified and your fee refunded. Your cancellation within that time will bring a refund only if there is a paid replacement available.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Continued from page 12*

cellent place to scrutinize more gulls! Advance reservations for accommodations in off-season should not be necessary.

**Saturday, February 17 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park.** See January 21 for details.

**Sunday, February 18 - Lake Norconian.** Leader TBA. Meet at 8 a.m. at Main Gate. We must mail our roster to the base beforehand, so register early at Audubon House. 25 maximum.

**Sunday, February 25 - Malibu Lagoon.** See January 28 for details.

**Sunday, February 25 - Pelagic Trip toward Santa Barbara Island.** Leaders Jonathan Alderfer and Kimball Garrett will lead you to some subset of Sooty, Pink-footed, Black-vented and Short-tailed Shearwaters, Northern Fulmar, Pomarine Jaeger, Red Phalarope, Wandering Tattler, Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird, Black-legged Kittiwake, Xantus Murrelet, Cassin's Auklet, Rhinoceros Auklet, and rarities such as South Polar Skua, Black-footed Albatross, Buller's Shearwater and Fork-tailed Petrel. Likely mammals include Pacific pilot whale, gray whale, Dahl porpoise, Risso's dolphin, Pacific bottlenose dolphin and Pacific common dolphin. The R.V. Vantuna leaves Terminal Island at 6:00 a.m. and returns at 4:30 p.m.. Price is \$28. Reservation required. (This is our only pelagic trip until August 11; grab your chance early if you're interested.)

**Sunday, March 4 - Topanga State Park.** See January 7 for details.

**Saturday, March 10 - Ballona Wetlands.** See January 13 for details.

**Saturday, March 17 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park.** See January 21 for details.

**Tuesday, March 20 - L.A. Arboretum.** Barbara Cohen will lead a morning walk through varied habitat looking for quail, owls, herons, raptors and early migrants. Meet at 8 a.m. in front of the gatehouse in the parking lot on Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, just south of Fwy 210, on the west side of the street. No admission fee.

**Sunday, April 8 - Providence Mts. and Vicinity.** Leader Chet McGaugh. If you are intrigued by the far desert but wouldn't know where to start on your own, this trip may be of special interest. Chet has spent considerable time in these areas and hopes to find Crissal and Bendire's Thrashers singing on their nesting grounds. The far reaches of the desert are presently under severe legislative scrutiny: aside from seeing early breeding and migrating birds, you can firm up your knowledge and appreciation of this very scenic desert area. Plan to do a lot of driving Saturday afternoon (and Sunday evening), as we will meet at 6 a.m. Sunday morning in Baker. Reserve with Audubon House for information on accommodations and meeting place as it becomes available. Fee: \$16. 20 maximum. ■

### WESTERN TANAGER

Published 10 times a year by  
Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard  
(Plummer Park)

West Hollywood, CA 90046

EDITOR: Jesse Moorman

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Hank Brodtkin

CONSERVATION EDITOR:

Sandy Wohlgemuth

ORNITHOLOGY CONSULTANT:

Kimball Garrett

DESKTOP PUBLISHING: WP Plus

PRINTING: Marcotte Printing

Los Angeles Audubon Society is a chapter of National Audubon Society. Opinions expressed in articles or letters herein do not necessarily express the position of this publication or of LAAS.

PRESIDENT: Robert Van Meter

1st VICE PRESIDENT: Jean Brandt

2nd VICE PRESIDENT:

Richard Webster

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:

Mildred Newton

Annual membership in both societies is \$35 per year, \$21 for seniors, and presently \$30 for new members for their first year. Members receive the *Western Tanager* newsletter and *Audubon* magazine, a national publication.

Renewals of membership are computerized by National Audubon and should not normally be sent to LAAS. New memberships and renewal of lapsed memberships may be sent to Los Angeles Audubon House at the above address. Make checks payable to the order of National Audubon Society.

Non-members may subscribe to the *Western Tanager* for \$12 per year. The newsletter is sent by first class mail to subscribers and members who pay an additional \$5. Make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

National Headquarters, New York -  
(212) 832-3200

Los Angeles Audubon Headquarters,  
Library and Bookstore are open

Tuesday - Saturday

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

(213) 876-0202 - office

(213) 874-1318 - bird tape

(updated Thursdays)

To report bird sightings,  
before 9:00 p.m.

(818) 788-5188 - Jean Brandt

(213) 827-0407 - Hank Brodtkin

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## EVENING MEETING

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

**Tuesday, January 9 - Point Reyes Bird Observatory Farallon Biologist Peter Pyle** will discuss **Seasons on the Farallon Islands - Life in the California Current**. For an introduction to this unique ecosystem, see article on page 8.

**Tuesday, February 13 - Steve Laymon, Independent Research Biologist**, will present **Spotted Owls: Their Habitat Use and Ecology in the Sierras**. Steve just finished his Ph.D. dissertation at Berkeley on Spotted Owls. These endangered birds have become a symbol for the fight to save old growth forests throughout the west. The political issues involving logging and the Forest Service will be discussed as well. Some of you will remember Steve from his excellent talk on Yellow-billed Cuckoos two years ago.

## IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

Precedes the regular evening meetings

7:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

CALL THE TAPE!

## BOARD MEETINGS

First Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at Audubon House  
Audubon Members are Welcome  
January 4, 1990 and February 1, 1990

## 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 cancellations that may have occurred by the Thursday before the trip.

**Sunday, January 7 - Topanga State Park.** Leader **Gerry Haigh** will guide participants through this beautiful nearby area. The group will look at wintering and resident species in the sycamores, grassland, scrub oak and chaparral. This is an ideal trip for a beginning birder or for someone new to the area. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. From Topanga Canyon Blvd. heading south, take a very sharp turn east (left if heading south from the San Fernando Valley) uphill onto Entrada Drive (7 miles south of Ventura Blvd. and 1 mile north of Topanga Village). Follow the signs to the state park. \$3 parking fee.

**Saturday, January 13 - Ballona Wetlands.** **Bob Shanman** will conduct this monthly walk at our nearest wetlands. Wintering waterfowl and shorebirds will be well established. Black Oystercatchers are usually seen. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Pacific Ave. footbridge. Take the Marina Fwy (90 West) to Culver Blvd., turn left to Pacific Ave., then right to the bridge at the end. Street parking is usually available.

**Saturday, January 13 - Lakeview/Lake Perris Area.** Leader **Monte Taylor** will show us around this excellent winter birding area in search of Buteos, Prairie Falcons, Golden Eagles, Longspurs and myriad waterfowl. Take Fwy 60 east past Fwy 215, exit south on Gilman Springs Rd., and meet at the Bridge St. intersection at 8:30 a.m. at the side of the road. Bring lunch, scopes, warm clothing and durable footwear.

**Friday & Saturday, January 19 & 20 - Raptor Workshop.** Our instructor **Ned Harris** will be drawing on his extensive collection of raptor slides and raptor lore for this Friday slide show and Saturday bus trip. The raptor I.D. workshop will cover the 22 species of diurnal birds of prey which can be observed in southern California, concentrating on the field identification of these raptors in their various age, sex and color morph variations. The recommended text is *Hawks*, by W. Clark & B. Wheeler (Peterson Field Guide Series #35). The most likely species to be seen on Saturday's field trip are Red-tailed and Ferruginous Hawks, American Kestrels, Prairie Falcons and Northern Harriers. Possible additional species include Rough-legged and Cooper's Hawks, Golden Eagles and Merlins. Lecture meets at 7:30 p.m. at Union Federal Savings at 8485 La Cienega near Wilshire. Free locked parking lot for duration of meeting. Field trip meets 7:00 a.m. at Federal Building parking lot in Westwood, 11000 Wilshire Blvd. Fee is \$12 for lecture and bus, \$6 for lecture only.

**Sunday, January 21 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park.** **David White** will lead a morning walk to check in on their resident birds and renowned waterfowl. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center, 1000 N. Durfee Avenue in South El Monte, off Fwy 60 between the Santa Anita and Peck Dr. exits, west of Fwy 605.

**Saturday, January 27 - Point Mugu.** Leader **Daniel Cooper** and the base biologist should find plenty of waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, scoters and other wintering birds to remark upon in this limited-access area. Exit PCH onto Wood Rd., head west, then south on the frontage road to the main (#1) gate lot. The attendance list must be submitted to the base beforehand, so sign up early! Must be minimum 16 years old, and no cameras please. Include in your reservation request an SASE, citizenship status, phone number and a \$5.00 deposit to be refunded at the gate.

**Sunday, January 28 - Malibu Lagoon.** Fourth Sunday of each month. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the lagoon parking lot (daily fee) on the ocean side of PCH, just north of the lagoon bridge. You can also turn into town for street parking. Parking along the highway is not recommended, as there have been several automobile break-ins in recent months. This walk is under the leadership of a member of the Santa Monica Audubon Society.

**Sunday, February 4 - Topanga State Park.** See January 7 for details.

**Sunday, February 4 - Salton Sea.** **Marge Pamias** will be leading this joint Los Angeles/Long Beach Audubon trip. Aside from the huge flocks of Canada Geese, Snow Geese and other waterfowl wintering in the area, we should see lots of White Pelicans, numerous Sandhill Cranes and—we hope—Still Sandpipers and Common Goldeneyes. Call Audubon House to reserve. No fee. Stay tuned for details.

**Saturday, February 10 - Ballona Wetlands.** See January 13 for details.

**Saturday, February 10 (and 11?) - Gull Mini-Workshop at Malibu / McGrath (with Morro Bay Sunday Option).** Encore performance of last year's excellent field seminar on gulls, given by one of our more professional amateur birdmen, **Larry Allen**. Aside from a short discussion on gull i.d. and sporadic blabbering for the duration of the day, Larry will provide an i.d. handout and a revised dichotomous field i.d. key. Bring a picnic lunch, warm clothing, and National Geographic Field Guide, and a scope if you have one. We will meet at the Malibu Lagoon parking lot kiosk at 8 a.m. (See January 28 for directions). After honing skills at Malibu, Larry will lead the party to McGrath State Beach in Oxnard in hopes of seeing nine or ten species of gulls in various plumages. We may take a peek at other birds, too. Those who become truly hooked are welcome to accompany Larry up the coast Saturday afternoon (about 4:30) on an informal birding trip to Morro Bay and environs, co-hosted by ex-LAAS local **Brad Schram**. San Luis Obispo often hosts a few unusual wintering birds and is an ex-

Continued on page 11

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

DATED MATERIAL  
Please Expedite

Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard  
West Hollywood, CA 90046

# We Need Your Opinions Now!

## Please Respond Today

Los Angeles Audubon Society (LAAS) has over 3,500 members with a **very silent** majority. The board of directors of LAAS wants to be informed of the views, desires and interests of **all** its members. Your response to this questionnaire is needed. Please take the time (less than 12 minutes) to answer and comment, then return this tear-out (or a photocopy) to Audubon House. There is no need to identify who you are. What you think and feel is vital. Our ambition is to be an effective organization, responsive to the members who support it. Thank you.

### PLEASE PRINT

#### BIRDS AND BIRDING

1. Yes No I maintain a bird feeder(s)
2. Yes No I keep a record of birds seen
3. Yes No I have participated in LAAS birding field trips  
My favorite trip was: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Yes No I read the list of field trips each month in the *Western Tanager*
5. Yes No The ID workshops one half hour prior to LAAS monthly meetings have sharpened my birding skills
6. Yes No I keep a pet bird(s)  
If so species kept: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Yes No Museum and zoo exhibits of birds intrigue me. I have visited the exhibits at:
  - a. Yes No Los Angeles Zoo
  - b. Yes No Los Angeles Natural History Museum
  - c. Yes No San Bernardino Natural History Museum
  - d. Yes No San Diego Zoo
  - e. Yes No Sea World, San Diego
  - f. Yes No Santa Barbara Natural History Museum
  - g. Yes No Desert Museum, Tucson
  - h. Please list other exhibits that LAAS members should know about:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

8. My personal birding library includes:
  - a. Yes No Check lists
  - b. Yes No Field guides
  - c. Yes No How-to books ("Build a . . .," "Drive to . . .")
  - d. Yes No Art books
  - e. Yes No Out of print and antique books
  - f. Yes No Ornithology textbooks
  - g. Yes No Cassette tapes
  - h. The total number of bird books in my library is approximately:  
10      25      50      100 more
  - i. My favorite magazines and newsletters about birds are:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Yes No I carefully go through the booklist included in the *Western Tanager*
10. Yes No I visit the LAAS bookstore: Never      Rarely      Occasionally      Frequently
11. Yes No I usually find what I want in the LAAS bookstore
12. Additional services or items the LAAS bookstore should provide are:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Yes No I would like to receive an LAAS bookstore gift certificate as a reward for recruiting a new member

**BOOKS AND PERIODICALS (continued)**

14. I read the *Western Tanager*. No Scan quickly Some articles Cover to cover
15. Yes No I like the new look of the *Western Tanager*
- a. I would like to see the following added:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I would like to see the following deleted or changed:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
16. My favorite part of the *Western Tanager* is
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
17. The *Western Tanager* should provide
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
18. Yes No I save back issues of the *Western Tanager*
19. I read *Audubon Magazine*: No Scan quickly Some articles Cover to cover
20. My favorite part of *Audubon Magazine* is
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
21. *Audubon Magazine* should provide
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
22. Yes No I save back issues of *Audubon Magazine*
23. I subscribe to:
- a. Yes No *Audubon Activist*
- b. Yes No *Audubon Wildlife Report*
24. My feeling about National Audubon Society selling my name and address to other conservation organizations is: Good idea Don't care Resentful

**AUDUBON HOUSE**

25. I have attended LAAS monthly meetings
- Not at all Once Occasionally Every month
26. I like the LAAS monthly meeting
- a. Yes No ID workshops
- b. Yes No Speakers
- c. Yes No Bird photograph contests
- d. Yes No Banquets
- e. Yes No Topics selected
- f. Yes No Variety of programs
- g. Yes No Format
- h. Yes No Meeting room
27. I would like to suggest that
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
28. Yes No I wish that LAAS would meet on Saturday mornings following a bird walk
29. Yes No I am comfortable attending evening meetings at Plummer Park
30. I call the Bird Alert Tape (213) 874-1318
- Never Occasionally Weekly
31. Yes No The format of the weekly bird tape is right
32. The tape should provide
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
33. Yes No I am aware that LAAS has a library for my own free use
34. I have used the library
- Never Once Occasionally Frequently



## CONSERVATION

35. At present, my conservation efforts include:
- a. Yes No Restoring habitat with pick and shovel
  - b. Yes No Performing volunteer office work
  - c. Yes No Writing letters to influence political action
  - d. Yes No Donating to worthy conservation projects
  - e. Yes No Listening to a concerned speaker
  - f. Yes No Recycling and conserving wherever I can
36. If I found an exciting conservation project, I wish it could be:
- a. Yes No Restoring habitat with pick and shovel
  - b. Yes No Performing volunteer office work
  - c. Yes No Writing letters to influence political action
  - d. Yes No Donating to worthy conservation projects
  - e. Yes No Listening to a concerned speaker
  - f. Yes No Recycling and conserving wherever I can
37. I think that:
- a. Emphasis on local conservation such as creating a wildlife area at Sepulveda Basin should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is
  - b. Contributing funds toward international problems such as rainforest conservation should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is
  - c. A habitat restoration project such as the "adopt a refuge" program should be:  
Started      Avoided
  - d. Political actions like the "Save Mono Lake" lawsuit should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is
  - e. Collection of aluminum cans at Audubon House should be:  
Started      Avoided
  - f. Letter writing campaigns to influence the politician's vote should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is
  - g. Awarding research grants to graduate students in bird biology and related fields should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is
  - h. Awarding scholarships for study at Audubon's Ecology Camp in the West should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is
  - i. Providing nature education programs to elementary schools should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is
  - j. Conducting annual Christmas Bird Counts should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is
  - k. Conducting fund-raising drives like the Birdathon should be:  
Increased      Decreased      Stopped      Stay as is

## COMMENTS

---

---

---

---

---

---

After completing the questionnaire, please fold, stamp and return it to Audubon House. If you prefer, you may send a photocopy instead of the original.

Thank you.

Membership, LAAS

---

*Thanks For Your Quick Response!*

---

.25  
Stamp  
Needed

Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard  
West Hollywood, California 90046

**Attn: Membership**