

WESTERN TANAGER

The Los Angeles Chapter of
The National Audubon Society

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by Henry E. Childs, Jr., Ph.D.

BRAWLEY

birding below sea level

Henry (Hank) Childs is Emeritus Professor of Biology at Chaffey College where he also served as Vice President for Instruction of that 14,000 student college for 7 years. His research has included studies on arctic vertebrates in Alaska, pocket gophers in California and the effects of irradiation on wild mammals at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He has published many papers in Evolution, The Condor, Journal of Wildlife Management, and the Journal of Mammalogy, as well as many articles in the Western Tanager and the Chaparral Naturalist of the Pomona Valley Audubon Society. Dr. Childs is the author of the forthcoming book on birding localities, Where Birders Go in Southern California.



White-faced Ibis

Photo courtesy of Herbert Clarke

Brawley, elevation minus 113 feet, is a sleepy little town in the heart of the agricultural area of Imperial County. Tourism is not one of its largest industries. Until recently, even birders only spent the night and then left for the more exciting southern edge of the Salton Sea. The presence of a Curved-billed Thrasher in January and February has awakened some of us to the riches in bird life that Brawley can provide.

Getting There: Depart from the Los Angeles area on I-10, go east past Indio and take the Dillon Road offramp. Turn right to Indio Blvd. and then turn left. It is most helpful

to have a road map of Imperial County when birding in the Salton Sea area.

Brawley may be approached on the east side of the Salton Sea on Highway 111 which passes through Niland and Calipatria. An awe-inspiring sight in Calipatria is the 160 ft. flagpole, the top of which is at sea level!

An alternate faster, but less interesting route is Highway 86 along the west side of the Sea. Birders usually bird along the east side in the morning and return along the west side the following day. Even two full days does not do justice to the wealth of birds to be seen at the many good localities along both sides of the Sea.

Brawley is located at the junctions of Highways 111 and 86, running essentially

north-south, and Highway 78, running east from Brawley to Blythe. There are several motels in town — the Town House Lodge [(619) 344-5120] is perhaps the newest and best. Several fast food and Mexican restaurants are available. Tim Tiger's Cafe on Highway 86 opens at 4:30 a.m., an item of interest to early birders.

However, for the best meal in the Imperial Valley, a short drive west to Westmorland is worth the effort. The place is the Town Pump, one of the few buildings left after a disastrous earthquake about 10 years ago. Don't be inhibited by the outside; inside is a fine and reasonable steak house. Call (619) 344-4841 for reservations.

Continued on next page

Birding Brawley and Vicinity: Assuming that you have birded along the east side of the Salton Sea all day, the-end-of-the-day spectacular is watching the Sandhill Cranes come in to roost, a sight not to be beaten in southern California. Go south from Brawley 6 miles on Hwy. 111 to Harris Road. Turn right and stop by the three palm trees. Plan to arrive there by 4:30 p.m. There is a field on the north side of the road where the cranes may be feeding, but most fly into the duck club a bit farther north and behind a row of shrubs. Occasionally, small flocks of White-faced Ibis may fly into this area, sometimes directly overhead. In January and February the real show starts at about 4:45 p.m. and continues until dark. Most years the cranes come in from the east; however, this year they came from the northwest, all 279 of them. Often the eerie calls of the cranes can be heard before the birds are seen. The flocks circle slowly and lower their landing gear as they drop into the protection of the duck club.

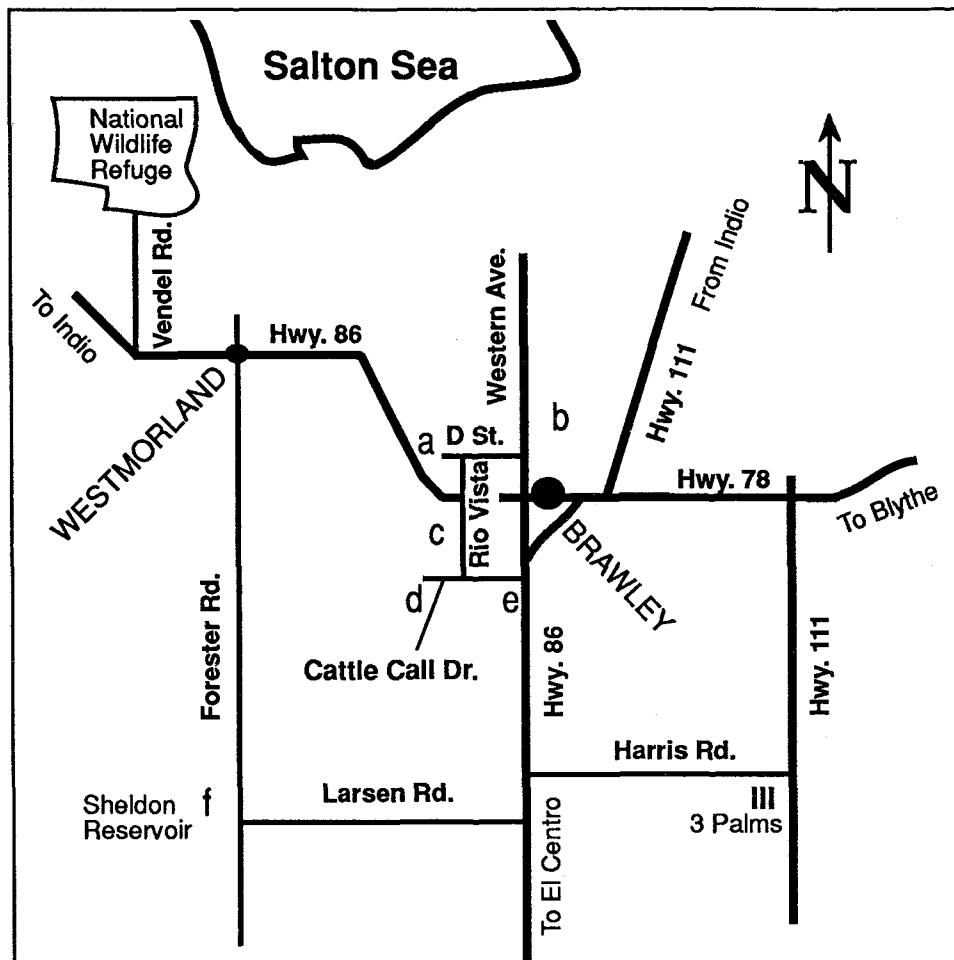
At the same time, huge flocks of ibis — 500 or more — come in from all directions. Literally thousands come north from a day in Mexico. These birds are referred to as "flybacks." Our estimate put the number of ibis around the 10,000 mark, but when there are so many, who counts?

By 5:15 it was getting dark, time for "happy hour" at the motel and memories of an adventure never to be forgotten.

THE BIRDS OF BRAWLEY (see map)

a. **"D" Street Wash Site.** Take Rio Vista one block north of Hwy. 86 on the west side of town to "D" Street. Turn left and continue to the end. Park and walk down the slope to the terrace along the creek. There is a small date palm grove on your right. All the special birds of the area are here in one spot! This year a Curve-billed Thrasher, Harris' Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Gila Woodpeckers were in residence. Many Lewis' Woodpeckers were feeding on the dates. Verdins, Abert's and Green-tailed Towhees, and Black-tailed Gnatcatchers were found. Some Gambel's Quail were flushed. Both Inca and Common Ground Doves were found in a feeding flock in the residential area north of the date palms. A Barn Owl caused consternation among the sparrows in the shrubs. The best time here is early morning.

b. **Riverview Cemetery.** Take Western Avenue north from Hwy. 86 for about a mile. Vermillion Flycatchers winter here along with sparrow flocks which may include three subspecies of Dark-eyed Juncos.



c. **Residential Brawley.** Take Rio Vista a block or two south of Hwy. 86 and walk. Gila Woodpeckers are found by their noise. Summer Tanagers are known to over-winter. Look for early migrants.

d. **Cattle Call Park.** Continue south on Rio Vista to Cattle Call Drive. Turn right to the park. Look for Gila Woodpeckers, Common Ground Doves and, in summer, the Bronzed Cowbird. November is the month for the rodeo, so be warned.

e. **Brawley Hospital.** The hospital, south of town on Hwy. 86, used to be the place for Gila Woodpeckers. So, if you haven't found them elsewhere, give this spot a try.

f. **Sheldon Reservoir.** Take Larsen Road west from Hwy. 86 to Forester Road. Good numbers of Redheads and Canvasbacks are normally present and, with luck, a Eurasian Widgeon.

The above refers to winter birding in the Brawley area. However, Brawley may give you a "retreat from the heat" when you come down to Red Hill in August for the Wood Storks, Laughing Gulls, Gull-billed and Black Terns, Fulvous Whistling Ducks and Magnificent Frigatebirds. Birding at 120 degrees is another story ... for the dedicated.

Heading Home: Five miles west of Westmorland, take Vendel Road north from Hwy. 86 to the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge. Along the dirt road, look for Mountain Plovers and Mountain Bluebirds in the fields. A Northern Shrike was in the area in 1989. Burrowing Owls may be present if ground squirrel control hasn't been recent. One year we counted 35 along this stretch of road! Horned Larks and Savannah Sparrows are in the fields.

This is an excellent place to see large flocks of Snow and Ross' Geese feeding in the fields or watering on the ponds of the Refuge. Large numbers of ducks and shorebirds may be here also. However, construction of new ponds combined with the low water levels did not produce much on our trip this year. A Wilson's Phalarope was present last year. Stilt Sandpipers have also been reported here.

Poe Road is sometimes productive, but a stop at the Riviera RV Park and Flora Park at Salton City often produces a Yellow-footed Gull, Wilson's Phalarope, Common Goldeneye and other shorebirds and ducks. 



Santa Rosa Plateau

Ray of Hope for the Santa Rosa Plateau

by Dan Silver

For over a year, Preserve Our Plateau, the Sierra Club and Audubon have battled to stop development on the Santa Rosa Plateau in western Riverside County near Murrieta. They have proposed a regional park for the site, which is a rare, beautiful and unique remnant of Old California native grassland, oak woodland and streams. Park proponents hope to add to an existing Nature Conservancy preserve which is now threatened by dense urban development. Situated between Los Angeles and San Diego, the park would serve the public well.

The Plateau, home to an incredible array of rare species, is an intact ecosystem including mountain lions and Golden Eagles. It is also the last stronghold of the Mesa or Engelmann Oak. If we lose the Plateau, we'll lose a big chunk of our heritage — the southern interior oak woodland.

Under public pressure, Riverside County initiated a park feasibility study. One option calls for "total property acquisition." The supervisors might be persuaded by region-wide support to preserve the Plateau. Preserve Our Plateau wants them to know how much a Santa Rosa Plateau Nature Park would mean to you and your family and how important it would be to acquire all lands on the Plateau. They also suggest extending the deadline for land purchase beyond 1990.

Preserve Our Plateau continues its role in park planning and in putting together a package of state, county and private funds. Inquiries for further involvement can be addressed to: Preserve Our Plateau, P.O. Box 1534, Wildomar, CA 92395. Or contact Dan Silver at (213) 654-1456. Letters should be addressed to: Board of Supervisors, 4080 Lemon Street, 14th Floor, Riverside, CA 92501. 

Line 45 Helps California's Endangered Species

There are more than 260 California wildlife species facing the threat of extinction. You can help them survive by filling in Line 45 on your State Tax Return. Line 45 puts thousands of small, voluntary contributions into the California Rare and Endangered Species Preservation Program.

Program activities have started to turn things around for the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Desert Tortoise, and a host of other plant and animal species that really need your help.

Average contributions to the program are small — ranging from \$5 to \$25 — but many people are giving, and it all adds up. Because other government and private agencies cooperate in the effort, the real impact of contributions is magnified several times beyond the actual dollar amount written in. And of course, it's deductible.

Use Line 45, and do something that will make you feel good at tax time. 

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

Take a good, long look at a map of Los Angeles. The gridiron of avenues and streets spreads out in all directions, interrupted by mountains, airports, marinas and a number of green areas of various shapes and sizes. Now study this green stuff for a moment. The tiny rectangles are neighborhood parks. If you were a keen-eyed raptor soaring over one of these parks, you would see manicured lawns, a ball field or two, perhaps a swimming pool or a small lake, a few non-native trees, picnic tables and some children's playground equipment. You move on to the larger green polygons on the map and you discover that most of them are golf courses — rigidly structured adult playgrounds. Fine. But you want to take a walk away from Little League, the nearby traffic, the noise and visual clutter of commerce. You want a bit of nature, a glimpse of blue sky, a spreading oak, a whiff of sage, a dirt path underfoot. You would like a sense of freedom from patterns, a choice of paths. What you need is open space.

Where do you find it? The options are sadly limited. Griffith Park is your best bet with hills and trails offering a chance to escape the confines of the city. Even that great park is subject to perennial erosion of its natural gifts as museums of the Old West and equestrian centers (that go broke) make their intrusion. Not too long ago a commercial scheme to build a tramway from the flatland to a hilltop restaurant complex was offered and fortunately defeated. A meager handful of smaller parks are scattered through the city and provide some decent elbow room. Elysian Park and O'Melveny come to mind. A few canyons remain in the Santa Monica Mountains where you can enjoy the wildflowers in the spring and see a bird, but their number is falling inexorably to the bulldozer and the houses that follow the Caterpillar tracks.

In the center of the San Fernando Valley, at the juncture of two freeways, is the 2,200 acre Sepulveda Basin. Owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, its mission is to control the channelized Los Angeles River and hold the water in time of flood. According to an act of Congress, where feasible, flood control areas are to be used as recreational sites. Sepulveda has three golf courses, baseball fields, tennis courts, cricket fields, a model airplane area and soon will have a 26-acre fishing and boating lake.

Tucked away on the eastern edge, next to the San Diego Freeway, is a designated Wildlife Area. For decades it lay fallow, growing a crop of weeds, but attracting an assortment of raptors: Red-tails, Harriers, an occasional Black-Shouldered Kite and — rarely — a Peregrine. After the earthquake of 1971, a 2- or 3-acre borrow pit of impervious clay was dug out of these 60 acres; the clay was used to repair a damaged Van Norman Dam. The pit collected rainwater and over the years became a shallow pond surrounded by willows and rough weeds. Almost overnight — and with no human intervention — it became an unplanned, thriving wetland. Ducks, shorebirds and waders appeared as if by magic and the fall migration was incredible. Waterbirds galore: Baird's Pectoral and solitary sandpipers; Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Avocets and Stilts; all the dabbling ducks, including Blue-winged Teal; all the Western Herons and egrets, including American Bittern. Passerines were drawn to this avian magnet: Bobolinks, Bank Swallows, Fox and Sage Sparrows, Palm Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Lawrence's Goldfinch. Eighty-eight species in two years — a birder's little Eden. The heavy clay of the pond bottom held the winter rains well into spring and early summer. The harsh Valley sun dried everything up by mid-July.

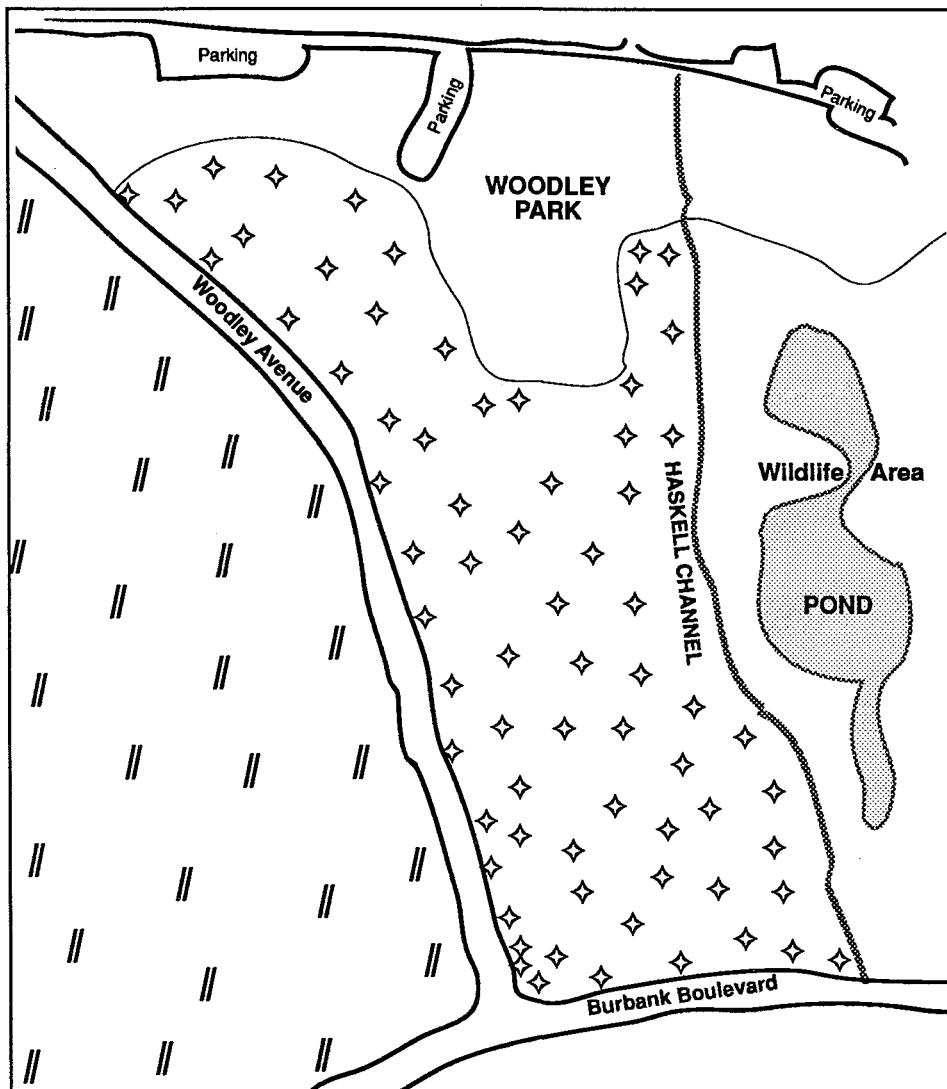
In the fullness of time, drought diminished the size and depth of the pond and in the winter only coots, mallards and an occasional Cinnamon Teal showed up. Then, in 1988, the City Recreation and Parks Department, which leases most of the facilities in the basin from the Corps, received a grant from the State Wildlife Conservation Board and built an 11-acre lake on the site of the old borrow pit. The \$479,000 grant was also to develop an oak woodland and a grassland in the 60 acres, but the money could only pay for the lake and the trees and shrubs that were planted around it.

People for years had cherished Sepulveda for its long vista of mountains on each side of the Valley, for that sense of spaciousness that was fast becoming unique in a city where a vacant lot was a scarce commodity. Jogging along a river (even one with concrete banks), flying a

kite, watching a skein of Canada Geese circle slowly over the basin and land in a field, yelping like so many puppy-dogs — this is the essence of Sepulveda. It is the careless spontaneity of the place that many of its friends fear would vanish with too much organized activity.

When the city announced the plan for the new wildlife lake, a group of us got together to monitor the lake and to do what we could to protect it. The master plan for the basin called for "Playing Fields" in a large parcel of land adjacent to the wildlife area. Two separate outfits made proposals to the city to construct polo fields there. The thought of pounding hooves and cheering crowds so close to the wild creatures seemed to be the height of incompatibility. In fact, any spectator sport in that place made very little sense. At a public hearing called to consider the proposals, speakers from the floor opposed them 15 to 1. The Recreation and Parks Commission decided against polo. In a meeting some time later with staff people of the Corps and Rec and Parks, our group suggested a native plant restoration for the adjacent parcel. We spoke of an oak savanna, water-loving trees like sycamores and alders for the drainage channel, and extensive shrub plantings. By replicating as closely as possible the habitat that existed in the basin before the arrival of the Spanish explorers, an interesting ecosystem could be created. With trail signs identifying the plants and commentary on their place in the lives of the aboriginal population, an educational resource would be available for students at all levels. The general public could gain an understanding of the value of our dwindling reserve of native plants and a sense of the history of the San Fernando Valley. We were quite pleased when our proposal met with considerable enthusiasm.

Our coalition (now named The Haskell Creek Park Committee, after the channel that separates the wildlife area from the proposed restoration plot) held meetings regularly, sharpening our skills for the big job ahead. Still a small core group, we're predominantly members of LAAS, San Fernando Valley Audubon, the Sierra Club and the California Native Plant Society. We became an official committee of San Fernando Valley Audubon, thus ac-



quiring the umbrella of their non-profit status that (we hoped) would make it easier to obtain grants. We have received support from many sources, especially from the academic community, with offers of help in planning and volunteer labor from other interested groups.

We have developed a draft proposal for a long-term, phased development of this native plant project and submitted it to the Recreation and Parks Commission. The Commission must be satisfied that our committee has the stuff to make the idea work. So we have been busy applying for grants, doing research, contacting those who have experience in this kind of restoration. Our relations with staff of the Corps and Recreation and Parks has been excellent. I think we have achieved a measure of respect from the agencies, and on occasion they have asked us for suggestions. Also, there has been enthusiastic cooperation from the district Congressman, Tony Beilenson.

We have been trying to be good citizens in the basin. Twice a year we have organized trash cleanups, enlisting youth groups and residents in the vicinity to help. A docent program is in the works to monitor the lake. As many of us are aware, with Malibu Lagoon in mind, unleashed dogs can be a hazard to wildlife, so we are backing a Rec and Parks plan to establish a fenced dog run on three acres nearby. Some of us have been weeding the shrubs and trees around the wildlife lake, working with park maintenance people to keep the plants alive and healthy. San Fernando Valley Audubon has led birding trips in the basin for many years and the public is invited to come along (first Sunday of every month).

We aren't kidding ourselves. We know this will be a long, hard struggle to create something new. It will take more than hard work, it will take patience and persistence. It will take encouragement from a wide constituency that hasn't yet been informed of the idea, much less invited to partici-

pate. There are hundreds of people who don't know one plant or one bird from another, but who would be happy to see a wildlife sanctuary grow and prosper. The panorama of a hundred acres of native plants and wildlife habitat together would present a splendid experience of uncluttered, open space.

After many months of waiting, the empty lake received its first taste of water at the end of January. Though only partially filled, it looks terrific. At this writing (February), it is much too early for an adequate food source to have formed. A few venturesome ducks (Mallard, Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal), a pair of Greater Yellowlegs, and 1,600 Canada Geese have already explored it. We must hope that the borrow pit bonanza of 15 years ago is just around the corner.

EPILOGUE

On March 2, with only four inches of water in the lake, an official dedication ceremony took place. Lots of bigshots spoke to a rather sparse audience (enough time had not been allowed for the announcement) and included Mayor Tom Bradley, Congressman Tony Beilenson, Colorado State Senator Gary Hart (who was instrumental in securing the grant), Colonel Thomas, commanding officer of the district Corps, and James Hadaway, manager of Recreation and Parks. Beside all these important, six-foot-plus, neatly-suited celebrities, was a short, bearded, sweatered Audubon person who said his little piece. As usually pompous, platitudinous dedications go, it wasn't too bad. Everybody seemed to be saying the right things about open space and wildlife, and it was quite refreshing. The Audubon character said he was talking for all those people who appreciated a retreat from the jangle of the city. He brought attention to the disappearance of wetlands and praised the agencies for creating one in a semi-tropical city. Just for the hell of it, he spoke of the native plant park next door, hoping that in some way it might bring the projects closer to reality.

The best part was that after the party broke up, he grabbed his binoculars and found more birds for his new list for the new lake: Least and Western Sandpipers, Tree and Cliff Swallows, wading Water Pipits and Savannah Sparrows taking a bath at the water's edge. Onward and upward! Wait 'til next year! 

Birds Of The Season

by Hank Brodkin

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.

Spring migration is already upon us. At this writing (10 March), the first Western Kingbird, swallows, and Hooded Oriole have already been reported. As they always do, the coastal canyons and flowering oaks will produce flocks of our Western Warblers between the second and third weeks of April. Hopefully there was enough rain this winter to bring flowers to the deserts and to replenish the springs at the oases. It is a wonderful time to be out of doors, re-familiarizing ourselves with the songs and calls of our more common species before this too-short season ends — giving way to the dry "winter" of our southern California summer. It is a wonderful time to be alive.

The White Pelican provided one of the more interesting of this past winter's bird observations. After a still unexplained fall die-off of some 400 birds in the Owens Valley, large flocks of these birds wintered on the lakes and reservoirs of southern California from Ventura through the coastal valleys and Riverside County. Apparently the birds were very scarce at the dying Salton Sea, where most of our White Pelicans usually winter. These phenomena can remind us how variable and fragile our environment is. It is hoped that our gov-

ernment fish and wildlife personnel are studying these population aberrations, if they are aberrations, to ensure that they are not warnings of serious habitat degradation.

Ten thousand plus White-faced Ibises were reported in the Perris Valley on 2 February. According to Hank Childs, this was "one of the most thrilling sights in 54 years of birding!" Eurasian Widgeon reports include one at Malibu State Park on New Year's Day, one at Sepulveda Basin on 7 January (both by Steve Ducatman) and one at Lake Sherwood on 20 February (Barbara Elliot). The even rarer Tufted Duck was present at Saticoy Ponds on 1 January (fide Janet Cupples) and at Puddingstone Reservoir on 18 January (Kurt Radermacher). The only local report of Oldsquaw concerns a female and an immature at Belmont Shores on 7 January (Henry Streadbury), and a Common Goldeneye was on Quail Lake on 21 January (Jean Brandt).

An immature Bald Eagle showed up at Silverlake on the last week of February (Maryanne Cook), and a Peregrine Falcon was reported from the Palos Verdes Peninsula on 16 January (Peter Barnes).

The Perris Valley had 279 Sandhill Cranes on 10 February (Hank Childs — what a day he had!), and three Mountain Plover were seen at the Sepulveda Basin on 1 January (Steve Ducatman).

There were only two reports of Black-legged Kittiwake this winter — one at Redondo Beach on 31 December (Eric Brooks) and one at Malibu on 11 February. Also at Redondo Beach on 29 December was a Rhinoceros Auklet (Arthur Howe).

Most unusual in mid-winter was the 23 January report of an Ash-throated Flycatcher at the Serra Retreat in Malibu (David Richardson). An Eastern Phoebe turned up again this winter at the L.A. Arboretum on 27 December (Barbara Elliot). Vermillion Flycatcher reports were one at Prado Basin on 9 January (Hank Childs), one at the El Dorado Nature Cen-

ter in Long Beach on 14 January (Betty Jo Swensen), and one near Fillmore on 21 January (Tom Frillman). The first Western Kingbird report of the season was on 10 March at Ballona Lagoon (Hank Brodkin).

Charles Harper had five species of swallow: Barn, Tree, Violet-Green, Cliff and Rough-wing at Silverlake on 5 March. A Winter Wren was at Huntington Gardens on 27 February (Daniel Cooper), an American Dipper was found in Santa Anita Canyon (a good close-in spot for this bird) on 31 January by Russel Stone and a Sage Thrasher was at Lake Perris on 20 February (Jerry Johnson).

Three Palm Warblers apparently wintered locally. One was found at Manhattan Beach, one at Culver City circa 10 January (Don Sterba) and one was in Chino on 14 January (Colin Campbell). A Summer Tanager and an Orchard Oriole were reported from the El Dorado Nature Center on 14 January by Betty Jo Swensen.

A Swamp Sparrow was at Chatsworth Reservoir on 8 January (David Richardson) and a White-throated Sparrow was reported from Ventura on 30 January (Peter Barnes). The first Hooded Oriole report of spring was on 8 March at Altadena (John Thompson).

Please don't forget - April 22 is Earth Day! Do what you can. 



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

Hank Brodkin
27 1/2 Mast Street
Marina del Rey, CA 90292
(213) 827-0407
or
Jean Brandt at (818) 788-5188

It's Not Too Late to Sign Up for Birdathon '90

April 1 - May 15 are the dates for Birdathon '90, Los Angeles Audubon's annual fundraiser to support environmental education. Organizers have planned a variety of activities and hope to raise \$10,000 to support youth education programs in Los Angeles schools. The event is fun, and you don't have to be an expert birder to participate. There are many ways to get involved:

FIELD TRIP PARTICIPANTS have an opportunity to bird with an expert:

- Sunday, April 29, ornithologist Kimball Garrett (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County) will stage a "Loonathon/Scoterthon" at Point Dume to watch spring migration in full swing. Participants are asked to find sponsors who will pledge a few cents per bird. He estimates the group

will see 500-1,000 Pacific Loons and about the same number of Surf Scoters.

- Saturday, May 5, author Chuck Bernstein (*The Joy of Birding*) will reprise last year's trip in Malibu for beginning birders. The group will bird at Malibu Creek State Park and Malibu Lagoon and will see approximately 50-80 species. Participants are asked to bring a minimum of \$25 in pledges.



O'PINIONS

by Ernest S. Thompson

You know, when I first came to this part of the world, virtually all the birds were new to me, and there was so much to learn. What kind of a bird is it? What age, what sex? What is it doing, where is it going, will it be here next season? As a bird-watcher, I feel it is my bounden duty to learn as much as I can about my local species: their identification in all plumages and habits in all seasons. For I am certainly their appointed steward — if not I, who? — and only the steward who knows his charges will be the proper arbiter of their rights. But beyond that responsibility, the pleasure of a hobby is in acquiring expertise in its object. Like the stamp collector who knows his watermarks, the baseball fan who can recite batting averages, the gardener who knows how to compost, how to prune, the birder should strive to master birdlore. The discovery of each new bird should be as full of rich potential as the uncovering of a buried treasure — an array of unknown jewels and hieroglyphed doubloons to be sorted through lovingly and in amaze.

I am afraid that many of the vast number of new birders flooding into the

field, while admirably inspired by an awakening awareness of nature, have no such goal to their yearnings but have been drawn in by the competitiveness of listing. These are the people who, a month into their new hobby, are decked out in a thousand dollars' worth of optics and accessories; by their first spring they have already birded a swath through Arizona and Texas and they are now booked onto a birding tour of Peru. Unable to distinguish a Pewee from a Phoebe, they are off to have a dozen or so sibling species of tyrants and Elaenias pointed out to them by a knowledgeable leader, and at the end of the day they cannot recall without a reminder which species it was, anyway, that they saw in the clearing that morning.

It is a shame, for these people have been misled by the same red herring of aggressive consumerism that, ironically, we are so aware of in other situations: to get more than the other guy, it is only necessary to spend more . . . and the goal, of course, is to get more than the other guy. The question is, what exactly are you getting?

Pleasure, obviously, and who can challenge another's idea of pleasure. That there is a joy of listing I cannot deny. But in this world of growing populations and shrinking resources, this pleasure is an attitude of life we can no longer afford to condone, much less abet, even in the most upright of contexts.

This is the difference between the gourmet and the glutton, and it is all the difference in the world. 

For more competitive types, there are the **BIG DAY COMPETITORS** and **BACKYARD BIRDERS**.

- **BIG DAY COMPETITORS** form a team, sign up sponsors and challenge LAAS's board of directors for prizes based on the most species seen and most money raised during a single 24-hour period.
- **BACKYARD BIRDERS** pledge \$1.00 or more per species and then count the birds at their backyard feeding station.

Prizes — including seed, feeders, and plants — are given for most species seen and most money raised.

Everyone who participates in the event, and sponsors who contribute \$50.00 or more, will receive an official Birdathon '90 t-shirt.

"The Birdathon is a great opportunity to involve new people in Audubon's activities," says Melanie Ingalls, Birdathon Chairperson. "People are intrigued by the

Bookstore News

by Charles Harper

I've recently purchased the remainder of the distributor's stock of Peter Alden and John Gooders' *Finding Birds Around the World* (\$12.95). LAAS now probably has the last distributed copies of this comprehensive birdfinding guide. Originally published in 1981 at \$17.95, this book is a great reference for an overview of world birding, describing over 100 areas — the best and most accessible localities in each of the world's ecosystems — and showing you where to find more than half of the world's species. Though you will want to get a more detailed birdfinding guide once you decide where you are going, there is nothing like Alden and Gooders for helping you plan your long-range itinerary.

Aileen Lotz' book, *Birding Around The World* (\$10.95), while not as detailed as Alden and Gooders' work, gives a great feeling for the magnitude of becoming a "world birder" and a sense of the approaches to birding one should take across the varied continents. It is full of handy hints and valuable references.

And while we're speaking of world birding, Dr. James F. Clements, at last finished with his 365-day marathon, is resting at home with a brand new titanium hip and utilizing his excess energy to complete, at last, the fourth revision of his *Birds of the World: A Checklist*. So we have that to look forward to in the not-too-distant future . . . unless he gets the wanderlust again! 

event and very willing to pledge when they hear where the money goes." Birdathon '90 will support LAAS's education programs, including teacher workshops, environmental education fairs, scholarships for teachers to Audubon Camp of the West, and the award-winning Audubon Adventures program for grades 3-6.

To register for Birdathon '90, call Audubon House at (213) 876-0202 for more information. 

WE'VE BEEN HAD

by Dorothy Dimsdale

Afew weeks ago I was asked to talk about the Audubon Society in a TV interview. Just two days before the taping, we were told that someone from British Petroleum would join the show to give a little background on the Huntington Beach oil-spill cleanup. We thought this would be informative and allow an exchange of ideas and aims.

The resulting interview turned out to be a promotion for BP with almost no opportunity to hear from Audubon. I now realize that this is characteristic of the P.R. whitewashing of the entire oil-spill disaster. A highly skilled BP rep manfully chants "*mea culpa*," thanks the world for lending a cooperative hand, then congratulates BP fulsomely for its miraculous work and unselfish devotion to nature, motherhood and apple pie.

True, most of the oil which landed on the beach was cleaned up quickly, and BP did as thorough a job as could be done in the time. But Great? Wonderful? Cheers all 'round? Haven't we forgotten something? It was BP *still* spilling on our beaches. BP's oil made the mess. In our relief to see clean beaches we should not forget how it happened and who did it. There is still oil floating out at sea and lying on the bottom smothering all the creatures who live there. Of course, we don't see that oil, so nothing is being done to clean it up, or more importantly, to prevent spills happening again. It's rather like cheering a person who constantly rear-ends your car for so kindly agreeing to have it repaired. The accidents should never happen, yet these oil spills have been going on for years. Only when the oil is visible — where people live — do the oil companies get serious about a cleanup. The 11-million gallon Valdez spill,

after a year, is still a disaster for fish, wildlife and land where the population is sparse.

The Huntington Beach cleanup, with no problems from inclement weather, cost about \$20 million and killed well over 700 birds. What would happen when a spill is whipped with high winds and a storm?

If the oil companies want to transport oil by any method whatever, the very least they can do is to make absolutely sure that the containers are leak proof.

Chuck Webster, BP's public relations man, compared the frequency of oil spills to that of airplane disasters. There is no doubt in my mind that if we had as many air disasters as we have oil spills, the public would have stopped flying long ago. The Wilderness Society announced in March that there have been over 10,000 in-transit oil spills in the United States, amounting to perhaps 20 million gallons, since the wreck of the Exxon Valdez.

The only obvious conclusion one can make is that it is cheaper for the oil companies to do a cleanup in areas where people are aware of the spills than to pay for research and implementation of better equipment and methods to avoid spills, which would also protect the parts of the environment far from the public eye. It is no less a tragedy to spill oil on remote pristine areas and to abandon the ensuing destruction simply because "out of sight is out of mind." I wonder if the cargo was gold how many spills the companies would endure? It was indeed remarkable how quickly BP responded in Huntington Beach, but they knew that the cameras and microphones were all on hand and much was at stake if they didn't show a serious and concerned attitude about cleanup.

WHAT ARE WE PROTECTING?

A disaster like the BP oil spill is only one threat, albeit a big one, to the environment. Pogo didn't say, "We have met the enemy and he is BP." The sight of a beach covered with oil and dead birds washed up with the tide is sad enough, but we know now that there is much more to it than that.

Dr. Louann Murray, a wonderfully knowledgeable and erudite lady with Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy, gave me some salient points; they apply to all our beaches and surrounding wetlands.

The sea, the sand and the land are vital, inextricable elements in an ecological entity upon which all life depends. The beach is a barrier between the sea and the land. Without sand, the sea erodes the land, gradually washing it away and causing heavy flooding in the surrounding land-

mass. In addition, the sea washes over and filters through the sand, cleaning it and providing nutrients for the innumerable tiny creatures which live there.

Many of the creatures living just below the sand's surface are a source of food for birds, which probe for them with their beaks, and for small animals, like crabs, as well as some fish. These in turn provide food for large fishes, sea mammals, and for us. Just as life began in the sea, a complex cycle of living things begins at the edge of the sea in a natural nursery.

Wetlands are marshy areas, usually at the estuary of a river. They abound with cattails, reeds and grasses, which surround areas of water where fish spawn, birds nest, and small animals live out their lives. Marshes also act as a rest and feeding stop for migrating waterfowl which fly from as far as Alaska down to the tip of South America and back again, thus enabling these birds to recuperate in comparative safety. They hide in the reeds and feed on the fish and insects found there before continuing on their journey, refueled and refreshed.

Wetlands also provide a peaceful place where humans can relax from the work-a-day world. If you ever walk around the area at Upper Newport Bay, you notice immediately the large numbers of people — adults and children — who visit there from early morning on 'til dusk. They walk, jog, cycle, birdwatch, study, or just plain sit, enjoying the view and marvelling at the diversity of wild creatures living there.

After a storm, and when the snow melts in the mountains far away, the water gushes down the river, through the agricultural areas and towns, to bring with it the debris and pollution collected along the way. All this water and debris washes into the marshy area which takes it in like a sponge, thus preventing flooding. Then the miracle happens. Organisms in the wetlands break down the pollutants and, when the water finally passes out to the sea, it is pure and clean. Equally wonderful, life-giving oxygen is produced. An acre of wetland gives off the same amount of oxygen as an acre of rain forest. Yet, we are destroying it. Huntington Beach once had 2,950 acres of wetlands and now there are a mere 150 acres, of which only 25 acres are preserved in an area called Talbert Marsh. The remaining 125 acres are being hotly contended by developers who have already built on the original 90% and, of course, Huntington Beach is a tiny (and fortunate) example of destruction world-wide.

Apart from the immediate danger of flooding if the wetland is developed, there's

one very important fact to remember: wetlands may recover from even heavy pollution, but with development, they are lost forever. It seems like madness when they are such a marvelous natural cleaner of our environment. It is ironic that up in Northern California, near Arcata, a new wetland is being created — how much easier and less expensive would it have been to protect what was there in the first place?

Apart from the generally threatened wildlife, there are three endangered bird species in the southern California wetlands. The light-footed Clapper Rail which lives all its life in the wetlands. It is a large, somewhat secretive bird, about the size of a chicken, but it can melt into the reeds without your seeing the movement of a single blade of grass, hence the phrase "Thin as a Rail." Then there is the Belding's race of the Savannah Sparrow, just a little brown job, which also lives only on the coastal wetlands and nowhere else. And

finally, the elegant and beautiful Least Tern, which nests in a small indentation in the open sand. On our overcrowded beaches, this bird's reproductive cycle is in great danger from passing people and predators. This list does not indicate what would happen to other birds, animals and insects with the elimination of the marsh and the deleterious effect to human beings who are already fighting all kinds of other pollutants with which they are in contact every day. These species are endangered and may become extinct, like thousands of other species before them.

Should we worry? Aren't there as many uncounted numbers, proving that we're doing all right? We have time. Or do we? Perhaps birds are a natural early warning system that all's not right with the world. Is there a connection between reduced species — and actual numbers — and other hints of trouble — the greenhouse effect, the ozone hole, the recent in-

tensity of "el niño" and "la niña"? Maybe the birds are telling us something, delivering a message like that of the canaries carried down into the shafts by coal miners.

Regarding the sea, where the oil spills start their destructive journey, one has only to read the reports of Jacques Cousteau to know that though it is the largest area of the planet, it is the most abused. Millions of gallons of waste, accidental and intended, are dumped into the sea every day. The tolerance of the sea is not infinite.

We can no longer watch and listen to publicity people with smiling faces and comforting words. Their products are soiling our beaches and destroying our sources for clean water and air. What is worse, these companies are doing nothing to prevent catastrophic future damage. The same ships are patched up and put to sea again. We must take note, get angry, and stop it. If we are to survive and to have any decent quality of life, there is no alternative. 

Earth Day 1990 to Launch Decade of the Environment

Audubon Active in National Education Activities

Do you remember the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970?

It was the event that gave birth to the modern environmental movement. Twenty million people came together that day to show they cared for the earth. There were earth fairs and teach-ins, tree plantings and demonstrations — an outpouring of concern that led to important environmental victories including the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, and creation of the EPA.

This April 22 will be Earth Day 1990, time to renew our commitment to the planet and set the environmental action agenda for the 1990s.

Education will be one of the most important components of this Earth Day, and the National Audubon Society is planning what will probably be the largest youth participation project in the country. It is the Earth Day Youth Declaration to President Bush inviting students of all ages to sign the "Declaration of Interdependence" (see right). Audubon's education division plans to collect 1,000,000 signatures from children across the country, and President and Mrs. Bush have been invited to come to the Audubon Adventures Youth Congress on April 19 in Philadelphia to receive them. (Many of the Audubon Adventures classrooms sponsored by L.A. Audubon have been participating in this project.)

Education is also a key to the local Earth Day effort, and there will be dozens of Earth Day education events in Los Angeles between now and April 22. L.A. Audubon needs volunteers to man tables and pass out literature at several environmental fairs, including events at the Ballona Wetlands (Friday, April 6; Saturday, April 7 and Sunday, April 22), Occidental College (Wednesday, May 9), and at the Biodiversity Fair and Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (Saturday, April 21 and Sunday, April 22). If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Melanie Ingalls, Education Chairperson, at (213) 876-3435.

For a complete listing of local Earth Day events, contact the Los Angeles Earth Day 1990 office at (213) 392-2229. 

Earth Day Youth Declaration to President Bush

Dear President Bush,
*We the youth of planet earth
 With respect for the dignity of each
 human life,
 With concern for future generations,
 With growing appreciation of
 our relationship
 to our environment,
 With concern for wildlife and for our
 disappearing natural resources,
 And with need for enough food, air,
 water, shelter,
 health, justice and self-pride,
 Hereby declare our interdependence;
 And pledge to work together in peace
 and
 in harmony with our environment,
 To enhance the quality
 of all life everywhere.*

Paul Ehrlich Lecture, Reception and Book Signing

Californians for Population Stabilization and the Population Crisis Committee, non-profit organizations, will co-sponsor a lecture by Professor Paul Ehrlich on April 17 at USC's Hancock Auditorium on population explosion. Dr. Ehrlich, author of the 1968 bestseller *The Population Bomb* (among many other books), contributor to the *Western Tanager* (January, 1990) and board member of National Audubon Society, is scheduled at noon. Reception and book signing, with refreshments, will follow. He will also be on Michael Jackson's radio program on KABC Talk Radio 79AM at 10 a.m.

Tickets for the event are \$25, discounted tickets are \$15 and are available to students and population activists. For more information or tickets, contact:

Elaine Stansfield
2008-1/2 Preuss Road
Los Angeles, CA 90034
(213) 839-1976

Reminder If You Move

The National Audubon Society allocates geographic areas of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills and some other ZIP codes to LAAS's membership territory. However, if you move out of that territory, NAS automatically changes your chapter.

If you move and still wish to be a member of LAAS, you should advise NAS that you wish to continue to be a member of LAAS. Members living outside of our designated territory who have requested membership in LAAS are automatically assigned to the local Audubon chapter when they have a change of address, even if they move to the house next door.

To be on the safe side, if you wish to continue being a member of LAAS and receiving the *Western Tanager*, include a note with your Change of Address to NAS requesting that you remain in the Los Angeles Audubon Society. If you have any doubts as to whether you will be changed, call Audubon House at (213) 876-0202 on Tuesdays and ask for the Registrar.

Notice: Special Pelagic Trip — Pterodroma Petrel Search

There will be a three-day pelagic trip to the Cortez Banks at the edge of the California Current on Friday, April 20 through Sunday, 22. Leaving out of San Diego at 8 a.m. on Friday, the boat will reach the Cortez Banks by dawn on Saturday and will return by 3 or 4 p.m. on Sunday. The "Pacific Queen," an 85-foot cabin cruiser, with bunks and food provided, departs from Fisherman's Landing in San Diego. Vegetarian meals are available upon prior request. The all-inclusive cost is \$250 per person with a \$100 deposit due by April 1st. For details and reservations, call the leaders: Eric Lichtwardt at (619) 224-8360 or John O'Brien at (619) 457-0986.

Birds Across the Border

San Diego Audubon Society hosts a regional meeting on Saturday, May 5 and Sunday, May 6 at the Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary in Lakeside. Silverwood is a 20-minute drive from El Cajon, 40 minutes from the intersection of I-15 and I-8 in Mission Valley. Because of limited parking at Silverwood, carpooling is very important.

National Audubon Society has a Southern California Coordinating Council which meets quarterly. Although these meetings can be of general interest, there is a substantial amount of shop talk and usually only some of the officers of the Audubon chapters have been notified. Now the San Diego chapter is hosting an EVENT and is inviting all the membership. Hurry and respond if this one appeals to you.

Friday evening, May 4 - San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park will be hosting an evening with Roger Tory Peterson. This is not part of the Audubon program, but you may want to contact the Museum at (619) 232-3821 for more info.

Saturday, May 5 - Arrive around 8 a.m. for some birding and breakfast. The Council meeting starts at 9 a.m. Agenda items include State of the Region address by John Borneman from the regional office

in Sacramento, regional conservation issues, reports on critical habitats (including San Diego South Bay and Tijuana River Valley), chapter reports, report on critical issues, report on Baja habitat preservation, and afternoon birding. Catered continental breakfast and lunch are available if you get a \$5 meal ticket.

Sunday, May 6 - Optional all-day bus trip (8 a.m. - 5'ish) to Baja coastal wetlands between Tijuana and Maneadero. May be local birding if enough interest is shown. Participants must provide their own lunch and water.

Accommodations - Rooms have been blocked out at Motel 6 (nice and new) in El Cajon (619) 588-6100. Camping is available at Stelzer Campground (619) 565-3600.

Help with carpooling between the motel and the conference may be available from San Diego Audubon.

For more information, look in Audubon House for posted materials or contact (before April 15, if possible):

SCACC Coordinator
c/o San Diego Audubon Society
4901 Morena Boulevard, Suite 703
San Diego, CA 92117
(619) 483-7620

Homes for Bluebirds

Bluebirds suffer a severe nesting shortage. They rely on whatever suitable cavities are available. And the search for natural cavities grows more and more difficult.

Anyone interested in helping the bluebird should erect nesting houses - the most successful technique by far for increasing the bluebird population. But not just any house will do. It needs to be carefully designed and constructed so that the birds will use it, but predators cannot raid a nest of recently-fledged young. The house also needs to be built without a perch. Placing a perch on the box attracts starlings which in turn drive away bluebirds.

Bluebirds Across America, an Audubon project, offers one of the finest houses available. The easily-assembled, durable cypress house is precisely tailored to the bluebird's needs.

Available from Bluebirds Across America, National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 123, Horatio, SC 29062. Ready-made is \$13, "do-it-yourself" kit is \$12 (includes shipping). Make checks payable to Bluebirds Across America.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Continued from page 12

Sunday, April 29 - Mojave Narrows. Harold Bond will lead his band of merry birders through this prime birding oasis to see what spring desert specialties the lake, marsh, fields and woods of this extensive area can produce. Rails, Vermilion Flycatchers and wayward vagrants have been known to augment the more usual freshly molted migrants. Take Hwy 15 toward Victorville and take the Bear Valley cut-off east (right) for about 4 miles. The entrance road to the park will be on the left. Bring a lunch and dress for the possibility of cold and wind. Bring a scope if you have one. Bird with Harold after lunch as well if you like. Overnight camping in the park and lodging in Victorville are available. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Mojave Narrows Boathouse. [LA, p. 10, A-5]

Sunday, April 29 - Kimball Garrett leads a "Loonathon" at Point Dume for Birdathon '90. Call Audubon House for details and to register.



Saturday, May 5 - Chuck Bernstein will lead a trip for beginning birders at Malibu Creek State Park and Malibu Lagoon for Birdathon '90. Call Audubon House for details and to register.

Saturday, May 5 - Santa Anita Canyon. Leader Mary Carmona. Take the 210 Fwy east toward Arcadia and take Santa Anita Avenue north to the very end. Meet at the trailhead at the bottom of the parking lot at the end of the road. A moderately strenuous 4-mile round trip through oak and chaparral canyons. Good selection of breeding and migrant passersines. Bring a lunch. May be cool. Meet at 7 a.m. [LA, p.20A, F-1]

Sunday, May 6 - Topanga State Park. See April 1 for details.

Saturday, May 19 - Big Morongo Wildlife Reserve. Leader Daniel Cooper. Birding this renowned desert oasis and adjacent areas, we will have a good shot at seeing numerous breeding desert birds such as Brown-crested and Vermilion Flycatchers, Summer Tanager, Gambel's Quail, White-winged Dove and Scott's Oriole, as well as Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Yellow-breasted Chat and a number of possible migrating flycatchers of the *Empidonax* genus. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot, and bring a lunch and old shoes. Take Fwy 10 past Banning and then Hwy 111 to Hwy 62 north. After passing through

the town of Morongo Valley, take a right on East Drive, then a left into the preserve.

Sunday, May 20 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Leader David White. See April 21 for details.

Saturday, May 26 - McDonald Creek. Leader Dustin Alcala. This evening hike will begin as a passerine walk looking for Swainson's Thrushes as well as other late migrants and breeding birds. As evening takes hold, attentions will shift to the local birds of the night. The group will hopefully see or hear Great Horned Owls, Poorwills and Lesser Nighthawks. The walk is an easy half mile each way. We will meet at 4:30 p.m., wait until 5:00 for stragglers, and revel in the darkness until 8:00 or 8:30. Bring a snack, something to drink, a flashlight and sweater, and a carrot for the Clydesdale (if you like horses). Limited to 15 participants. Reserve with Audubon House. [LA, p. 10, A-5]

Sat. & Sun., June 16 & 17 (18th optional) - Southern Sierras Weekend with Bob Barnes. This very popular trip covers widely varying terrain on both sides of the Sierras from desert to riverine to montaine habitats and should net over 120 species with the Monday extension. Hopeful-to-likely species include Evening Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, Calliope Hummer, Wood Duck, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Willow, Grey and Brown-crested Flycatchers. Limited participation. Fee \$22 plus \$10 for optional Monday extension. A bird report of the trip will be provided to those attending. Reserve with Audubon House.

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.

BUCKS FOR BIRDS

You can automatically earn money for LAAS if you bank at Union Federal Savings. All you need do is phone your local branch and register your account to charity #199. Once a year, a donation will be made to LAAS for 15 base points on the total sum of its registered accounts.



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WESTERN TANAGER

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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 Brodkin

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENING MEETING

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

Tuesday, April 10 - Don Roberson will present a program on the seabirds and mammals of the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean entitled "Birding the Bounding Main." Don is a well-known birder and author from Monterey whose books include *Rare Birds of the West Coast* and *Monterey Birds*. He recently travelled extensively on a research vessel in the Pacific Ocean and will share some of the highlights of that journey with us. Everyone is welcome.

IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

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

NEXT MONTH

Tuesday, May 8 - Richard Veit will present a program on "Jaegers," a fascinating group of birds he has studied from Alaska to Antarctica.

* * *

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.

Notations in parentheses after trip listings refer to Thomas Bros. map page and grid coordinates (county, page number, grid coordinates).

Sunday, April 1 - 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. [LA, p.109, D-4]

Thursday, April 5 - Point Dume Seabird Watch. One of our masters of field I.D., Jon Dunn, will be watching the world (of seabirds) go by from this prominent promontory. Loons, scoters and gulls should provide the meat of the observations. Take PCH north past Malibu, turn left onto Westward Beach Road which divides the bluff from the south end of Zuma Beach, and continue to the parking lot at the end of the road. Take the trail to the top of the bluff, veering right at the T in the trail. 1:30 p.m. to 5-ish. Dress warmly and bring a scope if possible. [LA, p.110, B-6]

Sunday, April 8 - El Dorado Park. Jim and Betty Jo Stevenson will show us around the extensive nature center and parkland that comprise their home turf. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the grassy area

behind the Nature Center parking lot (major bucks to park here!) To get to the park and find free parking, take the 605 Fwy south to Spring Street, head west and make a U-turn, then park along Spring before the flood control channel. Take the sidewalk over the channel to the parking lot on your right, then proceed to the back of the lot. [LA, p.72, F-1]

Sunday, April 8 - Providence Mts. and Vicinity. Leader Chet McGaugh. If you are intrigued by the eastern Mojave 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 at Pike's Coffee Shop in Baker. Take Hwy 15 east 60 miles past Barstow; take the Baker turnoff (Hwy 127) into town, and Pike's will be on the left side of the road. Reserve with Audubon House. Fee: \$16. 20 maximum. Call Nick Freeman at (213) 596-6172 with your name, phone number and address for accommodation information as it becomes available.

Saturday, April 14 - Ballona Wetlands. Bob Shanman will be conducting perhaps his last regular monthly walk at our nearest wetlands. Shorebirds will be migrating north again, so you'll have to figure out how to tell Least from Western Sandpipers one more time. 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. [LA, p.55A, D-1]

Friday, April 20 - Chatsworth Park South. Join leader Allan Keller for a morning of prime migration birding. We will seek warblers, orioles, grosbeaks and others in this chaparral-oak woodland habitat. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., go west on Devonshire and continue into the parking lot by the Recreation Center. Meet at 8 a.m. [LA, p.6, B-2]

Saturday, April 21 - L.A. River Walk for Beginners. Daniel Cooper will lead this urban morning bird walk in coordination with the Friends of the Los Angeles River in an effort to see some birds on less than a full tank of gas and to show that there are still stretches of the river that contain enough wildlife habitat to enjoy and be concerned about. Take Fwy 5 to Los Feliz, head east over the river, then park at the cafe adjacent to the golf course on the north (left) side of the street. Meet at 8 a.m. [LA, p.25, B-6]

Saturday, April 21 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. David White will be saying, "So long ducks" and "Hello, migrants and breeding birds" on this regular morning walk. 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. [LA, p.47, D-5]

Sunday, April 22, EARTH DAY - Placerita Canyon. Catch the migration with perhaps our most renowned birdsong aficionado, Kimball Garrett. The group will explore the oak woodlands and grasslands of the canyon and adjacent Walker Ranch. Take Hwy 14 to Placerita Canyon Road and drive east (right) about 3.5 miles to the Placerita Nature Center lot on the right. Meet outside the chained lot at 7 a.m. and finish before noon. [LA, p.127, H-4]

Sunday, April 22 - 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. This walk is under the leadership of a member of the Santa Monica Audubon Society. [LA, p.114, B-5]

Continued on page 11

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