



WESTERN TANAGER

The Los Angeles Chapter of
The National Audubon Society

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BIRDATHON, SHMIRDATHON-

There are all kinds of Birdathons, some as far from the traditional as the Hubble Space Telescope is from ten-cent toy binoculars. Having sampled a few, this old goat agreed to try something new. I like to build sand castles on the beach and even as I watch one washed away, I dream of my next one.

The normal Birdathon is a mid-night-to-midnight marathon, a frenzied flitting from habitat to habitat, plucking from each its distinctive birds. At the end of 24 hours, the participants total the species seen and promptly collapse, to sleep for two days straight. That's the normal Birdathon.

Not the one I led. The Beginners Birdathon I have been asked to head up each year is anything but normal. It is really a Nonbirders' Birdathon. For the first time, first-time birdwatchers have an opportunity to actively participate and be a gung-ho birder to their friends. The only fee is to raise a total of \$25 in pledges for all species listed. The novel experiment is proof certain that it does change couch potatoes into birdwatchers, it does raise otherwise untapped monies and it does give the leader an emotional roller-coaster ride that is exciting, renewing and rewarding.

Our route begins at Malibu Creek State Park for the chaparral birds and ends at Malibu Lagoon for whatever birds of the shore and sea have not yet gone north to nesting grounds by May 5th. Knowing that there is still a goodly supply of species in both places, I've concentrated on pinpointing nests in the Park. A live nest will turn-on a beginner like nothing else can.

I admit feeling handicapped by the rules set out for my walk. Can you imagine a Birdathon starting at 8 a.m.? Eight hours of valuable search time wasted. And that's not all! This foray has to end at noon — of the same day! The 15 beginners who signed up, it is explained, can't take too much birding their first day. On a fund-raising birdfest, this old goat can't take too little birding, either, I think, wondering if this shrunken enterprise isn't too much for me. Mine is probably the only four-hour Birdathon in North America!

While the limited hours, together with a heroic attempt to show each participant every bird we count, may hold our total score down, there is a hidden advantage in that the inability to rack up an astronomical list makes it painless to ask more friends for pledges and in higher amounts.

I overcame my anguish at the unnaturalness of the matter and leave it to the mathematicians and economists to deal with. I have other problems. Scheduled to help with the walking wounded, Melanie Ingalls, head honcho of the Los Angeles Audubon Society's Birdathon Committee, has cancelled out. And despite my pleas that they send me either Mother Theresa or Jon Dunn, they again send me Sandy Wohlgemuth. But I'm not one to look a gift

birder in the mouth.

At 6:00 a.m. — two hours early — on the Big Day, I am battering my way north on the 101 which, due to repairs, bleeds down from four lanes to one, creating five miles of hubcap-to-hubcap chaos! The 101 is the only way you can reach Malibu Canyon from the inland side of the Santa Monica Mountains. Caught in this traffic crunch, I can almost visualize the urge to be a Birdathoner draining from my hopefuls like hot oil from a leak in the bottom of the car as they ponder passing the whole thing off as a nightmare and returning home.

Still, the chorus of bird songs at the Park wipes all else from my mind. A Lazuli Bunting showers the world with its liquid *arias* from a spare willow tree near the entrance. Great to show the troops when they arrive! A Plain Titmouse pops in and out of its nest hole in the trunk of an oak tree. The beginners will love it! Here is a lively Song Sparrow and there a male Northern (Bullock's) Oriole, and farther along is a House Finch sitting on a nest built on top of a mud cup foundation plastered to the wall of a restroom building, obviously by a dispossessed Cliff

There is a difference!
by Chuck Bernstein

Continued on next page

Swallow. And there is the trilled outpouring of a treetop Orange-crowned Warbler! I'm ready for the beginners.

As I return, exalted, to the entrance kiosk, the driver of a Park pickup posts a sign that reads: "Due to high fire danger, park closed!"

I run at the man. "Whaddaya mean park closed?! I'm leading a Birdathon here for L.A. Audubon at 8:00. It's been advertised for months!" You can fight the 101 Freeway but you can't fight the drought. True, my mission is not as crucial as the Manhattan Project of World War II, but if there is justice in Birding Heaven, it is obviously not being spread around.

My impassioned pleas to the Park Manager, however, gets me permission to bird the entrance area and a section beyond, which will get us to the restroom building at least. We'll have to forego my nest stakeouts for Black Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Red-shouldered Hawk, and forget the Lewis' Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, the ducks in the creek . . . well, everything inside the Park. Anyway, won't lowering our score perversely bring in more and higher pledges next year? Just down the road we'll stop at Tapia Park to make up for it, anyway.

Seven prospective birders arrive intact, so we're batting a strong 500. And now there are new challenges. One lady has never before used binoculars. Hers were "borrowed from a neighbor." One gentleman has forgotten his binoculars at home. He gets to carry the scope, which gives him first looks at each bird we zero in on. Four have never before been on a birdwalk. Three have been on at least some sort of nature hike. We have one repeater from last year. *Clever girl.* Though I'm surprised that nature hasn't dumped a snowstorm down on my parade, the weather couldn't be more choice and the birds are singing with impatience!

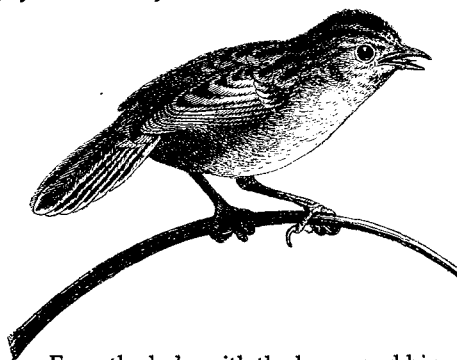
"Now, look through the scope at the Plain Titmouse going in and out of its nest hole." The puzzled gentleman is silent for a long time, then says, "I'm looking at a hole but there's no bird there." "Keep looking, it'll be back." Meanwhile, I'll show them the Lazuli Bunting. But, of course, it's moved. I hear it on an adjacent hill from a large valley oak tree, but the bird is hidden by the leaves. Where were these people when every bird was showing off at 7:00 this morning?!

"Watch for the Lazuli from the road. I'll see if I can flush it from the oak." I hurry toward the hill, only to find myself deeper and deeper in a field of lethal weeds with wide leaves edged with fish hooks. Almost unable to move forward, up to my

hips in the business end of grappling hooks and fishing tackle, I try *spishing*, but to no avail.

Scratched and torn a bit, I pick my way back to the road. Did the titmouse return? "No sign of it." Exasperated, I look at the nest hole through the scope just as the tiny gray bird pops in! But as I yell for the group to hurry over for a look, I spot the Lazuli back again atop the tall willow! The scope goes on that bird and they all get awesome looks. For those who for the first time see such a beautifully feathered bird through a scope as it sings of love and territory—its head thrown back, its bill held open, the breast trembling, even its tail quivering with the effort—it is awesome indeed.

The titmouse having left again, we drift toward the outer limits of permissibility and the Song Sparrow nest. One of my charges is expert at finding Scrub Jays for us, noting loudly every one in the Park. "Oh, look, there's a Blue Jay!" she yells out five different times. And I say, "That's an eastern species. *This* is a Scrub Jay." After about her fourth such expostulation she yells, "Bluebird!" I yell back, "Jay!" I catch a blank look and she says, "Sorry. Blue Jay." "Scrub Jay," I mutter.



Even the lady with the borrowed binoculars sees well the Song Sparrow in full throaty song. Having established confidence in the use of binoculars by watching a Rufous-sided Towhee on the ground, it is almost immediately shattered when a flock of gyrating, frenetic Bushtits passes. The rapidity of their movements gives the new birders new problems in quick focusing and instantaneous following with glasses.

While studying the brooding House Finch, we listen to the now invisible Orange-crowned Warbler as it sings its little heart out. Now on the back side of the tree where I've seen it earlier, it won't respond to even my most threatening owl call. There is a fleeting glimpse of a Black-shouldered Kite flying away and I am able to point out a noisy Acorn Woodpecker and Rough-winged Swallows darting about overhead. A curious Black-headed Grosbeak is appreciated, but what really rings their

bells is a through-the-scope picture of a Red-tailed Hawk on a pole! And when it flies — wow!

At Tapia Park we add the first Black-chinned Hummingbird most have ever seen, and Western Bluebirds, in and out of their nest hole. "Now, *that's* a bluebird," I say to the Scrub Jay lady. "It looks just like a little Blue Jay," she says. A cooperative Plain Titmouse lets us watch as it slips in and out of its nest hole, with young showing their tiny heads, which evokes squeals and yells and finally a long silence as we contemplate, I presume, motherhood, parenthood, the wonder of it all.

High above Tapia, Sandy spots a large female Red-shouldered Hawk showing its classic windows in the wings and a well-banded tail as it soars overhead. *Big birds are the most exciting!*

Having previously arranged with the proper Authority for the Malibu Lagoon to be at low tide when we arrive, we soon add to our list the scampering Sanderlings, striped Killdeer and the overly-cautious Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers, together with a Whimbrel and Ruddy Turnstones. And though it appears daunting at first, we are able, with the scope, to separate Western, Ring-billed, California and Heermann's from the Bonaparte's Gulls. And then, even easier, we identify Caspian, Elegant and Forster's Terns.

There are the common ducks, American Wigeon and Mallards—glory be!—some with fuzzy chicks! A Great Blue Heron in the scope is something wonderful, as are the Snowy and Great Egrets—and, like a cherry-topped ice cream sundae, there are good looks at a Red-breasted Merganser, its letter-opener bill slicing the moist salt air.

At five minutes to noon I announce, "If anyone wishes to stay longer and bird with me, I'll stay as long as you want." But every single new birder has a date for lunch, and so, alone, Sandy and I are left to bird the now placid ocean from the shore. But we are satisfied. Listening to their sounds of pleasure and seeing the fire of excitement in the "new eyes" and sending them off with the gift of a gallery filled with colorful bird images they can carry with them forever, and rekindling the lost childhood feeling of awe and wonder has raised what might have been an obstacle-laden lackluster event into what has been for me a joyous birdwalk.

The 1990 Beginners Birdathon chalked up 72 species on what was a unique experience for all. And if this old goat is asked to lead a bunch of beginners next year, I suppose I'll do it again. It's like building sand castles on the beach. 🐾

Los Angeles Audubon Society

P I C N I C

You're invited — and please bring the whole family!

Bring a picnic lunch (grills are available)

LAAS will provide liquid refreshments!

Charlton Flat Picnic Area

Sunday, July 15th

Nature walks begin at 8:00 a.m.

Picnic from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Activities Include:

- ☛ Birdwalks (beginning at 8:00 a.m.)
- ☛ Butterfly walk (9:00 a.m.)
- ☛ Botany walk (9:00 a.m.)
- ☛ Children's activities (ongoing)

Directions: Take Highway 2, the Angeles Crest Highway, north from the 210 Freeway in La Cañada. It is about a 20-minute drive up into the mountains to Charlton Flat, which is a well-marked picnic area on the left side of the road.

When you enter Charlton Flat, take the first **right** turn and proceed to the lowermost picnic sites. Watch for our LAAS signs.

For more info and to RSVP, call Audubon House at
(213) 876-0202 or the Bird Tape at (213) 874-1318

Dear Readers,

Your editor apologizes for missing the June edition of the *Western Tanager*. I've been too busy with other responsibilities to focus the requisite time and attention on the newsletter. Now we are getting out an edition that meets our standards, but we have failed to keep you properly posted on news and events of the L.A. chapter. This is a sorry failing.

It is obvious to me, and now unfortunately to you, that I am no longer reliable as your editor. I have enjoyed the job and would like to continue at it, but we have to be realistic in our plans. I hope that someone will step forward to be the editor, or at least co-editor, and put the *Western Tanager* back on track.

Los Angeles Audubon Society has need of other volunteers, too. As we remind you frequently, there are sociable

tasks to do in the office and bookstore, and the *Tanager* is always hungry for articles to print. Please become acquainted with our chapter and its activities and help us in our service work.

National Audubon Society is one of the Nation's most important conservation organizations; with more participation at the chapter level, LAAS could do much to protect the Earth and the birds that still survive on it. 🐦

Birdathon '90

After six weeks of driving and counting, Los Angeles Audubon Society wrapped up its 1990 Birdathon on May 15. Many thanks to all of you who joined the fun and helped to support LAAS's environmental education program. We are still waiting for a few checks to come in so if you haven't sent yours, please do so right away. The final results must be submitted to the National Audubon Society by June 15. They will be

published in next month's *Western Tanager* along with the list of participants and prize winners.

Prizes will be given to those who saw the most birds and raised the most money. This year's prizes include a "Gone Birding" VCR game, subscriptions to birding magazines, bird feeders, a belt pack, and art prints. Everyone who participated in

the Birdathon, and sponsors pledging \$50 or more, will receive an official T-shirt. Prizes will be given away at the LAAS picnic on July 15.

All money raised during the Birdathon supports LAAS's educational programs, including the Audubon Adventures program for grades 3-6. Last year, LAAS sponsored 208 Audubon Adventures classrooms in Los Angeles schools. 🐦

President's Annual Report

lence. This, despite my incessant complaints as to why the *Tanager* cannot be delivered the day after I have dropped it off.

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Other activities: contributing to the new Whittier Narrows Bird Rehabilitation Center; entering protests against the installation of wind power devices across the Gorman Mountains, habitat of the California Condor; more letters demanding protection of the Sespe.

Olga Clarke is always smiles and helpfulness at the bookstore. Jesse Moorman, as editor, and Steve Hirsh, as layout man, have brought the *Tanager* to new perfection, in both contents and design. Sharon Milder busily canvasses colleges and grad schools in search of worthy students for our Research Grant Awards. This year's award went to Bernie Tershy of Cornell U. His subject is "Brown and Blue-footed Boobies in Mexico."

Glenn Cunningham maintains our library (research and circulating) that so many of our members did not know we had.

* * *

It's great to see Evelyn Weiskoph on Tuesday mornings. She is like one who strides into a stormy surf. After the wave has crashed over her, she is still standing. No snarl in the membership files and mailing rosters and labels can stymie her. And too, there are our eagles—legal eagles—Richard Webster and Ken Kendig. They can always tell us when to keep our hands in or out of the cookie jar. Then there is our Treasurer, Richard Epps, the most silent with the hardest job. Currently, he has charge of an anonymous gift we received for the purchase of a new copier. When he does pass out his financial report and speaks, everything is always in the black! Not least of all, we possess a boon in the person of Charles Harper, our Office Manager. He functions 40+ hours a week as the engine that drives LAAS's every direction. We could not move without the volunteers who give us several hours of their time each week: Dorothy Dimsdale, Nellie Gryk, Jim Huffman, Andrea Kaufman, Ruth Lohr, Bert Mull, Pat Nelson, Bob Pann, Jean Pickus, Linda Swartz and Peppy Van Essen.

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So we come to EARTH DAY 1990. On the Wednesday before April 22nd, Jesse Moorman and I spoke about the environ-

This June 30th we will have ended another year. So much well done and so much to be done. Our actions and spirits *must* remain energized against the ongoing hazards to our planet.

Last August found Kimball Garrett in Pittsburgh, PA for a session of the I.C.P.B. LAAS is the only Audubon chapter that is a member of the U.S. section of that organization.

In September, Jesse Moorman, Melanie Ingalls, Millie Newton and myself represented LAAS at the NAS Convention in Tucson, AZ. The first of October saw the Board of Directors hosting National President Peter Berle at breakfast.

Jonathan Alderfer returned from Ecuador in November to give a report on Fundacion Natura of that country.

February past was the month LAAS hosted a meeting of the California Coordinating Council. Charlie Schoettlin was organizer for this well-received event which included representatives of Chapters from Santa Barbara to San Diego. In the same month, Melanie Ingalls and Pat Little were our representatives at the Dynamic Environmental Education Workshops for educators and youth leaders at the Long Beach El Dorado Nature Center. Also in February I attended the 11th Annual Bald Eagle Conference in Klamath Falls, OR.

On April 5th Steve Hirsh, Millie Newton and Charlie Schoettlin stood for us at the bi-annual Western Regional Conference at Asilomar. On April 7th, Jesse Moorman manned a table for LAAS promotion at a Sierra Club event at Loyola U. Law School.

Early May found Charlie Schoettlin and myself down at the California Coordinating Council meeting in El Cajon where we toured the Silverwood Preserve and, the next day, drove into Baja to inspect the site of the pro Esteros project. So much for jauntings.

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The Jan.-Feb. 1990 issue of the *Western Tanager* contained our first Membership Survey Questionnaire, handled by Millie Newton, Steve Hirsh and Charlie Schoettlin. The responses and answers were gratifying and, in some cases, quite surprising. The

results are summarized on page 2 of the March 1990 issue. With the March issue we also initiated the use of recycled paper. We increased the general fund and the education allotment through the sale of a Volkswagen kindly donated to us by member Ms. Rande Ramseycross. Newton and Hirsh created a new permanent set of name tags for officers and members, while Pat Nelson provided the holders.

As this goes to press, LAAS readies itself for its part in the AOU/Cooper Society Convention to be held from June 25th to July 1st, headquartered at UCLA. We donated \$1,000 toward travel and housing for students to attend this affair. Every LAAS member is invited to attend the sessions and enjoy the field trips. Jean Brandt is in charge of the latter. We are publishing a new book, *Where Birders Go in Southern California*, by member Henry Childs. Nick Freeman, tough worker that he is, provided us with quite a diversity of field trips: Mono Lake, Mineral King, Carrizo Plains, Mt. Piños, Placerita. You are urged to take ever more advantage of these outings. Jonathan Alderfer has seen to it that our evening meetings are highlighted by aces like Jon Dunn, Arnold Small, Herb Clarke, Peter Pyle, Kimball Garrett, Ned Harris and Jonathan himself, among others. The Bird Alert Tape so capably run by Jean Brandt is as essential as breath to all birders. And our southern California Bird Locator File established by member Gail Baumgarten is fast becoming an asset. Hank Brodtkin's BIRDS OF THE SEASON column always points the way to easily add to one's life list.

Sandy Wohlgemuth, ably assisted by David White, as always, on our behalf takes a cudgel to politicians and corporate forces in support of conservation issues. At the recent Western Regional Conference, Sandy was awarded a Certificate of Merit for his extraordinary efforts. Melanie Ingalls was responsible for our winning a Certificate for Outstanding Educational Achievement by our support of the LAAS Audubon Adventures youth program. We now sponsor 208 elementary classrooms! Ken Kendig, through his association with the California Environmental Federation, won an award for LAAS, and your president was given a certificate by the L.A. Postal System for Active Participation in Cooperative Programs to Achieve Postal Excel-

ment to about 100 students of the magnet school at North Hollywood High. On the following Saturday, Sandy Wohlgemuth and Melanie Ingalls represented us at two other venues in Earth Day celebrations. On Sunday, April 22nd itself, LAAS was represented at Ballona Wetlands with a table manned by Melanie Ingalls and volunteers Vicky Costello, Susan Zilber, and David Cline and his sons. The day was brilliant with sunshine, and John Borneman and Susan Lewis from Regional attended. Pat Nelson and Bob Shanman led early morning birdwalks in the area.

Our table at Franklin Canyon Nature Center was manned by Dorothy Dimsdale. She held forth with a provocative bird ID test for all who passed and paused. Steve Saffire, the curator and also our member, supervised the planting of dozens of trees on the grounds.

At the Museum of Natural History, Charlie Schoettlin held the fort while our table was manned by volunteers Jane

Twomy and spouse, and Marti Harmon and family. Sincere thanks to these new volunteers.

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The 1990 Birdathon's collection of pledge monies is not yet complete. That committee, chaired by Ingalls, consisted of Kendig, Hirsh, Newton, Charles Harper, Pat Heirs, and Darlene Knieriem. Final tabulations will be announced soon.

In The Offing

1. Searching for a new site for LAAS. Already scouted is Franklin Canyon; south end of Silverlake reservoir; Friendship Auditorium on Riverside Drive; and the Highland/Camrose bungalow village: Little, Newton, Van Meter, Kendig.
2. Stocking of a new line of sweatshirts and/or T-shirts: Milder, Little, Alderfer.
3. Assisting Friends of the L.A. River in its efforts to have part of the river set aside

and restored as a wildlife refuge: Garrett, Van Meter.

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So what can you do about all the above? Our new year will run from July 1st, 1990 until June 30th, 1991. Attend more meetings, visit the office and bookstore more often, phone or write in your discoveries, inquiries, opinions and accounts of birding trips you've made, unique experiences you've had. Pin any Board member in a corner and keep him there until you get an answer. **HELP THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO MAKE THE NEW YEAR A GREAT ONE! Bring your family to the picnic July 15th.**

Robert Van Meter

O'PINIONS,

by Conrad Lawrence

I am a man of habit, and adjourn each day at an accustomed hour to my club, where I relax in my usual chair and gaze thoughtfully across the rooftops of the city.

Few readers would be surprised, I think, at the wealth of wild creatures that manage to survive unobtrusively amongst us here, and some of my own more familiar companions are the little brown bats that roost within the concrete eaves of my clubhouse. Although they are resident the year around, we associate only seasonally, for it is only now and in the Fall that the wayward Earth and human chronographers conspire to bring us together; it is only now and in the Fall that I settle into my viewing station just as the last spark of the sun's edge flickers out behind the Hollywood Hills, the reddened sky subsides through violet toward indigo, and the bats awaken and arise before me.

I have estimated their numbers at a stable population of about two hundred, and they emerge distinctively from their rest in four successive waves: one or two outriders will precede a puff of fifty milling in a tight frenetic cloud, with a few more stragglers dribbling out behind; then nothing. In a minute or two, a new sortie: a few outriders, a sudden swarm of fifty, a few stragglers. Four times, just at dusk,

and then they are all gone somewhere into the east and northeast, where the moths are fat and slow.

Why they should leave at such a time and in such a fashion, as regular as my own dull habits, is intriguing.

The bats are not my only wild companions; there are also a surprising number of birds in the city. In the early spring, White-throated Swifts return to strafe us, and the Spotted Doves begin their courting flights, spiralling up to stoop so rapidly that I often mistake them for falcons; and indeed, several kestrels winter in the area and occasionally appear.

But in this season, the kestrels are more in evidence. My resident pair are busy raising young and are abroad hunting early and late. At this time of day, I arrive to find them perched each on an antenna of the building opposite, and their large hunting eyes strain to pierce the failing light.

The first bat appears suddenly, beelining east, and the kestrels jerk upright and launch themselves, towering in a tight ascending spiral. As the first bat swarm breaks free, the kestrels are hovering above and peering about in an attempt to select a victim; and the last dribble of laggards is met by a falcon's power dive and the sudden disappearance of one of their number.

The kestrels head for home with a bat apiece. If all goes efficiently, they are back and circling again by the time the third cloud of bats appears; if it is not too dark, two more furry dinners go home with them. No matter how poor the hunting earlier

that day, the kestrels are sure of at least one square meal for their family.

This suggests why bats come out at dusk: as early as possible to maximize their own hunting time but as late as possible to avoid their hunters. Or perhaps it is that dusk is too late for optimal hunting by diurnal raptors, too early for nocturnal ones, so that the bats slip through the weak point of both offenses.

This also explains why the bats come out in puffs. Tight, active flights of bats or birds, or schools of fish, disrupt a predator's concentration in selecting a prey item: the risk of any individual's genes being lost from the pool is thereby lessened. If the strategy worked perfectly, the hunters would starve; but there is always a straggler or two, early or late, for a predator to eliminate.

Why the bats emerge in four successive clouds rather than one big one is more problematic. The strategy is obvious enough: don't put all your eggs in one basket. If their genes are programmed to adhere so closely to the group that they all stick together absolutely, then genetic drift in the wrong direction, i.e., toward emergence in broad daylight, would be disastrous to the entire population.

But *how* that strategy is orchestrated is hard to conceive. Is the emerge-urge triggered by light intensity, with a series of "modes" of light-candles around which individual genotypes tend to cluster? Is there some critical social mass for a swarm

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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.

After the first or second week of June, when some of the last and often the best vagrants of the season are found, some of us like to go to high country to seek out Calliope Hummingbirds on Mt. Pinos and Williamson Sapsuckers near Vincent Gap in the San Gabriels or at Champion Lodgepole Meadow (next to Bluff Lake) above Big Bear Lake where Common Nighthawks can also be seen and an elusive Flammulated Owl might be heard just after dusk.

It is near the end of June that the first male Rufous Hummingbirds signal the start of the "Fall" migration as they drift south through the mountain wildflowers. And shortly thereafter, at the beginning of July, the first of the migrating shorebirds will also be seen. These would mainly be males (or females of some of the sex-role switching polyandrous species) who leave the chores of raising the young to their mates.

As expected, good pulses of Spring migration were noted across southern California the last two weeks of April. Movement of pelagic species were also observed in the open ocean. During an oceanographic survey some one to two hundred miles off shore the last part of April, among other species, a Laysan Albatross and many Cook's Petrels as well as 100 Murphy's Petrels off Ventura were reported by Kathy Molina and Peter Pyle.

A Little Blue Heron was at Malibu Lagoon (Ken Youngleib) and one was also at Upper Newport Bay (Peter Barnes) both on 15 April. A Reddish Egret, very unusual north of San Diego, was found at Point Mugu on 17 April by Doug Gould, a Santa Cruz birder.

A Snow Goose, now rarely seen along the coast, especially in Spring, was at Marina Del Rey on 10 April (Hank Brodtkin). An "Aleutian" Canada Goose, an endangered subspecies, was reported from Bolsa Chica on 7 April (Bob Muncie). If accepted, this could well be the only southern California coastal record of this form.

The Eurasian Wigeon was still at Malibu State Park as of 8 April (Russel Stone) and an Old Squaw was seen near Balboa on 9 April (Rick Grove). Three female Hooded Mergansers were found on the Pomona Valley Birdathon near Upper Newport Bay on 7 April (Hank Childs).

Most unexpected these days was a flock of 100 Swainson's Hawks in a field near Pomona on 1 April (Daniel Cooper and Barry Lyon). Up until the 1930s, large flocks were a common occurrence on the coastal slope. The last reports of large flocks seem to be 500-600 at Tejon Ranch on 26 October 1979, and 200 at Temecula the following day. These incidents were isolated in time.

One hundred twenty-seven Sage Grouse were on their lekking grounds north of Lake Crowley on 1 April (Jack Nash), and our only report of a Yellow Rail was on the Pomona Valley Birdathon at Upper Newport Bay on 7 April (Rick Clements) where one was found last year at around the same time.

Two "Pacific" Golden Plovers were at Seal Beach on 29 April (Barbara Elliot). A Solitary Sandpiper and a Ruff were seen on 12 April at Edwards Air Force Base on the Point Reyes Bird Observatory shorebird census (Kimball Garrett).

An adult Pomarine Jaeger flew over the beach at Redondo on 2 April (Charles Walker) and an immature Black-legged Kittiwake was at Malibu Lagoon on 15 April (Kimball Garrett).

Most of the Empidonax Flycatchers migrating along the coast in Spring are Pacific Slope and Hammond's with Willow showing up mostly in May. However a Dusky Flycatcher was reported from Huntington Gardens on 15 April and a Gray was at Wardlow Park in Long Beach on 26 April (Jerry Johnson).

Two Purple Martin reports this Spring were a flock on 8 April over Nojoqui Falls, Santa Barbara County, where they probably nest (Art and Jan Cupples), and one over Forest Park in Long Beach on 1 May (Charles Hood).

The first Gray Vireo at Bob's Gap near Valyermo was seen on 11 April (Barbara Elliot) and four individuals, one with nesting material, were seen there on 14 April (Mary Carmona).

A Virginia's Warbler was at Forest

Park on 1 May (Charles Hood) and a singing Northern Parula was at Descanso Gardens on 27 April (Gayle Benton). As of 8 April the Palm Warblers in Culver City and Manhattan Beach were still present (Don Sterba) and another was found at Redondo Wilderness Park on 19 April (Dave Moody). A singing Black-and-white Warbler was at Leo Carillo State Park on 15 April and a Northern Waterthrush was at Redondo Wilderness Park on 3 May (David Moody).

A Tree Sparrow, still inexplicably in juvenile plumage, was well seen at Butterbreed Springs, Kern County, on 1 April (Keith Axelson).

Great-tailed Grackles are finally nesting in L.A. County with the beginnings of a colony found at Lake Palmdale on 27 April (Jon Alderfer). Additional individuals were seen in the L.A. River near Los Feliz on 12 and 19 April (Kimball Garrett) and in Los Alamitos on 16 April (Barry Lyon). A Bronzed Cowbird was south of Blythe just over the Imperial County line on 12 April (Bruce Broadbooks).

Interesting because of the number, 30 Cassin's Finches were reported from Pearblossom on 25 April (Charles Hood). 🐦

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

Birding and Photography Tour of Africa

Fullerton College is sponsoring a three-week birding tour of Kenya from December 28, 1990 through January 18, 1991. Total cost will be \$4,262. Contact Chuck Lavell, Fullerton College at (714) 992-7541.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Society is now looking for a full-time employee to staff the LAAS office and bookstore. Minimum hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, with total weekly hours (up to 40) and salary negotiable. Basic requirements are bookkeeping/retail experience and an interest in birding, conservation and people. Duties include the following:

Office

- Respond to telephone inquiries regarding membership, subscriptions, field trips, meetings, birdfinding advice for travellers, identification of unknown species, conservation issues, media and other lay requests for information or advice, care of young or injured birds, and general comments and complaints by advising from personal knowledge, research within LAAS library and other records and consultation with other staff, or by referral to the appropriate agency or source.
- Receive field/pelagic trip reservations and monies, issue receipts and trip information, and maintain and update records.
- Perform miscellaneous minor duties of a recurring nature, such as making coffee, preparing the physical facilities for board and general membership meetings, and ensuring a level of overall tidiness in LAAS office space.

Bookstore

- Fill mail, telephone and over-the-counter orders; includes responding to requests for information and advice on selection of appropriate books and equipment.
- Do all purchasing and receiving of merchandise and supplies, and maintain inventory records.
- Maintain the books of account and prepare quarterly financial statements (for a very simple accounting system).
- Miscellaneous custodial duties, including maintaining displays, supplies, equipment, etc., processing incoming mail, carrying items to post office, etc.

Birds of New Zealand — a locality guide

Reviewed by Cliff Pollard

Stuart Chambers has done an excellent job of presenting a locality and species guide to the birds of New Zealand. He has led tours and is familiar with all the species of his native land. Brian Chudleigh's excellent photos illustrate many of the birds and some fine landscapes.

Each species is dealt with thoroughly. The book gives information on the impor-

tance of the family in New Zealand, scientific and common names of the bird, a description of the bird with notes on conspicuous features and field characteristics, the habitat and range, notes on the bird's call, where to find the birds and, for some, the best times of day and year for viewing. Maps help the birder in locating a good area for a particular species.

At the back of the book there is a list of three excursions a visiting birder might take, a good bird list and people who might help the birder. The beginning of the book discusses the practicalities of birdwatching such as climate, landscape, bird life, logistics, lodging, clothing and demographics. There are indexes of maps, of places and of birds.

Bookstore News

by Charles Harper

Those who shop only through our catalogue may not be aware that we also maintain an Out-of-Print and Hard-to-Find Titles section of the bookstore. We always keep our eyes open for copies of books that birders want—beautiful works such as Cooper & Forshaw's *Birds of Paradise and Bowerbirds* or Delacour & Amadon's *Curassows & Related Birds*, complete treatises like Johnson's two-volume *Birds of Chile*, identification guides like Pough's *Audubon Western Bird Guide* or Hoffmann's exquisite *Birds of the Pacific States*, and bird-finding and distribution guides such as Alden's *Finding the Birds in Western Mexico* or Garrett & Dunn's lamentably out-of-print *Birds of Southern California*.

Prices on these titles change from copy to copy, as sometimes we must pay a pretty penny for them, while other times we find a real deal; and condition of pre-owned copies can vary considerably. But in general, most of these books just get harder and harder to find as more and more people become interested in maintaining serious birding libraries; and unfortunately, the supply is severely limited.

Because these titles go in and out of stock quickly, they do not appear in the semiannual catalogue that you receive in the *Tanager*; however, we publish a periodic list, usually updated once or twice a month, that is available upon request.

And if there is a particular book you have been looking for, just let us know and we'll try to find it for you. Searching out-of-print titles can sometimes be the most frustrating, but other times the most rewarding, part of bookstore operations. 🐦

This very thorough and enjoyable book is a must for anyone interested in the fascinating birds of these islands.

The book contains 515 pages, 300 colored photos, over 170 bird illustrations, and 80 maps. Paperback available at Audubon House for \$36.95. Note: This book takes you only to selected areas. 🐦

For a change let's look on the bright side. Coming from the old curmudgeon who seems to wallow in sloshing buckets of doom, if nothing else, it might be a novelty. (Mustn't get your hopes up too high; remember, every silver lining has its cloud.) So in no particular order, what's good about the country, environmentally speaking?

- The three largest tuna packing companies have announced to a delighted public that they will no longer buy tuna from seining fishermen who are killing porpoises.

- The Shell Oil Company has unveiled a new lead-free gas. Together with ARCO's EC-1, the lead content of the air will be reasonably lower and far healthier for our vulnerable children.

- After much dragging of feet, the U.S. hosted an international conference on global warming. More research, says Mr. Bush.

- Mayor Bradley calls for mandatory reduction of water use if the city doesn't cut consumption by 10%.

- At the grocery store in answer to "Paper or plastic?" some people are actually whipping out their recycled bags to astonished clerks.

- More California Condor chicks were hatched in captivity this spring and there is talk of releasing adults next year.

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgenuth

- Bolsa Chica was spared the oil-spill trauma when the British tanker fouled Huntington Beach.

- After 13 years, a relatively decent Clean Air Act appears to be approaching passage in Congress — at this writing.

- The desert tortoise was at long last listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- Though the dreaded sword of Sinunu dangles over his head, William K. Reilly is still Chief of the Environmental Protection Agency.

- Jesse Jackson and others are saying that minorities, who suffer most from pollution, should get involved with environmental issues.

- There *was* an Earth Day and everyone and his cousin seemed to join in — including some of our most prominent polluters who, presumably, have seen the light.

- Wonder of wonders! Bob Hope may actually sell some of his gargantuan portion of southern California to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area *below*

market price.

- The latest polls confirm the conclusion reached years ago: most people care about the messy world they inhabit and want it cleaned up no matter what it costs — even if they have to pay for it.

How about them apples? Has *perestroika* taken over here in the good ole US of A? Are we *really* restructuring our heads and hearts? Perhaps the best sign of the times is that most of the politicians—including those who voted the straight James Watt ticket—are scrambling frantically to get on the environmental bandwagon. Despite the unprecedented ballyhoo, Earth Day announced that the development of an environmental ethic had already begun. Undeniably, there is an increased concern about pesticides in food, about the quality of air and water, about the loss of open space in our overcrowded cities. Recycling is increasing. Bicycle sales are going up. Some people have stopped hosing down their sidewalks. Styrofoam is becoming

Preserving Biodiversity Is Protecting Life on Earth

By Donella H. Meadows

Donella H. Meadows is an adjunct professor of environmental policy studies at Dartmouth College. This piece was published in the L. A. Times, May 13, 1990. Reprinted by permission.

The ozone hole and the greenhouse effect have entered our public vocabulary, but we have no catch label for the third great environmental problem of the late 20th Century. It's even more diffuse than depletion of the ozone layer or global warming, harder to grasp and summarize. The experts call it "the loss of biodiversity."

Biodiversity obviously has something to do with pandas, tigers and tropical forests. But preserving biodiversity is a much bigger job than protecting rainforests or charismatic megafauna. It's the job of pro-

tecting all life—microscopic creepy-crawlies as well as elephants and condors—and all life's habitats—tundra, prairie and swamp as well as forests.

Why care about red squirrels, for instance?

"Do we have to save every subspecies?" asked the U.S. Interior Secretary, Manuel Lujan, Jr. on Thursday. [This was published on May 13, just after Lujan's comments.] He called for changes in the Endangered Species Act because it is blocking construction of a \$200 million telescope on Mt. Graham in Arizona, the habitat for about 180 endangered red squirrels.

Why care about tundra, swamp, blue beetles or little bluestem grasses? Ecologists give three reasons, which boil down to simple self-interest on three levels of escalating importance.

Biodiversity has both immediate and potential economic value. This is the argument most commonly put forward to defend biodiversity because it's the one our culture is most ready to hear. It cites the importance of the industries most directly dependent upon nature—fisheries, forestry, tourism, recreation and the harvesting of wild foods, medicines, dyes, rubber and chemicals.

Some ecologists are so tired of this line of reasoning that they refer wearily to the "Madagascar periwinkle argument." That obscure plant yields the drugs vincristine and vinblastine, which have revolutionized the treatment of leukemia. About a third of all modern medicines have been derived from molds and plants. The potential for future discoveries is astounding. The total number of species of life is somewhere between 10 million and 30 million, only 1.7 million of which we

suspect. Who knows what tiny tremors of change are stirring in American souls? Perhaps we are still miles away from the new lifestyles that salvation requires, but let us hope we are closer than we were 20 years ago.

* * *

However, why kid ourselves, the world and all the people in it are not in prime condition. *The Christian Science Monitor* (a sober, respected, straight-arrow newspaper) points out that "Where the original Earth Day was largely a national event, Earth Day 1990 is a global effort." The promoters of Earth Day "... hope to launch a decade of international activity that stresses individual action as well as global pollution-cutting policies" such as:

- ⊗ Banning chlorofluorocarbons that destroy the ozone layer
- ⊗ Halting the export of toxic waste and dangerous pesticides to the third world
- ⊗ Beginning a 20-year transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources that won't contribute to global warming
- ⊗ Reducing acid rain by 80%
- ⊗ Creating a strong international agency with authority to protect the atmosphere and the oceans.


World environmental leaders are far from euphoric. They give us the good news

and the bad news. Russell Train, chairman of World Wildlife Fund, says he is encouraged by the progress made in the last 20 years. "In the industrialized nations, with the exception of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, we've made significant strides in controlling sulfur dioxide, most of the water pollution problems and auto emissions. But having said that, the level of economic activity has grown, the population has grown, the number of autos has grown — all tremendously in the last 20 years." Lester Brown of World Watch Institute says, "The good news is that more people are worried about the future of the planet than ever before," and that with the decline of cold war concerns perhaps we can see that "... the future threats are much less military and much more environmental." But, he adds, "All the things we were worried about in 1970, such as air and soil pollution, are far worse today." And "I tend to see that a lot of progress has been made. But we have a hell of a long way to go."

* * *

As you read this, shaking your head, murmuring, "There he goes again," the only response must be: *Mea culpa*, guilty as charged. The point is, we are doing some things right. We're turning ourselves in the right direction slowly, painfully. At the same time we know this is only a begin-

ning, that the staggering problems we face will ask more of us. Most of us are ordinary people. We don't want to be confronted with cosmic dilemmas every day at breakfast with the newspaper or every night with our choice of network anchors. Within the compass of our lives we want to have room for reading, music, entertainment, friendly contacts, fun, birds. Yet the solutions to the problems demand some measure of participation. If government action is essential it is up to us to vote for officials who agree with our ideas on the environment. In the so-called little things in our day-to-day existence—recycling, conserving water, carpooling and so forth—we must move from thinking they might be a good idea to practicing them. (There's the dreaded M word, "must." A terrible word that irritates and raises the hackles of freedom-loving citizens.) It is the accumulation of individual efforts, saving a gallon of water here and a gallon of gas there, that will preserve Mono Lake or prevent a few cases of asthma and emphysema.

If not us, who? 

Reference: *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 16-18, 1990, courtesy of our prime environmental monitor, Jim Halferty.

have tested for usefulness.

The economic value of biodiversity is very real, but ecologists hate the argument because it is both arrogant and trivial. It assumes that the Earth's millions of species are here to serve the economic purposes of just one species. And even if you buy that idea, it misses the larger and more valuable ways that nature serves us, even if we never name or harvest its millions of species.

Biodiversity performs environmental services beyond price. How would you like the job of pollinating all trillion or so apple blossoms in New York state some sunny afternoon in late May? It's conceivable, maybe, that you could invent a machine to do it, but inconceivable that the machine could work as elegantly and cheaply as the honeybee, much less make honey on the side.

Suppose you were assigned to turn every bit of dead organic matter—from fallen leaves, to urban garbage, to road kills—into nutrients that feed new life. Even if you knew how, what would it cost? A

host of bacteria, molds, mites and worms do it for free. If they ever stopped, all life would stop. We would not last long if green plants stopped turning our exhaled carbon dioxide back into oxygen. Plants would not last long if a few genera of soil bacteria stopped turning nitrogen from the air into nitrate fertilizer.

Human reckoning cannot put a value on the services performed by the ecosystems of Earth. In addition to pollination and nutrient recycling, these services include the cleansing of air and water, flood control, drought prevention, pest control, temperature regulation and maintenance of the world's most valuable library—the genes of all living organisms.

Biodiversity contains the accumulated wisdom of nature and the key to its future. If you ever wanted to destroy a society so thoroughly that there would be no hope of its resuscitation, you would burn its libraries and kill its intellectuals. You would destroy its knowledge. Nature's knowledge is contained in the DNA within living cells. The variety of that genetic information is the

driving engine of evolution, the immune system for life, the source of adaptability—not just the variety of species, but also the variety of individuals within each species.

Individuals are never quite alike. Each is genetically unique mostly in subterranean ways that will only appear in future generations. We recognize that is true of human beings. Plant and animal breeders recognize it in dogs, cattle, wheat, roses, apples. The only reason they can bring forth bigger fruits or sweeter smells or disease resistance is that those traits are already present in the genes carried by some individuals.

The amount of information in a single cell is hard to comprehend. A simple one-celled bacterium can carry genes for 1,000 traits, a flowering plant for 400,000. Biologist E.O. Wilson says the information in the genes of an ordinary mouse, if translated into printed letters, would fill all 15 editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* that have been published since 1768. And each

Continued on next page

Biodiversity

Continued from previous page

house mouse is slightly different from all the others.

The wealth of genetic information has been selected over billions of years to fit the ever-changing necessities of the planet. As Earth's atmosphere filled with oxygen, as land masses drifted apart, as humans invented agriculture and altered the land, there were lurking within individual pieces of genetic code that allowed them to defend against or take advantage of the changes. These individuals were more fit for the new environment. They bred more successfully. The population began to take on their characteristics. New species came into being.

Biodiversity is the accumulation of all life's past adaptations, and it is the basis for all future adaptations (even those mediated by human gene-splicers). That's why ecologists value biodiversity as one of the Earth's great resources, as great as oil deposits or topsoils or fresh water. It's why they take seriously the loss of even the most insignificant of species; why they defend not only the preservation of species but the preservation of populations within species, and why they regard the current rate of human-induced extinctions as an unparalleled catastrophe.

We don't know how many species we are eliminating, because we don't know how many species there are. It's a fair guess that at the rate we're destroying habitat, especially but not exclusively in the tropics, we're pushing to extinction about one species every hour. That doesn't count the species whose populations are being reduced so greatly that diversity within the population is essentially gone. Earth has not seen a spasm of extinctions like this for 65 million years.

Biologists estimate that human beings usurp, directly or indirectly, about 40% of each year's total biological production (and our population is on its way to another doubling in 40 years). There is hardly a place on Earth where people do not log, pave, spray, drain, flood, graze, fish, plow, burn, drill, spill or dump. There is no life zone, with the possible exception of the deep ocean, that we are not degrading. In poor countries biodiversity is being nickel-and-dimed to death; in rich countries it is being billion-dollared to death.

Besides "loss of diversity," biologists have another name for this problem—"biotic impoverishment." What is impoverished is not just biodiversity, it is also the human economy and human spirit. Ecologist Paul Ehrlich describes biotic impoverishment this way: "Unless current trends are reversed, Americans will gradually be living in a nation that has fewer warblers and ducks and more starlings and herring

gulls, fewer native wildflowers and more noxious weeds, fewer Swallowtail Butterflies and more cockroaches, smaller herds of elk and bigger herds of rats, less edible seafood, less productive croplands, less dependable supplies of pure fresh water, more desert wastes and dust storms, more frequent floods and more uncomfortable weather."

Biodiversity can't be maintained by protecting a few species in a zoo, or by preserving greenbelts or national parks. To function properly nature needs more room than that. It can maintain itself, however, without human expense, without zookeepers, park rangers, foresters or gene banks. All it needs is to be left alone.

To provide their priceless pollination service, the honeybees ask only that we stop saturating the landscape with poisons, stop paving the meadows where bee-food grows and leave them enough honey to get through the winter.

To maintain our planet, our lives and our future potential, the other species have similar requests, all of which add up to: Control yourselves. Control your numbers. Control your greed. See yourselves as what you are, part of an interdependent biological community—the most intelligent part, though you don't often act that way.

So act that way, either out of moral respect for something magnificent you did not create and do not understand, or out of a practical interest in your own survival.

Pelagic Trips for Remainder of 1990

There were no spring pelagic trips this year because the boat was committed to other things. Take advantage of the remaining chances this year and go on one of the upcoming trips. Reserve well in advance.

The R.V. *Vantuna* is a large, comfortable boat with a very knowledgeable and cooperative captain and crew. The cost to us is reasonable as we are a "teaching" non-profit organization.

Santa Barbara Island is the nearest island, except Santa Catalina, where sea birds breed. The route to the island gives us the greatest exposure to the adjacent coastal waters with good chances for the largest number of pelagic species.

The productive pelagic currents are far off the southern California coast. Good deep water is not found at a reasonable distance from shore until north of Point Conception, and is best off Monterey. Because of this, we do not schedule any two-day trips off of Southern California. If there is interest in longer trips, let Phil Sayre know.

1. Saturday, August 11, Santa Barbara Island and Osborne Banks, led by Arnold Small and Kimball Garrett; 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Price \$32
2. Saturday, September 22, out to sea as far as possible (near San Nicolas Island), led by Arnold Small and Herb Clarke; 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Price \$40
3. Sunday, October 21, Santa Barbara Island and Osborne Banks, led by Kimball Garrett and Herb Clarke; 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Price \$32
4. Saturday, November 17, toward Santa Barbara Island, led by Herb Clarke and Olga Clarke; 6:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Price \$28

WINTER (w) - SPRING (s) (#3 and #4):

SHEARWATERS: Sooty, Pink-footed, Black-vented (w), Short-tailed, Northern Fulmar

JAEGERS: Pomarine

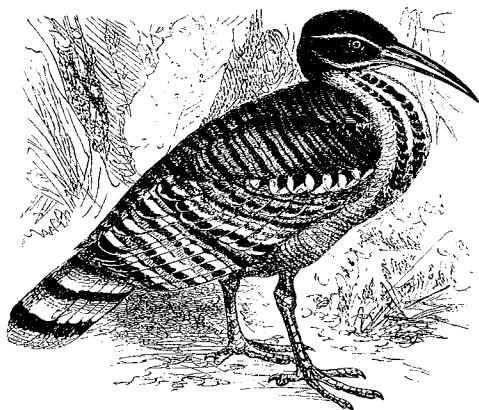
SHOREBIRDS: Red Phalarope, Wandering Tattler, Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird

TERNs & GULLS: Arctic Tern (s), Sabine's Gull (s), Black-legged Kittiwake

ALCIDS: Common Murre (s), Pigeon Guillemot (s), Xantus Murrelet, Cassin's Auklet, Rhinoceros Auklet

RARITIES: South Polar Skua, Puffin (s), Black-footed Albatross, Buller's Shearwater (w), Fork-tailed Petrel (w)

MAMMALS: Pacific Pilot Whale, Gray Whale, Dahl Porpoise, Risso's Dolphin, Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin, Pacific Common Dolphin



Pelagic Trips

Continued

SUMMER (s) - FALL (f) (#1 and #2):

SHEARWATERS: Sooty, Pink-footed, Black-vented (f), Northern Fulmar,

JAEGERS: Pomarine, Parasitic (f)

STORM PETRELS: Black (f), Least (f), Leach's

SHOREBIRDS: Black Oystercatcher, Phalarope, Surfbird (f), Wandering Tattler (f)

TERNS & GULLS: Royal (f), Arctic (f), Elegant Terns, Sabine's Gull (f)

ALCIDS: Pigeon Guillemot (s), Common Murre (f), Craveri's Murrelet (f), Xantus Murrelet (s), Cassin's Auklet

RARITIES: Flesh-footed Shearwater (f), Buller's Shearwater (f), Long-tailed Jaeger (f), Ashy-storm Petrel (f), Red-billed Tropicbird, South Polar Skua

MAMMALS: Elephant Seal, Harbor Seal, Finback Whale, Blue Whale, Orca, Risso's Dolphin, Pacific Common Dolphin

Bird Alerts Online

Computerized bird chasers will be happy to know that we have bird alerts from around the country on a local computer system.

Sid Johnson has begun gathering bird reports from computer networks and is posting them on a computer bulletin board, QUAKE BBS, operated in Sylmar. Sid has posted about 60 reports in just a few weeks. For active listers, especially those who are willing to travel, this could be one of the best, most current listings available. This bulletin board is a new project, still in its formative stages. You birders are more than welcome to use it free.

You need a computer, a modem and modem software to use this system. The telephone number for the host computer is (818) 362-6092. It seems to be operating with the most common parameters: full duplex, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no parity. The bird reports are on bulletin board 3.

O'PINIONS

Continued from page 5

of bats, so that only approximately 50 will amass, and a roost of 1000 would become airborne in 1000/50, or 20 puffs? Or are these puffs I describe merely extended-family units, drawn together by tradition?

To answer these questions, I would have to get out of my chair and disrupt my pleasant routine of benign observation. I would have to get scraped and dirty banding bats. Perhaps one of you already has the answers and could let me know. 🐉

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 (four weeks for pelagics) 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.

If you desire to carpool to an event, contact Audubon House for further info.

WESTERN TANAGER

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Annual membership in both societies is \$35 per year, \$21 for seniors, and presently \$20 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

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 11, 1990. Topic to be announced in the next *Tanager*.

* * *

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).

Saturday, June 30 - Big Bear Lake and Vicinity. Co-leaders Louis Tucker and Nick Freeman will meet interested parties outside Coldbrook Campground in Big Bear at 8:00 a.m. Take Hwy 18 or 38 to Big Bear Lake, then proceed about halfway along the south side of the lake on Hwy 18; turn south on Tulip Rd. The campground will be on the south side as the road curves. Target birds with good probability include Williamson's Sapsuckers, Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds, Lincoln's and Brewer's Sparrows, Cassin's and Purple Finches and White-headed Woodpeckers. It should be warm and there may be bugs, so come prepared. We plan to eat a picnic lunch along the way.

Sunday, July 1 - Topanga State Park. Leader Gerry Haigh will guide participants through this beautiful nearby area. The group will look at resident birds in the sycamores, grasslands, scrub oak and chaparral. This is an ideal trip for a beginning birder or for someone new in the area. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., take a very sharp turn east (left if heading south from the San Fernando Valley) uphill onto Entrada Dr. (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].

Sunday, July 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 led by a member of Santa Monica Audubon Society. [LA, p.114, B-5].

Sunday, July 28 - Franklin Canyon. This morning walk will be led by a member of the Franklin Canyon Bird Club which is made up of docents for the William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom, a nonprofit educational organization supported by the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area. Franklin Canyon is located between Sherman Oaks and Beverly Hills—remarkably close for many LAAS members. Over 100 species have been documented in the chap-

arral, lakeside and oak/pine woodland habitats of the canyon. We should see a typical assortment of passerines, hummers, woodpeckers and other expected birds of chaparral and lower mountain elevations, with Sora and Virginia Rails as added possibilities. Meet at the Sooky Goldman Nature Center parking lot at 7:30 a.m. From Sunset Blvd. in Beverly Hills, take Beverly Dr. north to Coldwater Canyon Dr., then make a 90-degree left turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr. for the remaining 1/2 mile to the Nature Center. From the 101 Fwy in the Valley, take Coldwater south into the hills, make a 90-degree right turn onto Franklin Canyon Dr., and continue to the Nature Center. To get to the Nature Center lot, you will pass through a gate designating the William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom. [LA, p.22, B-6].

Sunday, August 5 - Topanga State Park. Leader Gerry Haigh. Meet at 8:00 a.m. See July 1 for details.

Saturday, August 18 - Mt. Piños Vicinity. Shirley Rubin will lead this year's montane birding trip to the Mt. Piños area looking for, among other things, White-headed Woodpeckers, Mountain Bluebirds, Clark's Nutcrackers (unhappily, no condors). Bring a knapsack lunch, water, windbreaker, sunscreen and sturdy shoes. Be prepared for heat, cold or wind. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the "Y" formed by the junction of Cuddy Valley Rd. and Mil Potrero Hwy. Take Hwy 5 north just past Tejon Pass to the Frazier Park offramp, turn left and follow Frazier Mountain Park Rd. for 7.5 miles bearing right onto Cuddy Valley Rd. for 5.4 miles to the "Y," and park in the clearing. Rain cancels.

Saturday, August 18 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Join David White on this regular morning walk as he welcomes migrant and wintering birds still decked out in their summer finery. 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 Drive exits, west of Fwy 605. [LA, p.47, D-5]

Sunday, August 19 - Bolsa Chica. Marge Parnias will lead this morning bird walk at one of the Basin's better known birding locations. Likely birds include "peeps," dowitchers, yellow-legs, phalaropes and other shorebirds as well as possibilities for skimmers and a number of tern species. Brush up on your shorebirds before Jon Dunn's seminar (see below, a don't miss!). Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the Bolsa Chica estuary parking lot on the east side of PCH. Take the 405 Fwy south past the 605 and 22 Fwys to Goldenwest St. Take this south until it deadends into PCH and turn right. As you drive between the lagoon and the ocean, don't miss the small parking lot for the Bolsa Chica estuary on your right. Turn in here and park. A large turnout may require some paid parking across the street at the beach. Bring water and scopes. [OC, p.25, D-2]

Friday & Sunday, August 24 & 26 - Shorebird Seminar. Don't miss this in-depth discourse by Jon Dunn, senior consultant of the *National*

Geographic Field Guide and co-author of the locally definitive *Birds of Southern California*. Detailed treatment will be given to topics including migration patterns, species I.D., molts and plumages—making considerable use of Jon's fine slide collection. Excellent coverage of Alaskan rarities as well. Sunday morning will be a field trip at a fairly nearby locale (possibly McGrath). Details will be announced at the 7:30 p.m. lecture, depending on scouting reports. For lecture location, reserve with SASE per field trip policy. Fee: \$19 for lecture and field trip, \$8 for lecture only. Field trip limited to 25. [LA, p.34, A-4]

Sunday, August 26 - Malibu Lagoon. Leader SMAS member. Meet at 8:30 a.m. See July 22 for details. 🐦

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