



WESTERN TANAGER

The Los Angeles Chapter of
The National Audubon Society

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BIRDQUEST '89: THAILAND

By James F. Clements

The November segment of BIRDQUEST '89 was spent in Thailand, one of the most exciting birding localities in Southeast Asia. Sandwiched between the Sino-Himalayan avifauna to the north and the tropical Malaysian birds to the south, Thailand boasts one of the largest concentrations of birds in the Orient.

Unfortunately, this sandwich effect cost us dearly...Despite our recording over 300 species, the overlap with my previous trips to India and China this year was extensive, with our three week trip adding only 118 species to the BIRDQUEST '89 total.

Our activity centered in three major areas--Khao Yai, Chiang Mai and Hhao Nang Rum.

Khao Yai, situated only two hours from Bangkok, is one of the most easily accessible birding localities in Thailand. Khao Yai's 318 recorded species are primarily submontane species, and it is host to many Palaearctic migrant and wintering birds. We recorded a total of 34 Sylvid warblers alone...including 14 members of the genus Phylloscopus!

Probably the most exciting birding in Thailand is found in the northern hill states bordering Burma. My expert "witness" for this segment of BIRDQUEST '89 was Phil Round, one of the most dedicated conservationists in Southeast Asia. Phil was primarily responsible for the rediscovery of Gurney's

Pitta in 1986, a notorious skulker considered extinct for almost 40 years. When not involved in his conservation duties with the International Council for Bird Preservation, Phil leads an occasional private tour and serves as a tour leader for Tucson-based WINGS, INC.

Phil had arranged for us to stay at a royal forest reserve some 120 kilometers northwest of Chiang Mai. Royal Angkhang Reserve sits at 1450 meters elevation, and was designed as a pilot project to try to

encourage the nomadic hill people to substitute a cash crop for their traditional opium. These include mainly fruits (apricots, peaches, pears, lichees), vegetables, and even potatoes.

This has caused a serious ecological problem, since the traditional nomadic life-style and low population density formerly gave the hillsides a chance to recover.

continued on page 2 at "Thailand"



The author and a guide during the New Guinea segment of his trip

THAILAND

continued from page 1

Now the burgeoning population and permanent settlement are causing increasing degradation of the habitat, and I was alarmed at the evident increase in erosion since my 1976 visit to the northern hill tribes.

The king spends considerable time here on this pet project, but I don't think it is going to prove successful despite the royal interest. For one thing, it is a brutal five hours by horrible roads to Chiang Mai to deliver any produce, and most Thais seem quite content with their daily diet of rice and chicken that come from the lowlands.

In addition, Phil and I hiked up to the 2,000 meter level one day and found opium fields tucked away in every nook and cranny of the hillsides. It will be hard to break 200 years of raising such an easily transportable cash crop...one that the hill people have based their lives on since British rule.

Phil and I were especially pleased to record the first Thailand record for the Brambling, a Palearctic finch way out of its normal range. I was thrilled to find a life bird for Phil (Nepal Cutia), who has by far the largest Thai list of birds, and this was countered by Phil showing me one of my most wanted birds, a pair of Giant Nuthatches prospecting for a nesting site.

Our next stop was Doi Inthanon, the most famous national park in Thailand. It boasts the largest avifauna in Thailand with 383 recorded species. This granite massif located 55 kilometers southwest of Chiang Mai rises to an elevation of 2565 meters, the highest point in Thailand.

Doi Inthanon provides one of the best examples of altitudinal zonation in northern Thailand. The summit slopes are bathed in a rich carpet of evergreens, mosses and ferns, which replace the lower elevation dry dipterocarp forests.

Floral variation provides unique habitats for many birds, and only near the summit of Doi Inthanon can several species

of birds peculiar to Thailand be found (Ashy-throated Warbler and an endemic race of the Green-tailed Sunbird).

To me, however, Doi Inthanon was "Babbler Heaven." Our last day at this prolific spot produced a mind-boggling 16 species of babblers...giving us a total count of 21 babblers during our four day sojourn here.

Our final birding in Thailand was to a little-known forest Phil selected in the western province of Uthai Thani, a seven hour drive from Bangkok. Our destination was Khao Nang Rum Research Station, best known in ornithological circles for its 17 species of woodpeckers.

Poaching is rampant in this remote reserve, and Phil explained that just in the

past few years alone, four park guards have lost their lives trying to protect the wildlife of the area (tigers, leopards, gibbons, monkeys and elephants). Phil summed it up poignantly as we passed two isolated crosses on a curve in the deep forest.

"Underpaid and often poorly equipped, the officials and staff are the custodians of Thailand's remaining wild places. Society has charged them with protecting forests and wildlife, but has neglected to supply them with the means and mandate to carry out this task effectively.

"Facing armed poachers and illegal loggers, they do a difficult and sometimes dangerous job with little prospect of reward or recognition."

continued on page 10 at "Thailand"

Natural Areas Association Symposium

This year the Natural Areas Association is presenting its 17th annual conference in conjunction with the Yosemite National Park Centennial celebration. The Association invites new members and encourages participation in the long-term protection and stewardship of natural areas throughout the United States.

Natural area managers, scientists, journalists, environmentalists, business and government representatives, students and interested members of the general public are invited to participate in this exciting symposium. Join us as we explore the fields of:

Natural areas protection and management

Natural and cultural resources research & management

Landscape preservation

Natural areas interpretation and education

Art and literature in natural areas

Biological diversity conservation

Genetic conservation and other global issues

Call the Audubon office for more information.

BIRDING ABOVE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

In this issue, we conclude Dorothy Dimsdale's tale of her trek in the North. The first part can be found in last month's Western Tanager.

This night we slept so comfortably and deeply, buried in our sleeping bags, that we didn't feel our tent collapse on us - the ice was too brittle to hold the pegs. We didn't notice till we awoke and found the tent crumpled on our heads.

After breakfast we walked across the ice to climb the talus and mud hillside onto the mushy tundra, across to a looming cliff, where we understood the Gyrfalcon to be. It would be the light morph - different from those on the west coast. Two Wheatears flew by. Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs perched on the rocks, but no Gyrfalcon. We waited, peering up at the nest area, as the heavy, rolling mist pretty much obscured our view; then the mist parted for a few moments, and we scanned frantically every nook and cranny, but our only miss of the trip was to be this bird: we didn't see the Gyrfalcon.

Back at Pond Inlet after two days and nights without washing, we enjoyed a shower. Very refreshing, but we all agreed we'd rather be sleeping out of doors in our tents than in a heated hotel.

The next morning we were on the sleds again, for the ride across the sea to Blyot Island where we camped on the tundra. From the island we saw two dog sleds pass across the ice - about 14 dogs in each team. I understand they use any number from 8 to 16 - very romantic looking, and the dogs are beautiful. Unfortunately, the dogs love to roll in seal offal when it's available, so their smell is, to say the least, powerful, and proximity is not a good idea.

There were several ponds near the camp in a marshy area, and dozens of Snow Geese were spread over the tundra. Oldsquaws, sounding like kazoos, called to one another. Lesser Golden-Plovers and White-rumped Sandpipers were everywhere as were Glaucous Gulls and Long-tailed Jaegers. The Common Raven, too, had been seen in all habitats, and more Red

Phalaropes tootled along in the ponds. Running about on the mud was what seemed like a very familiar bird. Then the call went up, "Common Ringed Plover!" On close scrutiny it is different from the Semipalmented Plover, but close scrutiny is what it takes to be sure.



We took off up the hillside and walked for maybe 1/2 mile when we spotted a Rock Ptarmigan in winter white plumage way up ahead of us. We approached slowly till we were 50, 20, 10 feet from the bird! It sat, then stood stretching its feathered legs and feet and eyeing us seemingly with some distrust. The black line through the eye then the scarlet eyebrow against the stark white of the bird were truly beautiful. Close up we noted that it had a number of dark feathers on its head - the start of alternate plumage - and, of course, when it fanned its tail, the black pattern was very elegant. Those with cameras had a field day, and our bird posed till finally we got too close, and it took off with a series of loud cackles.

Back at camp later, we wandered over to the marshy area, and there, to our delight, was a Purple Sandpiper. We all had good looks at this small peep with the longish bill. Then a Stilt Sandpiper appeared - a new bird for the area, which gave us even more momentum to wander further over the tundra.

Millie and I were with a superb group of birders, though in this environment it would be hard to be anything but "up". As we were always covered with clothing, we knew each other only by our various colored garments. There was one delightful woman called Betsy, but unless she was bundled up in her red anorak and white head gear, I'd never recognize her again.

One of our group returned to camp with a dead lemming. We had seen them scampering away under the ice on the tundra. This one was still in its winter white coat. It was a bit soggy when found, but rather lovely when dried out. Another of our group, had found a Snow Goose nest containing four eggs, so there was more picture taking. Then a Snowy Owl was found by two birders who had been off on their own. They had a good look then watched it flying off towards a glacier.

The following morning, we all went to look for the Snowy Owl and, luckily, we found him -- beautiful! All white and standing on the tundra like a big blob of snow. He blinked his great yellow eyes lazily, then after about 15 minutes he took off -- again in the direction of the glacier.

On we walked, over yet another hill or two, and saw an arctic hare. How large they are! The size of a beagle - but much more cuddly-looking. Long ears and long legs and at this time of year in transition from winter white to dark gray/brown coloring.

continued on page 10 at "Arctic"

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



*This is a reprint from the Western Tanager of February 1980. (Historical notes: M*A*S*H is no longer with us except in re-runs. Happily, the Little League fields are no longer in Malibu Lagoon. At the moment, the condor is gone but wait till next year.)*

What is recreation? Golf. Bowling. A seat on the 50-yard line. Blackjack at Vegas. Cycling. Climbing the North Face. Chess. Shuffleboard. Racquet ball. M*A*S*H. Michener. Mozart. Make your own list. "Refreshment of the strength and spirits after toil; diversion; play;" says the dictionary. We *recreate* ourselves. In a world of toil and tension we try to move toward a balance, toward sanity.

Let's confine ourselves today to outdoor recreation. The amiable pastime

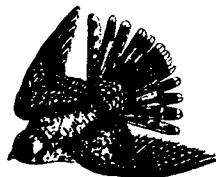
of birding takes us out of the house and into the backyard, the city park, the hills, the seashore, the desert, the wilderness. Birding can be a multiple experience. What kind of flowers do hummingbirds prefer? What kind of trees do sapsuckers fancy? What kind of butterfly just flew by? How do you tell the person you're with which shrub the Blackburnian flew into? The toyon, the sumac? If you don't know and point vaguely, the bird may never be found again. Even on an unsuccessful hunt for a rare bird we've been out in the fresh air and sunshine. We may have had a pleasant walk or discovered a birding habitat new to us. Sure, this may be rationalizing, but we've still managed to break away from humdrum routine. We've had diversion, recreation.

Others share the outdoors with birders: hunters, fishermen, motorcyclists, four-wheel-drive enthusiasts, dune-buggy operators, model-airplane buffs, soccer players. With the green and brown world of

open space dwindling before our very eyes, every acre is up for grabs. Every new golf course in the suburbs subtracts from the limited store of open fields. Manicured fairways replace irregular patches of weeds and flowers that support seedeaters, mice and raptors. The Little League fields at Malibu Lagoon were built after clearing away scarce *Salicornia* marshland. The hills near Gorman are scarred by motorcycles gouging furrows into them. The creation of Marina del Rey provided hundreds of slips for recreational boats and destroyed one of the most magnificent wetlands on the Pacific coast. Our great deserts are plagued by the devastation of off-road vehicles that crush vegetation, trample endangered tortoises and leave tracks in the desert pavement that will not disappear for a hundred years. These--and-many more--are "consumptive" recreation. They are legitimate forms of recreation, but they *consume* the land, the resources, the environment. The Marina marshes will never

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.

September is the month vagrant chasing starts in earnest. Eager birders will fan out through the desert oases, some even braving the heat of Furnace Creek, anywhere a trickle of water might hold a lost migrant for a few days. Perhaps the best spots, however, are closer at hand along our coast. Places like Carpenteria Creek, McGrath State Park, the Oxnard plain, Pt. Mugu State Park, Zuma Creek, Huntington Beach Central Park, and Pt. Loma are some of the places that have produced quality Fall birding in the past. For various reasons

last year's hot spot might not produce this year - so it is always a good idea to check different locations. You may find the new "vagrant trap" for 1990. Again a reminder to send in details of vagrants or of commoner birds doing strange things in strange places to Guy McCaskie, Southern California Regional Editor, AMERICAN BIRDS, 954 Grove Street, Imperial Beach, CA 92032. L.A. County sightings only may go to Kimball Garrett, Section of Ornithology, LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007. Reports that merit review by the California Bird Records Committee will be forwarded to them.

The big excitement in July took place at the Salton Sea. A trip to the Salton Sea on 12 July by Bruce Broadbooks, Jon Dunn, and Arnold Small produced two Blue-footed Boobies, two Brown Boobies and a Pomarine Jaeger. Birders from all over the country came to see the Boobies which

reached a high of three Blue-footed and four Brown on July 22. A good supply of Laughing Gulls, Yellow-footed Gulls, Gull-billed Terns, Wood Storks and Fulvous Whistling Ducks, and a few Magnificent Frigatebirds as well as the bizarre sight of a flock of six Greater and Lesser Flamingos made this an interesting trip. And Dan of Dan's Place Bait Shop at Red Hill Marina took boatloads of birders out for close-up camera lens filling looks at these birds. To check up on what's around Red Hill and to reserve a place on his boat call Dan at (619) 348-7247.

Reports from Southern California were the fewest in many months. Perhaps the drought conditions and the warm ocean water have affected the birds.

Unusual at an inland location in our part of the country at this time of year were two Common Loons on Big Bear Lake on 18 July (Howard King). Blue-footed and Brown Boobies were reported at



come back; the desert may never recover in our lifetime. The trigger-happy novice hunter may pop off an eagle or a condor at the close of a deer-less day.

The hiker, the bicycle rider, the botanist, the mountain climber, and the birder are *non-consumptive* sportsmen. For the most part they adhere to the hoary motto of the National Park Service: "Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints." Does this make us more virtuous? Yes and no. On the one hand, the bicycle rider burns no gasoline, makes no noise, and would have the devil of a time climbing a dirt hill in Gorman. Most mountain climbers are not interested in hunting big-horn sheep. And birders tend to be consumptive only in their fantasies--when confronted by a few hundred starlings. On the other hand, how many of us have chosen an avocation deliberately because it did not use up the environment? We became non-consumers, for the most part, because

we liked to bird, or climb mountains, or identify flowers. We can claim no medals for enjoying ourselves. We're *inadvertently* on the side of the Good and the Blameless. Some of our competitors for natural areas do not consider us blameless. We are accused of depriving them of their rightful share of the good stuff; we want to "lock up" the wild areas in our selfish, sentimental way. The ORV fans say they are taxpayers and should be able to enjoy the desert as well as others: the desert is huge and can take a little punishment. Besides, they're careful. If we oppose more boat slips in the Ballona wetlands, this means we care more for wildlife than our fellowman. In the Mono Lake brouhaha we are told we are more concerned about brine shrimp and seagulls (sic) than people. We deny this vigorously. We insist that all people are poorer when open space, and the wild creatures it harbors, are diminished.

Unfortunately, we non-consumers

tend to be quiet, undemonstrative folk. We don't fire hunting rifles, we don't scream at the Rose Bowl (at least on our birding days), we don't drive our Yamahas offroad from Barstow to Vegas. There can be a hundred birders at Big Sycamore or Devereux Slough one morning and they'll hardly be noticed. But a hundred Little League players and their supporters can make a big blast. And, unfortunately, the recreational consumers tend to be highly organized and vocal. The squeaky wheel gets the most oil. And bureaucrats and politicians are peculiarly attuned to squeaks. When the pie is cut, the quiet ones may well be left with just a few crumbs.

Somehow, we must let the world know that we're here, that we have a constituency, and that we have rights. In the next environmental crisis (will we ever run out of them?) let us raise our voices a few decibels. We will not only be squeaking for ourselves, but for the birds.



the Salton Sea. See above. 45 White Pelicans were at Buena Vista Lagoon on 6 July. Numbers of this bird seem to be down at the Salton Sea.

Magnificent Frigatebird reports include one at the Salton Sea on 16 July (Anne Kale), two at the Sea on 22 July (many observers), two at Redondo Beach on 23 July (Arthur Howe), and one at Puddingstone Reservoir on 1 August (Lloyd Koff and Ed Harrison). Most of these birds were white headed-immatures.

Twelve White-faced Ibis were seen near Port Hueneme on 22 July (Dick Branton) and a Rufous-necked Stint was at the Santa Maria River Mouth in Santa Barbara County on 15 July (Craig Smith).

A Pomarine Jaeger was at Salton City on 12 July (see above) and a Pigeon Guillemot, slightly oiled was found on a pond at Downy Wilderness Park on 24 July (Bob Hansen of Carpenteria).

A flock of Pinyon Jays was at its traditional Southern California location at Big Bear City on 29 July (Terry Graham) and a female Great-tailed Grackle was reported from Buena Vista Lagoon on 6 July (Don Galli).

Some of us have been fortunate enough to have birded western Amazonia and the bordering Andes. Most of the recent knowledge of this area that enables us to find our way through this most diverse avifauna in the world is based on research started by John O'Neil of LSU. John and his researchers and graduate students, many of whom are friends of this Society, have combed these areas of Peru and Bolivia discovering an amazing number of previously undescribed species in a world where not too recently it was thought that there were no new species left undiscovered. In the new book, PARROT WITHOUT A NAME, the author, Robert Stapp, accompanies one of these expeditions. Whether you have birded these magnificent forests or not, I think you

will find this book a rewarding read.

Good birding!

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

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

*OR
call Jean Brandt at
(818) 788-5188*

SEPTEMBER 1990 TANGER FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

Before setting out for any field trip, call the Audubon bird tape, (213) 874-1318, for special instructions or possible emergency cancellations that may have occurred by the Thursday before the trip.

Sunday, September 2 - Topanga State Park. Leader **Gerry Haigh** will be guiding participants through this beautiful and nearby area. The group will be observing migrant and 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 7:00 a.m. (Sept. only) in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. From Topanga Canyon heading SW from the Valley, take a very sharp turn east uphill on Entrada Dr. (7 miles So. of Ventura Blvd., 1 mile No. of Topanga Vil-

lage.). Follow the signs to the state park, and meet in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. \$3 parking fee. (L.A., p. 109, D-4).

Sunday, September 9 - Lancaster Shorebirds. Leader **Kimball Garrett**. This may be a good time of migration to observe juvenal plumages in some of the shorebirds. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the entrance to the Lancaster Sewage Ponds. To get there, take Hwy. 14 north thru Palmdale to Avenue D, turn right onto Avenue D heading east, and make a quick left into the sewage treatment facility. Other stops will depend on scouting reports and accessibility. We will probably bird until around 1:00 p.m., so bring a lunch if you like. Do bring lots of liquids, as it may be very hot. Spotting scopes helpful.

Sunday, September 16 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Join **David White** on this regular morning walk as he offers his hospitality to the migrant birds passing through. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave. in south El Monte, off Fwy. 60 between Santa Anita and Peck Drive exits, west of Fwy. 605. (L.A., p. 47, D-5).

Sunday, September 23 - Mojave Vicinity. Come join gull aficionado **Larry Allen** as he demonstrates his birding flexibility among the tweety-birds migrating through the oases around Mojave. We will bird the California City golf course for 1 hour (in case you're late), eat a picnic lunch when the mood strikes us, and bird surrounding areas 'til

continued on page 8

ROGER TORY PETERSON INSTITUTE

"Dedicated to Nature in Education"

NATURE CENTER PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

Jeffrey B. Froke, formerly with National Audubon Society's Sanctuary Department, is now President of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to putting nature study back in American education. RTPI focuses on bringing people closer to nature in order to foster a greater passion and concern for wild places and wild things.

NAS and nationwide chapter leaders have made significant contributions to conferences sponsored by the Peterson Institute. The Institute recently brought together lead-

ing nature center directors to participate in its first *Round Table on American Nature Centers*, an intensive but informal gathering which resulted in published recommendations and guidelines for professionals and volunteers in the field. The confab addressed leadership issues facing nature center directors nationally--issues of funding, educational programming and architectural design.

To receive a complimentary copy of the report, *American Nature Centers: Leadership for the Nineties*, and additional information, about RTPI, contact:

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O'PINION

I can contain myself no longer, but must wade into the fray of birds' names, an area inchoate and ripe for regimentation. This is an arena beyond the capabilities of mere ornithologists, no matter the ease with which they can spew Linnaean trinomials nor with what dexterity identify the subtlest of subspecies midair -- this is the realm of the pedant, and hence my milieu!

In the field, under the sun, one can hear the strangest of calls. BEE-wick's Wrens, Parasitic JA Y-gers and Common MYURRYs abound among the unwashed. Experienced birders have learned the traditional pronunciations from their seniors and are saved the more common embarrassments; but some of the longest in tooth still hesitate in calling a Parula Warbler or a Smooth-billed Ani lest they be reprimanded.

Well, enough of that, I say. Let us dispose once and for all with the naming of the beasts.

First, there are the names that are definitively pronounced but hotly contested. Many of these are human's names, and the rule is that these should be said as the owners of the names said them. For instance, the Lutheran minister of Charleston and in-law of Audubon has many descendants in that city, who still adamantly call themselves aching-BACKmans, though they are no longer birdwatchers and hence have no vested interest in this squabble. Well, who is to gainsay their tradition? On the other hand, there are lengths to which I will not go, and any ignoramus who will deny his heritage to the extent of calling himself VOX-like-box when he is clearly spelled a sonorously franco-phone VAUX-like-oiseaux-- and has shown considerable disrespect to his forebears by doing so-- should be repudiated, not promulgated.

Then there is the Latinist's (thankfully a dying breed, that has already too long out-lived the Empire) area of expertise, which can in a supremely supercilious manner wither you with their pomar-EYE-nes and peregr-EYE-nes, PIE-leateds and ASSIPiters. To them I urge the same careful consideration to other tongues: Let me hear Pidgin GWEE-MOE, Cordi-YERRRRan Flycatcher, Chee-HWA-HWA

Raven and Reev-OWE-li's Hummer.

A third major grouping is of those names whose pronunciations are susceptible to change with familiarity. In English this is tracked by the advance of the stress toward the front of the word, and the smudging of subsequent vowels into vague schwas (the ubiquitous inverted 'e's of your pronouncing dictionary). This trend reveals an easy contempt for those who still must laboriously maneuver each syllable around their palates. Thus, many a grizzled spotter in faded khaki will speak of Crested CRAcrus or Common MERGunzers or an accidental GARGunny. HURman's Gull, BENdur's Thrasher and SABBun's Gull reflect this same phenomenon, which is also called the British Affect.

My own forte is not a question of pronunciation-- far too slippery a subject to beguile me-- but one of usage, wherein I can underlay the discussion with a subtext of knowledge and experience merely by using the names by which I originally learned the birds. By pointing out Marsh Hawks and Butcherbirds, Sparrow and Duck and Pigeon Hawks, Mudhens and Shitepokes, not only do I indicate the length of my intimate acquaintance with these species, but avoid the necessity-- and smug competition-- of oneupmanship in remembering to use American Pitpit and Boreal Pewee, soon no doubt to be something else again. Yes, there is the ever-present danger that I may mislead the odd foreign ornithologist or university research fellow with my next monograph, but it is a risk I will assume.

Finally, there is a group of names which nobody knows how to pronounce and for which no one can produce an authority more authoritative than anyone else's authority. These birds include the anis and Parula above, as well as the Lazuli Bunting, Gyrfalcon and Goshawk, Rose-throated Becard, and all the Empidonax flycatchers-- even the lowly towhee is announced differently on Peterson East and Peterson West recordings. This is perhaps the largest grouping of names under discussion and these can all be pronounced any way you like. So just have boldly at it; otherwise, you'll continue to miss making the first call at the I.D. workshop.

FIELD LIST OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY BIRDS: AN UPDATE

By Kimball L. Garrett and Jon L. Dunn

Late last year the Los Angeles Audubon Society published an updated checklist of the birds of Los Angeles County. Periodically we will update this list with short notes in the Western Tanager. This is the first such installment.

1. Add symbol (B) for Western Gull. One pair nested on a piling in Long Beach Harbor during summer 1990, and it is likely that future nesting attempts will occur (this species also nested in coastal Orange County this year).
2. Change status symbol of Broad-billed Hummingbird from * to ** (this species is on the California Bird Records Committee review list).
3. Remove the symbol * from Olive-sided Flycatcher and replace it with B. This species is a fairly common breeding species and migrant in the county and was inadvertently given the rarity symbol on the checklist.

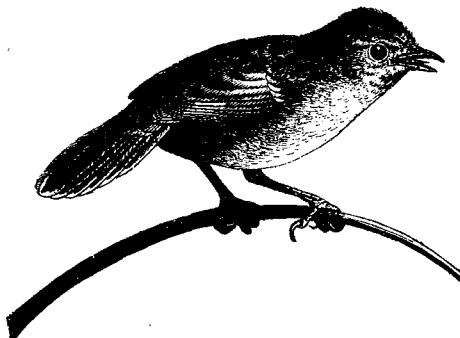
FIELD TRIPS

continued from page 6

we drop. Bring water for you and your car. Come prepared for a possibly very hot, dusty, fun day. Take Hwy. 14 out past Mojave, continue north on Hwy. 14 about 10 miles to the clearly marked California City Blvd., turn right and proceed into the town past the shopping center for about a mile, and turn left at the Central Park sign. The first right turn will take you right into the parking lot. We will meet in the lot at 6:30 a.m., so you may wish to consider local camping and motelling options. About 2 hours driving time from L.A.

Sunday, September 23 - Malibu Lagoon. Fourth Sunday of each month. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the lagoon parking lot. The lot is on the ocean side of PCH, just west of the lagoon bridge, but you can turn right into town for street parking. The lagoon has a daily fee. This walk is under the leadership of a member of Santa Monica Audubon Society. (L.A., p. 114, B-5).

Sunday, September 30 - Upper Bee Canyon. Leader **Dustin Alcala.** 6 mile strenuous walk through real wilderness. Impressive, rugged oak woodland habitat with fair chance to see Purple Finch, Varied Thrush, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Band-tailed Pigeon, Nuttall's and Lewis' Woodpecker, deer and other mammals. Golden Eagle hopeful. Dustin is also familiar with the native plants and trees in the area. Not for lightweights,



but not a forced march. Layered clothing, hat, long sleeves and durable lug-soled footwear suggested. Pack light, bring lunch and water. Take 405 Fwy. north to 118 Fwy. west, take the Balboa Blvd. offramp north, turn left on Jolette Ave. and right onto Meadowlark Ave. Park at the side of the street where Meadowlark dead-ends into Van Gogh St. Reserve with Audubon House for meeting time, and Dustin's phone # for further details. (L.A., p. 1, E-3).

Sunday, September 30 - Oxnard Plains. **Fred Heath** will be exploring the wind-breaks and thickets that criss-cross the agricultural plains around Oxnard. Usually excellent for warbler, vireos, emu and other migrants. Possible shorebirds if time allows. From Hwy. 101, take Las Posas Rd. south, turn right on Pleasant Valley Road,

and left on Laguna Road. From Hwy. 1, take Pleasant Valley Road inland to Laguna Road and turn right. Meet at the side of Laguna Road across from the house at 8:00 a.m. Bring a picnic lunch and bird into the afternoon.

Monday, October 1 - Malibu to McGrath. First Monday in October for nineteen years running! **Ed Navojosky** will be leading interested parties up the coast from Malibu Lagoon to McGrath estuary, stopping along the way to bird and picnic at Big Sycamore Canyon and elsewhere. This is an excellent time of year to see resident, migrant and wintering bird species together (with decent vagrant possibilities). Bail out early if a full-day affair doesn't suit you. Meet at 8:00 a.m. (note time change) in the shopping center adjacent to the Malibu Lagoon bridge. Take PCH north over the bridge, turn right, and right again into the shopping center across from the lagoon, and meet clear back in the northeast corner of the lot. Bring a lunch. (L.A., p. 114, B-5).

Saturday, October 6 - Santa Cruz Island. **Irwin Woldman** leader. Upon reaching the island at 10:00, the guides will lead a 1/8 mile walk to the ranch house and eucalyptus stands. After lunch, there will be two-mile moderate hikes to the overlook or to the grasslands and ironwood canyons for those interested. On the islands, the endemic ssp. of Scrub Jay should be seen, as well as island-hopping migrants. Irwin also hopes to document a "Farallon effect" of eastern migrant overshoots in our own backyard. Many birds may also be seen en route, but this is not a pelagic birding trip, as the boat will take us quickly and directly to the island. Reserve directly with Island Packers in Ventura (805) 642-1393. If you plan to go as a birder, please inform Audubon House also. L.A.A.S. has spaces reserved until Sept. 21. Reserve later at own risk. Leave from Ventura Boat Landing at 8:00 a.m. to Scorpion Ranch, return 6:00 p.m. Bring food, hot grills provided. Cost \$40.

Sunday, October 7 - Topanga State Park. Leader **Gerry Haigh.** Meet at the traditional 8:00 a.m. time. See Sept. 2 write-up for details.

Friday, October 12 - Chatsworth Park

Frustration in the Forest

by Glenn Cunningham

*A bird is sighted on a bough,
But I'll be darned if I see how.
"Its legs are black", someone has said.
"Its eye ring white. Its bill is red."
Soon on its species all agree,
While I'm still looking for the tree!*

South. Join leader **Allan Keller** for a morning of late migration birding. We will seek warblers, orioles, grosbeaks and others in this chaparral/oak woodland habitat. From Topanga Cyn. Blvd., go west on Devonshire and continue into the parking lot by the Rec. Center. Meet at 8:00 a.m. (L.A., p. 6, B-3).

Sunday, October 14 - San Diego Area. Ironically, as many trips as **Nick Freeman** has arranged and overseen, this is his first solo billing as leader. Perhaps he feels that the reputation of Pt. Loma as a fall migrant trap is well deserved; some odd birds have been known to pop up here during late migration. Could be he hopes to turn up an interesting heron in the extensive marshes. Maybe he could use some help! Take the San Diego Fwy. (Interstate 5) about three miles past Route 52 to the Claremont Drive offramp and head west into the small lot adjacent to the Mission Bay Information Center. Meet here at 8:00 a.m. Bring a lunch.

Sunday, October 20 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Leader David White. Meet at 8:00 a.m. See September 16 write-up for details.



Saturday, October 27 - Bird Photography Seminar. Local photo experts **Herbert Clarke** and **Arnold Small** will conduct this tag-team seminar reviewing the equipment, methods, ethics and aesthetic aspects of nature photography with special emphasis on birds. Slide illustrations on technique will accompany the speakers. Arnold and Herb have both had numerous photos published in books and magazines, and jointly wrote and illustrated *BIRDS OF THE WEST*, now out of print. Herb recently published *INTRODUCTION TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS*, and Arnold is currently working on a book about California birds. A basic understanding of photographic principles is suggested for participants. The seminar will be held in the Multipurpose Room (near the flag pole) of Plummer Park, West Hollywood, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a one-hour lunch break. Light refreshments. Fee \$20. (L.A., p. 34, A-4).

Sunday, October 28 - Malibu Lagoon. Leader SMAS member. Meet at 8:30 a.m. See September 23 write-up for details.

RESERVATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Reservations will be accepted ONLY if ALL the following information is supplied:

- (1) Trip desired,
- (2) Names of people in your party,
- (3) Phone numbers (a) usual and
(b) evening before event, in case of emergency cancellation.
- (4) Separate check (no cash please) to LAAS for exact amount for each trip;
- (5) Self-addressed stamped envelope for confirmation and associated trip information.

Send to Office Manager, Edith Vache, LAAS, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, 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 notified and your fee returned. Your cancellation during that time will bring a refund only if there is a paid replacement.

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

Sunday, November 4 - Topanga State Park. Leader **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 for August and September only. See October 8 write-up for details.

Sunday, November 18 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Leader David White. Meet at 8:00 a.m. See October 20 write-up for details.

Sunday, November 18 - Sepulveda Basin Natural Area. Leader **Dustin Alcala** anticipates seeing fair numbers of raptors, geese and smaller waterfowl, other wintering birds and resident riparian and grassland species. This is an easy walk. Audubon has actively been supporting development of this site as a park. Meet at Woodley Park at 7:00 a.m. To get there, take Burbank Blvd. west, turn right onto Woodley Ave. and continue to the Woodley Park entrance on the right. Meet in the first parking area. (L.A., p. 15, B-6).

**Notations in parentheses after trip listings refer to Thomas Brothers' map coordinates: (County, Page #, Quadrant #).*

THAILAND

continued from page 2

You can imagine how my respect for our lonely park rangers increased at dinner that night!

Our final dinner in Bangkok was marred by a headline in the Bangkok Post: "FOREST RESERVE TO BE TURNED INTO FARMLAND," the caption screamed and continued with the explanation that the government had "ordered the forestry department to lend 60 chain saws to people in the forest reserve for use in preparing land to replace crops devastated by Typhoon Gay."

A more succinct paragraph added that "Many of the victims had previously encroached on the forest reserve in Pa Thiew and had begun farming in a wildlife reserve in Sawee District."

But was this anything new? According to Dr. Boonsong Lekagul, Siam (now Thailand) was almost 80 percent forested at the end of World War II, but by the end of 1985 this forest cover was reduced to 30 percent. This large scale deforestation is a relatively recent phenomenon, which has greatly modified the landscape in just one or two generations.

This latest figure was obtained primarily by satellite imagery and probably grossly overstates the true extent of biologically significant areas of degraded, open-canopy formations, secondary growth and scrub.

But if Thailand has now prohibited exportation of their own meager timber reserves, they have cast their eyes elsewhere. A final news item in the paper caught my attention as our A-300 Airbus lifted off the runway for the long flight back to Los Angeles.

"We are hoping our 1,000 aged busses can be traded with Burma for teak of a similar value," a Thai official declared.

Dejected, I ordered a drink, tallied up the BIRDQUEST '89 total (3,560 species) and wondered what the final month of 1989 held in store for me.

*James F. Clements
LA County Museum of Natural History
900 Exposition Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90032
December 11, 1989*



ARCTIC

continued from page 3

We had become accustomed to seeing Long-tailed Jaegers and also saw a few Pomarine and a possible Parasitic. We found another goose nest with 4 eggs - later reduced to 2 - possibly by an arctic fox. There were lovely wildflowers, my favorite was the Woolly Lousewort (maybe because of its name). There were no bugs except for a few spiders and flies and the odd bee congregated on the flowers. So ended our last day on the ice. The next morning we started our sled ride back to Pond Inlet.

About 3/4 of the way we came upon a young ringed seal. It didn't disappear into its hole at our approach because it had lost its way. It was about 2 months old and recently weaned. Elijah said it would die if left on the ice and would not be accepted if put at another seal hole. So, it was put in Millie's and my sled. After a few efforts to escape it settled down. We longed to pet it, but it has sharp teeth and seemed eager to use them, so we contented ourselves watching it and stealing a quick stroke of its back fur. Later, Bret confirmed our reluctant conclusions. The seal would be dispatched by the Inuits and every part would be utilized. To have left it on the ice would have caused it unnecessary suffering, so we had to face facts and be glad that its end would be quick and painless.

This was our last ride on the sleds, and we said farewell to Elijah and Moses and their 3 companions. We had found the Inuit people to be gentle, industrious and good humored. They work together in close harmony and are charming and helpful at all times. We respected them and their way of life.

Our adventure was over, more or less. We had one more day hiking round Pond Inlet, where we found a Wheatear and a Sabine's Gull flying by, which did us the favor of landing - I'd never seen one on land before. We also saw three of the ten species of butterflies found in the area.

A number of us had swollen lower lips and noses from the wind, but we had an experience to be treasured forever. Doubtless more people will find their way to "our" wilderness and it won't be quite the same, though worth it nevertheless. It should be stressed here that one should be in good health to take this trip. You should be able to walk, climb and jump a little, though tap-dancing is not a requirement. If you have a bad back, the sled rides could be painful. The member of our group who arrived with an arthritic knee had a walker-type cane, but said that she could walk very well. Unfortunately, she was not able to cross the snow or cracks and would have stumbled in the tundra, which was why she spent most of the trip at the hotel in Pond Inlet.

I hope I haven't made it sound hard. It wasn't. It was stimulating and exciting and the scenery was breathtaking. The sense of being alone in a pristine environment was a very emotional one. I realized how perfectly Barry Lopez had captured the area in his book, ARCTIC DREAMS. It brought out all the little feelings one normally keeps hidden, and lines of poetry came to mind - one of our group even murmured some out loud. I knew truly how it felt to be at one with the elements, and saw it enacted by the Inuits.

I went for the birds, the adventure and the fun, and found them all, together with a touch of a breeze from Heaven.

July 1990.
Dorothy Dimsdale

BOOKSTORE UPDATE

by Olga L. Clarke

New titles are coming into the Bookstore almost weekly, making it difficult to keep you aware of the availability of all the wonderful information at your fingertips.

One book entitled **BIRDS TO WATCH, THE ICBP WORLD CHECK-LIST OF THREATENED BIRDS**, by N.J. Collar and P. Andrew, published by the ICBP, Technical Publication No. 8, even surpasses the information of the **RED DATA BOOK** by summarizing the latest data on the world's threatened birds. Listed in taxonomic order, and by common names, ranges are given in addition to habitats where the birds have been found, along with latest known recorded dates last seen. Many of the areas appear to be extremely difficult to get into. However, if you're adventurous, and long for the sight of some really exotic species such as Crescent-faced Antpitta, Kinglet Cotinga, Gurney's Pitta, or perhaps a White-necked

Picathartes, this book is sure to whet your appetite for the rare and unusual. Paperback....Price to be announced.

Another exciting new book to add to your library is **RAINFORESTS, A GUIDE TO RESEARCH AND TOURIST FACILITIES AT SELECTED FOREST SITES IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA**, by James L. Castner, published by Feline Press. Chapters regarding Countries, Sites, and Facilities, Rainforest Information Sources, Hands-On Organizations, and Sources of Funding, make this book invaluable if you're planning to explore on your own, providing you with information on both tourist lodges and biological stations, describing and evaluating select locations in each country. One feature is a partially annotated bibliography of books, journals, and magazines dealing with rainforests. And to quote Archie Carr III, "This book does wonders for the muddy-boots biologist." Paperback....\$24.95.

DOCENT TRAINING CLASSES SCHEDULED

Applications are now being accepted for the October Volunteer Docent Training Class for the Madrona Marsh Nature Preserve.

Deadline to register is September 21, 1990.

Training includes lectures, slides and discussion on plants and ecology of the wetland and associated upland of the preserve and tying this together in its regional perspective.

No teaching or science background is required, just an interest in nature, a desire to learn more about it and a wish to share the natural world with others.

The classes, coordinated by Walt Wright, City of Torrance Naturalist, and the Friends of Madrona Marsh, will meet at the West Annex, Torrance City Hall, 3031 Torrance Boulevard.

Training will be 9:30 a.m. to noon on 5 Tuesdays beginning October 2nd and two Saturdays, October 13th and 27th. Enrollment is limited and on a first-come first-served basis. Please call (213) 618-2998 or (213) 32MARSH to register.

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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.

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Library and Bookstore are open
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pm

(213) 876-0202 - office
(213) 874-1318 - bird tape
(updated Thursdays)
To report bird sightings,
before 9:00pm
(818) 788-5188 - Jean Brandt
(213) 827-0407 - Hank Brodin

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENING MEETINGS

Tuesday, September 11 - Robert Dickson: The Remarkable Willow Grouse. This film documents the research of Geir Gabrielson on the biology, winter survival, spring displays, and breeding techniques of the Norwegian willow grouse. Radio telemetry reveals the wild birds breathing and heart rates while they feed, fly, incubate eggs, or tend their young. This is the second United States' showing of this film, which was recently featured at the A.O.U. Cooper Society Convention. A film by Chris Mylne.

ID Workshop: Jonathon Alderfer

Tuesday, October 9 - Dr. Hartmut Walter: Ecology of Socorro Islands. Dr.

Walter is Associate Professor, Department of Geography, at UCLA. His current research concentrates on the ecology and biogeography of endemic island species.

ID Workshop: Kimball Garrett. Subject to be announced.

Tuesday, November 13 - Arnold Small: Subject to be announced.

ID Workshop: Lee Jones

PELAGIC TRIPS

The 1990 Shearwater Journeys calendar of pelagic trips is available. Check it out on the bulletin board at Audubon House.

ANTELOPE SUCCESSFULLY RELEASED

The recent release of 37 pronghorn antelope back onto their home range in California's Carrizo Plain went extremely well. Pronghorns were formerly plentiful on the Carrizo before they were hunted to near-extinction. The 37 recently released join 39 that were released in 1987 and 217 released in 1988. They were outfitted with eartags and some with radio collars to help researchers track and identify them. Media coverage of the event included a film crew from London, England, which is beginning a year-long project to film a wildlife documentary on the Carrizo Plain.

5th Annual Champagne Brunch & Auction

Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary

Save Sunday, September 30!

10:30 am, Lyford House Meadow

Elegant Salmon Brunch, Live & Silent Auctions

A sample of auction offerings:

Trips

Nepal trek for 2 from Mountain Travel

Maui vacation

Bermuda cruise for 2 on Royal Viking Lines

One week Yucatan vacation

Wine,

Meals

Clothing

Sports Equipment

Sports event tickets

Invitations will be mailed early September. For more information, or to make donations of items or services, please call 388-2524.

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