



WESTERN TANAGER

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The "Other" Christmas Island *A Rare Birding Experience*

by Glenn Cunningham

Four endemic bird species and a half dozen endemic subspecies can be the reward for one lucky enough to visit Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean (not to be confused with the Pacific Christmas Island, or Kiritimati, south of Hawaii).

The island is one of the most difficult areas to reach in the modern world. Although located 230 miles south of Java, it is a possession of Australia and is served once a week by an airline from Perth, flying the circle route - Perth - Christmas Island - Cocos Island - Perth

- or in reverse on alternate weeks. Further discouraging visitors, the island has no hotels or public transport.

Christmas Island, a raised coral atoll, is a source of phosphate, and the mining and shipping of the valuable fertilizer has been the life of the island. Mining

has now ceased and only an occasional ship calls to load with ore stockpiled in earlier years. A mixed population of about 1,300, largely Chinese and Malays, still inhabits the island, busy when a ship calls, otherwise living on the dole. Proud of its unique fauna, Christmas Island has issued postage stamps depicting several species. The bird stamps, being particularly attractive, are favorites of collectors around the world.

Society Expeditions, whose aptly named ships, the World Discoverer and the World Explorer, seek out unusual destinations, made its first call to the island in July of this year. The World Discoverer was the first cruise ship ever to visit the island and, according to the locals, supplied a large percentage of the total number of tourists who have set foot on Christmas Island. I was fortunate to be among them.

The ship's expedition staff always includes lecturing specialists—archeologists, historians and naturalists. Two outstanding ornithologists accompanied us on this voyage, Sharon Chester and Jim Oetzel, both veteran birders who have succeeded in seeing all avian families. Both were excellent in spotting and identifying birds and in sharing the finds with us less skilled birders.

As we approached the island, throngs of feeding Brown and Red-footed boobies, Red-tailed Tropicbirds, and Great Frigatebirds surrounded us, but more spectacular were the White-tailed Tropicbirds or golden bosunbirds, (*Phaethon lepturus fulvus*) an endemic



subspecies, whose golden underparts glistened in the sun against the island's dark cliffs.

No large vessels can reach the island's tiny wharf so we were ferried ashore in the ship's Zodiacs, then boarded the island's only bus, the school bus, commandeered for the occasion. Joining us were two young men from the Australian Park and Wildlife Service, for the government, aware of the uniqueness of the island's wildlife, has wisely incorporated large areas into a National Park.

We drove past the workers' dormitories that line the shore of Flying Fish

Cove, then to the upper settlement on the plateau with its school and other public buildings, offices and work shops of the Phosphate Company and the remnants of a narrow gauge railway. We were headed for the highest point on the island, 1,170 feet, near the northwest corner. En route we passed some of the mined out areas, wastelands of rough coral limestone crags, some covered with secondary growth, others being reforested, or rehabilitated as the Australians call it.

Christmas Island Glossy Swiftlets (*Collocalia esculenta natalis*), an endemic subspecies, darted overhead, and we glimpsed occasional Emerald Doves (*Chalcophaps indica natalis*), also an endemic race. But our goal was a greater prize, Abbot's Booby (*Sula abbotti*). This rarest of the nine species of boobies numbers only 2,000 breeding pairs. Abbot's Booby breeds only on Christmas Island, nesting in high trees of the rainforest. It feeds at sea, but no one knows exactly where as it has almost never been sighted away from the island. From our vantage point we watched the large birds gliding in to make landfall as they headed for their nests in the center of the island.

A visit to the rainforest introduced us to the lush natural vegetation and to two more endemic birds. Flitting about in the undergrowth were small flocks of the Christmas Island White-eye (*Zosterops natalis*) and flying among the highest trees were a few of the Christmas Island Imperial Pigeons (*Ducula*



whartoni), an endangered species, victim of hunting and loss of habitat.

The walk along a forest trail also provided an encounter with the native crabs—the large endemic robber or coconut crab, and the endemic red land crab for which the island is famous. Numbering over one hundred million, they literally carpet the island when all emerge from their burrows at breeding time, a phenomenon known locally as the crimson tide. It is thought that the presence of crabs in such abundance accounts for the absence of small ground-nesting birds.

The following morning we were taken to the northeast coast to see the fourth of the island's endemic birds, the Christmas Frigatebird (*Fregata andrewsi*), also the rarest of its group of five species, numbering perhaps 1,600 breeding pairs. They nest in low trees and both nests and young could be easily observed from the ground. While searching for nests the Park guide came across a chick that had fallen to the ground. It stood no chance of survival, he explained, for the adults, unable to fly among the low growth, would make no attempt to feed it. If it did not die of starvation it would be killed and eaten by crabs. Still in good condition, it had fallen only recently and stood a good chance of reaching adulthood in the hands of Park personnel who were well equipped to deal with such emergencies, but the bird, unappreciative of his rescue, struggled for release and the guide had to hold the powerful beak to avoid a nasty nip!

One other endemic subspecies was frequently seen. The fearless and friendly Christmas Island Thrush (*Turdus poliocephalus erythropleurus*) seemed at home both in the forest and in the settlement. Two others, however, we failed to find—the Brown Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus natalis*) and the Christmas Island Hawk-owl (*Ninox squamipila natalis*), both rare and endangered.

But complaints and regrets, we all agreed, were not in order. We had seen some of the most inaccessible birds on earth. Many of the world's top birders would give their eye teeth, or an arm or a leg, or even their binoculars, to add them to their list.



The stamps used to illustrate this article are courtesy of Lloyd Kiff. Photos by Sam Sumida. 🐦

Birdathon '90 Results

by Melanie Ingalls, Birdathon Chair

Through the efforts of dozens of chapter members, sponsors and friends, LAAS's annual fund-raiser, Birdathon '90, raised \$7,100 to support environmental education. The six-week event featured a variety of birding activities designed to encourage fun in the field and support for chapter education activities. Participants ranged from brand new birders to veteran Big Day Competitors, and contributions ranged from a \$.01 to \$40 per species seen. The \$7,100 raised will support the award-winning Audubon Adventures environmental education program for elementary and junior high school students in the Los Angeles area.

The Birdathon is an annual event, a competitive bird count in which birders find sponsors who will pledge a few cents or more per species seen during a single 24-hour period. LAAS's Birdathon '90 was one of hundreds of birdathons sponsored last spring by Audubon chapters across the country. Their combined efforts raised more than one million dollars for Audubon programs and activities nationwide.

Birdathon '90 offered activities for birders of all abilities. Kimball Garrett led a group on a "Loonathon" at Point Dume on April 29; while Chuck Bernstein, with help from Sandy Wohlgemuth, took a group of birders to Malibu on May 5. Two dozen backyard birders counted species in their own yards, and seven teams took to the field in *The Big Day Competition*. Prizes were awarded to those seeing the most species and raising the most money in each category. All participants, and sponsors pledging \$50 or more, received an official Birdathon '90 t-shirt.

Many, many thanks to the generous sponsors who supported the efforts of our birders. Thanks, too, to those who helped make the event a success: Kimball Garrett and Chuck Bernstein who led field trips; Millie Newton and Steve Hirsh who solicited prizes; Steve Hirsh who designed the Birdathon brochure; Charles Harper who kept track of registration and bookkeeping; and Walter Williams who designed this year's t-shirt. 🐦

BIG DAY COMPETITORS

Most Species

Alderfer/Ingalls	147
Johnson/Carmona/	
Knieriem/Hilliard	125
Harper/Newton	118

Most Money Raised

Kendig/Harper	\$4,059
Johnson/Carmona/	
Knieriem/Hilliard	\$ 717
Alderfer/Ingalls	\$ 650

BACKYARD BIRDERS

Most Species

Dorothy Dimsdale	26
Deane Plaister	25
Pat Lindquist	21

Most Money Raised

Judy Rothman	\$ 108
Pat Lindquist	\$ 50
Deane Plaister	\$ 25

FIELD TRIPS

Most Money Raised

Steve Hirsh	\$ 144	Pierre Delastre	\$ 110
Barbara Courtois	\$ 123	Pat Heirs	\$ 50

The Los Angeles Audubon Society wishes to thank those who donated prizes for this year's event:

Rupicola	-	Gone Birding Bird Identification Videotape Game
The Wooden Bird,		
Glendale Galleria	-	Fine Art Prints
Birder's Buddy	-	Birding Vest
Eddie Bauer	-	Fannie Pack
LAAS Bookstore	-	An Introduction to Southern California Birds by Herb Clarke
	-	Birdwatcher's Life List & Diary by Bernard A. Fashingbauer

The Malibu Christmas Count Rises Again

by Kimball L. Garrett

The Santa Monica Mountains offer expanses of near-pristine wildlife habitat combined with a spreading hodge-podge of residential and commercial development. Molded by complex geological processes, these beleaguered mountains are now changing on a vastly accelerated time scale through a tug-of-war of human interests. The face of the Santa Monica Mountains has changed radically even in the fifteen years since Jean Brandt and I first assumed compilation duties for the Malibu Christmas Bird Count. If Christmas Bird Counts have any validity for monitoring historical changes in bird populations, then the Malibu count should be a gold mine of information in this fascinating but troubled region.

Can the Malibu Count provide the data we need to assess historical changes in the area's birdlife? The answer is an emphatic... "well, maybe a little bit, perhaps." To maximize the count's potential as a yardstick for changing birdlife we should strive for the following:

Continuity — any census becomes more valuable when repeated at regular intervals over a long period of time.

Accuracy — a "cleanly" compiled count will minimize or eliminate misidentifications; but no Christmas Count can guarantee quantitative accuracy; even if all observers identify and count birds accurately, the count remains nothing more than a sampling of a large (more than 450 sq. km) area, and the sampling effort is always going to vary within and between counts.

Retrievability — what good is the most accurate census when the results are unavailable?

What about continuity? The Malibu Christmas Bird Count will continue this year. Jean Brandt and Kimball Garrett have resumed their duties as compilers, and have scheduled the count for Sunday, 16 December. PLEASE CONTACT JEAN AT (818) 788-5188, OR KIMBALL AT (818) 507-4773 TO SIGN UP OR FOR MORE INFORMATION.

How about accuracy? Qualitative accuracy can be ensured if unusual species or unusual numbers of individuals are carefully documented and supported with written and (when possible) photographic details. Quantitative accuracy is simply not part of the Christmas Bird Count design. The best a compiler can hope for is consistency of effort from year to year; otherwise, comparisons between years are meaningless. Christmas Count data achieve their greatest scientific potential when combined over many years and over a large region to illuminate broad, general geographical and temporal trends. A finer-scale analysis, such as comparing a 1990 Malibu count to the same count from 1970, must be done with a truckload of caveats, cautions and disclaimers. We know, for example, that Horned Larks used to be regular in the count circle, and we know that the species is now gone. In this case, the loss of a species could clearly be tied to rampant development along the Ventura Freeway corridor (the Ronald Reagan Wilderness Area). But many other cases are more subtle and even the best-run Christmas Count can only hint at the degree of change.

And retrievability? Christmas Bird Counts are published once a year in *American Birds* magazine. Except, that is, when the results are never submitted! This was the unfortunate case with the 1988 and 1989 Malibu Christmas Bird Counts — two years' worth of efforts negated by careless compiling. That's why we have new (actually... old) compilers this year, and we promise that the count results will be compiled and submitted in a timely manner! And below, we are publishing the results of the two "lost" Malibu Christmas Bird Counts, as compiled (but never published) by Liga Auzins and Roger Cobb.

This year's Malibu Count will be FREE to all participants. We hope this eases the frustration of the last two counts having gone unpublished. With participation fees increasing annually, many

long-time count participants will be tempted to forego counts, something we'd like to help avoid.

1988 RESULTS

MALIBU, CA 34 04'N 118 42'W. Center as described 1972, at the intersection of Las Virgenes Rd. and Piuma Rd. Dec. 18; 5:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Temp. 55 to 75 F. Wind WSW, 0-5 mph. Cloudy, foggy, light rain. 68 observers, in field in 33-40 parties (non-owling), plus 1 at feeders. 0.5 hours at feeders; 5.25 hours and 15.7 miles owling. Total party-hours 158 and party-miles 128.5.

Red-throated Loon 26; Pacific Loon 10; Common Loon 18; Pied-billed Grebe 21; Horned Grebe 1; Eared Grebe 39; W. Grebe 178; Black-vented Shearwater 12; Brown Pelican 79; Double-crested Cormorant 226; Brandt's Cormorant 12; Pelagic Cormorant 49; Great Blue Heron 24; Snowy Egret 10; Cattle Egret 1; Green-backed Heron 2; Black-crowned Night-Heron 12; Canada Goose 19; Green-winged Teal 98; Mallard 458; N. Pintail 2; Cinnamon Teal 11; N. Shoveler 12; Gadwall 38; Am. Wigeon 76; Canvasback 45; Ring-necked Duck 43; Lesser Scaup 48; Surf Scoter 379; White-winged Scoter 81; Red-breasted Merganser 10; Ruddy Duck 207; Turkey Vulture 9; Black-shouldered Kite 1; N. Harrier 12; Sharp-shinned Hawk 16; Cooper's Hawk 18; Red-shouldered Hawk 62; Red-tailed Hawk 101; Golden Eagle 4(ad.); Am. Kestrel 49; Prairie Falcon 1; Calif. Quail 829; Sora 1; Am. Coot 1283; Black-bellied Plover 84; Snowy Plover 41; Killdeer 98; Am. Avocet 16; Greater Yellowlegs 1; Willet 46; Spotted Sandpiper 13; Whimbrel 14; Long-billed Curlew 1; Marbled Godwit 43; Ruddy Turnstone 10; Black Turnstone 9; Surfbird 5; Sanderling 247; Western Sandpiper 26; Least Sandpiper 44; Long-billed Dowitcher 41; Com. Snipe 14; Pomarine Jaeger 1; jaeger, sp. 2; Bonaparte's Gull 1931; Heermann's Gull 82; Mew Gull 4; Ring-billed Gull 287; California Gull 426; Herring Gull 4; Thayer's Gull 7; W. Gull 364; Glaucous-winged Gull 8; gull, sp. 260; Caspian Tern 4; Forster's Tern 142; Com. Murre 1;

Rock Dove 898; Band-tailed Pigeon 8; Spotted Dove 1; Mourning Dove 829; Rose-ringed Parakeet 12; Red-crowned Parrot 2; Barn Owl 3; W. Screech-Owl 1; Great Horned Owl 64; Common Poorwill 1; Vaux's Swift 6; Anna's Hummingbird 466; Allen's Humming-

bird 13; *Selasphorus* 43; Belted Kingfisher 17; Acorn Woodpecker 406; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1; Red-breasted Sapsucker 7; Nuttall's Woodpecker 75; Downy Woodpecker 16; N. Flicker 142; Black Phoebe 156; Say's Phoebe 30; Scrub Jay 964; Am. Crow 656; Common Raven 222; Plain Titmouse 256; Bushtit 633; Pygmy Nuthatch 23; Rock Wren 2; Canyon Wren 10; Bewick's Wren 111; House Wren 34; Golden-crowned Kinglet 4; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 317; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 10; W. Bluebird 37; Hermit Thrush 84; Am. Robin 313; Wrentit 238; N. Mockingbird 167; California Thrasher 160; American Pipit 25; Cedar Waxwing 8 (low); Phainopepla 25; Loggerhead Shrike 24; Eur. Starling 2921; Hutton's Vireo 6; Orange-crowned Warbler 27; Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler 2; Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler 3445; Townsend's Warbler 21; Common Yellowthroat 48; Rufous-sided Towhee 230; Calif. Towhee 483; Rufous-crowned Sparrow 89 (?); Lark Sparrow 38; Savannah Sparrow 30; Fox Sparrow 54; Song Sparrow 170; Lincoln's Sparrow 32; White-throated Sparrow 1; Golden-crowned Sparrow 191; White-crowned Sparrow 1706; Dark-eyed Junco 886; Red-winged Blackbird 683; W. Meadowlark 263; Brewer's Blackbird 1133; Brown-headed Cowbird 6; Purple Finch 18; House Finch 1863; Pine Siskin 21; Lesser Goldfinch 646; Am. Goldfinch 264; House Sparrow 248.

TOTAL SPECIES 147; TOTAL INDIVIDUALS 31,995.

1989 RESULTS

MALIBU, CA 34 04'N 118 42'W
Center as described 1972 at the intersection of Las Virgenes Rd. and Piuma Rd.
December 17; 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp 30 to 70 F. Wind WSW 0-5 mph. A.M. clear. P.M. clear. 60 observers in field in 27-30 parties (non-owling) plus 1 at feeders. .25 hours at feeders, 3.5 hours and 10 miles owling. Total party-hours 144.0 and party-miles 315.5; 108.25 hours and 78.0 miles on foot, 35.75 hours and 237.5 miles by car.

Red-throated Loon 30; Pacific Loon 25; Com. Loon 39; Pied-billed Grebe 46; Horned Grebe 3; Eared Grebe 5; W. Grebe 111; Clark's Grebe 2; Black-vented Shearwater 4051; Am. White Pelican 25; Brown Pelican 205; Double-crested Cormorant 257; Brandt's Cormorant 59; Pelagic Cormorant 21; Great Blue Heron 14; Great Egret 4; Snowy Egret 34; Cattle

Egret 43; Green-backed Heron 9; Black-crowned Night-Heron 7; Greater White-fronted Goose 1; Canada Goose 10; Green-winged Teal 27; Mallard 319; Cinnamon Teal 13; N. Shoveler 12; Gadwall 49; Am. Wigeon 126; Canvasback 39; Ring-necked Duck 28; Lesser Scaup 52; Surf Scoter 222; White-winged Scoter 1; Bufflehead 56; Hooded Merganser 7; Com. Merganser 1; Red-breasted Merganser 17; Ruddy Duck 198; Turkey Vulture 19; Black-shouldered Kite 2; N. Harrier 4; Sharp-shinned Hawk 8; Cooper's Hawk 5; Red-shouldered Hawk 48; Red-tailed Hawk 11 (?); Golden Eagle 2(ad.); Am. Kestrel 30; Calif. Quail 552; Virginia Rail 1; Sora 1; Am. Coot 665;

Black-bellied Plover 128; Snowy Plover 42; Killdeer 115; Am. Avocet 8; Greater Yellowlegs 1; Willet 42; Spotted Sandpiper 10; Whimbrel 31; Ruddy Turnstone 26; Black Turnstone 2; Sanderling 289; W. Sandpiper 40; Least Sandpiper 109; Long-billed Dowitcher 10; Com. Snipe 8; Pomarine Jaeger 1; Bonaparte's Gull 1654; Heermann's Gull 281; Mew Gull 5; Ring-billed Gull 389; California Gull 1248; Herring Gull 10; Thayer's Gull 1; W. Gull 399; Glaucous-winged Gull 6; gull, sp. 187; Caspian Tern 2; Royal Tern 2; Forster's Tern 226; Rhinoceros Auklet 1; Rock Dove 831; Band-tailed Pigeon 117; Spotted Dove 1; Mourning Dove 773; Rose-ringed Parakeet 17; Black-hooded Parakeet 14; Red-crowned Parrot 8; Lilac-crowned Parrot 10; Greater Roadrunner 6; Barn Owl 1; W. Screech-Owl 2; Great Horned Owl 32; White-throated Swift 85; Anna's Hummingbird 566; Allen's Hummingbird 33; *Selasphorus* sp. 36; Belted Kingfisher 8; Lewis' Woodpecker 2; Acorn Woodpecker 383; Red-breasted Sapsucker 12; Nuttall's Woodpecker 59;

Downy Woodpecker 21; Hairy Woodpecker 1; N. Flicker 173; Black Phoebe 110; Say's Phoebe 22; Tree Swallow 2; Scrub Jay 811; Am. Crow 425; Com. Raven 207; Mountain Chickadee 1; Plain Titmouse 225; Bushtit 1237; White-breasted Nuthatch 15; Brown Creeper 1; Rock Wren 3; Canyon Wren 13; Bewick's Wren 82; House Wren 21; Winter Wren 1; Marsh Wren 2; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 231; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 3; W. Bluebird 65; Hermit Thrush 275; Am. Robin 332; Varied Thrush 20; Wrentit 246; N. Mockingbird 134; Calif. Thrasher 57; Am. Pipit 98; Cedar Waxwing 89; Phainopepla 10; Loggerhead Shrike 12; Eur. Starling 1112; Hutton's Vireo 8;

Orange-crowned Warbler 32; Yellow Warbler 2; Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler 15; Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler 3857; Townsend's Warbler 9; Com. Yellowthroat 66; Wilson's Warbler 2; Black-headed Grosbeak 1; Rufous-sided Towhee 433; Calif. Towhee 534; Rufous-crowned Sparrow 7; Lark Sparrow 38; Sage Sparrow 1; Savannah Sparrow 7; Fox Sparrow 32; Song Sparrow 169; Lincoln's Sparrow 17; Golden-crowned Sparrow 570; White-crowned Sparrow 1402; Dark-eyed (Slate-col.) Junco 2; Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco 535; Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco 1; Red-winged Blackbird 485; W. Meadowlark 84; Brewer's Blackbird 411; Brown-headed Cowbird 3; N. (Bullock's) Oriole 2; Purple Finch 40; House Finch 1072; Pine Siskin 2; Lesser Goldfinch 268; Am. Goldfinch 177; House Sparrow 122.

TOTAL SPECIES 162; TOTAL INDIVIDUALS 32,280.

Additional species seen in count circle count week but not on count day: Wood Stork; Greater Pewee. 🐦

... any census becomes more valuable

when repeated at regular intervals

over a long period of time.

Christmas Counts 1990

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

Big Bear Lake	Leo Best	818/334-2528
Bishop	Earl Gann	619/938-2916
Claremont	Daniel Guthrie	714/621-4000
Lancaster	Fred Heath	(H) 805/527-0986
		(W) 805/984-3752
Morro Bay	Tom Edell	805/995-1691
Redlands (Mill Creek)	D. Williams	714/867-2391
San Fernando Valley	Art Langton	818/887-0973
Santa Catalina Island	Lee Jones	714/640-1237
	Misty Gay	213/510-0954
Santa Maria-Guadalupe	Alex Abela	805/734-4008

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

China Lake	Donald Moore	619/446-6137
Lone Pine	Michael Prather	619/876-5807
Malibu	Jean Brandt	818/788-5188
	Kimball Garrett	(H) 818/507-4773
		(W) 213/744-3368
Orange County (NE)	Gerald Tolman	714/539-8040
Rancho Santa Fe	Luis Santælla	(H) 619/756-2082
		(W) 619/753-5588
Santa Ana River Valley	Larry La Pre	(H) 714/369-3508
		(W) 714/684-7081

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Pasadena	Michael Long	818/398-5420
Salton Sea (south)	Jon Dunn	818/981-1841
San Jacinto Lake	R. McKernan	714/773-7897

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

Buena Vista Lake	Alison Sheehy	805/323-8365
Butterbrecht Springs	Keith Axelson	213/390-6378
Morongo Valley	Steven Meyers	619/949-3567
La Purisima	Alex Abela	805/734-4008
Palos Verdes Peninsula	Ross Landry	(H) 213/863-9078
		(W) 818/302-9159

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

Idyllwild	N. & G. Hazard	714/794-2251
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29

Carrizo Plains	Roger Zachary	805/466-6222
Escondido	K. Weaver	619/723-2448
Kern River Valley	Donald Moore	619/446-6137
Long Beach	Peter Tackney	213/425-3948
Los Angeles	Mike Tiffany	213/328-4417
Salton Sea (north)	Chet McGaugh	714/781-3699
Santa Barbara	Paul Lehman	805/967-2450
	Pat Kelly	805/962-9916

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

Anza Borrego Desert	Art Morley	619/767-4298
Orange County (coastal)	Gerald Tolman	714/539-8040
San Bernardino Valley	Don Hoechlin	714/371-7001
Thousand Oaks	H. E. McClure	805/482-0411
	Jan Wasserman	805/987-3928

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31

Ventura	Virgil Ketner	805/642-3480
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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2

Death Valley	Michael Prather	619/876-5807
Joshua Tree Nat. Mon.	Brian Prescott	714/780-3146

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12

Cuyamaca	Dave King	619/259-8649
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Compiled by Glenn Cunningham

Los Angeles CBC

The Los Angeles Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is, or ought to be, the "home count" of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. However, with the increase in the number of southern California CBC areas, the LA count has fallen on hard times. The LA count traditionally attracted 50 to 100 participants each year, but in the last five years we have averaged only 35 participants. Most of these are "old-timers," the perennial active supporters of chapter events. There are usually one or two rookies tagging along, and sometimes an out-of-towner, but the

majority of our membership is sadly under-represented.

Although our count circle is not thought of as a birding hot-spot, we do manage to turn in a respectable list each year, and there are a lot of very interesting nooks and crannies of good habitat to be found in our area. Nearly a third of the circle is in the Santa Monica Mountains, and we also have beaches, the Venice canals, Playa del Rey, the Ballona Wetlands and several good reservoirs.

Some of these locations have been the focus of important conservation

battles in recent years, many of which are ongoing. One of the purposes of the CBCs is to provide data on bird distribution over time, data which are useful in assessing such things as the impact of development on wetland and mountain habitat. This is the most compelling reason I can give our members to "come home" to the LA count: to help document the effect that continuing development is having *right now* on our shrinking islands of natural habitat.

The Los Angeles CBC will be held this year on Saturday, December 29th. For information call or write Mike Tiffany, 2267-B Carson Street, Torrance, CA 90501, (213) 328-4417. 🐦

Bookstore News

by Edi Vaché

Think Audubon for the holidays! The LAAS Bookstore is the best place to find perfect presents for all of your favorite bird lovers. Remember—all of our profits go to the birds! We have an extensive selection of books and gift items sure to please everyone on your list.

For that extra special person, why not order *Birds of the High Andes* by Jon Fjeldsa and Niels Krabbe? A Danish import, it is superbly illustrated with detailed maps and comprehensive, readable information on the nearly one thousand species that inhabit this little known and little visited area.

Among the most elegant books we now carry is a set entitled *Birds of Papua, New Guinea*. In two volumes (available together or individually), the books highlight the mating displays of the world's extraordinary Birds of Paradise. Bower Birds and their bowers are also featured. Stunning photographs and excellent text abound throughout.

For the hummingbird lover on your list, may we suggest the following new arrivals:

Robert Tyrrell's *Hummingbirds of the Caribbean*. A truly beautiful book, it includes some of the most crisply photographed, dramatic, and often touching illustrations available. A high point of

the book is one of Mr. Tyrrell's many photos of the Bee Hummingbird, the smallest bird in the world, as it perches on the eraser of a pencil.

John Gould's *Hummingbirds*. We have been able to obtain a moderately priced version of this book by one of the 19th century's most highly respected bird artists. This volume includes all of the original illustrations and text. It is a very large book, over 400 pages, and is sure to delight your favorite hummingbird enthusiast or aficionado of great bird prints.

For those of us who have lots of folks on our holiday lists and not a lot of money to spend, Audubon Bookstore has a cornucopia of lovely presents. The "old standbys" always make good gifts, for the novice up to the advanced birder: *The National Geographic Field Guide to North American Birds* is \$16.95, Peterson's *Field Guide to Western Birds* is \$12.95 softcover, \$19.95 hardcover. *An Introduction to Southern California Birds*, by Herbert Clarke, featuring photographs of all the birds the typical birder is likely to see in the southland, is \$11.95. A new standby, quickly becoming a favorite, is Kenn Kaufman's *Advanced Birding*, which sells for \$14.95.

We also carry our own line of t-shirts, sweatshirts, tote bags and aprons

with LAAS's Western Tanager logo, and a variety of pins (including William Spear). We have some fantastic new designs! In the shop are all sorts of calendars—from Mono Lake through Bird Identification—and other gift items, many for under \$10.00. The bookstore also carries recycled wrapping paper and gift cards as well.

The armchair traveller, or those of us lucky enough to get to some of the world's best birding spots in Australia and New Zealand, would certainly enjoy the many field guides to the region. We carry the Slater guide (very portable), the Simpson and Day (wonderful illustrations), and the Pizzey (great text). In addition, we have *Where to Find Birds in Australia* by Bransbury and *Birds of New Zealand, a Locality Guide* (field guide and bird finding guide in one) by Chambers. Try one or all for family and friends looking into the wild and colorful world of Australian birding.

Finally, don't forget our new book: *Where Birders Go in Southern California*, by Dr. Henry Childs, Jr. Published by LAAS, it is, at \$12.95 per autographed copy, an excellent addition to any birder's library.

So, think of us when you're thinking of sending a gift and have a splendid holiday season. 🐦

Birds Do It Best!

But That Doesn't Stop Us From Trying!

Catalina Island CBC

Join a small but enthusiastic group of birders on the third annual Catalina CBC, Saturday, December 15th. Take advantage of this rare opportunity to explore the island's interior. Good birds in the past two years include Ross' Goose, Eastern Phoebe, Saw-whet Owl (resident) and recently reintroduced Bald Eagles. Call Lee Jones at (714) 640-1237 or Misty Gay at (213) 510-0954 for details. 🐦

Trying to fly, that is. Paul MacCready, called the father of human-powered flight, will be speaking at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History on 20 January, 1991, at 2:30 p.m. in the Jean Delacour auditorium. He invented the Gossamer Condor in 1977, which made the first sustained, controlled flight powered by human muscle, and then designed the Gossamer Albatross which crossed the English channel propelled by manpower. He will discuss some of the fascinating similarities between natural and artificial flight, and how he often gets his inventive inspiration from the natural world.

This special lecture marks the opening weekend of the new Ralph W. Schreiber Hall of Birds, which LAAS has supported, and we will be able to have a special private tour of the Hall.

Lecture \$7. Reception and private tour \$7. For reservations call (213) 744-3534 or send your check to: Education Division, Natural History Museum, 900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90007. 🐦

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

In 1988 we elected a man who promised to be "the environmental President." The words were sweet, and though they arose out of the witches' cauldron of a heated campaign, we hoped they were sincere and true. Cynics wondered if this slogan might not be a device to hitch a ride on the genuine environmental bandwagon that had clearly appeared on the American scene. Most of us decided to wait and see.

The curtain opens on Act II, about two years later. Has George Bush's promise been fulfilled? Let's look at the record.

Energy is a rather touchy subject at this moment of writing. The OPEC oil embargo back in the '70s inspired a lot of talk and some action about conservation, alternate fuels, western oil shale and smaller cars with better mileage. When Mr. Reagan entered the White House, whatever improvement that had been made quickly and silently vanished. Then, when the price of oil declined we could forget all that annoying stuff about reducing consumption and get on with the show. It was like Christmas - with a gas-guzzler under the tree. The Persian Gulf crisis finds us using more oil than ever before, and still without a sensible energy policy. Now loud rumbles are emanating from Washington that perhaps off-shore drilling might be reconsidered. Ant that-by George! - this could be the time to "prudently" dig into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

In his 1988 campaign George Bush said, referring to myriad global environmental problems, "We face the prospect of being trapped on a boat that we have irreparably damaged...by the slow neglect of a vessel we believed to be impervious to our abuse." After the election, Secretary of State James Baker said that all governments must act immediately on energy conservation, global warming and reforestation. "We can probably not afford to wait until all the uncertainties have been resolved before we do act. Time will not make the problem go away." These incisive words were heady stuff and gave promise of a

refreshing new attitude in the White House. We looked forward to a vigorous attack on the environmental dragons that assailed us. For the most part we've had to settle for words.

Mr. Bush visited the Canadian prime minister to discuss acid rain and made all the proper noises. But very little has been done; sulfur emissions from the midwest still blow over New England and eastern Canada, destroying lakes and streams with impunity. Heavy industry has good friends in Washington.

The powerful auto makers and the Administration have recently blocked a Senate bill that would have mandated a fuel efficiency of 40 mpg for all new cars by 2001. Hardly surprising. Reagan actually *rolled back* the mpg figures in force at that time; Mr. Bush staunchly carries the banner for Detroit.

Americans consume more fossil fuels per person than any other nation. We talk big about our global responsibilities toward reducing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases but we drag our feet. And we have been less than enthusiastic about eliminating CFCs that attack the protective ozone layer. The latest data reveals that the hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica has now spread to Australia where physicians report an alarming increase in cases of melanoma, a usually fatal skin cancer caused by ultra-violet rays. Where is the dynamic federal program to help industry to quickly develop benign substitutes for CFCs?

Our environmental president has selected as steward of our national treasures a man who wonders why we must save every little ole subspecies. Manuel Lujan is the man who said for all the world to hear, "No one has explained to me the difference between the red squirrel, the black squirrel and the brown squirrel." As Secretary of the Interior he is also chairman of the "God Squad," the cabinet level Endangered Species Committee that the Administration would empower to set aside provisions of the Endangered Species Act for economic reasons. This is what Mr. Lujan means when he says that the

Act "needs balancing." Though the Northern Spotted Owl is now listed as a threatened species and so requires protection, the path could be cleared for logging its ancient forest habitat if the committee decides that cutting the trees is an economic necessity. With the owl as a precedent the entire spectrum of endangered species would be in jeopardy.

The National Forest Service labels its forests as "Lands of Many Uses," yet the recreational uses have always been incidental to their main function: harvesting trees. The laissez-faire approach of the Reagan years resulted in a tremendous increase in the amount of timber cut. The Service has been widely viewed as the handmaiden of the industry, selling its trees on the cheap and subsidizing the corporations with logging roads. It tried very hard to prevent the listing of the Spotted Owl. In Mr. Bush's tour of duty so far there has been no attempt to change the ways of the Forest Service.

Under pressure from militant anti-abortionists Mr. Bush maintains the financial boycott of family planning groups in the Third World. Though none of these groups *advocates* abortion, in some places the practice is accepted if the client country permits it. A blind eye is turned to over population, widely accepted as the root of all our environmental problems.

Sadly, the hopes stirred during the first days of the Bush Administration have been all but crushed. In fact an ominous echo of the Reagan years seems to be heard in the irritable sounds of the executive branch. In July, 1990, 150 environmental organizations met in Houston. They accused the seven leading industrial powers of paying lip service but doing little about global warming, ozone depletion, land and water pollution, and more. The U.S. ranked fourth on their ecological scorecard, and even the usually mild National Wildlife Federation accused the Administration of "killing our world." In response, George Bush said, "We cannot govern by listening to the loud-

est voices on the extreme of an environmental movement." [These were all respectable mainstream organizations.] He added, "I did not rely heavily on them for support in getting elected... they haven't seemed happy with me for a long time. And I'm not too happy with them."

Budget Director Darman, in ringing phrases said, "Americans did not fight and win wars of the 20th century to make the world safe for green vegetables." And, "Environmentalism is a green mask under which different faces of politico-economic ideology can hide." If these thoughts have a familiar ring, listen to these: Environmentalists "are political activists, a left-wing cult which seeks to bring down the type of government I believe in." The National Audubon Society "wants a government that believes in centralized socialistic planning." You guessed it — vintage James Watt, 1982. Mr. Darman's lines are more polished but no less alarming.

We wonder if Mr. Bush and his friends are reading the minds of the electorate correctly. The ground-swell that arose after "Silent Spring" and the first Earth Day has not abated. It is not a trendy fad. People all over the world are seeing the results of humanity's ignorance and folly every day. They — We — are becoming more aware, more educated, more concerned about the insults to the earth. And the leaders of nations — especially of this one — cannot much longer ignore or delay the day of reckoning. 🐦

LAAS Receives State Education Grant

LAAS has been awarded \$15,000 by the State of California's Environmental Education Grant Program to expand its sponsorship of Audubon Adventures. The grant enrolls one hundred 5th and 6th grade inner city classrooms in the Los Angeles Unified School District in the Audubon Adventures program this year. Participating teachers are also enrolled in a series of staff development workshops taught by the National Audubon Society's special consultant on urban environmental education. The first workshop was held October 6 at the Los Angeles Zoo. Subsequent workshops will be held January 26 at the Ballona Wetlands and February 27 at the Natural History Museum.

"The program is designed to strengthen teachers' skills for teaching environmental education in the city," stated Melanie Ingalls, Education Chair. According to Ingalls, the State recommended funding the project in full, not least because of LAAS's enthusiastic support of the Adventures program over the last few years. 🐦

Lens View

by Herb Clarke

This is the first in a series of columns which will discuss general nature photography with emphasis on bird photography. These pieces will appear irregularly and will cover various aspects of this fascinating avocation. Subjects discussed will be primarily based upon my own experiences and biases and, in addition, will be an open forum for whatever points readers wish to raise. Suggestions, questions and comments are welcome and should be sent, in writing, to Audubon House for my attention.

There is nothing so satisfying as capturing a good image of an elusive wild creature. The photographer is the creator of the photograph and is solely responsible for the result and no one, not even the photographer himself, can take another picture that exactly duplicates the original. Better nature photographs are the result of the skill of the photographer using good equipment coming together with such diverse elements as weather, timing and the subject's cooperation. Most field circumstances cannot be completely anticipated as there is always a luck factor involved. However, being properly prepared will enhance the chances of a



favorable outcome and the aim here is to learn to control, as much as possible, the variables.

Many times I have had a person approach me asking: What camera and lens should be purchased to take good bird pictures? Expected is a brief reply summarizing thirty years' experience. When trying to frame an answer based on questions about that person's photo expertise, I am cut short by a statement that the technical knowledge is not needed with all the modern automatic equipment that is available! A notion which is entirely erroneous. Another common fallacy is that with the latest, most expensive camera and a big lens, bird photography should be a snap.

Photography is much like any other skill. Required is practice and more practice. Know your equipment. Never be satisfied with your pictures. Always strive to do better. Don't be discouraged by your mistakes, learn from them. In the excitement of the moment, after all these years, I, and all other photographers I know, frequently make errors, some over and over again. I hope to learn from you because even now, I often hear about some technique or gadget that solves a problem that has plagued me for years.

So, everybody into the pool and let's share our photo secrets and frustrations along with our triumphs and have a lot of fun as we go along.

Future columns will detail field problems, equipment and techniques.

Good shooting! 🐦

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.

As expected, October proved to be the most exciting month of the year for birders. Careful coverage of in-town locations proved that rarities can be found right in Los Angeles—a welcome note in these days of high fuel costs.

Good numbers of winter invaders such as **Red-breasted** and **White-breasted Nuthatches**, **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, **Brown Creepers** and **Lewis' Woodpeckers** are beginning to appear on the scene. This should be an incentive for all of us to sign on for the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts. Look for details elsewhere in this issue.

Many reports of **Wood Duck** have come in this fall. Outstanding were the ten seen at Jackson Lake in the San Gabriels on 7 October (Roy Smith). Thirty **Blue-winged Teal** were on the Los Angeles River below Willow Street in Long Beach on 28 October (Dave Koeppel, Mitch Heindel). Two **Eurasian Wigeon** were reported from Malibu on 28 October (Andrew Howe) and one was at Castaic Lagoon on 20 October (Kimball Garrett). A **Hooded Merganser** was at Upper Newport Bay on 3 November (Dwayne Nelson).

An immature **Broad-winged Hawk** was on the Oxnard Plain on 30 September (Fred Heath) and there were several **Merlins** reported, including one from Harbor Lake Park on 27 October (Bob Beckler).

Shorebird reports from the Oxnard Plain include a **Ruff** on 5 October (Jerry Maisel), four **fulva Lesser Golden Plovers** on 21 October (F.H.) with fourteen Golden of both races on 28 October (Art and Jan Cupples), and a **Mountain Plover** on 27 October (also Art and Jan).

A **Sabine's Gull** showed up at California City on 23 September (Barry Lyon) and an individual of another pe-

lagic species, **Arctic Tern**, was reported on the beach at Redondo on 25 September (Charlie Walker).

A **White-winged Dove** was seen on a most successful LAAS field trip (132 species) on 24 September (Ed Navajosky) and a concentration of 10,000 migrant **Vaux's Swifts** was in downtown L.A. on 30 September and into early October (K.G.).

Among the **Lewis' Woodpecker** reports were six at Jackson Lake 7 October (R.S.), one in Big Sycamore Canyon on 20 October (Terry Haig), and two in central L.A. on 21 October (John Levine). A male **Williamson's Sapsucker** was at California City on 7 October (M.Hi.), and a female at Piru on 27 October (A. & J.C.). Rarely reported since it was "lumped", a "**Yellow-shafted**" **Flicker** was at Averill Park, San Pedro on 27 October (Mi.H.). There were two **Vermilion Flycatcher** sightings: one on the Oxnard Plain on 24 September (E.N.) and one near Irvine on 27 October (David Sibley). A **Great Crested Flycatcher** was at Banning Park from 31 October to 2 November (Mi.H.) and three **Eastern Kingbirds** were on the LAAS Field Trip to the Oxnard Plain on 24 September.

On 22 September, Kurt Campbell watched a movement of forty seven **Scrub Jays** up a canyon in Burbank. He points out that little is known about the movements of this abundant species. Welcome back to L.A., Kurt!

A very rare **Wood Thrush** was at Harbor Lake on 10 October (Mi.H.) and **Varied Thrushes** are starting to show up with one at Malibu (A. & J.C.) and one at Galileo Park (Priscilla Brodtkin), both on 28 October.

The warbler reports this month include: a **Golden-winged** at Morongo Valley on 27 October (Jim Connelly); **Tennessees** at Banning Park on 26 September (Mi.H.), Redondo Wilderness Park, 30 September (K.G.), and Zuma Beach also on 30 September (Jean Brandt and Phil Sayre); an immature **Parula** at Banning Park on 2 October (Mi.H.); a **Chestnut-sided** at Harbor Lake on 6 October (E.N.); **Magnolias** at Harbor

Lake on 26 September (Mi.H.), on the Oxnard Plain on 3 October (Sandy Wohlgemuth) and at Mojave on 7 October (Dave Koeppel); a **Black-throated Blue** at Mojave on 23 September (Larry Allen); **Black-throated Greens** at Zuma Beach on 30 September (J.B. & P.S.) and at Galileo Park on 6 October (Bea and Dick Smith); a **Bay-breasted** at Harbor Lake on 26 September (Mi.H.); **Black-polls** at Banning Park on 26 September (Mi.H.), and at Harbor Lake on 12 October (Mi.H.); **Black-and-whites** at Harbor Lake on 26 September and at Banning Park on 6 October (both Mi.H.); **American Redstarts** on 26 September at Banning Park (Mi.H.) and at Zuma on 28 September (Dan Cooper); an **Ovenbird** at Redondo Wilderness Park on 30 September (K.G.); and a **Northern Waterthrush** on 26 September in Harbor Park (Mi.H.).

Two **Summer Tanagers** were reported, one in Sun Valley on 30 September (K.C.) and one in Banning Park on 6 October (E.N.), and an **Indigo Bunting** was at Harbor Lake on 26 September (Mi.H.).

Two **Vesper Sparrows** were seen at Sepulveda Basin on 30 September (K.C.), and a **LeConte's Sparrow** was found at McGrath State Park on 23 September (F.H.). **White-throated Sparrows** were reported at Tapia Park by Maggie Salmon and at El Dorado Nature Center (K.G., 27 October).

Details on how to reach most of the birding locations mentioned in this column can be found in Hank Childs' new *Where Birders Go in Southern California* published by LAAS and available at the book store.

Merry Christmas and Good Birding!

Please send all bird sightings to:

Hank Brodtkin
27 1/2 Mast Street
Marina del Rey, CA 90292

Bird reports given to David Koeppel for the Bird Alert are forwarded to me. 🐦

C A L E N D A R

Continued from back page

Saturday, January 5 - Sepulveda Basin. **Dustin Alcalá** leads this morning tour of a nearby greenbelt. Easy birding in a "wild" area. Take the 405 Fwy. to Burbank Blvd., head west to Woodley Ave., turn north (right), and proceed to the Woodley Park entrance on the right. Meet in the first lot at 8:00 a.m. (L.A., p.16, 6-B).

Sunday, January 6 - Topanga State Park. Leader **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 a.m. See December 2 write-up for details.

Saturday, January 12 - Gull Mini-Workshop. Field seminar on gulls given by one of our more professional amateur birdmen, **Larry Allen**. Includes a short discussion on gull I.D. and Larry's field-tested hand-out. Bring a picnic lunch, warm clothing, a National Geographic Field Guide, and a scope if you have one. We will meet at the **Malibu Lagoon** parking lot kiosk at 8 a.m. Free parking on Cross Creek Road (first road west of lagoon bridge). After honing skills at Malibu, Larry will lead the party to McGrath State Park in Oxnard in hopes of seeing nine or ten species of gulls in various plumages. (L.A., p.114, B-5).

Sunday, January 20 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Leader **David White**. Meet at 8:00 a.m. See December 8 for details.

Friday & Sunday, January 18 & 20 - Raptor Workshop. **Ned Harris** has further augmented his fine slide collection since last year's remarkable presentation. Friday slide show/Sunday Antelope Valley bus trip. The raptor I.D. workshop will cover the 22 species of diurnal birds of prey which can be observed in Southern California, concentrating on the field identification of these raptors in their various age, sex and color morph variations. Recommended text: *Hawks* by Clark and Wheeler. Likely on Saturday's field trip are: Red-tailed & Ferruginous Hawks, Kestrel, Prairie Falcon and Harrier. Possible species include Rough-legged and Cooper's Hawks, Golden Eagle and Merlin. Lecture meets at 7:30 p.m. at Union Federal Savings at 8485 Wilshire Blvd. and La Cienega in L.A. (L.A., p.42, E-2). Free, locked parking lot for duration of meeting. Some street parking if large crowd. Field trip meets at 7:00 a.m., probably in the San Fernando Valley. Bus meeting place info. will be in the Jan. Tanager and at the lecture. Cost: \$15 for lecture and/or bus, \$6 for lecture only. Reserve with S.A.S.E.

Saturday, January 26 - Pt. Mugu. Leader **Daniel Cooper** and new base biologist **Tom Keeney** should find plenty of waterfowl,

shorebirds, gulls, scoters and other wintering birds to remark upon in this limited access area. Option to bird Ventura after lunch with leader. Take 101 Fwy west to Las Posas Rd. south, take PCH north onto Wood Rd., head west then south on the frontage road to the lot at the main (#1) gate. The attendance list must be submitted to the base, so sign up early. Must be 16 years old, scopes but no cameras, please. Include in your reservation request an S.A.S.E., citizenship status, phone number, and a \$5 deposit to be refunded at the gate.

Sunday, January 27 - Malibu Lagoon. Leader **SMBAS** member. Meet at 8:30 a.m. See December 23 write-up for details.

Sunday, January 27 - Tufted Duck Hunt. **Bob Johnson** is leading a trip in search of Tufted Ducks. Plenty of other birds, too! Meet at Denny's on Roxford St. just east of the 170 Fwy (near the 5 Fwy.), leave at 8:00 a.m. Call tape first - definite, but *very* subject to change per scouting reports. (L.A., p.2, B-3).

Fri/Sat., February 8/9 - Gull Workshop. **Arnold Small**. Details in Jan/Feb *Western Tanager*.

Saturday, February 9 - Prado Basin. Leader **Tom Keeney**. Call Audubon House to sign up. 🐦

RESERVATION AND FEE EVENTS (Limited Participation) 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 Reservations Chairman **Millie Newton**, 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 so notified and your fee returned. Your cancellation after that time will bring a refund only if there is a paid replacement.

Millie Newton is available at Audubon House on Tuesdays 10-3 to answer questions about field trips. If you desire to carpool to an event, she can also provide contacts for you. Our office staff is also available Tues.-Sat. for most reservation services.

WESTERN TANAGER

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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.

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(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 10:00 p.m.

(213) 454-2576 - David Koeppel

(213) 827-0407 - Hank Brodtkin

C A L E N D A R

EVENING MEETINGS

Meet at 8:00 p.m. in Plummer Park
ID Workshop preceeds the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 11 - Lynn Barkley: Birding for Bats. This entertaining and informative talk with slide presentation will offer a broad perspective on these mammalian aeronauts; answering questions ranging from "What is a bat?" to "What makes bats unique?" The status of bats worldwide as well as of the 26 species of bats found in California will be discussed.

ID Workshop - Dr. Henry Childs, Blackbirds of California

Tuesday, January 8 - Esther and Robert Tyrrell. Our southern California based hummingbird mavens will present a breathtaking look into the world of these miniature masters of flight. This evening's talk/slide show will highlight the hummers of the Caribbean, including the Bee Hummingbird, the world's smallest bird, and the streamertail or "Doctor Bird" of Jamaica. Take this opportunity to have Esther and Bob sign your copy (available at Audubon House) of their new, lavishly illustrated book, *Hummingbirds of the Caribbean*.

I.D. Workshop: Herb Clarke, Birds of Fall

F I E L D T R I P S

CALL THE TAPE!

Before setting out for any field trip or attending any event, 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.

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

Saturday, December 1 - Prado Basin. Rescheduled for Sat., Feb. 9 due to change in hunting season. Leader **Tom Keeney**. Call Audubon House to sign up.

Sunday, December 2 - Topanga State Park. **Gerry Haigh** will lead participants through this nearby area composed of sycamores, grasslands, scrub oak and chaparral. This is an ideal trip for a beginning birder or for someone new in the area. From Topanga Canyon Blvd. 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 Village.) Follow the signs to the state park, and meet in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch at 8:00 a.m. \$3 parking fee. (LA., p.109, D-4).

Saturday, December 8 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Join **David White** on this regular morning walk to see the park's renowned wintering waterfowl and other birds. Meet at 8:00 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. (LA., p.47, D-5).

Saturday, December 8 - Carrizo Plain #1. This year, the trip will be led by an experienced Nature Conservancy staff member with first-hand knowledge of the preserve. Mountain Plovers and Bluebirds, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Golden Eagles, Northern Harriers and Prairie Falcons are seen on the plain regularly. We will check at dusk on Saturday for Sandhill Cranes. Trip is limited to 7 cars (per day), fee is a flat \$20 per car. Carpooling is encouraged. Lots of dirt roads. See reservation details below. Map and info will be sent.

Sunday, December 9 - Carrizo Plain #2. See above for details. Meet Sunday, 8:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 9 - Ballona Lagoon Marine Preserve. Leader **Eileen Weiss**. An easy morning bird walk. Note: Ballona Lagoon is not the same as Ballona Wetlands. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the bridge at Pacific Ave. and Lighthouse Street south of

Washington Street in Venice. To get there from the 405 Fwy., take Culver Blvd. SW to Lincoln Blvd. (PCH), turn right on Lincoln, left on Washington Blvd. and veer left onto Washington Ave. Turn left on Pacific Ave. and continue about 3/4 mile to Lighthouse St. Search out parking in the adjacent residential areas. (L.A., p.49, C-6).

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

Continued on previous page

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