



WESTERN TANAGER

The Los Angeles Chapter of
The National Audubon Society

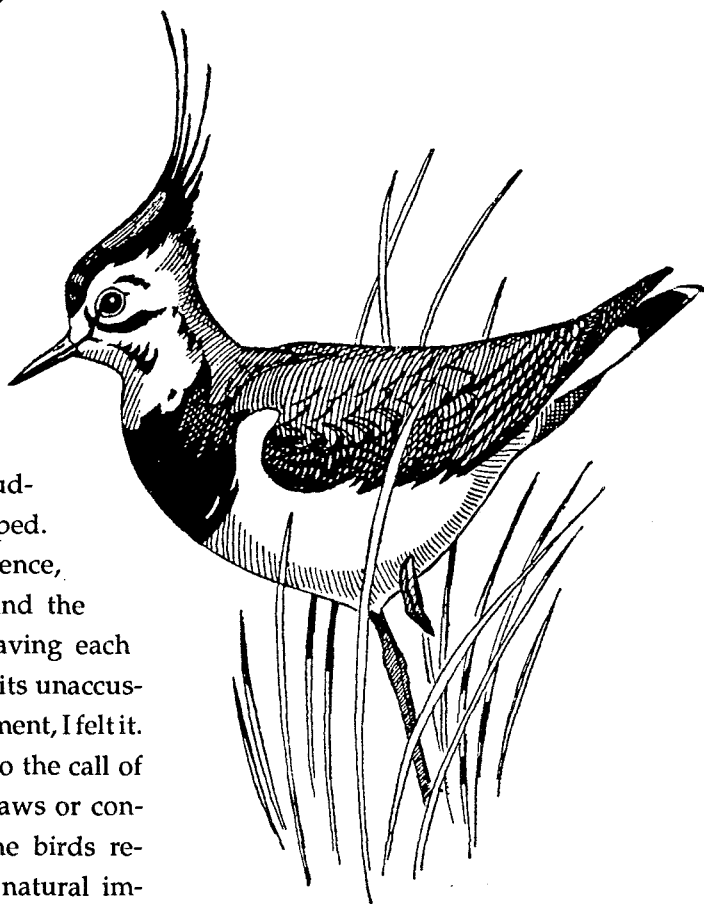
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Dreams & Reality

by Dorothy Dimsdale



I knew what it was long before I experienced it, and all my life I have continued to search for it. A moment when one feels an exhilaration, a harmony and a peace. It can happen under certain circumstances, by witnessing and feeling a part of a spontaneous happening in the natural world.

In northwest England, before World War II, my father and I would try to find a spot from where we stood and the horizon around us, where there would be no sign of human occupation. We never found it, but one morning in the Lake District I awakened to a deafening noise of birds. I looked out of the window to see a willow weighted down with hundreds—maybe thousands—of black-

birds, all calling at once. Suddenly the cacophony stopped. There was complete silence, then a whirl of wings, and the whole flock took off, leaving each branch rebounding from its unaccustomed weight. In that moment, I felt it. The automatic response to the call of the wild, unfettered by laws or constraints of any kind. The birds responding to completely natural impulses. I longed to go with them. I was young, and in that moment, I knew that beyond the horizon, my world of wonder waited.

During World War II, there always seemed to be a grey canopy over the sky. I watched German and British planes dog-fight, and saw some planes brought down by gunfire. The

clouds which floated by, no longer appeared to hold smiling faces and beckoning arms. They were troubled-looking, rolling, indiscernible images, and I knew I had to wait for peace.

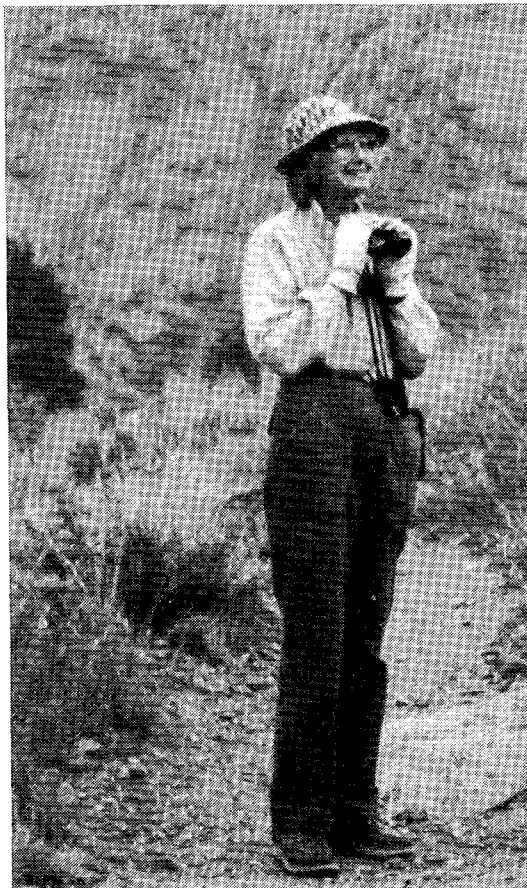
*Lapwing
Illustration by John Henry Dick
From A Gathering of Shore Birds*

Sometimes there were moments indicating what might be when the war was over and we could be free again. At the back of our house were two large dumps of old coal mine tailings. One was comparatively recent with no growth on it, called "The Muckeys." The other one was much older and had a carpet of grass and wildflowers hiding the drab tailings, called "The Green Muckeys." It was here, on the Green Muckeys on a warm summer's day, that I would lie, smelling the grass and looking up to my old friends, the clouds. I found it easy to align myself with the insects buzzing about me, and the caterpillars on the nearby hawthorne bushes, doggedly pursuing their extraordinary lives. This, in spite of the bushes being periodically cut back or small children collecting many of the caterpillars in match boxes, to pupate in a corner of the closed box and then be discarded — trapped forever.

After the war, and having embarked on a career in London, my solace was to be able to visit the country at weekends. Often small happenings would make my stay memorable. Once I found a sheep which had fallen and landed on its back. I pulled it onto its feet and was told later that it would have died if left. It gave me a good feeling to watch it run off, and was a sight far removed from the work-a-day world of the city, but there were still no people-free horizons.

Then, in 1963, I came to the western U.S. and on my first venture outside the city, I found it. No sign of habitation from horizon to horizon.

Enormous skies, sometimes with no clouds whatsoever. Complete silence from human noise. Just bird song and rustlings in the grass, and deep, soothing, overall silence. I didn't feel like an intruder — I felt a part of it. To stretch towards the warmth when the sun came up. To sit by a stream and listen and watch. Sometimes a couple of



hours would go by, and I would return to human company renewed in spirit and deeply contented.

One of the happiest discoveries for me was to find that others outside my family felt the way I did, and that there are many of us. There are those who write, like authors Barry Lopez (*Arctic Dreams*) and Lars Jonsson (*Bird Island*) who have such understanding and remarkable powers of expressing

what they feel. There are also those of us who cannot express adequately, but nevertheless understand and feel deeply.

Later in life I started to bird watch, and birding has provided a door to the magic land I seek. It has taken me to marvelous places, particularly in the U.S., from the Dry Tortugas of Florida to the Alaskan Pribilofs. On my trips to England, birding has opened new vistas and I guess my favourite bird there is the Lapwing — I am always thrilled on my return visits to see it in the fields. It is so completely European. I love the U.S. and am happy to be a citizen, yet the bond between me and my birth country will always tug a little at my heart strings. I think I'm very lucky to have had the benefit of living in both places. Wherever I have been in the world, there have been people I have met who share the same need to commune with the natural planet, who want to join it, not fight it. Who want to help further its natural state, not destroy it. Who, most of all, respect the whole earth and its inhabitants, flora and fauna alike.

I have been very fortunate in having lived a full and varied life. The most wonderful part, as I said in my first sentence, has been to have found what I knew existed even before I was able to experience it — the glory of our natural earth. 🐦

Editor's Note: Dorothy Dimsdale passed away on 27 August 1991. We shall miss her good humor, her companionship and her love of life.

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

At the risk of beating the not-so-dead horse of nuclear power to death, let's add a few words about this interesting source of energy. In a recent column we made the confident statement, "Nuclear power is clean, quiet and dreadfully expensive." Not so, says Earl Budin, M.D., Associate Professor of Radiology, UCLA Medical Center. We were only two-thirds right. "Nuclear power," he writes, "is dreadfully unclean." He points out that there are millions of tons of radioactive tailings from uranium mines sitting out in the open air in the United States.¹ To keep reactor rods from overheating, great quantities of cold water are used which must be returned to a river or the ocean at relatively high temperatures that are lethal to fish and plants.² And the well-known problem of getting rid of high-level radioactive wastes has never been solved.

Recent advertisements by the nuclear industry proclaim boldly that "Nuclear reactors emit no greenhouse gasses." Most of us would agree to that without a second thought. And this has been troublesome to those of us who are concerned about fossil fuel emissions and their proven role in global warming. If nuclear plants are free of greenhouse gases, perhaps we've been hasty in condemning them. Which is precisely what the ads want us to think. Especially if, as the ads imply, there is new technology on the drawing board that will reduce the danger of core meltdown to the vanishing point.

But Dr. Budin has done his homework. He discovered that nuclear plants produce large amounts of carbon dioxide. He has tracked down the perpetrators of what he calls "The Carbon Dioxide Myth" - the Nuclear Power Oversight Committee. The Committee (which sounds very official and objective) is the voice of the nuclear establishment, made up of the senior executives of the most powerful energy producers in the country. It

sponsors the cheery ads we've been talking about that promise a brave new world with plenty of safe, pollution-free energy. The Committee has also published a Position Paper entitled, "A Perfect Match: Nuclear Energy and the National Energy Strategy."³ This is certainly a perfect match with President Bush's recently announced energy policy. Bush calls for lots of new nuclear facilities, accelerated oil drilling (specifically targeting the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge) and neglects to mention auto fuel efficiency, alternative fuels and real energy conservation. The Position Paper contains a graph comparing the CO₂ emissions of power plants using different forms of fuel: coal, oil, gas and nuclear. The graph bears a note: "Although nuclear energy plants emit zero pollution, *nuclear fuel production in the U.S. uses coal-fired power.*"⁴ The electricity to create the radioactive rods that produce the heat that generates the power comes *only* from coal-fired plants. So the industry is telling us in small print (but not the public that reads its ads) that each major nuclear plant is responsible for the release of 250,000 tons of CO₂ each year! Coal-fired plants are the dirtiest energy producers, dispensing not only CO₂ but sulfur and nitrogen oxides, the notorious precursors of acid rain.

But that's not all. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that when reactors are not operating, maintenance electricity from diesel generators produce an additional 50,000 tons of CO₂ a year.⁵ No one has measured the amount of CO₂ that develops when reactors are dismantled and in the periodic chore of removing, transporting and storing the spent fuel rods.

The nuclear industry wants to thrust upon us a new generation of nuclear monsters costing billions of dollars that would offer no more guarantees of safety to an apprehensive public than the old breed. And it is attempting to do so by bare-faced deception: the Carbon Dioxide Myth.

The public is entitled to its apprehension. It was told at the birth of the nuclear era that this wonderful new source of power would "make electricity too cheap to meter." And the safety record leaves much to be desired. Beside Three-Mile Island and Chernobyl, there have been frequent shut-downs, human error and near-catastrophes. The Chernobyl reactor, by the way, was considered "one of the world's most reliable" by experts in the field.⁶ After Three-Mile Island, a study by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory concluded that one core-damaging accident could occur every eight years.⁷

Supporters of nuclear power have for years pointed to France as the paragon of nuclear energy success. What we haven't been told is that the state-owned agency runs at a staggering loss and has a forbidding international debt of \$38 billion.⁸ Its reactors are beginning to break down with the state considering converting some to natural gas.⁹

Sadly, the exciting vision of the miraculous atom as the clean, inexpensive energy that was going to replace fossil fuels is vanishing like a mirage in the desert. Though our nuclear industry has not given up, it can no longer claim to be safe and squeaky-clean. Nuclear power is as obsolete as nuclear weapons. The world is ready for an era of exploration of new sources of user-friendly energy: wind, solar, whatever. Let's get going. ➤

¹ National Geographic, April 1989

² Marine Review Commission, California Coastal Commission

³ Position Paper on Nuclear Power Oversight Committee, November 1990

⁴ Ibid. Source: Science Concepts, Inc.

⁵ Energy Systems Emissions, February 1989

⁶ World Watch, January-February 1988; "How Many Chernobyls?"

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Crisis in the French Nuclear Industry": Greenpeace press conference, July 1991

⁹ Wall Street Journal, December 12, 1990



Cave Creek—photo by Herb Clarke

Eared Trogans

Now that we have your attention, it's time to act to preserve Cave Creek Canyon!

The long-awaited bill to withdraw the Cave Creek Canyon area in southeastern Arizona from mining activity is now before Congress. When the U.S. Forest Service granted Newmont Mining Corp. permission to make exploratory drilling for gold in this unique ecosystem, the outraged response from people all over the country led the company to defer exploration for a year. If Congress agrees that the area deserves protection, Newmont will abandon their project.

So it is up to us. Letters supporting Arizona Congressman Jim Kolbe's bill, HR 2790, are absolutely essential. Please write a short personal letter to your congressman (House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515), asking him to vote for the bill and to co-sponsor it. Letters to California Senators Alan Cranston and John Seymour (U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510) urging them to introduce and support an identical bill in the Senate are equally important.

The remarkable blend of desert and mountain habitats close to the Mexican border has nurtured a diversity of plants and animals perhaps unsurpassed in the U.S. For birders, it is a perpetual feast of hummingbirds, flycatchers, warblers, Elegant Trogans and rare vagrants such as Eared Trogans.

Write for HR 2790—today. Your letters will make a difference. ➤

Environmental Success: Santa Rosa Plateau Saved

by Dan Silver

The fate of one of California's most precious natural areas, the Santa Rosa Plateau in southwest Riverside County, has hung in the balance for two years. Would there be housing development or a "Park by Nature," as first proposed by the citizens group Preserve Our Plateau? In a triumph of concerted and cooperative effort by all parties, on April 17, a \$35.4 million escrow closed on the key 3,800 acre Santa Rosa Springs parcel, saving the land for wildlife and future generations.

The Santa Rosa Plateau comprises rare Engelmann oak woodlands, chaparral, vernal pools, the finest native grassland left in southern California, and extensive riparian areas including year-round basins called tenajas. More rare and threatened species are found on the Plateau than on any other site in the entire state, and top predators like mountain lion and badger are still present. Due to this wealth of biodiversity, the Nature Conservancy purchased 2,900 acres there in 1984.

In the last several years, the region has experienced rapid growth and the escalating land prices typical of southern California. But with grassroots activism and strong public support, conservationists were able to forge a consensus that land protection was essential. With the inspired leadership of District Supervisor Walt Abraham, the entire Riverside County Board of Supervisors worked with outstanding dedication to put in place an innovative funding package. The landowner, RANPAC Communities, had announced on Earth Day 1990 that it, too, would seek a sale. The Nature Conservancy handled complex negotiations which included substantial mitigation monies from the Metropolitan Water District, and state participation was secured by Senator Robert Presley via Proposition 117/Mountain Lion funds. After many nerve-wracking ups and downs, success was finally achieved.

This story shows that even in what appears initially to be a near-hopeless situation, it is possible to protect our natural heritage if we have enough determination, will power, and the willingness to work together. It shows that grassroots activism makes a difference, and that government is capable of bold and effective action. On the Plateau, there are still major properties to be acquired and wildlife corridors to be secured, but the wildflowers are blooming and Golden Eagles circle overhead.

Many of you wrote important letters and gave much-needed contributions. Your help was essential, and many thanks. To get on the Preserve Our Plateau mailing list or for further information, write Preserve Our Plateau at P.O. Box 1534, Wildomar, CA 92395. ➤

Ecology Symposium

"Interface Between Ecology and Land Development in California"

This will be the title of a symposium to be held at the annual meeting of the Southern California Academy of Sciences, 1-2 May 1992 at Occidental College in Los Angeles. The meeting will begin Friday morning with a plenary address by Dr. Peter Raven, followed by morning and afternoon sessions on both Friday and Saturday. It is anticipated that the symposium will consist of four sessions on: Biodiversity and Habitat Loss, Mitigation of Development, Restoration of Damaged Communities, and Wildlife Corridors.

The focus of the meeting is to bring together persons involved in basic research, applied environmental consulting and governmental policy. Persons interested in participating or suggestions for related sessions should contact: Dr. Jon Keeley, Department of Biology, Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA 90041. ➤

LAAS Donations 1990-1991

We are proud to support the following organizations:

California Nature Conservancy	\$1,000
World Wildlife Fund	\$1,000
Environmental Defense Fund	\$1,000
National Resources Defense Council	\$1,000
Amigos de Bolsa Chica	\$ 500
Point Reyes Bird Observatory	\$ 500

Winter High Tides at Upper Newport Bay

By William C. Bakewell

November, December, January and February are the best months for searching for rails and other birds at Upper Newport Bay. American Bitterns, Clapper, Virginia and Sora Rails are most often seen during these months; and the rare Black Rail is a possibility. These birds are by far most easily found at about the times of the highest high waters during the times of the spring tides of this season. There are no tide gauges in Upper Newport Bay, but most local biologists seem to agree that the times and heights of higher high waters at Upper Newport Bay and Los Angeles Outer Harbor may be taken to be about the same. In the paragraphs below, the times of favorable high waters during this season will be set forth.

The heights of the tide for the times given below are all at least 6.2 feet. On 21 and 22 December 1991 and 19 January 1992, the heights of the higher high waters reach this season's three maxima of 7.1 feet. Birders looking for rails should be on station one half hour before the time of higher high water and stay for at least one hour after. For that reason, the times given below are all for higher high waters that occur more than a half hour after sunrise.

In November 1991 the times of favorable higher high waters are 0712 on Monday the 4th, 0741 on Tuesday the 5th, 0811 on Wednesday the 6th, 0841 on Thursday the 7th, 0710 on Wednesday the 20th, 0744 on Thursday the 21st, 0823 on Friday the 22nd, 0905 on Saturday the 23rd, 0953 on Sunday the 24th and 1043 on Monday the 25th.

In December 1991, the times of favorable higher high waters are 0749 on Thursday the 5th, 0821 on Friday the 6th, 0729 on Friday the 20th, 0814 on Saturday the 21st, 0900 on Sunday the 22nd, 0948 on Monday the 23rd and 1040 on Tuesday the 24th. The first two of this season's three highest high waters occur on the 21st and the 22nd, their heights being 7.1 feet.

In January 1992, the times of favorable higher high waters are 0807 on Sunday the 19th, 0855 on Monday the 20th and 0944 on Tuesday the 21st. The third and last of this season's highest high waters occurs on the 19th, it's height being 7.1 feet.

In February 1992, the times of favorable higher high waters are 0801 on Monday the 17th and 0847 on Tuesday the 18th.

All of these data were gotten from the 1991 and 1992 editions of *Tide Tables West Coast of North and South America*. These books are published by the National Ocean Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

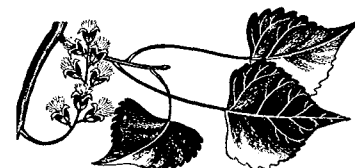
Good birding! 🐦

F R E E !

Camaraderie, fulfillment, satisfaction — the knowledge of a deed well-done.

The best kept secret around is the fact that many persons dedicate a part of their lives to helping out at Audubon House and *they enjoy it!* You can't find a more congenial group to be with. Everyone cares about the things that you care about. Everyone "talks" birds. Everyone is helpful and friendly.

It doesn't matter if you have computer knowledge. If you want to learn, we'll teach you—if you don't, then that's all right too. We urgently need more of these wonderful volunteers and are asking you to spend part of your week with us. Persons who wish to volunteer any day of the week, Tuesday through Saturday, 10-3, are welcome. Call Olga Clarke or Millie Newton, (213) 876-0202.



Colorful Perennials at Native Plant Sale

Colorful drought-tolerant perennials will be among the 7,000 plants featured at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden's annual native plant sale Saturday, November 2, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Plants for sale include cultivars of native California trees, shrubs, and ground covers. Succulents, cacti, iris, bulbs, ornamental grasses and drought-tolerant plants from Mediterranean climates will also be available.

Shoppers can do their part for plant conservation by "adopting" an endangered species at the sale.

Baked goods, soft drinks, books, and gifts will also be for sale.

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden is located at 1500 N. College Avenue in Claremont. For more information, call (714) 625-8767. 🐦

NAS Convention: Audubon in the Americas

By Tom Van Huss

Not all of the electrifying moments experienced at the 1991 National Audubon Convention in Estes Park, Colorado were attributable to the frequent lightening storms we had that week. Nor did the nearly constant rain dampen any spirits.

We expected fine sunny weather as 900 attendees from around the country gathered on July 22 at the YMCA of the Rockies to begin a week-long series of meetings, workshops, presentations, conclaves and, yes, even a little birding. But our hopes were soon dashed by a torrential downpour.

Second Vice President Bill Principe and I were the official delegates of the Los Angeles Chapter. Also in attendance from LAAS was Executive Past President Bob Van Meter.

The theme, "Audubon in the Americas," was emphasized by the many attendees and speakers from Mexico, Central and South America, and Canada. The many presentations and sessions dealing with environmental issues in the tropical areas of the Western Hemisphere reinforced the concept of a unified biosphere in which each living organism is inextricably interrelated to all others. The reality of this notion was revealed in a

series of reports given by Audubon Society scientists working in Central America in which they detailed a correlation in the decline of certain warblers and other birds in the United States and the disappearance of their wintering habitat in the tropical forests of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, and other neighboring countries.

The mostly miserable accommodations and weather were entirely forgotten and forgiven after hearing an address by Dr. José Lutzenberger, the Minister of the Environment of Brazil. In his eloquent and forceful speech Dr. Lutzenberger challenged us and the governments of the world to change the way we think about progress and the environment. He urged a global consideration of every action that is undertaken in the name of "development."

The convention's keynote speaker, Ted Turner, provided the entertainment highlight of the week. In a very personal and amusing talk Mr. Turner expressed his own feelings about the frustrations of trying to make the world a better place. For his courage in airing an Audubon special on his cable television network in the face of an advertiser boycott, Mr. Turner received the Audubon crowd's gratitude in a standing ovation.

The audience was to stand several times during the week: Once to honor Helen Engle of the Tahoma, Washington Chapter as the winner of the Audubon/Bausch and Lomb Award for outstanding service; again for a moving speech by Dr. Alvaro Umaña of Mexico, who spoke on "Our Environmental Agenda;" and also for the Grand Chief of the Cree Nation, Mathew Cooncomb, who so poetically stated the cause of his people in resisting a development in Quebec that benefits a few people, much to the detriment of a huge natural area and the native people who live there.

Shortly before the close of the conference the depth and conviction of the attendees became apparent in a session about the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992. Many of the rank and file members of the Audubon chapters nationwide spoke about the environment, governments, religion, and all the forces that can make our planet a better-or worse-place to live. Their eloquence and commitment spoke volumes of the depth of our organization.

Audubon President Peter Berle closed the convention by speaking of the "community of interests that unites us," and reminded us that there is "no more noble cause than our collective interest in saving the planet."

With the ever-present sound of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds whizzing by in every direction, we boarded the buses back to Denver feeling at once both energized and exhausted. 🐦

Hey Buddy! Got a Half Hour?



Are you increasingly frustrated by stories of oil spills, wanton logging, pollution, and environmental destruction every time you pick up a newspaper or turn on the news? Would you like to do something about it, make your voice heard, but you're not quite sure where to write or what to say? You're not the only one, and that's how the Los Angeles Audubon Society together with a National Audubon Society organization called the Armchair Activist can help.

The Armchair Activist is a national infrastructure of concerned citizens like yourself, organized on the local level, who write letters to legislators or to newspapers, or who make phone calls, all in a united effort to advise legislators on all levels—national, state, and local—about issues which are important to them.

Each month LAAS will send you detailed information on issues, how to write letters, and the names and address of the people who should receive them. All you have to provide is one half hour of your time and a 29¢

stamp. And best of all, there is no cost to you for the first six months! If, after six months, you don't feel good about yourself and your contribution to the environment, you pay absolutely nothing. But if you find yourself walking around with fuzzy feelings, then you'll want to subscribe to a whole year of the Armchair Activist for just \$6 (to help defray the printing and postage costs of the monthly mailings).

Sound good? Then go to your phone and dial (213) 306-4889 before 10:00 p.m. If no one is home, then leave your name, address, and telephone number. 🐦

Bookstore News

Olga Clarke

An update from your bookstore. Come and see the new titles on our shelves, or give us a call at the LAAS Bookstore at (213)876-0202.

Birds of the Lower Colorado, Rosenberg
Central California Naturally, Dickinson

Birds of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Littlefield
Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan, Ripley
The Birds of Pakistan, Roberts
Let's Look at Thailand, Ornitholidays
The Birds of Java and Bali, Holmes and Nash
Handbook Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds, Marchant and Higgins
Birds of Sumatra and Kalimantan, Holmes and Nash
The Birds of Wallacea, White and Bruce
Birds of the Netherland Antilles, Voous
Birdwatching in Britain, A Site-By-

Site Guide, Redman and Harrap
Pocket Guide to the Birds of Ireland, D'Arcy
The Birds of Tikal, Smythe
The Bluebird Book, Stokes
The Bald Eagles, Gerrard and Bortolotti
Voices of the Woodcreepers (cassette), Hardy/Parker/Coffey
The American Bald Eagle, E.I. Du Pont de Nemours and Company
The Pocket Guide to Shorebirds of the Northern Hemisphere, Richards
The Search for the Pink-headed Duck, Nugent
Phylogeny and Classification of Birds, Sibley
Fishwatchers Guide, West Atlantic

An Overview of the California Bird Records Committee

The California Bird Records Committee (CBRC) was established over twenty years ago (McCaskie 1970, Winter 1971) and was originally called the "Rare Bird Committee" of the California Field Ornithologists (CFO). The CFO was a then fledgling organization that grew into today's Western Field Ornithologists (WFO), which publishes the journal *Western Birds* and sponsors the CBRC. The initial intent of the Committee was to "ascertain which of the multitudinous observations [made in California] are acceptable beyond any reasonable doubt" (Craig 1970). As the CFO grew into the WFO, so too did this Rare Bird Committee grow into the CBRC. Rather than limiting itself to the review of sight records, the CBRC now reviews all records of rare birds that are reported in California, be they sight, photographic, or specimen records. Only those birds which average four or fewer records per year in California are reviewed. The latest version of the CBRC review list can be found in Roberson (1989) or can be obtained from the Secretary at no charge (but please include an addressed, stamped envelope).

The CBRC is comprised of ten voting members, one of whom acts as the Secretary. The Secretary is responsible for cataloging all of the documenta-

tion received, for ensuring that each record is circulated through the Committee, and for compiling the final record once it has completed circulation. All of the information reviewed by the CBRC, including the comments of its members, are placed on permanent archive at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Los Angeles. In this way, the CBRC is serving a valuable function to future researchers, many of whom would presumably have a difficult time otherwise tracking down information about particular reports of rare birds. Another important function of the CBRC is to maintain the official checklist of California birds, which currently stands at 576 species (Patten 1991).

Records are circulated by mail to all ten members. The documentation comprising a given record is reviewed by each Committee member, who is responsible for determining whether or not the information provided is sufficient to support the identification of the reported species. For this reason, it is very important to include as many

details as possible, no matter how trivial they seem at the time. The majority of records rejected by the CBRC receive this verdict because the submitted documentation was not thorough enough to support an identification. A standardized form has been

developed to assist the observer in the reporting of CBRC review species. I hope that you find this form useable and that it will encourage many of you to submit your sightings. I ask

that the completed forms, photographs, or any other type of documentation be submitted to me at the address below. I look forward to hearing from you!

Michael A. Patten, Secretary, P. O. Box 8612, Riverside, CA 92515-8612

Literature cited

- Craig, A.M. 1970. Editorial. *California Birds* 1:1-2.
McCaskie, G. 1970. The functioning of the Rare Bird Committee. *California Birds* 1:2-3.
Patten, M.A. 1991. An update from the California Bird Records Committee. *Western Birds* 22:95.
Roberson, D. 1989. News from the California Bird Records Committee. *Western Birds* 20:269-271.
Winter, J. 1971. The California Rarities Committee. *California Birds* 2:109-110.

Please copy the form
on the following two pages
for your reports to the
CBRC

**CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
REPORT FORM**

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of unusual birds. It may be used flexibly or need not be used at all. Please print or type. Leave blank any details not observed. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Also attach drawings, photographs, etc. Include all available photographs if the species is obscurely marked. When completed, mail this form to the Secretary of the C.B.R.C.

Common and scientific name:

Date(s) when seen:

Time(s) of day when seen:

Locality: California; _____ County; _____
_____ ; elevation:

Number of individuals, sex(es), age(s), general plumage (e.g. 2 adult males in breeding plumage):

Reporting observer and address:

Other observers accompanying the reporter who also **identified** the bird:

Other observers who **independently identified** the bird:

Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and the direction and amount of light):

Optical equipment (type, power, condition):

Distance from bird:

Duration of observations:

Habitat (general and specific):

Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; stress those habits used in identification):

Description (Include only what was actually seen, not what should have been seen. If possible, include total length (preferably as a comparison to another species, not just a length in inches), body bulk, shape, bill, eye, and legs characteristics, color and pattern of plumage, etc. Stress those marks that allowed an identification to be made.):

Voice:

Similar species (include how they were eliminated):

Photographs (Was it photographed? By whom? Are copies attached?):

Previous experience with this species:

List books, illustrations, other birders, etc. that aided you in the identification

a) at the time of observation:

b) after the observation:

Are you positive of the identification? (circle one) yes no If not, please explain:

This account was written from (check those that apply): ___ notes made during the observation;
___ notes made after the observation; ___ from memory.

Signature of the reporting observer(s):

Date and time of writing this account:

Birds Of The Season

by Hank Brodtkin

October is the heart of the fall vagrant season and birders will be fanning out along the coast searching the favorite "vagrant traps" for that unusual sighting that turns an ordinary day of birding into a memorable event. A list of these places that regularly turn up the irregular includes Pt. Loma in San Diego County, Huntington Beach Central Park in Orange County, Harbor Lake, Tapia Park, Malibu Creek and Zuma Canyon in Los Angeles County, the Pt. Mugu/Oxnard Plain area in Ventura County and Carpinteria Creek, Goleta and Gaviota Beach in Santa Barbara County. For information on birding hotspots, check Hank Childs' *Where Birders Go In Southern California*, available at the LAAS Bookstore.

Reports from mid-July to mid-August are usually slim, and this year is no exception. However, the tropical storm that brushed the coast was probably responsible for two outstanding sightings. A **Townsend's Shearwater** was reported on a whale-watching boat off Morro Bay on 11 August (Jim Royer). This species has not yet been officially accepted on the California list, although one other record is under review. And an oiled **Red-footed Booby** was picked up by the Harbor Patrol in King Harbor on 18 August and eventually placed in a bird rehab center (David Moody).

Two **Pink-footed Shearwaters** were 'scoped from shore near Pt. Mugu on 18 July (Don Desjardin). **Magnificent Frigatebird** reports include one bird at the north end of the Salton Sea on 27 July (Mike Patten), one north of Santa Monica on 13 August (Linda Harris), and an inland report near Silver Lake, Los Angeles, on 16 August (Dan Kahane).

There were three **Little Blue Heron** reports—one at Harbor Lake on 26 July (Mitch Heindel), one at the Ventura River mouth on 8-9 August (DD), and one in Malibu Lagoon on 15-17 August (Bruce Broadbooks). A **Tricolored Heron** was at the north end of the Salton Sea on 27 July (MP), and **Wood Storks** were seen at both ends of the Sea on 1 August (Nick Freeman).

A **Solitary Sandpiper** was at Harbor Lake on 15 August (Martin Beihower), a **Stilt Sandpiper** was near Niland on 1 August (NF), and single **Ruffs** were reported from the Santa Clara River mouth on 18 July (DD) and Piute Ponds near Lancaster on 20 July (Larry Sansone and Arnold Small).

A **South Polar Skua** in the San Pedro Channel was the highlight of the 17 August LAAS Pelagic trip. A **Pomarine Jaeger** was at the north end of the Salton Sea on 1 August (MP), **Franklin's Gulls** were at the Santa Clara River mouth on 18 July and 8 August (DD), and an impressive number of 47 **Common Terns** were at

Bolsa Chica on 27 July.

A **Northern Pygmy Owl** was found on an LAAS field trip at Cloudburst Summit in the San Gabriels on 4 August (NF), and **Williamson's Sapsuckers** and **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were reported from Mt. Baden-Powell in the San Gabriels on 23 July (Dan Cooper).

Two immature **Mountain Bluebirds** were on top of Mt. Piños on 18 July (Randy Moore). An **Indigo Bunting** was seen at the El Dorado Nature Center in Long Beach on 15 August (MB), and **Tricolored Blackbirds** were in the Sepulveda Basin on 1 August (Irwin Woldman). A **Great-tailed Grackle** was at Gorman Station on 30 July (RM).

Good Birding! 🐦

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.

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

Hank Brodtkin
27 -1/2 Mast Street
Marina del Rey, CA 90292
(213) 827-0407

- or -

David Koeppel
(213) 454-2576

A Guide to the Red Bishops of Los Angeles County

Several species of bishops, of the Afrotropical genus *Euplectes*, occur in a feral state in coastal southern California. They are most likely to be seen in rank weedy or marshy vegetation along lowland revercourses (such as the Sepulveda Basin or the Los Angeles River in the Los Feliz/Elysian Park area). The male **Yellow-crowned**



E. franciscanus
Northern Red Bishop

E. orix
Southern Red Bishop



E. nigroventris
Zanzibar Red Bishop

E. hordaceus
Black-winged Bishop



Text and drawings by Kimball Garrett.

Bishop (*E. afer*) is bright yellow on most of the upperparts in the breeding season, but breeding males of four other species are bright red or orange-red. These are pictured here; note the

extent and pattern of black on the face and underparts. Females, immature males, and non-breeding adult males of all bishop species are nearly identical to one another in the field. 🐦

C A L E N D A R

Continued from Page 12

Sunday, October 13 - San Diego Area. Nick Freeman leader. A good portion of the morning will be spent at Pt. Loma. Other areas that may be visited include the Tijuana Marsh and the Tijuana River farm fields. Take the San Diego Fwy (Interstate 5) about three miles past Route 52 to the Clairemont Dr. offramp and head W into the small lot adjacent to the Mission Bay Information Center. Meet here at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch. Scopes helpful.

Saturday, October 19 - Oxnard Plains. Leader Larry Allen will be scanning the extensive sod fields and wind breaks in the area for late migrants. Possible sightings may be of late warblers, Red-throated Pipit and Upland Sandpiper (one seen last year). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in front of the Edison building on the north side of Hueneme Rd. just before Casper Rd. and about 1.5 miles west of PCH. From the 101 Fwy take Las Posas Rd. S to Hueneme Rd. W. Probably finish before lunch. Scopes a big plus.

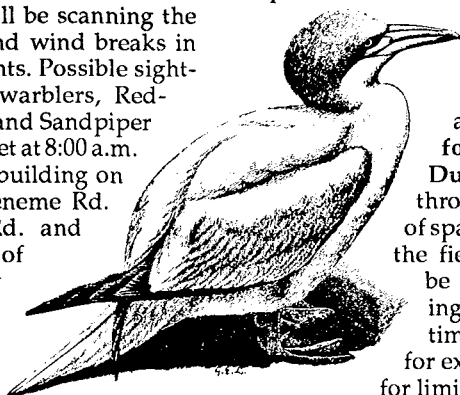
Saturday, October 19 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Leader David White. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave. in South El Monte, off 60 Fwy between Santa Anita and Peck Dr. exits, west of 605 Fwy. [LA, p.47, D-5]

Sunday, October 27 - Upper Bee Canyon. Leader Dustin Alcalá. A six mile strenuous walk through real wilderness, impressively rugged oak woodland habitat with a fair chance of seeing Purple Finch, Varied Thrush, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lewis' Woodpecker, Golden Eagle, deer and other mammals. Plants and trees will also be scrutinized. 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 N to 118 Fwy W to Balboa Blvd. N. Continue N, turn left on Jolette Ave., then right on Meadowlark Ave. Park at the side of the street where Meadowlark dead ends at Van Gogh St. Meet at 7:00 a.m. Call Dustin before 9:00 p.m. at (818) 767-0558 for more information. [LA, p.1, E-3]

Sunday, November 3 - Topanga State Park. Leader Gerry Haigh. See October 6 write-up for details.

Friday, November 8 - Sparrow Seminar. Ever have trouble sorting out Clay-col-

ored and Chipping sparrows? Our own Jon Dunn will draw on his extensive field experience and impressive slide collection to familiarize us with this often difficult family of birds. Bring binoculars to view slides. Lecture only fee \$8. Meet at 7:30 p.m. at the Van Nuys Senior Citizens' Center. Take the 101 Fwy to the Van Nuys Blvd. offramp in Sherman Oaks, head N, and turn right onto Addison St. Make a quick left on Tilden Ave., and continue into the adjacent lot. See November 10 for field trip.



Sunday, November 10 - Sparrow Field Trip. The affiliated fieldtrip to California City with Jon Dunn will take us through the ins and outs of sparrow identification in the field. Sparrows should be migrating or wintering in fair numbers at this time. Sign-up with LAAS for exact directions. \$15 fee for limited participation field trip only. See November 8 for lecture.

Saturday, November 16 - Sepulveda Basin Natural Area. Leader Dustin Alcalá anticipates seeing fair numbers of wintering birds and resident riparian and grassland species. This is an easy walk and a good chance to see a park that LAAS has been actively supporting. Meet at Woodley Park at 7:00 a.m. From the 405 Fwy, take Burbank Blvd. W, turn right onto Woodley Ave. and continue to the Woodley Park entrance on the right. Meet in the first parking area. [LA, p.15, B-6]

Sunday, November 17 - Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Leader David White. Meet at 8:00 a.m. See October 19 write-up for details.

Sunday, November 24 - Pt. Mugu. Base biologist Tom Keeney should find plenty of waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, scoters and other wintering birds to remark upon in this limited access area. Take 101 Fwy W to Las Posas Rd. S, take PCH N onto Wood Rd., head W then S on the frontage road to the lot at the main (#1) gate. Meet at 8:00 a.m. The limited 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 SASE, citizenship status, phone number, and a \$5 deposit to be refunded at the gate. ☞

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EDITOR: Jean Brandt
CONSERVATION: Sandy Wohlgenuth
ORNITHOLOGY CONSULTANT:
Kimball Garrett
FIELD TRIPS: Nick Freeman
PROGRAMS: Dan Kahane
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Tuesday - Saturday
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(213) 876-0202 - office
(213) 874-1318 - bird tape
(updated Thursdays)

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 Tuesday - Saturday for most reservation services.

C A L E N D A R

EVENING MEETINGS

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

October 8, 1991 - Master naturalist, Herb Clarke, will present an illustrated program: *Wild California*. Herb's stunning photography will highlight some of the unique wonder and diversity of California's natural heritage. Lots of birds!

Workshop - Steve Hartman of the California Native Plants Society will present an overview of the flora of the Sepulveda Wildlife Reserve and of restoration efforts underway to eliminate exotics and to restore the basin with several native plant communities.

November 12 - Chuck Almdale of the Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society will give a program entitled, *Birding In Uganda or Looking For The Shoebill*.

ID Workshop - TBA

and wintering bird species together. Full or half day; suit yourself. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the shopping center adjacent to the Malibu Lagoon bridge. Take PCH N over the bridge, turn right and right again into the shopping center across from the lagoon, and meet in the NE corner of the lot. Bring lunch. [LA, p.114, B-5]

Friday, October 11 - Chatsworth Park 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 Canyon Blvd., go W on Devonshire and continue into the parking lot by the Recreation Center. Meet at 8:00 a.m. [LA, p.6, B-3]

Continued on page 11



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P E L A G I C T R I P S

Saturday, October 12 - Los Angeles to Santa Barbara Island and beyond; 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Cost \$32. Leaders: Herb and Olga Clarke.

Saturday, November 16 - Los Angeles to Santa Barbara Island and beyond. Trip is planned to look for ALCIDS; 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Cost \$32. Leaders: Arnold Small and Herb Clarke.

Note: Surcharge may be required for all trips if fuel costs rise.
See Reservation Policy on page 11

F I E L D T R I P S

CALL THE TAPE!

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

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

Sunday, October 6 - 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, turn E (uphill) on Entrada Dr. (7 miles S of Ventura Blvd., 1 mile N 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]

Monday, October 7 - Malibu to McGrath. First Monday in October for twenty years running! What a landmark! Ed Navojosky will lead birders up the coast from Malibu Lagoon to McGrath estuary, stopping along the way to bird and picnic at Big Sycamore Canyon and elsewhere. Good possibilities for resident, migrant, vagrant

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