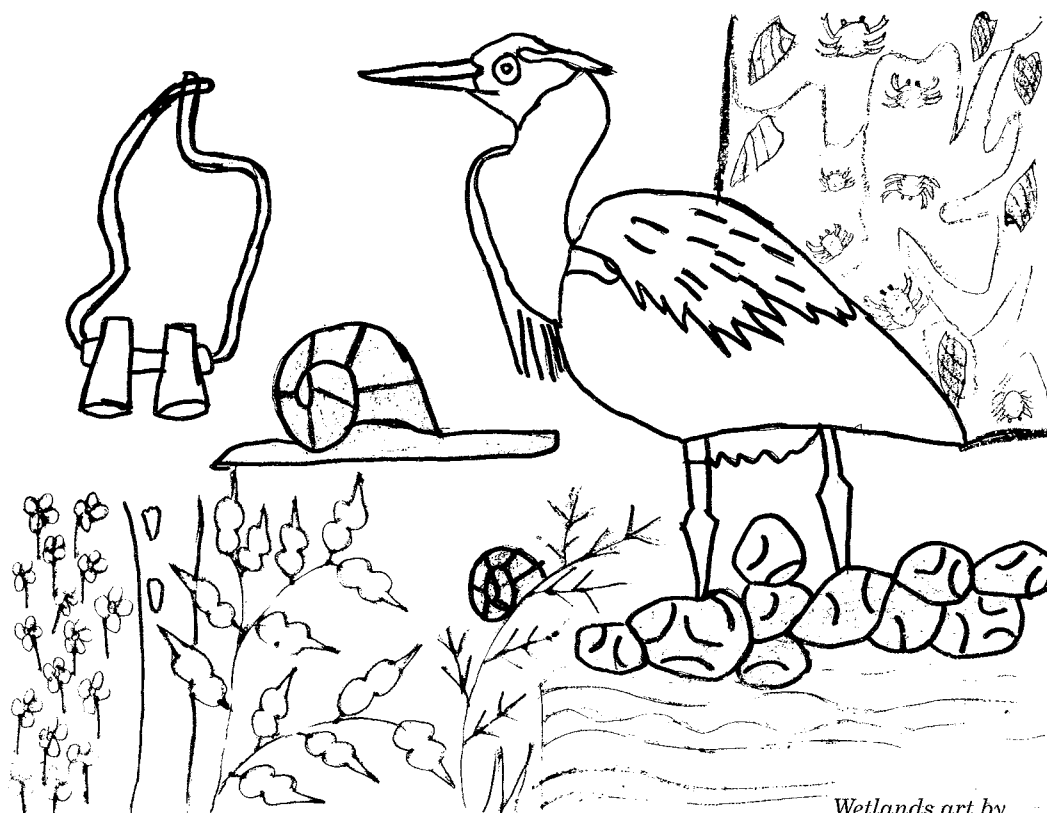


# WESTERN TANAGER



Volume 60 Number 1 September 1993

Los Angeles Audubon Society



Wetlands art by  
Lene Ngoo Thi Son, age 11

## A New Look...

**T**he Los Angeles Audubon Society was formed in 1910. The first issue of the *Western Tanager* was published by LAAS in October 1934. We are now entering our **sixtieth** year!

To celebrate this momentous occasion, the *Tanager* has a new look and a new direction. Three new columns have been added. **OPEN EYES** will be a page devoted to things that you can do with children or that children can do by themselves to make them more aware of the

world of nature. **PERSONAL HIGH** will be written by famous birders sharing their most rewarding day in the field. With **A CLOSER LOOK**, Kimball Garrett will discuss a different bird species each month.

Some things are too good to change. **CONSERVATION CONVERSATION**, so beautifully written by Sandy Wohlgemuth, will continue to enlighten and awaken us to environmental concerns. Hank Brodtkin will keep reporting **BIRDS OF THE SEASON** in his unique style (but remember

he needs your input for his records). A belated thanks to Sandy and Hank for their years of dedication. Thanks also to Nick Freeman, Phil Sayre and Dan Kahane for our full calendar of events.

We have made some design changes, and our heartfelt gratitude goes to LAAS's resident artist, Jonathan Alderfer, for the new headings. Jonathan has always been a gracious contributor to the *Tanager*, and we really appreciate the time he has spent on our behalf.

We hope you enjoy the "new" *Western Tanager*. Please let us know. ➤



# Rich Stallcup

## P E R S O N A L H I G H

by Rich Stallcup

**S**ometimes you wake up early and just **know** it's going to be a **great** day!

That's the way it was at 4:30 A.M. on Sunday, 3 November 1985, as we were rolling out the driveway at Inverness for the one-hour trip to Bodega Harbor. We paused at the stream to look at the alder and willow tops silhouetted against the dirty-orange glow of San Francisco's city lights. They were still — there was no wind and I knew our boat would make it to Cordell Bank, 25 miles west of Point Reyes Lighthouse.

I had been asked to be a leader on this "Pacific Adventures" cruise and was happy to find many friends at the dock, all abuzz with talk of recent trips and sightings. As we loaded gear, chum and passengers aboard the *Merry Jane*, there was an overall sense of anxious energy. It seemed that everyone knew it was going to be a great day.

It was dawning beautifully as we coursed through the bay's channel markers toward the breakwaters and the open sea. As hoped, a slight northwest breeze was now developing — enough to lift tubenoses into flight but not enough to cause excessive hurling by sick birders at the stern.

Usually, except for two or three alcid species, a few Sooty Shearwaters and a Parasitic Jaeger, the first two hours of this trip are relatively quiet — but not today. Almost instantly as we cleared the jetties and turned west into the long, gently rising swells, there was a shout from the bow, "Buller's Shearwater!" We scurried to see it, then two more, a Pink-footed, two Ancient Murrelets and a fulmar. The

all-day rush was on, and we were still so close to land that the oystercatchers wondered what all the yelling was about.

By "chumming" regular bits of popcorn and dead fish, we maintained a large gull following as we powered west. These, in turn, attracted other birds like Pomarine Jaegers, a few Sabine's Gulls and numerous shearwaters. (During the day we tallied over 250 for each Buller's Shearwater and Northern Fulmar.) When a particularly identifiable Short-tailed Shearwater — and later a Flesh-footed — appeared in the wake, we stopped for great views and the "why—we-know-it-is-what-it-is" speech. Again, we put the compass on the big green SW and ran toward the bank but again were interrupted when I glimpsed a Laysan Albatross nearly a mile back. The bird took a while to catch up, but did and landed on the water. Soon the sounds of cheering and winding motor drives was drowned by a shout of "whale!" from the bow. At long distance, it blew again, was certainly one of the great *Balenopteras*, and we were off to the southeast.

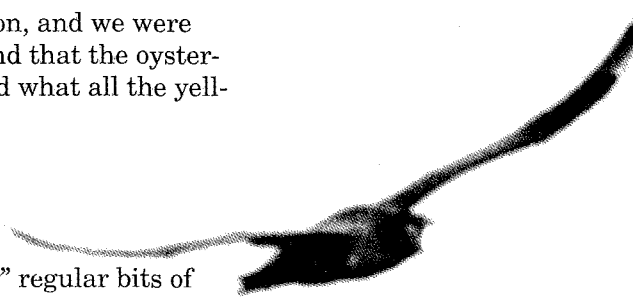
We were close to the east ridge of Cordell Bank, and Cassin's Auklets were skipping away like stones between the Rhinos, sitting dumbly. We killed the engines near where we thought the whale was, still chumming, and several Black-footed Albatrosses lumbered in to splash down. Suddenly, there was a huge blast of air right beside the boat and everyone froze, not sure

what was going on. Moments later, a wonderful mist of Blue Whale snot settled on everything, and birders were digging for hankies and tissues. Were we having fun yet? You can bet your Bushnells we were!

O.K. So I haven't even mentioned the skua, Dall's Porpoises or Red Phalaropes, and we were only halfway through the trip. The water was behaving and, with a high overcast, visibility was excellent. What else could happen? After two albatross species, I (jokingly) said to the group that if anyone saw any **other** kind of albatross to please speak up.

At one-third speed we moved west again above the mountain tops, some only 120 feet below the surface. The number of Black-footed Albatrosses was increasing, there was a second Laysan and a Minke Whale... and then there were storm petrels. A few Ashys are to be expected here, but the Blacks were a first Marin County record (and this was **November**). Fifteen Fork-taileds were scattered about, and the white-rumped birds were Wilson's. We were very conservative in thinking there were at least ten of them, which was certainly more than had ever been seen together before in the entire North Pacific. Storm-petrels move fast and, even when close, are hard to count.

This was one of those trips that



oceanic wildlife dreams are made of. As we floated toward the south bank we entered pelagic nirvana.

There were several Humpback Whales plowing rows off the port bow, and almost everyone was there watching them. I was in the back cutting squid — there were still lots of birds around.

(Ever since I was a kid-birder, I knew that the ultimate sighting in the California Pacific would be that of a Short-tailed Albatross. For 25 years, 200 ocean trips and many windy days staring at the watery horizon from shore... waiting... but knowing the chances were slim, almost zero. With only 200 of them in the world, there probably weren't enough to go around.)

Then it happened — there it was. About 200 yards away and coming straight at us. I was so excited I could barely breathe. It rose slightly to miss the boat and went over me so close I could feel its wind

— I came unglued. The screams must have been deafening, causing the skipper to have “done something” to his transmission and causing 40 birders to come stampeding aft. I snapped off a couple of panic photos, threw most of the squid overboard and dragged a sick person out of the cabin.

The huge bird passed again, made a large arcing, slow motion wheel, lowered its big pink, webbed landing gear and water skied to a halt. Those who knew the significance of the event were alternately crying and laughing, babbling incoherently and missing “high fives.” Others were at least amazed — with the unraveling story about this bird and with the vision... this thing made the Black-footed Albatrosses look small!

The two-hour ride back to the mainland seemed short, and there was lots of talk. People were tired and their energy was spent, but

most were too excited to sleep. Hardly anyone came running to look at the Elephant Seal.

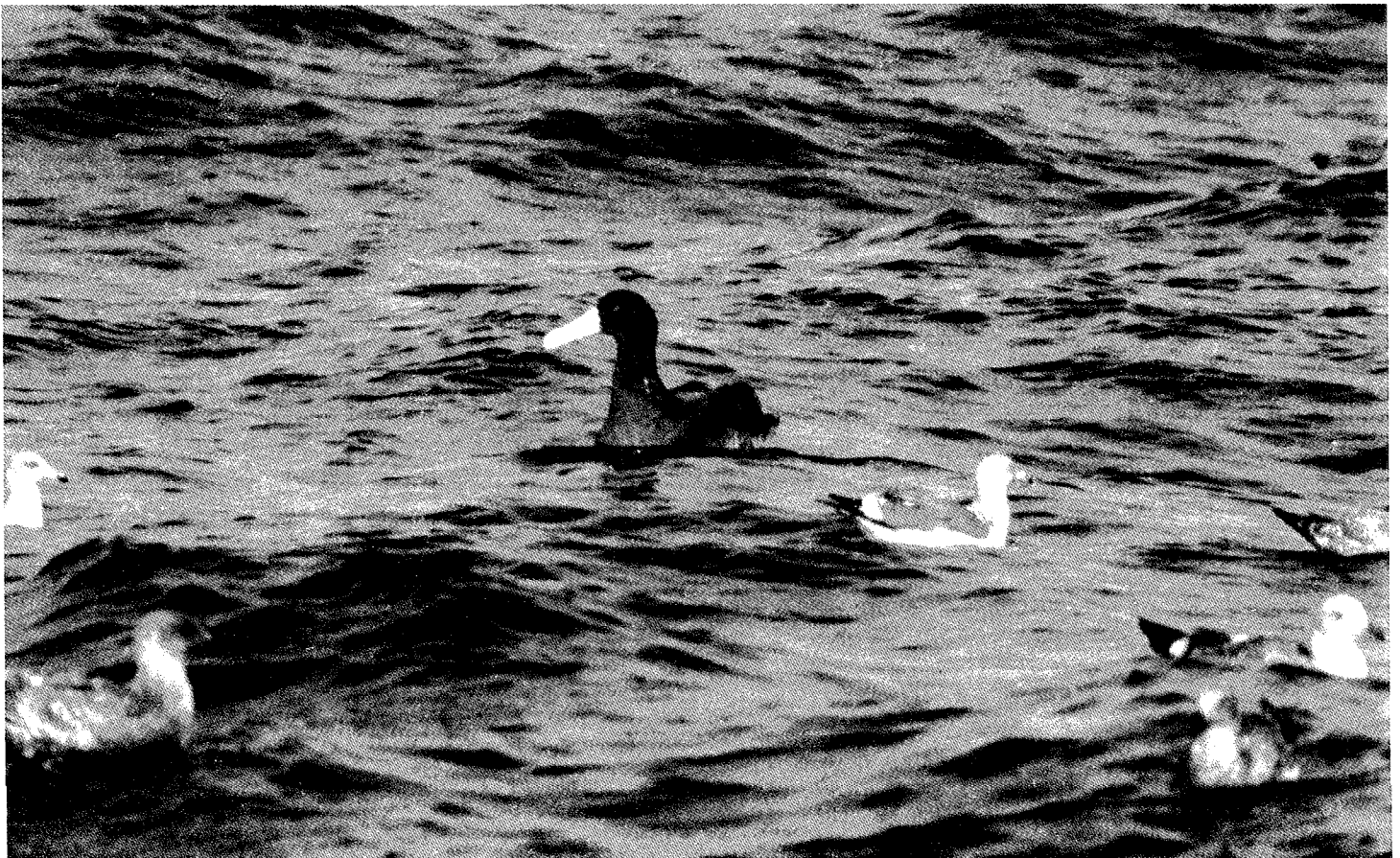
## Epilogue

Over time, we have learned that organizing chase trips after rare seabirds is usually futile. This time, though, it had to be done. This bird was so rare, so big and it was present because there were fishing boats producing forage. On Tuesday, 5 November, the chase trip went directly to the spot we had found the bird and there it was. Those who waited until Thursday, 7 November, had a miserable day. 🐋

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Rich Stallcup has been a California birder from a very early age. He is the author of *Ocean Birds of the Near Shore Pacific — A Guide for the Sea-Going Naturalist* and leads seminars for the Point Reyes National Seashore. Rich lives in Inverness, California.

*Short-tailed Albatross with Western Gulls. Photos by author.*





by Dan Kahane

**A**mong the wonders of nature is the seasonal pulse of bird migration. How does a Ruby-throated Hummingbird fly 500 miles across the Gulf of Mexico? How does a Hooded Oriole return from Mexico each spring to the same palm tree in Los Angeles or a tiny warbler fly thousands of miles from the woodlands of Venezuela to the forests of the Yukon? This fall, try using migration as an opportunity to stimulate your child's innate curiosity.

Why do birds migrate? In general, they move to where food supplies and hunting territories are most abundant. How do these feathered travelers find their way? In addition to topography, they may take their bearings from the sun, the stars or the moon. On foggy days they may use the sound of waves crashing on the shore. Some use tiny pieces of magnetite in their brains as compasses. A few may even use their sense of smell.

Angelenos who watch birds know the subtle pleasure when we first hear the "see" of Cedar Waxwings

in October, or knowing in late May that the last of these gregarious songbirds will depart for their northern breeding grounds. Encourage questions about where birds go when they disappear from our neighborhoods and why.

In addition to helping a child develop a life list, and more importantly the observational skills that go along with it, try setting up a yard or neighborhood bird list and recording the different species seen each month. The table below allows one to graphically track the arrivals and departures of the "regulars" as well as the unheralded and thrilling appearance of vagrants that occasionally visit our neighborhoods.

Large ledger sheets work beautifully or, if the child is handy with a ruler, have them create their own. Rather than a simple 'x' in the box, you may have the child enter the date that she/he first sees the species in a given month. Older children may divide the months into weeks. We suggest claiming all visible air space from both front and back yards!

After one year, you will see patterns emerging. If you are consistent over a period of years, you may be able to detect increases or decreases in species diversity. These notes can be useful to ornithologists. There are many questions to be asked and lessons to be learned in the study of backyard birds and their rhythmic comings and goings.

The drawings on page 1 and at the top of this page were done by students in Elyse Artin's 5th grade class at the Bellagio Road Newcomers Center in Los Angeles. All are in their first year in the United States. They participated in the Ballona Wetlands Education Program this past spring and drew these pictures based on their outdoor classroom experience.

| SPECIES | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
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# A Feather Quiz

Illustrated by John Schmidt

**T**est your observational skills. You have seen feathers like these on the ground somewhere in Southern California (except for one... it's a "ringer"). Can you identify the bird for each feather?

Answers can be found on page 10.



- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
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- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_



# CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

Once more unto the breach, dear friends... Another bloody battle is joined in a war that never ends. The philosophical struggle continues unabated between the scientific community and the well-meaning sentimentalists of animal rights. Last year it was red foxes, today it is the feral ducks of the Venice canals. Though birders scorn them as “funny ducks,” “city park ducks,” “bastard mallards” or worse, they are the always-hungry, animated creatures little kids and their parents delight in feeding bread and popcorn to. At the Venice canals the hybrid mallards, Muscovy ducks and white Pekin ducks were as cherished as household pets by many of their neighbors. The urban idyll at Venice was shattered when a number of pets turned up dead.

The County Department of Health Services determined that a virus had destroyed the victims. Positive diagnosis was established by the federal government's National Wildlife Research Laboratory. Cause of death was DVE, Duck Virus Enteritis, a deadly herpes organism that killed 40,000 wild ducks in Lake Andes, South Dakota, in 1973. California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided that to prevent the spread of the disease to millions of wild ducks and geese coming down the Pacific Flyway in the fall it was necessary to capture and kill the Venice population. Although some of the birds appeared healthy and might not perish, any survivors could be carriers of the virus and so transmit it to wild waterfowl. When it was all over it was es-

timated that 60 birds died of the disease and 350 were euthanized.

Many of the local residents who had become attached to the ducks exploded in anger. Naturalists from the wildlife agencies were confronted, verbally abused and even threatened with bodily harm. People talked of quarantining the birds, of immunizing them with a vaccine, of shipping them to some covert shelter in Kern County.

And then a startling rumor began to spread: determined, emotional Venetians were clandestinely moving their ducks to other areas. None were sighted at Malibu Lagoon, but some did turn up at the Ballona Wetlands. One man was seen walking down Culver Blvd. in broad daylight with a duck in his arms. A number were spotted in Franklin Canyon Reservoir in the Santa Monica Mountains. When some of these birds died, all remaining ducks were caught and killed. These ducks appeared overnight, fueling a suspicion that they were secretly introduced. (Feral ducks rarely wander; they tend to remain where they are fed.)

It is widely accepted today that birds of most species, and particularly the migrants, are in a period of severe decline. Loss of wetlands has removed feeding and resting places for waterfowl and shorebirds, increasing the distance between oases and crowding those that remain. Longer flights burn more fat reserves; crowding produces stress and adds to the possibility of epidemic botulism and other fatal infections. Selenium poisoning in wildlife refuges like Kesterton has caused the deaths of thousands of water birds: 100,000 Eared Grebes perished of selenium poisoning in the Salton Sea. And now another hazard is added to the grim obstacle course, Duck Virus Enteritis.

\*\*\*

The humanitarian impulse of the Venice folks is easy to understand; those of us with pets know the bond of affection that develops between pet and owner. But as with the organized animal rights groups, the whole picture of beleaguered wildlife seems to have escaped them.

**The narrow, absolute  
veneration of life — any life,  
regardless of consequences —  
is hard to understand.**

The narrow, absolute veneration of life — any life, regardless of consequences — is hard to understand. We have seen the misplaced concern for the San Clemente feral goats that were shot as they methodically consumed the wildlife habitat. We have witnessed the violence and hatred that erupted when the red foxes at Ballona were euthanized because they were feeding on endangered Belding's Savannah Sparrows and other native birds and animals. There was little sympathy expressed by the righteous militants for the deceased wildlife.

Yes, it is sad and tragic that the Venice ducks had to be destroyed. But ducks with a deadly disease

cannot be allowed to infect healthy wild waterfowl already in serious trouble. Perhaps eventually the canals will be repopulated with uncontaminated hybrids, but today a painful tradeoff must be made. The overwhelming majority of biological scientists support the sacrifice of these unfortunate birds.

It is a sobering thing to realize that there are so many people — many well-educated — who have such little understanding of nature, who are unaware of the wildlife crisis all over the world. We can only hope that education in our schools and in the media will make a difference. Unfortunately we aren't holding our breath. 🐾

## WESTERN Tanager

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# Bookstore News

## End-of-Summer Sale

**O**ut-of-print books and overstocked titles at 20%–40% off. Space-master 60mm telescope is only \$164! Also check out these new arrivals:

### World

*A Supplement to the Distribution and Taxonomy of the Birds of the World*, Sibley and Monroe; price TBA.

### North America

*Birds of Washtenaw County, Michigan*, Keibl; \$13.95.

*Birds of Montana*, McEneaney; price TBA.

*Birds of the Tri-Cities — 25 Bird-watching Locations*, Ennor; \$15.95.

*Birds of the Canadian Rockies*, Scotter; \$16.95.

*Birder's Guide to British Columbia*, Taylor; \$18.95.

### Checklists

*Florida Bird Species: An Annotated List*, Robertson; \$16.95.

*Location Checklist to the Birds of Chiricahua Mountains*, Taylor; \$4.95.

*Checklist to the Birds of Oaxaca, Mexico*, Taylor; \$4.95.

*A World Checklist of Birds*, Monroe and Sibley; due November '93; price TBA.

### Australasia

*Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali*, Mackinnon; price TBA.

### South America

*Birding Brazil — A Checklist and Site Guide*, Forrester; \$34.95.

### Europe and Middle East

*Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* (Fifth Edition), Peterson, Mountfort and Hollom; due September '93; price TBA.

### Specific

*White Ibis: Wetland Wanderer*, Bildstein; due October '93; price TBA.

If you have misplaced or did not receive our Fall/Winter 1992 catalogue or update, please call us at (213) 876-0202 between 9:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Tuesday through Saturday, and we will send one out to you. 🐾

Annual membership in both societies is \$35 per year, \$21 for seniors and presently \$20 for new members for their first year. Members receive the *Western Tanager* newsletter and *Audubon* magazine, a national publication. **Renewals** of membership are computerized by National Audubon and should not normally be sent to LAAS; however, new memberships and renewal of lapsed memberships may be sent directly to LAAS. Make checks payable to of National Audubon Society.

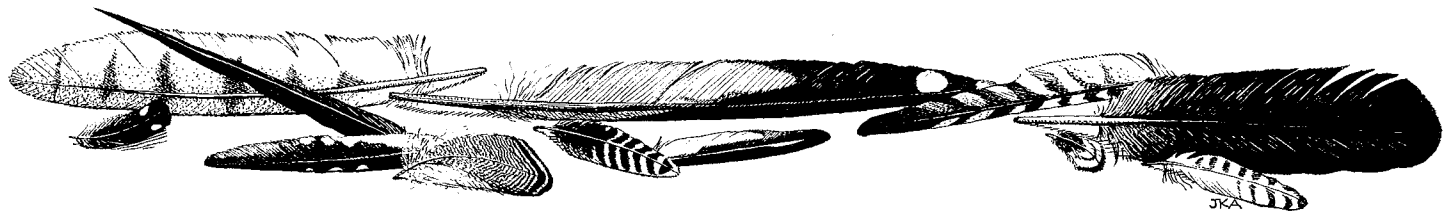
Nonmembers may subscribe to the *Western Tanager* for \$15 per year. The newsletter is sent by first-class mail to subscribers and members who pay an additional \$7. Make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

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# A C C L O S E R L O O K

by Kimball Garrett

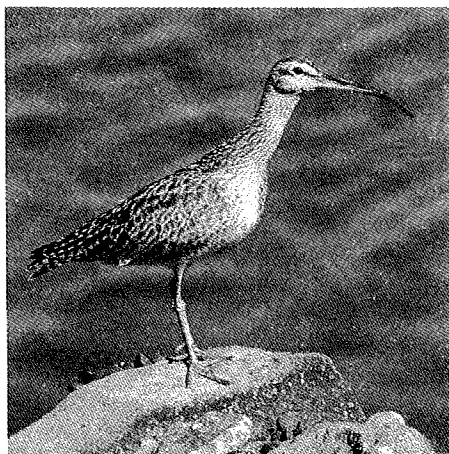
## The Whimbrel

(*Numenius phaeopus*)

**L**ike so many of our shorebirds, the Whimbrel nests in the vast tundra regions that lie mostly north of the 60th parallel. And in common with certain other species, including the Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling, Whimbrels winter over a vast latitudinal range, from the coasts of our northern states south to southern South America. It's no surprise, therefore, that migration is a dominant force in this curlew's annual cycle and that the passage of this species through our area is substantial and prolonged.

One notable feature of the Whimbrel's migration is that it shows strikingly different patterns of distribution and habitat use in spring versus fall. This isn't an unusual pattern — many warblers and hummingbirds, for example, show a tendency to move north in spring through lowland and foothill habitats while returning southward through higher elevation forests and meadows — but it is exhibited more strongly in the Whimbrel than in most species.

Southbound Whimbrels in "fall" (roughly July through September) are detected mainly along the coast, from estuaries to beaches and rocky headlands. If there is any significant passage through the interior, it must overfly most of our region for there are only scattered records of individuals or small flocks in our desert regions. Only at the Salton Sea do inland Whimbrels occur in large numbers in fall, and all but



the occasional bird or two will withdraw from there for the winter.

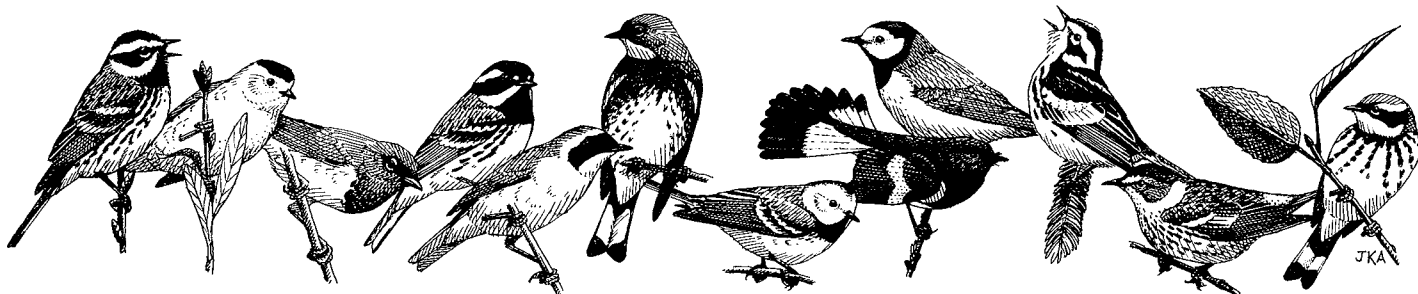
In contrast, the spring passage of Whimbrels brings large numbers of birds through the interior where they forage in alfalfa fields, pasturelands and other open situa-

tions in agricultural regions. Flocks are often seen in open areas on the coastal slope as well, including parks, golf courses and school athletic fields. Perhaps the best spot to find large spring flocks of Whimbrels is the Lancaster Water Treatment Plant north of Avenue D (Highway 138), just east of Highway 14. These ponds are open from 7:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., seven days a week; be sure to check in at the office. Flocks of several hundred are routine here from early April through mid-May, with high counts of 1,300 recorded on 16 April 1980 and again on 25 April 1993. The photograph below shows just a portion of a large assemblage of Whimbrels (with a few Long-billed Curlews, *Numenius americanus*) at the Lancaster Water Treatment Plant on 18 April 1992. —

(This column initiates a regular illustrated feature in the Western Tanager. Each month we will focus on a selected aspect of the biology of one of our local species.)







# BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Hank Brodtkin

**F**all migration will be well under way when this issue reaches the reader. Vagrant shorebirds such as Semipalmated Sandpipers and Rufous-necked Stints should be looked for among the flocks of Least and Western Sandpipers. Vagrant passerines such as Eastern Kingbirds, Red-eyed Vireos and American Redstarts seem to show up early in the season — probably because breeding populations of these birds exist close to California in eastern Oregon. By the end of September anything could show up. The active birder will want to check coastal canyons and estuaries as well as desert sewer ponds and manmade or natural oases.

Please share and document any unusual sightings by calling the telephone numbers at the end of this column and by sending a complete description of your sighting to Guy McCaskie, Southern California Regional Editor, *AMERICAN BIRDS*, P.O. Box 1390, San Diego, CA 92112. Los Angeles County sightings should be reported to Kimball Garrett, Natural History Museum, 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007.

— — —

The most exciting event of the summer so far took place at the north end of the Salton Sea on 10 July when Guy McCaskie and others saw a gadfly-type petrel with the characteristics of a **Bulwer's Petrel**. If accepted, this would be the first North American sighting of this species. Almost as amazing to those birders who have braved long

hours of sickness-inducing pelagic birding was the sighting on the same day of a **Cook's Petrel** as well as a **Least Storm-Petrel** and a **Pomarine Jaeger** from the same location. Fifty **Black Storm-Petrels** were seen in Santa Monica Bay from a sailboat on 10 July (Tom Frillman). An adult Blue-footed Booby was on Lake Mojave on the Arizona/Nevada border, just north of the California border on 22 July (Bob McKernan).

A **Wood Stork**, rare away from the Salton Sea, was reported from Anaheim Lakes on 3 June (Ed Knight). Three late **Black Brants** were at Cabrillo Beach on 18 June (Tom Miko), and also from the north end of the Salton Sea comes a report of a **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** on 12 July (Gjon Hazard).

The **Black Skimmer**, now a common breeder in San Diego and Orange Counties, often disperses northward after the breeding season. Two were at Cabrillo Beach on 2 July (TM), and one was seen at Marina del Rey on 4 July (TF). A **White-winged Dove** was at Peck Park on 4 June (Jon Ivanov), and single **Common Ground-Doves**, spreading north from their foothold in Orange County, were seen at Sand Dune Park in Manhattan Beach and at the South Bay Botanical Gardens on 26 May (both Mitch Heindel).

A report of a "**Gilded**" **Flicker** from north of Blythe on 30 May was the first report of that form in a while (Sue Clark). A pair of **Olive-sided Flycatchers** with a newly fledged young bird were seen in

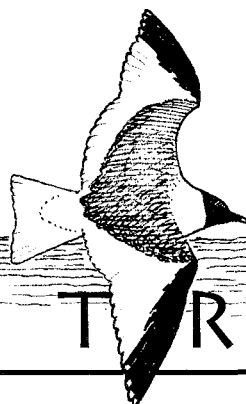
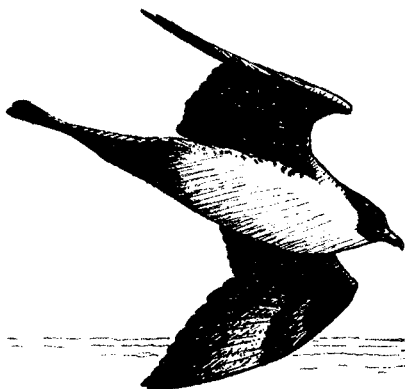
lower Zuma Canyon on 16 July (Hank Brodtkin), and a **Purple Martin**, known from only one or two localities in Los Angeles County, was seen on Mt. Lukens above Tujunga (John Thompson).

Vagrant warbler reports include a **Northern Parula** at Charlton Flats on 2 July (Joanne Getze), a **Chestnut-sided** at Butterbredt Springs in eastern Kern County on 13 June (Dexter Kelly), a **Magnolia** at Butterbredt on 12 June (Steve Laymon) and one in Wyman Canyon in the White Mountains of Inyo County on 16 July (Richard Webster), a **Yellow-throated** in El Nido Park on 6 June (Kevin Larson), **American Redstarts** in Peck Park on 4 June (JI) and at Charlton Flats on 27 June (Jon Fisher), a **Kentucky** in Wyman Canyon on 16 July (RW), a **Hooded** at Butterbredt on 12 June (SL) and one at Charlton Flats on 27 June (Kimball Garrett) and a **Painted Redstart** east of Chilao on 29 June (KG). —

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** OR **David Koeppel**  
27-½ Mast Street (310) 454-2576  
Marina del Rey, CA 90292  
(310) 827-0407



# PELAGIC TRIPS JKA

## **Vantuna, San Pedro**

**Sunday, September 19.** Santa Barbara Island and out to sea; 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Cost \$32. Leaders: Arnold Small and Mitch Heindel.

**Saturday, October 16.** Toward Santa Barbara Island; 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Cost \$32. Leaders: Kimball Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer.

**Sunday, November 7.** Palos Verdes Escarpment to Redondo Canyon; 7:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Cost \$20. Leaders: Herb and Olga Clarke.

**NOTE:** Marine Mammal Expert Linda Lewis will be one of our leaders when her schedule permits.

### **Feather Quiz Answers**

1. Killdeer
2. Burrowing Owl
3. American Kestrel
4. Belted Kingfisher
5. Loggerhead Shrike
6. Red-shouldered Hawk
7. White-breasted Nuthatch
8. Upland Sandpiper
9. Poorwill
10. Western Meadowlark
11. White-headed Woodpecker
12. Yellow-billed Magpie

## **Jeffrey Arvid, Ventura**

**Saturday, September 4.** Anacapa Island to Santa Rosa Island and through the Santa Barbara Channel to Santa Cruz Island; 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Cost: \$64. Leaders: Mitch Heindel and Kimball Garrett.

### **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:

LAAS Reservations  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694.

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 Wednesdays from noon to 4:00 P.M. to answer questions about field trips. Our office staff is also available Tuesday through Saturday for most reservation services.

## **Vanguard, Ventura**

**Friday, Saturday and Sunday, October 1-3.** Deep water trip out of Ventura northwest past Pt. Conception to the Continental Shelf via Arguello Canyon. Leave dock Friday at 10:00 P.M. and return Sunday at 2:00 A.M. (28 hrs.). Six large double bunks for two people at \$210; nine single bunks at \$130. Cost includes three meals. No space for ice chests. Leaders: Mitch Heindel and Richard Webster.

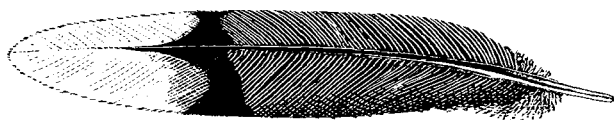
**Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 5-7.** See details above. Leaders: Kimball Garrett and Mitch Heindel.

## **Bird Baths**

Some very creative ideas for bird baths are found in the August '93 issue of *Sunset Magazine*.

## **Correction**

We regret the misspelling of Dr. Frank B. Gill's name in the July/August issue.



*Mourning Dove*

## Call The Tape

**B**efore 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.

**Sunday, September 5 — Topanga State Park.** **Gerry Haigh** will lead participants through this diverse coastal mountain area. This is an ideal trip for a beginning birder or for someone new in the area. A plant person is usually in attendance. 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 and make a left into the park. Meet at 8:00 A.M. in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch \$5 parking fee.

**Saturday, September 11 — Oxnard Surf and Turf.** Leader **Don Desjardin** is a very active birder in the Ventura Basin. He knows the hotspots and the stakeouts. Seabirds, early migrant songbirds and colorful adult sandpipers with possible Baird's and Pectoral should be coming through. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at Mugu Rock south of Oxnard and just south of Mugu Overlook on the sea side of PCH for a full day of birding.

**Saturday, September 18 — Van Norman Reservoir.** Leader **Dustin Alcalá** or **Doug Martin**. Riparian and grassland habitat surround the reservoir and adjacent ponds. Passerine migrants, hopeful Chat and Blue Grosbeak. Take the 405 Fwy N to the Rinaldi offramp just S of the 5 Fwy interchange. Go W on Rinaldi about a mile to the front gate on the right (N) side. Meet at 7:00 A.M. in the lot inside the gate on the left. We will carpool from there and stop about 12:30 P.M. Restrooms on-site.

**Sunday, September 19 — Franklin Canyon.** This morning walk will be led by **Steven Saffier**. Franklin Canyon is located between Sherman Oaks and Beverly Hills. Over 100 species of birds have been documented in the chaparral, lakeside and oak/pine woodland habitats of the canyon. From the 101 Fwy, take Coldwater Canyon S into the hills. Immediately after Mulholland Dr.

merges from the west with Coldwater Canyon, make a 90° right turn onto Franklin Canyon and continue to the nature center. Meet at 7:30 A.M. in the parking lot past a gated drive on the left.

### **Sunday, September 26 (Date Change) — Lake Palmdale.**

**Jonathan Alderfer** will lead a select few on a tour of this restricted and little-birded bit of L.A. County. Vagrants have been encountered with the waterfowl and migrants in the past. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at the new Park and Ride adjacent to Lake Palmdale. Take Hwy 14 N to the Avenue S offramp east, followed by a quick right into the lot. We'll finish around 12:30 P.M. before lunch. Sign up by phone with Audubon House. **Strict maximum of 10.**

**Saturday, October 2 — Sepulveda Basin Natural Area.** Leader **Steve Ducatman**. Migrants and early wintering birds should be starting to augment resident species. A good chance to check in on this important resource after last winter's flood. Meet at 8:00 A.M. in the first parking area at Woodley Park. Take Burbank Blvd. W from the 405 Fwy, turn right onto Woodley Ave. and continue to the Woodley Park entrance on the right.

**Sunday, October 3 — San Diego Area.** **Nick Freeman** leader. A good portion of the morning will certainly be spent at Pt. Loma. Some odd birds have been known to pop up here during late migration. Other possible areas include the Tijuana Marsh and nearby farm fields. Take the 5 Fwy S 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 at 8:00 A.M. east of the kiosk. Bring a lunch. Send \$5 fee to LAAS.

**Sunday, October 3 — Topanga State Park.** Leader **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See September 5 write-up for details.

**Saturday, October 9 — Whittier Narrows Regional Park.** Join **Mary Carmona** at 8:00 A.M. to see late migrants passing through, sprinkled with

wintering bird arrivals. Introduced Cardinals resident. Meet at the Nature Center at 1000 Durfee Ave. Take the 60 Fwy to South El Monte, just W of the 605 Fwy, to the Peck Dr. exit S. Take the offramp onto Durfee Ave. heading W (right), and make a left into the Nature Center.

**Sunday, October 10 — Mojave Vicinity.** Leader **Larry Allen**. We will meet where Jawbone Canyon Rd. intersects with Hwy 14 N of Mojave. We will then proceed to Butterbrecht Springs, Galileo Hills and a picnic and more birds at California City Central Park. Come prepared for a possibly very hot, dusty, fun day. Take Hwy 14 past Mojave, continue N on Hwy 14 about 17 miles to Jawbone Canyon Rd. on the west side. We will meet at 6:30 A.M. at the Jawbone Canyon Recreation Area sign just off the Highway. A good spot for camping is five miles north at Red Rock Canyon State Park. About two hours driving time from L.A. Send \$5 fee to LAAS to register.

**Saturday, October 16 — Van Norman Reservoir.** Leader **Dustin Alcalá**. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at Rinaldi gate and stop about 12:30 P.M. See September 18 write-up for details.

**Sunday, October 17 — Oxnard Plains.** Leader **Fred Heath** will be exploring the windbreaks and thickets that crisscross the agricultural plains around Oxnard. Usually excellent for warblers, vireos and other migrants. Possible vagrant chasing. From the 101 Fwy, take Las Posas Rd. S, turn right on Pleasant Valley Rd., and left on Laguna Rd. If coming via Hwy 1, take Pleasant Valley Rd. inland to Laguna Rd. and turn right. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the side of Laguna Rd. across from the big house. Bring a lunch and bird into the afternoon.

**Sunday, October 24 — Sketching Birds in the Field.** Renowned bird artist **John Schmitt** will show eight klutzes how to render useful bird sketches for field documentation. Spotting scope, folding chair and sketch pad mandatory. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at Malibu kiosk. Phone LAAS to sign up. 🐦

# EVENING MEETING

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

**September 14 Kimball Garrett**

What is a Species — and Should a Birder Care?

**B**irders are keenly interested in the “splitting” and “lumping” of bird species by ornithologists and a bit flustered by changing concepts of just what constitutes a “species.” The splitting of the Canyon Towhee and the California Towhee might just have been the tip of the iceberg. This slide-illustrated lecture will survey the geographical variation of our western birds, discuss current and anticipated species-level taxonomic changes, and suggest what this might all mean for the birder. ➤



Canyon Towhee Photo: Kimball Garrett

**Complete listings of Pelagic Trips and Field Trips are on pages 10 and 11.**

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## All Species Day at the L.A. Zoo

**N**ational Audubon and the L.A. Zoo are presenting a Halloween Happening on **Saturday, October 30**. A group of costumed school children will dress as California Condors, Desert Tortoises, Florida Panthers and other endangered species. Monarch Butterflies, Giant Sequoias and wildflowers will also be represented.

All costumed children visiting the Zoo this day will receive discounted admission. In addition, costume- and mask-making will be available free with paid Zoo entry.

Audubon All Species Day is a national celebration. Other major events are planned for St. Louis and Washington, D.C.

For further information, call Nann Miller at (213) 689-1579 or Lora LaMarca at (213) 666-3507. ➤