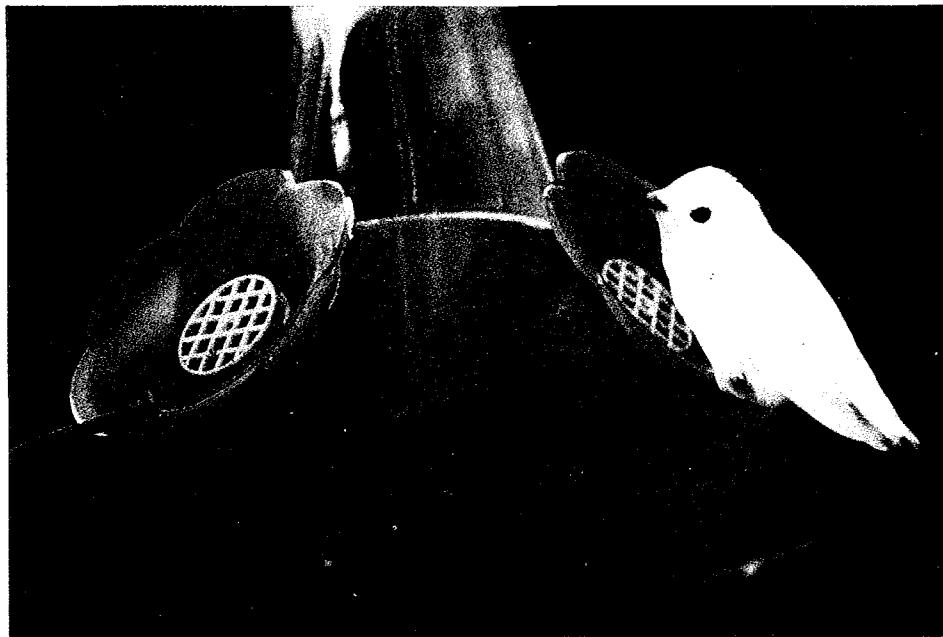


WESTERN TANAGER



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Los Angeles Audubon Society



Albino Anna's Hummingbird, Laguna Beach

WHITE BIRDS

by Henry E. Childs, Jr., Ph.D.

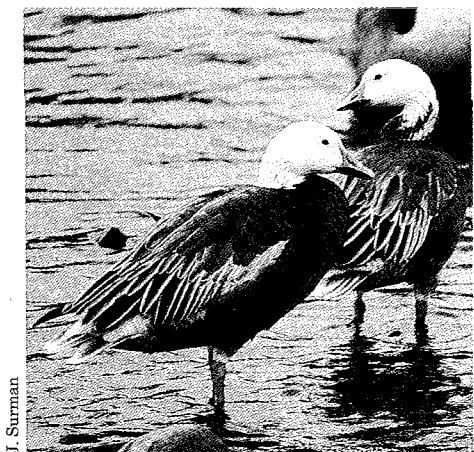
White birds are the most colorful members of the class *Aves*, as the color white is the sum of all the colors of the visible spectrum, from violet to red, coming from the sun. White birds lack color-absorbing pigments in the cells of the feathers. We see white because all the light striking the bird is reflected to our eyes. Birds are black because no light is being reflected or refracted!

Many species of heron are either all white, predominately white, have a white immature plumage or have a white color phase. The Great Blue Heron is a common species over much of North America. As its name implies, it is blue-gray in color. However, in southern Florida, it occurs as an all white bird, not greatly different in appearance from the Great Egret, another large white heron. At one time, the "Great White Heron" was considered to be a distinct species based solely on that morphological feature. "Wurdemann's Heron," found only in the Florida Keys, is an intergrade between the normal and the white morphs of the Great Blue.

The adult Little Blue Heron is blue with a reddish head and neck in the breeding plumage. The immature birds are white and present an identification problem to the novice bird watcher. Look carefully at the small white herons around the south end of San Diego Bay in late summer; that Snowy Egret may turn into an immature Little Blue Heron!

Color Phases

Within the populations of Snow Geese, a predominately white species wintering in California, occasionally individuals which have a dark body and white head are seen. These are the blue color phase or morph, a plumage difference not related to the sex or age. "Blue Geese" occur more abundantly in the Midwest where at one time they were considered to be a separate



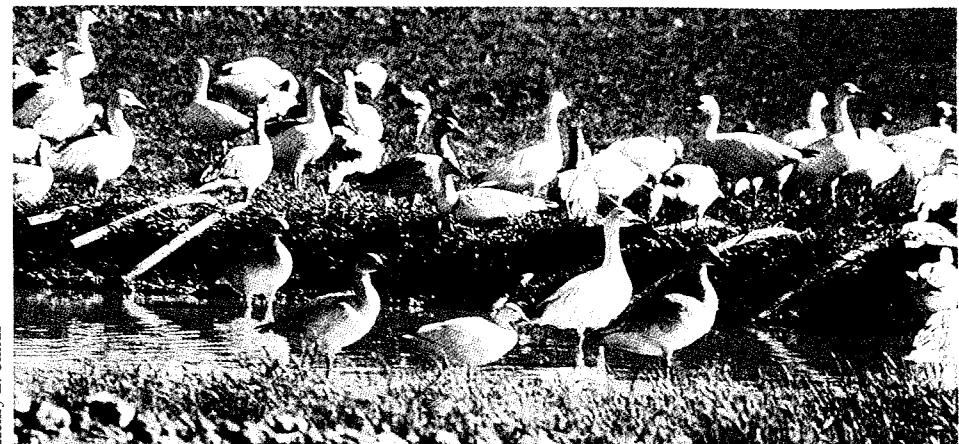
Snow Goose (blue morph)

species. Now it is known that there is no barrier to breeding between them. The blue morph, therefore, is only a variant of the Snow Goose. Blue morphs also occur in the rarer, smaller look-alike to the Snow Goose, the Ross' Goose. The closely related Emperor Goose exhibits only the blue morph.

Albinos

Occasionally, birds are seen that are atypically white. We call these unusual birds *albinos* and the phenomenon *leucism*. Somehow, either from the genetics of the bird, its diet or injury to developing feathers, the color-producing cells fail to produce their normal pigments. The genetics controlling skin color in man is well known. It is probable that a similar mechanism occurs in birds, but I have been unable to find any reference to studies which confirm that statement.

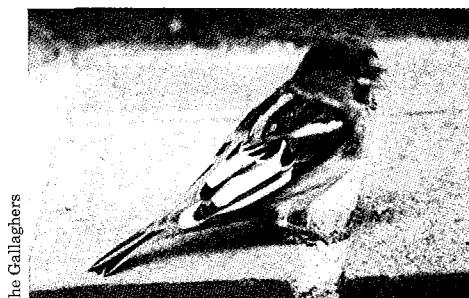
Total albinism, the lack of any pigment in the skin or feathers, is rare. The eyes of true albinos are



Ross' and Snow Geese

red, as they show the color of the red blood cells passing through vessels in the retina. Albino gulls have pink legs. Others may show some structural color in the legs or bill which makes the usual process of sorting out the gulls even more difficult.

Albinism is rare in nature where the abnormal is usually eliminated rapidly by natural selection. The



House Sparrow (partial albino)

Michner, who banded over 30,000 birds in Pasadena in the 1930s, found only 17 (0.05%) individuals with any degree of albinism. Gross (1965a) found records of 1,847 albinos in 304 species of North American birds. Of these, only 7% were completely albino. Albinoes are interesting and exciting to find in the field, but biologically they are at great risk and rarely contribute to the next generation.

Partially albinistic individuals, called mosaics, are much more commonly observed. Birds at your feeder may show patches of white feathers, a rather common occurrence in flocks of blackbirds or crows. Occasionally, this albinism is

symmetrical and thus indicates a problem in early embryological development. A somatic mutation in an otherwise heterozygous individual is another possibility. Asymmetric white patches are usually the result of injury to the developing feather follicles. In any case, such birds stand out in the flock!

It is interesting that many white birds have black wing tips, i.e., terns, gulls, gannets, tropicbirds and pelicans, to name a few. Apparently, the black pigment gives strength to those important feathers.

Melanism

Melanistic individuals, those possessing more melanin (black pigment) than in the normal plumage, are much rarer than albinos. Gross (1965b) reported this condition in only 29 species of North American birds. Red-tailed Hawks are noted for their wide variation in adult plumages. Melanistic Red-tails are occasionally observed in Southern California. For a number of years, there has been a "black" Red-tail near Chaffey College in Rancho Cucamonga and another near the prisons in Chino. The body may be black but the tail is always red, usually darker than normal.

Literature cited:

Gross, A.O. 1965a. The incidence of albinism in North American birds. *Bird-Banding* 36(2):67-71.
_____. 1965b. Melanism in North American birds. *Bird-Banding* 36(4):240-42.

Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Maunder County

A Book Review by Fred Heath

Edited by Don Roberson and Chris Tenney
Published by Maunder Peninsula Audubon Society

In the last issue of the *Tanager*, it was mentioned that a number of counties in California had completed five years of field work. Of these, only two have actually published an atlas. The Marin County atlas was just recently completed even though the field work was finished in 1978. This atlas, which will be reviewed in a future *Western Tanager*, has a wealth of bird life history information which may explain in part why it took so long to complete. The Maunder County Atlas, in contrast, was published last year, only one year after the field work was ended. Aside from this, the amount of field work done with only 49 atlases is truly amazing.

Maunder County was divided into square blocks of 5 kilometers (5 km = 3.1 miles) per side using the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) grid. This resulted in 385 such blocks. By way of comparison, the Los Angeles Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) has 414 similar-sized blocks.

Similar but not identical because we have decided to use 7.5 minute topo maps published by the U.S. Geological Survey. These maps are divided into six rectangular blocks which are roughly the same area as the 5 by 5 km blocks used by Maunder. The benefit of using the 7.5 minute quads is the ease of providing block maps from these. Another side benefit which Tom Frillman noticed recently is that the Automobile Club map of Los Angeles County uses the boundaries of these same maps as its alpha-numeric locator guides on the side of the map. For example, G3 on the Auto Club map corresponds to the Malibu

Beach topo map, while E8 defines the Chilao Flat map.

In total, during the five years of field work from 1988 to 1992, they found breeding evidence for 178 species plus three species of free flying parrots in Maunder County. This five-year period, by the way, coincided with the worst of the recent drought. Thus, a number of species are under-represented and some may not have been tallied at all which might have bred in years of more normal rainfall.

A total of 3,561 hours of atlasing was carried on over the five-year period with the bulk of the field work being done by 20 core volunteers. In fact, the two editors of the Maunder Atlas,

Don Roberson and Chris Tenney, totaled 999 hours between them. Some data from a few government-sponsored surveys were used (such as Bell

Vireo searches). In addition, 53 people provided casual breeding observations during the five-year period.

Since most of the atlases came from the Maunder Peninsula or Salinas which are at the northern end of the county, coverage of the southern end (with up to a three hour drive to get into some blocks) was quite a challenge. To solve this problem, 66 priority blocks were designated, covering the entire northwest part of the county. In the rest of the county, one of each group of four was designated a priority block which brought the total to 152 priority blocks. The goal for the priority block was to confirm 50% (later reduced to 45%) of the breeding species. For the 233 nonpriority

blocks, the goal was simply to identify all of the possible breeders.

After five years of field work in which an average of 16 hours was spent in each priority block and five hours in each nonpriority block, the following breeding records were noted:

In the Pacific Grove block, where a number of the key atlases live, they were able to confirm 86% of the 59 breeding species. At the other extreme, many nonpriority blocks got less than three hours coverage, some only an hour. Thus the final species maps show many discontinuities in those blocks.

Given the number of active birders in Los Angeles County as compared with Maunder, we should have no trouble getting at least three times the number of observers who could provide excellent coverage for three blocks each (a total of 48 hours over 5 years). Thus there should be no need for nonpriority blocks here.

NUMBER OF RECORDS	% OF CONFIDENCE
Confirmed	5,988
Probable	3,310
Possible	5,585
Total Records	14,883

Most of the Maunder effort was concentrated in May through July, although data was collected from late January to early September. Note that 50% of the confirmed

records were of young dependent birds, as opposed to 30% which required the actual finding of a nest. This point is mentioned because the standard excuse as to why birders don't want to be involved in a BBA is, "I can't find nests!"

In addition to finding breeding evidence, some effort was made to do a rough estimate of breeding pairs. Categories of 1, 2-10, 11-100, and greater than 100 were used for this purpose and mapped. The Los Angeles County effort will attempt to gather this same information.

The Atlas itself contains a detailed introduction which discusses the methodology, write-ups on topography, biogeography, physical environment and habitats, as well

Continued on page 9

Phoebe B. Snetsinger

PERSONAL HIGH

by Phoebe Snetsinger

I'm often asked the unanswerable question: "What's your favorite bird — or trip — or place?" As soon as I decide on one, another immediately springs to mind, and another, and yet another, as in the children's story of my generation, "Millions of Cats."

Usually my "favorite" bird is one of the last great ones I've just seen. Right now I'd name Black-bellied Gnat-eater (Brazil) — or maybe White-breasted Guineafowl (Ivory Coast) — or Short-tailed Scimitar-babbler (Vietnam). And favorite day — or trip? Here's a sampling, because I just can't choose:

There was the '82 Peru trip with legendary Ted Parker that began at 16,000 ft. in the spectacularly beautiful Andes above Lima with Diademed Sandpiper-Plover as my 3,000th bird and ended with fantastic perched views of both Harpy and Crested Eagles on two successive days at Explorers' Inn. Oh yes, there were a few good things sandwiched in between — like a treasure chest of over 200 lifers, many of which I've never seen again.

Ben King's first Sri Lanka tour in '92 came as close to "perfect" as any I've been on, in that we found *all* the endemic possibilities. These include some very difficult species (Whistling-Thrush, Spurfowl) as well some highly dramatic ones, my favorite being the Red-faced Malkeha. It also produced a major milestone for me — Ceylon Frogmouth for number 7,000.

For total atmosphere and a sense of being in the heart of a tropical wilderness, I'd vote for Manu, which Richard Webster has eloquently de-

scribed in a previous PERSONAL HIGH. I've been twice; the first trip included a jaguar sprawled on a riverside log, and the second, extraordinary birds such as Lanceolated Monklet and Rufous-fronted Antthrush. The sense of culture shock upon returning to civilization after an extended period in one of the wildest places on Earth was as extreme as I've ever experienced.

A close second for ambiance and incredible birding is Darien, Panama. I'd lost a chance at this by the skin of my teeth in '88 when the whole Noriega crisis exploded two days before we were to leave. Obviously I jumped at the first chance to do it when a door of opportunity opened again in December '91.

I certainly had one of the most satisfying birding days of my life there. I spent it largely alone, the day when Group 1 packed and left and Group 2 arrived and set up camp. Happily, I was left free of logistics, since I was doing both sections. By now I'd had a week of experience there, so I could explore knowledgeably and do my own thing relieved of all group pressures (as well as leader advantages).

I was returning to camp after a full morning when some sound or motion made me stop and look up a forested slope. Nothing — but yes something — moved. I focused binoculars on a hole in the vegetation and saw a large dark eye peering at me, then a brown face, and a flat bronzy crest, and finally a huge greenish bill. It didn't take long to work out views of the rest of the superb Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo which was staying quite concealed

but largely ignoring me. I later returned to the spot where the bird had run up the slope to find a huge active antswarm, this time with the Ground-Cuckoo fully in the open at very close range and too busy even to notice me. Also in attendance was the *second* reason I'd come to Darien — a sensational Black-crowned Antpitta, giving full views of its gorgeously scaled underparts. By this time I'd alerted the recent arrivals and most got to share in at least some of this spectacular event.

My euphoria was only slightly dampened by learning from the incoming leader that there was an adult Ross' Gull in St. Louis, about a half-hour drive from my home. I was three days too late by the time I finally got there.

Another favorite spot of wilderness aficionados is El Triunfo in extreme southern Mexico. It's a fairly rugged 2-3 day hike, camping along the way, with enticements like Tody Motmot, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo and Azure-rumped Tanager to keep you going. At the top lies the beautiful mist-shrouded, bromeliad-laden cloud forest habitat of one of the world's greatest birds — the improbable-looking Horned Guan, which is the *real* reward for your struggles.

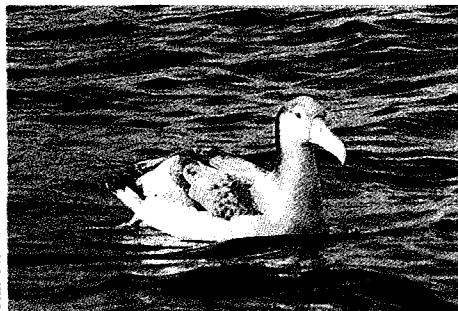
On the other side of the world in central Africa I recently experienced an absolutely marvelous combination of habitat highlights in Burundi, eastern Zaire and southern Rwanda. The wonderfully beautiful Ndora Track at about 6,000 ft. in the Rwegura Forest of Burundi gave me surely one of the most enjoyable days of my career. The



thrills began with a Lagden's Bush-shrike and a perched Ayres' Hawk-Eagle at the beginning, extended through the electric Purple-breasted Sunbirds, burnt-orange Kivu Ground-Thrush, Red-throated Alethe and Equatorial Akalat, to the strange and unique Grauer's and Neumann's Warblers, the challenging Mountain and Grey-chested Illadopsis, to the beautifully responsive White-tailed Antthrush on the way out.

Eastern Zaire holds gorillas (an encounter with which is truly a great emotional experience) and the lowland Irangi rainforest (reached by crossing on foot a truly awesome swinging bridge made of vines and

Jim Clements



Short-tailed Albatross

little else). A few of the local enticements are Hartlaub's Ducks, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Bare-cheeked Tropicbird, Rufous-sided Broadbill and Congo Serpent-Eagle, as well as a host of skulking forest denizens.

Enroute back to Burundi we took a swing through the Nyungwe Forest of southern Rwanda, mainly to pick up the Ruwenzori Turaco which we'd missed in the mountains of Zaire, and lucked into one of my all-time most-wanted — a flock of Red-collared Mountain-Babblers, as well as the Turaco.

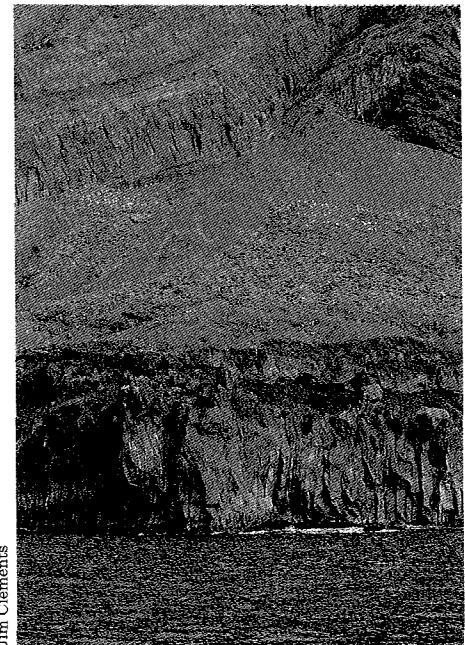
Do I have a favorite elevation? Yes — unequivocally — 5–6,000 ft. anywhere in the world, from the Rockies to the Andes, the Himalayas, the mountains of southeast Asia, New Guinea or Africa. At this height the birds, flowers, scenery and temperatures always seem at their best, and it's here where I feel healthiest and most vigorous.

At my favorite elevation in

Papua New Guinea lies one of the world's best birding sites — Ambua Lodge at Tari. One of the most dramatic of nightbirds, the Feline Owlet-Nightjar, is common by voice in the forests — though seeing one (and believe me, you *do* want to see one, whatever ABA is now telling you!) usually takes persistence and effort. I'd been here before, but last August I finally connected with an unimaginably good study of a pair of calling New Guinea Harpy Eagles, to say nothing of extraordinary views of the "impossible" Lesser Melampitta, Chestnut Forest-Rail, some 12 species of male Birds of Paradise and countless others. Ambua Lodge provides access to all this and is a comfortable and attractive place to stay as well.

I've never been particularly lucky on pelagic trips, so I've had to take a lot of them. (I'm still missing the *hypoleucus* race of Xantus' Murrelet, and I've never seen a Great Skua in North American waters — not for lack of trying). Consequently my pelagic successes have been largely a result of dogged perseverance, but rewards thus achieved can be eminently satisfying. Rich Stallcup's California Short-tailed Albatross trip has become a legend. I *wasn't* one of the lucky ones on board; mine came a lot harder.

Two years ago I'd signed on the Japanese three-day fishing boat excursion to Torishima Island in the Pacific where this albatross nests. Full of optimism and anticipation (short of a major out-of-season typhoon, success seemed "guaranteed"), I flew to Tokyo, only to find that the trip had just been cancelled due to "mechanical problems" with the boat. Never mind, I was encouraged to stay over a few (expensive) days until they fixed the boat and would run a second trip. The few days passed (during which I managed a view of a drumming Copper Pheasant), and as I was about to leave the hotel to join the boat, word came that the repair had failed and the second trip was also cancelled! I flew home *sans* albatross and bitterly disappointed —



Jim Clements

Torishima Island

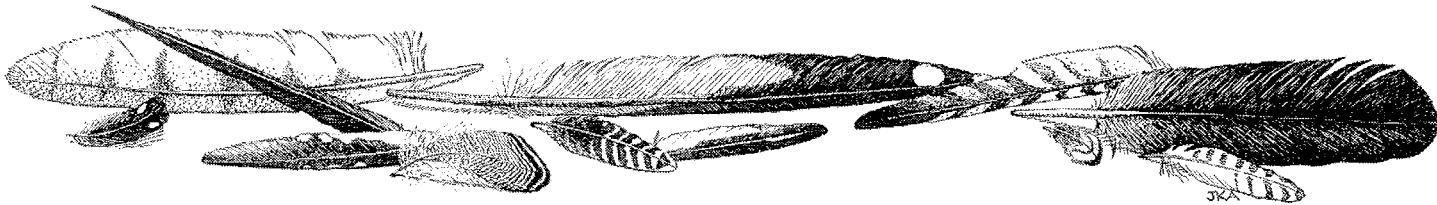
but started planning for '93.

This time I was in Hawaii to begin with, where I phoned ahead (all was okay), flew again to Tokyo with all fingers crossed, and in due time found myself on board the boat with about 40 Japanese birders. It was total cultural and linguistic immersion; the only one who spoke English was so seasick the whole time I hardly saw him. We got there, despite rough seas, and spent a fantastic morning absorbing close on-the-water and flight views and distant scope views of the colony on the island. All plumage stages of the Short-tailed Albatross were represented. Not easy, lucky or cheap — but fully rewarding!

Many great times, yes. But don't be deluded into construing all this as a 20-year happy and carefree waltz to the top. There's been lots of teeth-gritting hard work and a significant number of real downers — which make pretty good stories too! ☺



Phoebe Snetsinger is a full-time international birder, residing when home in St. Louis, Missouri. She started birding on a local level in her mid 30s, and now at age 62 has birded most of the world and holds the present official world record of over 7,500 species, all seen.



A CLOSER LOOK

by Kimball L. Garrett

One sure sign of maturation in one's birding abilities is to realize that a bird of a given species might not — indeed, probably will not — look "just like the one in the book." In some cases this is attributable to poor field guide art or an ill-advised selection of figures for the guide, but the culprits are just as often the birds themselves: they're just so variable! Hawks are especially notorious for plumage variability due to age, geography and genetically based individual variation, or polymorphism. We are all familiar with the incredible variation shown by Red-tailed Hawks, our most common large bird of prey. There are blackish ones, deep reddish-brown ones, pale ones and even rare albinos. There are barred or blotchy immatures and clean adults with nice reddish tails. With this familiarity comes an appreciation for shape and flight silhouette as primary characters for field identification.

We're often perplexed by Swainson's Hawks because they, too, are quite variable, and we see a lot fewer of them. We get fewer opportunities to sort out their plumage variation and learn their distinctive pointed-wing flight silhouette (see Pete Dunne, David Sibley and Clay Sutton's *Hawks in Flight* guide for a masterful discussion and spot-on depictions of this species). The point of the present essay is not to reiterate identification criteria, but rather to touch on the Swainson's Hawk's tortured status in the Los Angeles region and suggest where and how to get more familiar with this species locally.

Joseph Grinnell, in his 1898 pub-

lication *Birds of the Pacific Slope of Los Angeles County*, says that "On windy days, in late March and early April, large numbers are sometimes seen flying northwestward in mi-

Hawks around Los Angeles is to park yourself along the southern base of the San Gabriel Mountains in March and early April and look for migrating birds. I see small

Swainson's Hawk

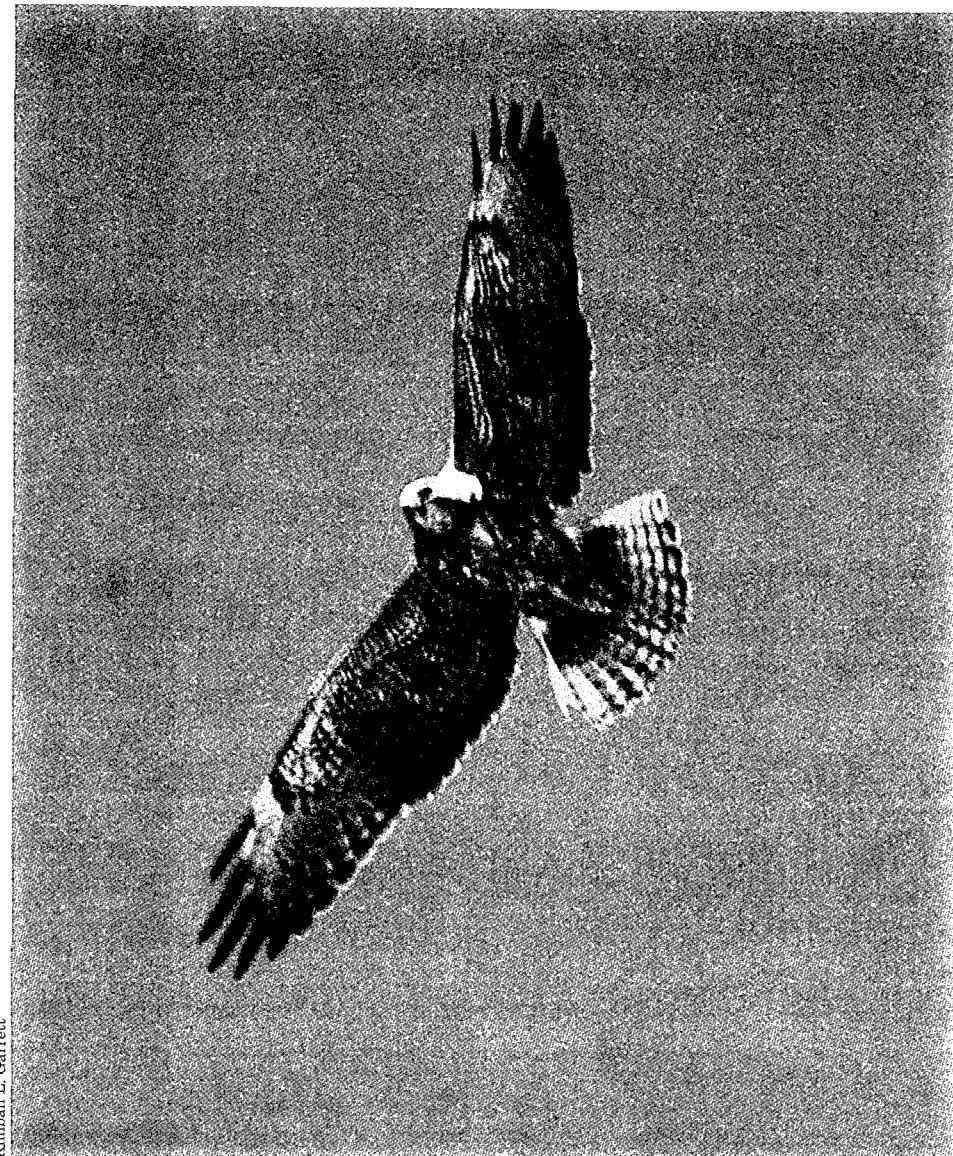
Buteo swainsoni

gration, and similarly in the latter part of September long, straggling flocks are observed at moderate height, flying in a southeasterly direction."

Grinnell also mentioned that these hawks bred in "considerable numbers" in the valleys and lowlands. How times have changed. Breeding Swainson's Hawks in Los Angeles County are confined now to the Antelope Valley, where two or three pairs appear to hang on in the few remaining agricultural areas both east and west of Lancaster. The massive and continuing urbanization of the Antelope Valley does not bode well for the county's population of this species. However, from April through September, and even into October, Swainson's Hawks can still be seen where ranchyard trees provide nest sites and alfalfa fields provide the species' prey of large insects. If you do happen to find a nesting pair, keep your distance and keep quiet!

Another way to find Swainson's

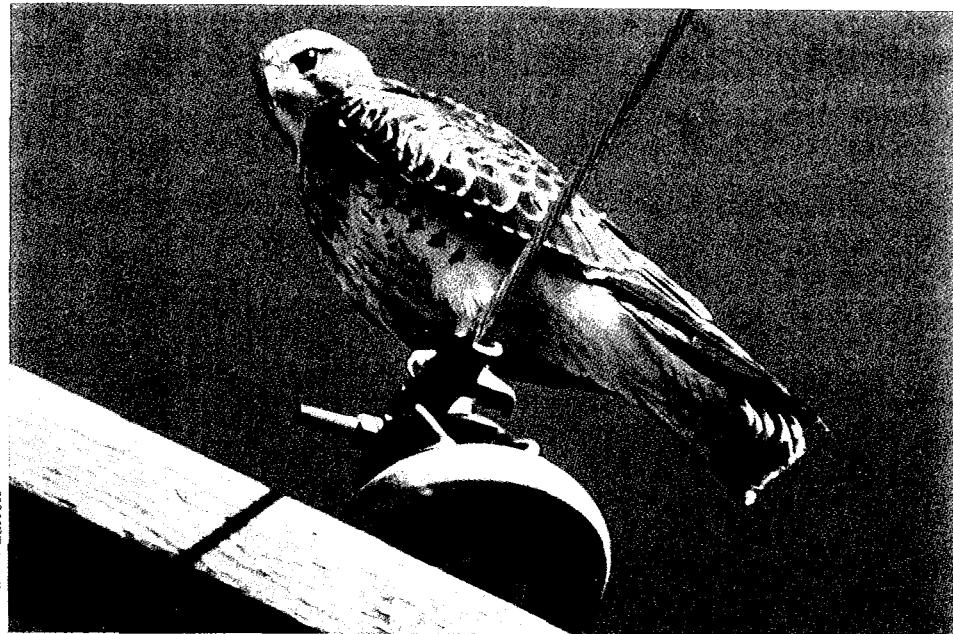
numbers annually at this season over La Crescenta, and these same birds, or others, must also pass over the foothills from Cajon Pass west through Arcadia, Altadena and La Cañada Flintridge to Sylmar. A moderate westerly afternoon breeze, deflecting upward as it hits the northwest/southeast trending mountains, offers ideal conditions for migrating hawks in spring (and American White Pelicans, too). *Accipiter* hawks, Ospreys, Red-tailed Hawks and Turkey Vultures are also part of this movement. Similar conditions are probably good in fall. Good vantage points include several public parks at the uppermost edge of the suburbs, such as Oak Grove Park (Hahamonga) behind the Devil's Gate Dam Basin, Deukmejian Wilderness Park (no kidding, that's the real name) in La Crescenta, and Veterans' Park in Sylmar. Try it this fall or next spring, and maybe our variable and confusing hawks will begin to make a little more sense. ■



Kimball L. Garrett

A confusing immature Swainson's Hawk over the Antelope Valley, 5 April 1994

Young Swainson's Hawk east of Lancaster, 5 October 1991



Kimball L. Garrett

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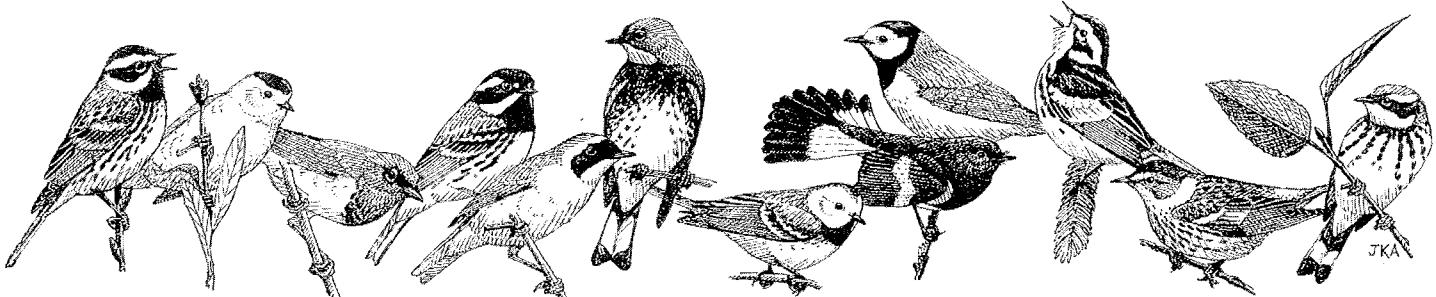
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BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Hank Brodkin

July and August offer a number of birding alternatives. The mountains are at their best. Places like Mt. Pinos near the Grapevine; Chilao, Charlton Flats, Buckhorn and other stops along the Angeles Crest Highway in the San Gabriels; Bluff Lake, Baldwin Lake and Arastre Creek in the San Bernardino; and many other spots to the north in the Sierras and the White Mountains offer birding opportunities in incredibly beautiful settings. In addition to the usual breeding species, migrant hummers in July and migrant warblers in August begin their leisurely "fall" migration south along the ridges and through the meadows.

Also in August the Salton Sea heats up, both the temperature and the birding. It gets very hot — be careful — but anything can turn up, from lost tubenoses to Mexican wading birds. The first of the fall shorebirds led by breeding plumage adults also are in evidence.

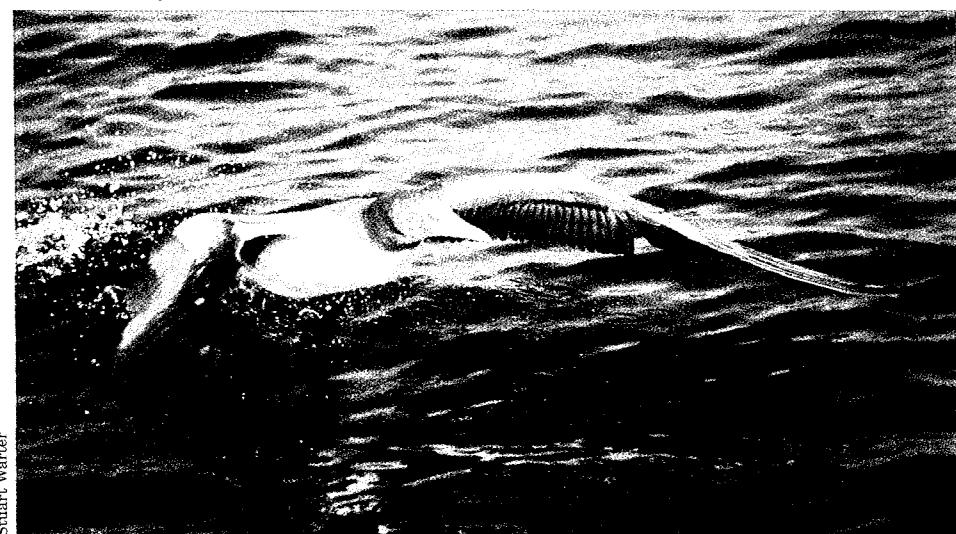
It has always seemed strange to be writing about fall migration while spring migration is still under way, but this is one of the things that makes this avocation so exciting. A great pulse of migrants, apparently held up by relatively stormy weather, produced thousands of migrants in parks in the southern portions of Los Angeles on 13 and 14 May. Noticeable, however, was the lack of vagrants which were down in numbers considerably from the last two years. This is probably also a weather-related phenomenon. There were still a number of interesting reports.

A Northern Fulmar was at the Newport Pier on 30 April (Doug

Willick). On the same day, three miles south of White's Point, an immature **Masked Booby** surprised observers on a research vessel who obtained many excellent photographs (Mike San Miguel, Stuart Warter and Charles Collins). There were three **Reddish Egret** sightings — one at Seal Beach on 23 April (DW), one at Bolsa Chica on 30 April (DW), and a third was seen flying past the Palos Verdes Peninsula on 1 May (Kevin Larson).

A very late **Tufted Duck** stopped briefly at Hansen Dam on 26 April. A **Mississippi Kite** was seen flying over Torrance on 30 April (Mitch Heindel), and two were over Rancho Park Golf Course on 3 May (Arnold Small). A **Broad-winged Hawk** was at Valyermo on 28 April (Kimball Garrett), and another was at Santiago Oaks, Orange County, on 30 April (DW). Two Los Angeles County **Zone-tailed Hawks** were reported — one at Valyermo on 24 April (MSM) and another over Harbor Park on 9 May (MH).

Masked Booby



A **Ruff** was seen at the Edwards Air Force Base's Piute Ponds on 24 April (KG), a **Franklin's Gull** was at Sepulveda Basin on 16 May (Sandy Wohlgemuth), and a **Black-legged Kittiwake** was seen from the Redondo breakwater on 30 April (Lori Conrad, Martin Byhower and KL). Completely unexpected was a **Thick-billed Murre** in breeding plumage (a first record of this bird south of Monterey) seen on the LAAS pelagic trip on 21 May (KG).

Lowering clouds provided several reports of **Black Swift** over the South Bay on 8 May (fide MH), and a flock of 20 was over Ballona Lagoon on 18 May (Hank & Priscilla Brodkin). A **Chimney Swift** was reported over Harbor Park on 9 May (MH), and several were over the Los Angeles River near Elysian Park on 12–13 May (KG). A migrant **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was in Towsley Canyon, Santa Clarita, on 22 May (Jim Laage).

A **Least Flycatcher**, rarely reported in spring, was seen at Har-

bor Park on 14 May (MH), and at least four pairs of **Purple Martin** were seen at Bear Mountain Springs near Tehachapi (Gail Hightower).

Three **Tennessee Warblers** were reported — one at Switzer Camp on the Angeles Crest Highway on 1 May (Tom Wurster, Gerard Phillips), one at Banning Park on 13 May (Dave Koeppel), and one at Holiday Lake in the Antelope Valley on 18 May (Charles Hood). A **Lucy's Warbler** was reported from Banning Park on 13 May (DK), and single **Black-and-white Warblers** were at Galileo Hill, Kern County, on

10 May (GH) and Harbor Park on 14 May (KL). Two **Ovenbirds** were reported from Galileo Hill in eastern Kern County, one on 14 May (Ned & Linda Harris) and one on 22 May (H&PB). A **Painted Redstart** was seen on the Angeles Crest Highway on 1 May (TW, GP), and a pair was near Seven Oaks in the San Bernardino Mountains on 21 May (Mickey Long).

Single **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were at Big Bear Lake on 7 May (Ron Coombs) and at Cottonwood Springs in Joshua Tree National Monument on 11 May (Jim Slattery). An **Indigo Bunting** was reported from Cottonwood Springs

on 19 May (GH), and a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was seen at Harbor Park on 14 May (MH).

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 Brodkin

27½ Mast Street, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292.
(310) 827-0407 E-Mail: hankb@kaiwan.com

Or call **David Koeppel** at (310) 454-2576.

Atlas

Continued from page 3

as a brief history of the County and the impact of people on the avifauna.

Each of the 178 breeding species are afforded an average of two pages which include an attractive line drawing of the species, current status and distribution, historical occurrence, breeding and natural history, conservation, a map showing breeding blocks and level of confidence and, finally, for most species, an abundance map by block. The appendices cover possible and former breeding species, scientific names for other plants and animals mentioned in the text, a comparison with other atlas projects, an article on Mauder biodiversity and, finally, a block-by-block summary.

All in all, this is a well put together atlas which contains not only a wealth of information on the breeding birds of Mauder County but gives the reader a feeling for the methodology chosen and the reasoning behind those decisions. The breeding bird information presented is well worth the reasonable cost of this book and thus is highly recommended for any but the most jaded lister. The very process of doing the field work and getting it published should be a great incentive to anyone even remotely thinking of being a part of a Breeding

Bird Atlas project. This is especially true for the Los Angeles County BBA which starts next year.

Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Mauder County is available through the Los Angeles Audubon Bookstore at \$19.95 ☺

Help!

For many years now, Nick Freeman has done a wonderful job setting up the field trips sponsored by LAAS. They have ranged from the Salton Sea to the deserts of Anza Borrego to the mountains of Yosemite and everywhere in between. A weekend almost never went by without one and usually two trips to some terrific birding location. He has managed to entice a number of regulars such as Gerry Haigh, Dustin Alcala or Doug Martin to lead trips to their favorite birding haunts. We all owe Nick a large debt of gratitude for this bounty of field trips.

After all these years, Nick is asking for help. He would like to pass the mantle of Field Trip Chairperson on to someone else. One of the problems with doing a great job is that you become a tough act to follow. This is certainly true in Nick's case. However, because he has established a number of regular lead-

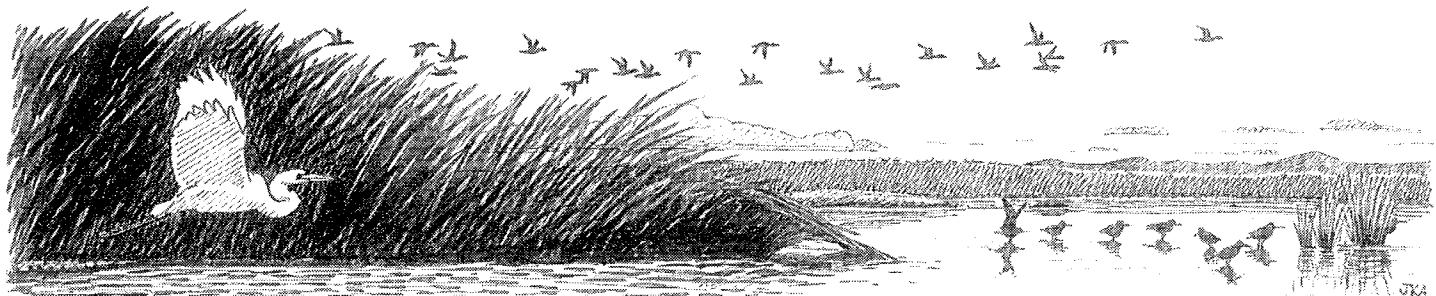
ers as well as annual trips, the new Field Trip Chair will have an easier job. Nick is also willing to lend a hand to make sure that passing the baton goes smoothly. He does not want to see his years of effort go for naught.

So if there is anyone out there who has been thinking of getting more involved in Los Angeles Audubon, now is your opportunity. If you are interested, or know someone who might be but is too shy to come forward on their own, please call our chapter President, Fred Heath, at (310) 826-0086.

Fred is always on the lookout for people who want to become more immersed in Los Angeles Audubon. Not only will you be involved with a bunch of interesting and fun folks, but you will find it immensely soul satisfying. Give him a call or talk to him at the next meeting. Oh, one caution: Don't let him start talking about butterflies! ☺

Correction

Our sincere apologies to Sandy Wohlgemuth who should have received credit for his CONVERSATION CONVERSATION article in the June *Western Tanager*.



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

City Parks Broke, Money-Making Plans Afoot. Softball for Kids for Bucks. Hansen Dam Water Slide, Another “Raging Waters?”

Things just ain't what they used to be, pardner. Remember when the outdoors were free? No more, friends. Parking at Malibu Lagoon is six bucks, even if you stay half an hour. Hiking a trail in the park to smell the flowers and get away from concrete and steel will cost you. Want to play basketball in the Sepulveda Basin? Get your wallet out.

What's going on here anyway? The Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Department says it has no money and must convert to pay-as-you-go or it won't make it. Tentative plans are in the works to take 56 acres west of Balboa Blvd. in the Sepulveda Basin and hand it over to private concessionaires who will build 11 softball and basketball courts — for pay. The city gets a percentage of the take. The proposed Arts Park project people want to build a theater in the same parcel. And so another 56 acres of scarce open space will disappear from Los Angeles.

Chatsworth Reservoir sits in the far West Valley with a ten-acre wildlife pond full of waterfowl in the winter and 1,300 acres of excellent birdy habitat. Hundreds of Canada Geese forage there every year. The reservoir has been empty for 25 years and the prime flatland has long been coveted by real estate developers. The city Department of Water and Power, reluctant to dispose of this excess property in the past, has recently expressed an in-

terest in selling or leasing the area.

Recreation and Parks has cooked up a blockbuster recipe for the future of this wildlife refuge. Here are the ingredients: two nine-hole executive-style golf courses, banquet room, driving range, restaurant, recreation center, miniature golf course and video arcade. It takes little imagination to guess what will happen to the roadrunners and the rest of the 190 species of birds that have been seen in the reservoir if this massive development is realized.

Other neat ideas cooking in the busy ovens of Rec and Parks are a water slide in Hansen Dam and food stands and batting cages in a number of small city parks. A future park in North Hollywood may include a miniature golf course and a mini-car racetrack.

All city departments are crying the blues. A hiring freeze has been in effect for several years; when an employee retires or quits, he or she is not replaced. Though Mayor Riordan has announced that his proposed new budget actually increases funds for Rec and Parks, the department insists it needs more money to carry on its business. With a constantly growing population and more demand for facilities, this is probably true. But in its panicky haste to cure the shortfall, the department is in danger of downsizing the value of its own property. (“We had to destroy the village in order to save it.”) In a neighborhood park that has baseball diamonds, a bat-

ting cage may not be a bad idea. But what about the kids who can't afford to pay for it? And will the amount of money generated be worth the trouble?

It's the larger parks like Chatsworth and Sepulveda where the losses would vastly outweigh the gains. Parks like these are refuges for people as well as animals and birds. After a week fighting freeway traffic and the usual stresses of work (and the daily news), we *need* the relief of open space, the long vistas of the mountains. We need green parkland without the sharp angles and flat surfaces of the city. The glimpse of a deer or the cry of a bird can soothe the urban soul.

The mayor and the Rec and Parks director say this is a proposal, not a *fait accompli*. There will be public hearings and much discussion. City Councilman Hal Bernson, whose district includes Chatsworth, says, “It's not going to fly. We have preserved the reservoir because it is a sensitive wildlife refuge. It is basically one of the last open spaces we have left.” Bravo!

If Rec and Parks reaches its goal, it may achieve a short-term cash bonanza. But it will have sold its assets, dipped into its capital. Genuine parkland will have been transformed into restaurants and sand traps, ball fields and parking lots. Once paved over and built upon, the wild habitat can never be recaptured; it is lost forever. ■

FIELD TRIPS

Continued from page 12

Friday Night, August 5 —

 From Ventura on the *M.V. Vanguard*. 30-hour trip will go NW from Ventura and W to the Continental Shelf. We'll search for warm water specialties, including Cook's Petrel, tropicbirds, Craveri's Murrelets and the great whales. Leaders **Kimball Garrett** and **Mitch Heindel**.

Sunday, August 7 — Topanga State Park. Leader **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See July 3 write-up for details.

August 13 to 18; extension through August 21 — Southeast Arizona. Leaders **Larry Allen**, **Nick Freeman** and **Mary Carmona**. Some camping required. Only leadership and camaraderie will be provided. Enthusiasm and willingness to research Southeast

Arizona birds are requirements. \$45 reservation fee for all or part of the basic trip (\$20 refunded in AZ), \$10 more for extension. Send SASE with two stamps to LAAS to reserve or for detailed trip description. Room/carpool info available from LAAS. Limited to 16.

 **Sunday, August 14 —** 12-hour trip from San Pedro on the *R.V. Vantuna* to Santa Barbara Island and the Osborne Bank. Craveri's Murrelets and storm-petrels possible. Leaders **Arnold Small** and **Jonathan Alderfer**.

Saturday, August 20 — Lancaster Migrants. Leader **Kimball Garrett**. Shorebirds and early land birds should keep us busy. Meet at 7:00 A.M. at the Park-and-Ride adjacent to Lake Palmdale off Hwy 14. Take the Avenue S offramp E, followed by a quick right into the lot. Stops will depend on scouting reports and accessibility. We will finish up shortly after noon. Be prepared for heat.

Sunday, August 21 — Van Norman Reservoir. Leader Dustin Alcala. Meet at 7:00 A.M. See July 17 write-up for details.

Sunday, August 28 — Chatsworth Reservoir. Leader Dustin Alcala. Meet at 7:00 A.M. See July 24 write-up for details.

 **Friday Night, September 2 —** From Ventura on the *M.V. Vanguard*. 30-hour trip will go NW from Ventura and W to the Continental Shelf. Hope to see fall *Pterodromas* and tropicbirds, sperm whales, two species of beaked whales and orcas. Leaders **Arnold Small** and **Richard Webster**.

Sunday, September 4 — Topanga State Park. Leader **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See July 3 write-up for details.

Saturday, September 10 — Bolsa Chica. Leader **Irwin Woldman**. Shorebirds, skimmers and a number of tern species likely. Meet at

8:00 A.M. in the Bolsa Chica estuary parking lot on the east side of PCH. Take the 405 Fwy S to Goldenwest St., take this S to PCH, and turn right onto PCH. Don't miss the small parking lot for the Bolsa Chica Marine Preserve on your right. Some paid parking across the street at the beach may be required.

Sunday, September 11 — Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Join ranger **Ray Jillson** to see songbirds, migrants, breeding raptors, etc. Cardinals are resident. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave. Take the Peck Dr. exit S off the 60 Fwy in South El Monte (just W of the 605 Fwy). Take the offramp onto Durfee Ave. heading W (right) and turn left into the Nature Center.

 **Saturday, October 1 —** Anacapa Island to Santa Rosa Island. We will look for the American Oystercatcher at Anacapa Island and Long-tailed Jaegers and Skuas. Leaders **Arnold Small**, **Herb Clarke** and **Mitch Heindel**.

 **Sunday, October 23 —** 12-hour trip from San Pedro on the *R.V. Vantuna* to Santa Barbara Island and the Osborne Bank. In the past three years we've had five species of storm-petrels and a Brown Booby. Leaders **Kimball Garrett** and **Jonathan Alderfer**.

 **Friday Night, October 28 —** From Ventura on the *M.V. Vanguard*. We'll look for Cook's and Mottled Petrels. Leaders **Kimball Garrett** and **Arnold Small**.

 **Saturday, November 12 —** 12-hour trip from San Pedro on the *R.V. Vantuna* to Santa Barbara Island and the Osborne Bank. Leaders **Kimball Garrett** and **Arnold Small**.

 **Friday Night, November 18 —** From Ventura on the *M.V. Vanguard*. This is the best time to look for fall *Pterodromas*, including Stejneger's Petrels. Leaders **Kimball Garrett** and **Mitch Heindel**.

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.

EVENING MEETING



Meet at 8:00 P.M. in Plummer Park.

No meetings in July or August

**September 13, 1994 Kimball Garrett and Fred Heath
The Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas**

Join this dynamic duo as they unfold before your very eyes the secret of how to add excitement to your summer birding for the next five years while participating in this major worthwhile endeavor.

F I E L D T R I P S

Before setting out on any field trip, **please 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.

♪ Denotes Pelagic Trips — call Audubon House for fees and additional information.

Sunday, July 3 — Topanga State Park. Gerry Haigh will lead participants through this diverse coastal mountain area. An ideal trip for a beginning birder or someone new in the area. A botanist is usually present. 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 turn left into the park. Meet at 8:00 A.M. in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. \$5 parking fee.

Sunday, July 10 — Big Bear Lake Vicinity. Leaders **Nick Freeman and Mary Carmona.** Meet at 8:00 A.M. outside Coldbrook Campground in Big Bear. Take Hwy 18 or 38 to Big Bear Lake. Proceed about halfway along the S side of the lake on Hwy 18. Turn S on Tulip Lane. Campground is on SW side as the road curves. Target birds include Williamson's Sapsucker, Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds, mountain finches and White-headed Woodpecker. Come prepared for heat and bugs. Bring lunch.

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Saturday, July 16 — Mt. Pinos Vicinity. Leader **Doug Martin.** Hummers, mountain woodpeckers, Hermit Warbler, etc. Bring a lunch. Anticipate the elements. Take Hwy 5 N past Tejon Pass to the Frazier Park offramp. Turn left and follow Frazier Mountain Park Rd., bearing right onto Cuddy Valley Rd. Meet at 7:45 A.M. **promptly** at the "Y" formed by junction of Cuddy Valley Rd. and Mil Potrero Hwy. Park in the obvious dirt clearing. Rain cancels.

Sunday, July 17 — Van Norman Reservoir. Leader **Dustin Alcala.** Riparian and grassland habitat surround the reservoir and adjacent ponds. 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 1:00 P.M. Restrooms on-site.

Sunday, July 24 — Chatsworth Reservoir. Leader **Dustin Alcala.** Observe mostly breeding resident birds in a grassland/oak scrub habitat with a large body of water. Take the 405 Fwy N to Roscoe Blvd. and head W to Fallbrook Ave. Take this N to the DWP entrance at the end. Meet at 7:00 A.M. at the gate. Finish up early afternoon. Bring lunch and water. No restrooms.

Continued on page 11