

# WESTERN TANAGER

APRIL IS  
**BIRDATHON**  
MONTH  
SEE PAGE 8

Volume 61 Number 7 April 1995

Los Angeles Audubon Society

## After the Fire: Bird Use of a New Burn

by E. N. Anderson

**O**n October 27, 1993, fire swept Two Trees Canyon in Box Springs County Park at the edge of the city of Riverside. Firefighters saved the main riparian forest, but the rest of the canyon drainage was completely incinerated by a very hot fire.

Formerly, the drainage was covered by chamise and mountain lilac chaparral above 2,000' (or higher on south-facing slopes) and, below that, by coastal sage scrub of California sagebrush, brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), sages and other

small shrubs. Successive fires had eliminated much of the bush cover by 1993.

Introduced species, mostly cheat grass (*Bromus* spp.) and mustard (*Brassica* spp.), as well as wild oats (*Avena* spp.) and other weeds, had begun to replace the natives. The fire continued this trend. Brush species were killed; less than 10% resprouted. They have regenerated only in bare, packed areas unsuitable for the introduced weeds. It remains to be seen whether they can hold their own there. Wildflowers

came up in large quantities after the fire, but late-growing and less-competitive species were absent, and past experience indicates that in future years the introduced annuals will steadily increase at the expense of the natives.

In riparian areas that were burned, castor bean has dominated regrowth, choking out virtually all natives. Two Trees Canyon is now virtually 100% covered by non-native plants. The main exception is the huge and dense sycamore-poison oak-mugwort thicket around Cassina Spring, an almost permanent spring at approximately 1,700' elevation on the south fork of Two Trees Canyon. This area grew back rapidly, becoming even more lush and dense than before the fire.

It is worth noting that an April burn several years ago had quite



## Winners of the 1995 Members' Annual Photo Contest

1st Prize Outside ABA Area  
Swallow-tailed Gulls  
Galapagos Islands  
Photographer Jay Fuhrman

different effects: it almost wiped out the nonnatives, especially the cheat grasses, and these were slow to reinvade. Ongoing research by Drs. Richard Minnich and Andrew Sanders of the University of California, Riverside, is revealing the revegetation patterns resulting from these fires. Better recommendations for controlled spring burning, to reduce fire danger and restore native plant cover, may soon result from this work.

Virtually every morning I hike the trail from the canyon bottom along the ridge to the park ranger station. This ridge makes up, by and large, the south edge of the Two Trees drainage. The trail is about a mile long and affords a commanding view of a square mile of brush, grass and riparian habitats. Naturally, I have come to know the birds along the trail quite well. It seemed worthwhile to record the fate of the nesting species as of July 1994 (when this was written). "Successful nesting" below refers to observations of fledged young (usually with parents) in nesting area. Species in the unburned areas are not considered; they were apparently quite unaffected by the fire.

As will be seen, several species moved away or were greatly reduced in population, but other species moved in or expanded their range and numbers. On the whole, the birds of the area are well adapted to fire and can live with it. However, the change of habitat from brush to grass is disturbing, and the total replacement of riparian vegetation by castor bean is *very* disturbing. This latter change has occurred in areas not easy to reach or count, so I have no details on its effect on birds, but Wrentits, House Wrens, Bewick's Wrens, Rufous-sided Towhees and other birds of dense brush have clearly suffered seriously.

### **Red-tailed Hawk**

A pair nested for years in a huge nest in an old sycamore above Cassina Spring. The nest burned (though the sycamore itself was undamaged). The birds stayed in the

canyon through the winter and are still in the area. They have apparently not nested this year. Immediately after the fire, a number of Red-tails came to the burn to hunt rabbits and ground squirrels that were no longer able to hide. The wet spring of 1993 had produced a huge increase in the number of these animals. By midwinter, the rabbits were down to previous numbers, and the ground squirrels were very rare. (Many may have been hibernating, but populations in spring of 1994 were much lower than ever before — perhaps 50% of usual levels. Spring of 1994 led to a rapid and dramatic increase in rabbits, but the ground squirrels did not reproduce at all well.)

### **Cooper's Hawk**

A pair lived in the canyon and foraged among the hills and elsewhere. They moved away after the initial flush of game was thinned out and have not reappeared.

### **California Quail**

A huge population had developed, especially from the 1993 wet spring. This population was not much affected by the fire. Quail moved out of the burned areas, but recolonized them in spring, when annual vegetation had grown tall. Pairs attempted to nest every few dozen yards along the trail, for a total of at least six pairs (probably more). Nesting was not particularly successful. Three pairs raised large coveys. The rest appear to have suffered nest loss. Since nesting success was better in unburned areas, it seems probable that the introduced annuals did not offer adequate cover.

### **Mourning Dove**

Common before and after burn.

### **Roadrunner**

Two pairs live in the area. They both nested successfully — one apparently in the unburned area, one in the burn itself, in spring of 1994.

### **Anna's Hummingbird**

A few had nested in dense sage

scrub before the fire. These did not nest or stay in the area after the fire (the brush being gone).

### **Costa's Hummingbird**

Nested commonly in areas with flowers, particularly around Cassina Spring. Population reduced but not totally gone.

### **Bushtit**

Several pairs occupied dense brush at higher elevations or near Cassina Spring. Pairs continued to occupy unburned patches of brush through the winter but eventually deserted the entire area.

### **Wrentit**

A pair had always occupied the poison oak scrub around Cassina Spring. They continued to occupy the area through the winter — living in bushes that had been too damp to burn — but deserted the area in late winter, never to return.

### **Bewick's Wren**

This had been the commonest bird of the sage scrub with very large populations, probably in the dozens of nesting pairs. Pairs survive in less severely damaged patches of brush, but the total for the square mile is now perhaps three pairs.

### **Canyon Wren**

Two pairs in area stayed and appear to have nested.

### **Rock Wren**

Two pairs nested regularly along the trail. One took refuge in nearby unburned house yards but returned to its usual territory in spring and nested successfully. The other pair stayed in its old territory throughout; I do not know if nesting succeeded, however, since it moved to a rather remote part of the territory.

### **California Thrasher**

Several pairs resident in area. They seem to have been remarkably unaffected. At least three pairs remain, living in unburned areas, and at least one of these nested successfully (probably all three did).

## Phainopepla

Two or three pairs regularly nest nearby and feed on elderberries in the burn area. They seemed unaffected; the elderberries recovered fast from the fire.

## Loggerhead Shrike

A pair has lived for years in the area of the ranger station, nesting successfully. In these times, when populations of this bird are catastrophically declining continent-wide, every pair merits concern. Fortunately, the opening of the habitat has been good to the shrikes, which nested successfully once again.

## Brown-headed Cowbird

This bird is common—far too common. In spring, large numbers of cowbirds systematically comb every bush and tree, seeking nests to parasitize. The fire probably made it much easier for them to find nests. In any case, numbers of young cowbirds were seen by the end of June.

## (Bullock's) Northern Oriole

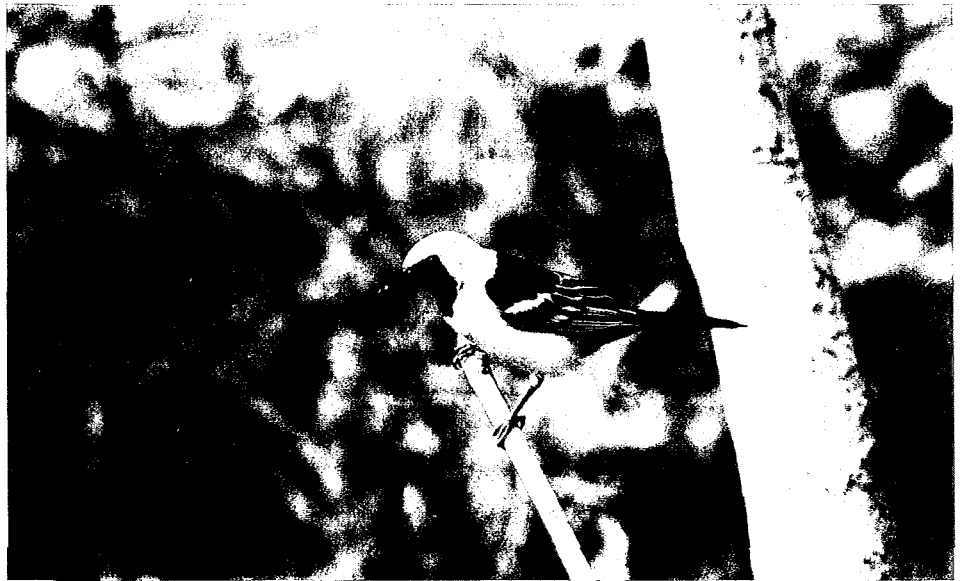
Occasionally has nested in the canyon. A few (three?) pairs nested in 1994 in unburned and burned sycamore groves and produced an unprecedentedly large number of young which foraged widely, being always visible at Cassina Spring and other sycamore sites.

## Blue Grosbeak

This bird had never nested in the area before, appearing only as an uncommon migrant. However, in April 1994, two adult males took up residence near Cassina Spring. One never found a mate, but the other managed to attract a female. They successfully raised at least two (probably three or four) young. A bird of dense riparian thickets bordering grassland, this species found the new habitat favorable.

## Lazuli Bunting

A common migrant in the area, this bird had never nested before. However, in April and May a pair



*2nd Prize Inside ABA Area, Hooded Oriole, Photographer Jack Nash*

were engaging in nesting activity near a small spring high up the canyon. They did not succeed and abandoned the area.

## House Finch

Status unclear; common in area but nests hard to find. May not nest in actual burn. No change in numbers noted.

## Lesser Goldfinch

Nests around Cassina Spring (few pairs). No change from before the fire.

## Rufous-sided Towhee

Several pairs occupied the sage scrub; most vacated the area, but some remain in unburned areas.

## California Towhee

Approximately seven pairs nest along the trail. These were back on territory as soon as the ground cooled. Alone among all the birds, they persisted on their territories throughout the year, even during the midwinter drought when the area remained utterly barren and lifeless for months. They nested with conspicuous success, most (perhaps all) nests fledging young.

## Rufous-crowned Sparrow

Second only to the California Towhee in persistence, this bird seems very similar to said towhee in habitat and habits. Again, about seven

pairs occur along the trail. During winter, fluctuating numbers stayed on site; others refuged in unburned brush. In spring, all seem to have returned to their usual haunts to nest. Success is difficult to judge, due to secretive habits of the bird, but appears not to have been high. As of late July there are no large families or groups in evidence.

## Sage Sparrow

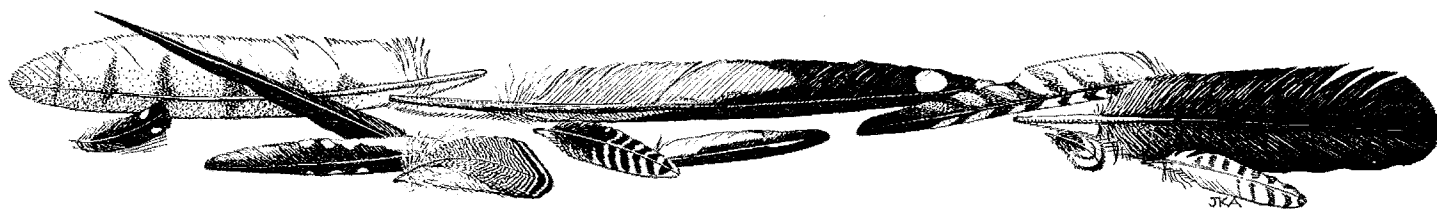
One pair had occupied a dense patch of sage scrub. It moved to a nearby patch outside the burn and remained there.

## Black-chinned Sparrow

This species seems to have moved into the vacuum. Previously nesting in small numbers in higher parts of the drainage, it expanded in numbers and range. Up to six territorial males were singing along the trail through spring, while others could be heard in more distant areas. Success of nesting was impossible to assess, however, due to secretiveness.

## Song Sparrow

A pair at Cassina Spring stayed throughout and nested successfully. Another pair lives at a smaller spring; it too remained on territory (no data on nesting). The bird remains common in other riparian areas, burned and unburned, nearby. ➤



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

by Kimball L. Garrett

**W**hat is the most widespread breeding bird species in Los Angeles

County? This may not be the most pressing issue in southern California avian biology, but perhaps it is something you have wondered about. And there are some non-trivial biological ramifications associated with the answer. After all, common and widespread birds can provide considerable information about human impacts on the environment — just think how many of our truly abundant birds, both native and nonnative, were probably much rarer or absent here 150 years ago (Northern Mockingbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Hooded Oriole and European Starling, just to name a few). Conversely, how many of today's common birds will be rare a couple of decades hence? Are there common and familiar birds we have taken for granted that are perhaps at the brink of a steep decline? (I offer no prescience here, but might nominate Western Meadowlark and Spotted Dove as possibilities.)

Arriving at quantitative information on bird population sizes is not a very easy thing to do. We can get a handle on the most numerous wintering birds by looking at Christmas Bird Count data, but we have no similar counting effort for the breeding season. What we do have, of course, is the Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas (I bet you were wondering when I'd get around to mentioning it!). The Atlas will only develop crude estimates of the numerical abundance of the county's breeding birds, but it will

## The Commonest Breeding in Los Angeles County?

yield fine-tuned distributional information. We should, therefore, be able to answer the question I initially posed: what is the county's most widespread breeding bird species?

Of course the primary use of atlas data for conservation biology concerns those species which are rare and localized, occurring only in specific habitats. Mapping these species provides a central tool for the management of avian diversity. Nevertheless, atlas statistics regarding common birds are fascinating and enlightening. Let's examine the two atlases already published from California. The table below shows that the most widespread bird species (expressed as the percentage of total blocks in which the species was confirmed breeding at least at the "possible" level) were:

One bias evident in these numbers is that Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks are conspicuous birds and are far easier to establish as "possible" breeders than smaller, more secretive species; nevertheless, the hawk and vulture are clearly widespread in Marin County. Both Marin and Monterey counties have diverse habitats, but neither comes close to the diversity of Los Angeles County. The relationship between habitat uniformity and wide distribution is evident in part of North America, particularly the Midwest. In the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas, ten different species were recorded in 100% of the 764 surveyed blocks! (These were Mourning Doves, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Blue Jay, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Northern Cardi-

### MONTEREY COUNTY

Mourning Dove	91%
Scrub Jay	88%
California Quail	82%
House Finch	80%
Lesser Goldfinch	79%

### MARIN COUNTY

Scrub Jay	97%
Turkey Vulture	96%
Red-tailed Hawk	96%
Mourning Dove	96%
California Quail	94%

nal, Song Sparrow and American Goldfinch.) Pennsylvania's Atlas had four species recorded in at least 97% of its nearly 5,000 blocks (American Robin, American Crow, Song Sparrow and Chipping Sparrow). Such wide distributions are not likely to be found in Los Angeles County, with its deserts, high mountains and coastal regions.

and coastal slopes are absent, in turn, from 20 or so high mountain blocks and/or the 20 or so most urbanized blocks; species in this category include: California Quail and Bewick's Wren. A good candidate for "Most Widespread Breeder" should, therefore, be: (1) found on both the desert and lowland slopes of the county, (2) occur over a wide attitu-

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*Mourning Dove, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Arizona, 27 January 1995*



*Male House Finch, Huntington Gardens, Los Angeles County, 7 March 1993*

So what are your guesses for the most widespread breeder in Los Angeles County? Some species that leap to mind immediately are, with further inspection, not good candidates. Many species, for example, are widespread over much of the county, but absent from most of the 60 or so blocks (out of 414) that encompass the Antelope Valley. These include: Scrub Jay, California Towhee, American Robin and Anna's Hummingbird. Other species that are widespread on both the desert

dinal range, (3) be a habitat generalist and (4) be tolerant of heavy urbanization. Three species that would appear to fit this bill are Mourning Dove, House Finch and European Starling. Of these, I'd give the nod to Mourning Dove just because it is somewhat more widely distributed in the high mountains than the other two.

Remember that being widespread and being abundant are not the same thing; the relationship between these two traits are complex and hotly debated among biogeographers. Some species, like our three candidates for "Most Widespread," are both abundant and widespread. Others, like the Red-tailed Hawk, are widespread but numerically uncommon. Still others are very common within limited, localized habitats (e.g., Tricolored Blackbird at only three or four nesting sites or Mountain Chickadee within coniferous forests).

Once again I repeat the familiar refrain: When the Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas is completed, we'll not only know who the champion species is, but we'll also have made great strides toward unraveling the complex mysteries of avian abundance and distribution.



*1st Prize Inside Los Angeles County, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Photographer Gary M. Garrity*

## Bird-Banding Training Courses Offered

**A**re you looking for new birding frontiers? The world of bird-banding awaits you! Banding is a fantastic opportunity to see birds up close: learn about their plumages, molt sequences and life habits and, by participating in established banding programs, contribute in a direct way to their conservation. Imagine capturing a bird such as a Swainson's Thrush and knowing that it traveled at least as far as central Mexico and returned to the exact spot at which you banded it the year before! Holding and then releasing such birds is an experience that literally moves some people to tears.

The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) based in California is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering a global approach to the preservation of birds and their habitats. IBP coordinates a large-scale cooperative program called Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS for short) that consists of a network of over 300 band-

ing stations throughout the Continental U.S. and Canada. These stations are operated by a wide assortment of contributors, including government agencies, nonprofits, educational institutions, independent banders and IBP itself. Birds banded at MAPS stations provide critically needed information on productivity and survivorship that can help identify the causes of long-term population declines. MAPS is endorsed by the National Biological Service and Partners in Flight and relies very heavily on the contribution of data from volunteer cooperators.

IBP is seeking volunteers in Oregon and Washington to "adopt" MAPS stations it currently operates in national forests under contract with the U.S. Forest Service. To achieve its goal of 12 such volunteers by 1996, IBP will be conducting two five-day bander-training courses near Portland, Oregon, this summer. The exact dates of these courses have not been set yet, but

they most likely will be in late June and/or early July. The anticipated enrollment fee is \$300, including lodging. Scholarships may be available to defray some of this cost. Upon completion of the course, capable students will be qualified for a banding subpermit and will be expected to adopt at least one MAPS station in their area starting in 1996. The operation of a MAPS station requires a commitment of only one morning (six hours) every ten days from late May (Oregon) or early June (Washington) through August for a total of only nine or ten mornings a year, all of which can be on weekends. People willing to make such a commitment for at least several years are preferred. All necessary equipment will be provided.

If you are interested in enrolling in one or both of these courses or if you would like additional information about IBP, MAPS or bird-banding in general, please contact Kenneth Burton, The Institute for Bird Populations, P.O. Box 1346, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956; Phone 415/663-1436; FAX 415/663-9482. You'll be glad you did! 🐦

# Tricolored Blackbird Counts Set For April and May

For further information, contact Bob Barnes, Birds in the Balance Program Coordinator, Audubon's Western Regional Office in Sacramento; Phone 916/481-5332; FAX 916/481-6228. 🐦

The Western Regional Office of the National Audubon Society is helping the California Department of Fish & Game and the Tricolored Blackbird Working Group to coordinate the second year of statewide counts of Tricolored Blackbird nesting and foraging locations. The counts will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 22 and 23, 1995, and May 20 and 21, 1995.

The counts include May dates this year in order to help identify the northward movement of Tricolored Blackbird colonies that seems to occur between early nesting in April and late nesting in May.

Your participation will make an important scientific contribution by helping to determine overall numbers of Tricolored Blackbirds, size and location of nesting colonies and foraging areas. Furthermore, the data you gather will be used to help shape this year's research.

Thanks for your help on this significant project!



1st Prize, Inside ABA Area, Sage Grouse, Photographer Brian Small

## A Birdwatcher Phunning in a State Park

For reasons of safety, the author wishes to remain unanimous.

When I arrived at camp headquarters, I said: "What will the PHOEBE?"

The ranger said: "\$2.00."

"That's RUFF," said I.

"No, it's KNOTT," he replied.

I went in the park and not a FLICKER of anyone in sight. So, I came back to headquarters — not a SOLITAIRE soul in sight there either; no one to CHAT with, that is until Yul Brenner came by with his BALDPATE. Next, my friend Bill came along, in a very bad mood. You should have heard him GROUSE and RAIL. He was indeed a CROSSBILL. I

said to myself: "POORWILL."

I saw some WESTERN TEENAGERS LOON up on the horizon, with their call "Gimme, gimme, gimme." They began BUNTING a ball around. One hit a BUTEO, but it was caught in the outfield by a FLYCATCHER. One seemed to be hurt; he was LIMPkin. Not a PEEP out of him, though.

Then some LAUGHING GULLS came in. They were VEERY immature. They said: "Let's PHALAROPE," which they did, then left.

Next, some cats came in for a funeral and held a KITTIWAKE, attended by a flock of MOURNING DOVES.

Things got SORA bad. A woman came PUFFIN in, bent on ROBIN the camp. At the same time a tourist from Baja California arrived and when the thief started to fire her revolver you should have seen that MEXICAN DUCK and heard him RAVEN at that WILD TURKEY.

Then the thief stole my tent and I started to OWL: "Bring my CANVAS-BACK." I muttered to myself: "If I could catch her, I'd THRASHER and CHUKAR out." It is a CARDINAL sin to steal EIDER a tent or anything else in a state campground.

Well, it was a real hectic day, but I'm not the LEAST BITTERN and have no EGRETS. 🐦

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Reprinted from *Outdoors West*, Summer 1980.



# Birdathon '95

April 1 - May 15, 1995

**H**elp support Los Angeles Audubon's Society's Environmental Education Activities!

Los Angeles Audubon Society is dedicated to helping young people understand and appreciate the world in which they live.

Between April 1 and May 15, Los Angeles Audubon birders will be heading to the fields to count birds and raise funds to support environmental education for children in Los Angeles who have little or no experience with the natural world.

Your generous, tax-deductible pledge to Birdathon '95 will help! A donation of...

- \$10 will provide a color classroom poster on bird migration
- \$35 will enroll 32 children in the *Audubon Adventures* program for one year
- \$70 will enroll two classes in *Audubon Adventures* for one year
- \$250 will provide a two-hour, hands-on, outdoor discovery program for 65 children at the Ballona Wetlands or Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area.

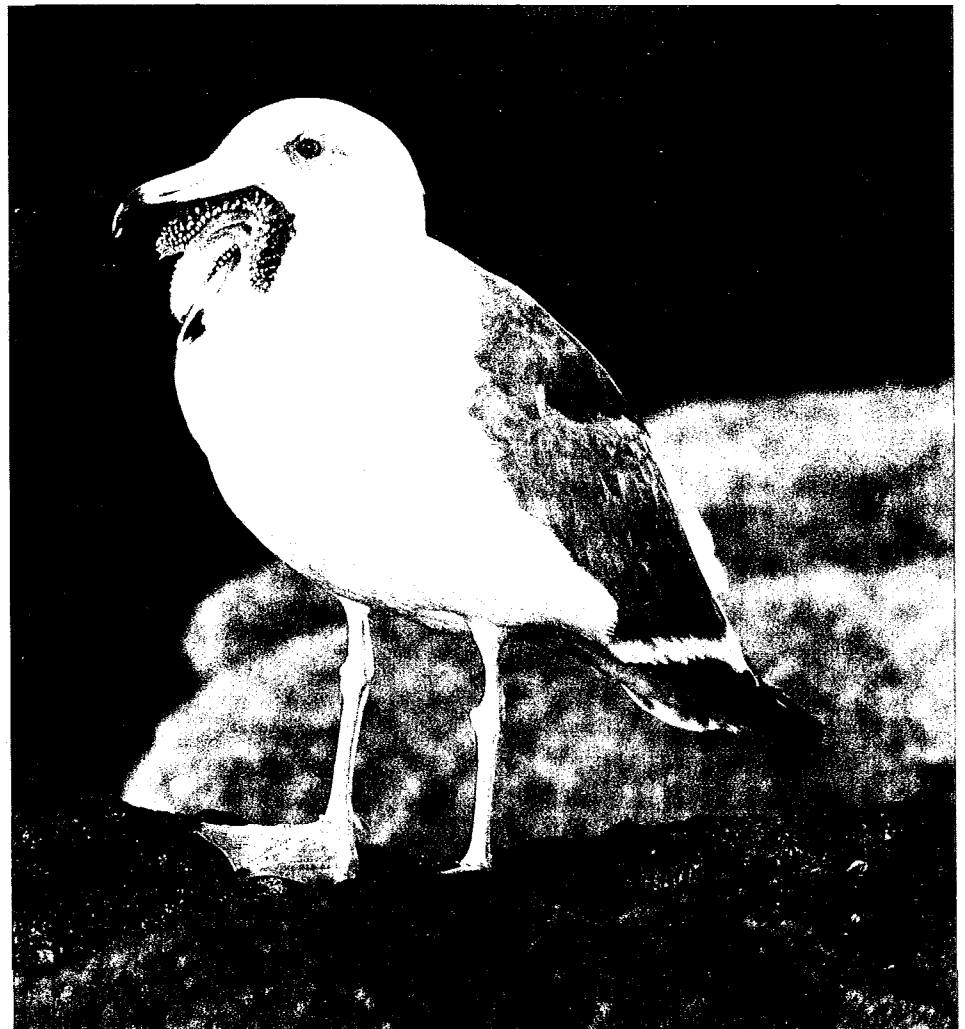
Please sign up to do a birdathon or send your check today. Help young people learn what they can do to help protect the planet. For more information, call Audubon House at 213/876-0202. 🐦

Volunteers  
are needed at  
Audubon House  
on Tuesdays  
and Thursdays.  
Please call  
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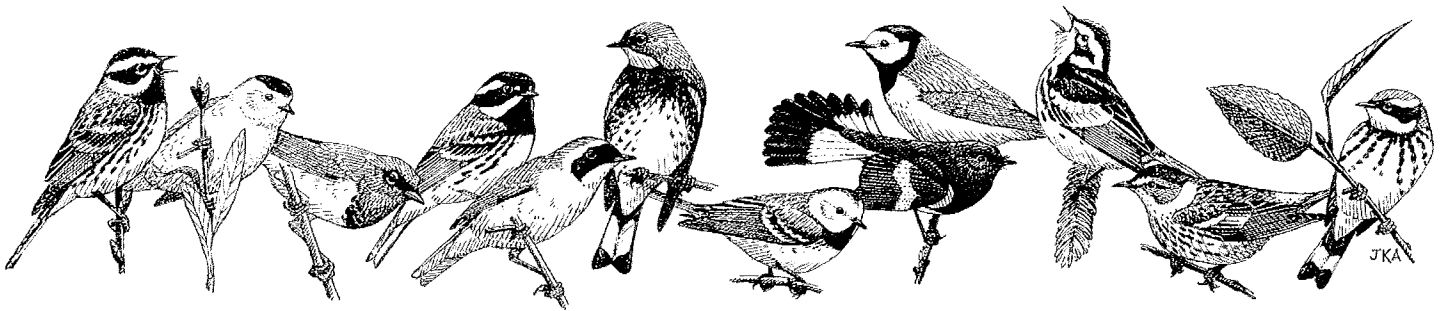


*2nd Prize, Inside Los Angeles County, House Finch, Photographer Kathleen Garrity*

*1st Prize, Humorous, California Gull with starfish, Photographer Brian Small*







# BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Hank Brodtkin

**A**pril brings with it the climax of the spring migration. Sometime between the second and third week it is possible to go into our local canyons and find up to eight species of wood warbler along with a vireo or two in an oak tree. One good place to view this phenomenon is the Walker Ranch section of Placerita State and County Park. There are other benefits as well in being out at this time of year. The chaparral is green and fresh; flowers dot the flats and their perfume fills the air; butterflies and other insects are active. So go out to the woods and drink in the beauty that is southern California in spring.

Mid-January through mid-February is one of the slowest birding periods of the year. Yet there still were a number of interesting reports. A **Least Bittern** was found at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Preserve on 21 February (Dick Barth), and 30 **White-faced Ibis** were seen on a San Bernardino Audubon Society field trip to Prado Basin on 18 February (Jim Kissinger).

Six **Ross' Geese** were at the Chino Prison grounds on 2 February (Hank Childs), and a **Eurasian Wigeon** was discovered at Silver Lakes near Victorville on 10 February (Bea and Dick Smith). One of the very few reports of **White-winged Scoter** this season comes from Bolsa Chica on 12 February (Paul Fielding). Also at Bolsa Chica on 29 January were five **Common Goldeneyes** (Gayle Hightower). An adult male **Smew** was reported from Lake Evans in the Buena Vista Lakebed area of Kern County

in mid-February (Lincoln Moses), but it could not be refound.

A **Broad-winged Hawk** was at a Ventura hunting club on 18 February (Doug Martin), and again from Bolsa Chica comes a report of an out-of-season **Lesser Yellow-legs** on 29 January (GH). Eighty **Mew Gulls** were seen at the Ventura Sewer Ponds on 21 February (GH) — quite a large gathering of this species. **Black Skimmers** were seen up and down the coast in numbers this past month with up to 30 at one time near Marina del Rey. Many of these are birds from the Bolsa Chica colony; we should watch for the establishment of new colonies where proper habitat is available.

A **Burrowing Owl** present for several days in late January at the Sepulveda Basin (Alan Dunn) was the first found there in several years. Unusual but not unprecedented was a report of a **North-ern Saw-whet Owl** in North Hollywood on 22 January (Richard Sapiro). An early record of egg laying for **Costa's Hummingbird** comes from Ridgecrest, Kern County, on 7 February (Rick Hallowell).

A female **Vermilion Fly-catcher** was at El Dorado Nature Center, Long Beach, on 15 February (DB), and one was at Pierce College in Canoga Park on 19 February (DB). Spring swallow firsts this year are a **Violet-green** at Hansen Dam Lake on 11 February (Cosmo Bloom and Gerard Phillips) and a **Barn** at El Dorado on 9 February (DB).

A **Northern Shrike** was seen at a feeder harassing rosy-finches at Aspendell in Inyo County on

14 February (Tom and Jo Heindel). Up to fifty **Chestnut-collared Longspurs**, along with two **McCown's** and one **Lapland**, were in agricultural fields south of Brawley in the first half of February (Guy McCaskie and Jon Dunn). A **Black-headed Grosbeak** was found at Camino Real Park in Ventura (GH). The **Rusty Black-bird** at Harbor Park on 11 February (Bob Beckler) was probably the same bird seen there late last fall. Five "**Bullock's**" **Orioles** — probably wintering locally — were at El Dorado Nature Center on 9 February (DB). The tenth **Black Rosy-Finch** ever reported from California comes from Aspendell on 11 February (GM); it was with several hundred **Gray-crowned**s.

For those of you with Internet access, I have initiated the Calbird-L Mail List for discussions of California birds and California birding. To subscribe (it is, of course, free) send your message to:  
<listserv@kaiwan.com>

Your message should read:  
add Calbird-L

Messages to the list can be addressed to:

<CalbirdL@kaiwan.com>

Good Birding! —

**R**ecords 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**

27½ Mast Street, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292.  
(310) 827-0407 E-Mail: hankb@kaiwan.com  
Or call **David Koeppel** at (818) 784-0425.

# The Kern Valley Festival

## A Celebration of the Bio-Regions — April 29-30

In the spring of 1995, amateur birdwatchers, hikers, photographers, wildflower enthusiasts and residents interested in learning about the biological treasures in their own community are invited to a very special weekend event.

A trip through the Kern River Valley can take you through five of the six bio-regions found in the state of California: Mojave desert, Great Basin sagebrush, coastal chaparral, great valley grasslands including riparian forest and Sierran forest. Joshua trees and desert sands lie within minutes of a vast cottonwood-willow forest with oak and chaparral covered hills stretching back from the scene, topped by the coniferous forests of the Kern Plateau.

As a result of this unique situation, biodiversity is higher in the Kern River watershed than in any other place in the United States. With so many different habitats meeting in one place, plants and animals usually separated by many miles can be spotted within easy hiking distance in the Kern River Valley.

This festival is set at the height of the spring bird migration and wildflower bloom. Events will be

headquartered in Kernville and Weldon, California. There will be displays and workshops on nature photography, birding for beginners and landscaping to attract wildlife. Short nature walks will be led on the Kern River Preserve and in nearby areas. Longer field trips will be organized for wildflower and bird observation, as well as tours of riparian forest and habitat restoration. Saturday will also feature special activities for children.

In Kernville there will be an invitational art show featuring wildlife and landscape fine art, photography and sculpture. There will also be rafting trips down the wild and scenic Kern River and exhibits in Circle Park. On Sunday the Book Shoppe in Kernville will feature "Conversations With" renowned California author Gerald Haslam, one of the premier chroniclers of the lore and landscape of this area. Signed copies of his recent books will be available for purchase.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Lynn Overtree at 619/378-2531 or Judy Hyatt at 800/258-3368. For info on accommodations, contact Kernville Chamber of Commerce at 619/376-2629. 🐾

## FIELD TRIPS

*Continued from page 12*

will be on the observation and assessment of breeding behaviors in birds. After touring the coastal sage scrub of the park itself and the ponds and reed patch at Pepperdine, the group will carpool to Solstice and Corral Canyons to look for Sage Sparrow, raptors and others. The group will return to Malibu at noon to eat and disband. Larry may bird informally into the afternoon. Take Malibu Canyon Road W directly across PCH into the free lot for the park and meet at 7:30 A.M. by the obvious Michael Landon building at the W end of the lot.

**Sunday, April 9 — Antelope Valley BBA.** Meet leader **Fred Heath** to review Breeding Bird Atlas techniques and look at birds and flowers. Fun and educational; no commitment. Learn why it is important to study bird distributions, and see a lot of birds in the process. Piute Ponds hopefully. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at the Lamont-Odett Overlook on

### 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.

*2nd Prize, Outside ABA Area, Common Snipe, Sultanate of Oman,  
Photographer David Seay*



the E side of Hwy 14, N of the Pearblossom Hwy turnoff, before Palmdale.

**Sunday, April 9 — Whittier Narrows Regional Park.** Ranger **Ray Jillson**. View wintering and resident raptors, waterbirds, songbirds and resident Cardinals. 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 make a left into the Nature Center.

 **Friday, April 21** — 30-hour trip departs 10:00 P.M. Friday; returns 4:00 A.M. Sunday. From Ventura on Island Packer's *M.V. Vanguard*, NW past Point Conception to Arquello Canyon and W to the California continental shelf with several daylight hours along the shelf. \$250/double bunk, \$145/single bunk (meals included).

**Saturday, April 22 — Walker Ranch.** **Irwin Woldman** will lead a morning of birding through the oak woodland and chaparral in search of the colorful migrants and singing residents that abound in spring. Take Hwy 14 N from the 5 Fwy to Placerita Canyon Rd. Head E about 4 miles to Placerita State Park. Continue 2 miles to the pullout on the right with the locked gate. Meet at 7:30 A.M.


**Saturday, April 29 — Shake Canyon and Vicinity.** Leader **Doug Martin** will tour the wilds of the Santa Susanna Mountains. Migrating warblers, vireos, flycatchers, etc. and breeding montane birds should make for a high species count. Bring sturdy shoes and food for a full day of birding. Take the 5 Fwy N to Lake Hughes Rd. in Castaic. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at McDonald's.

**Sunday, April 30 — Starr Ranch Audubon Sanctuary.** We will meet Park Manager **Pete DeSimone** nearby and carpool in park and private vehicles. This

unstrenuous walk through oak woodlands should be good for passerines and young raptors. Take the 5 or 405 Fwy to El Toro Rd. Go NE to Santa Margarita Pkwy. Turn right onto the parkway and continue into a shopping center lot, veering R toward Lucky's. Gather in the lot near the Shell station. Leave promptly from the lot at 8:30 A.M. Reserve by phone with LAAS. Rain cancels. \$5 donation to Starr Ranch optional. Do not send money to LAAS. Participation limited.

**Sunday, May 7 — Topanga State Park.** Leader **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See April 2 write-up for details.


**Saturday, May 13 — Lakeview Area.** Leader **Howard King** will scour the coastal sage scrub and lakeside habitats around Mystic Lake and the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Bring \$2.25 fee or a fishing/hunting license for admission. Breeding hopefuls include four blackbirds, California Gnatcatcher, White-faced Ibis, Golden Eagle, Sora, Virginia's Rail and Rufous-crowned and Black-chinned sparrows. Take the 60 Fwy E to 215 Fwy S to Ramona Expressway E. Turn left onto Davis Rd. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at the headquarters building on the right. Bring lunch.

 **Saturday, May 13** — 12-hour trip out of Ventura to Anacapa, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands. Full galley on board. \$60.

**Sunday, May 14 — Whittier Narrows.** Leader **Ray Jillson**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See April 9 write-up for details.


**Saturday, May 20 — Santa Anita Canyon.** Leader **Mary Carmona**. Take the 210 Fwy toward Arcadia. Take Santa Anita Ave. N to the parking lot at the end of the road. Meet at 7:30 A.M. at the trailhead at the bottom of the lot. Four mile round-trip moderately strenuous walk through oak and chaparral canyons. Good selection of breeding and migrating birds including war-

blers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Band-tailed Pigeon, three hummers and American Dippers possible. Bring a lunch.

 **Sunday, May 21** — 12-hour trip on the *R.V. Vantuna* out of San Pedro to Santa Barbara Island and the Osborne Bank. \$37.

**Sunday, May 21 — Butterbredd Springs Lizards.** Leader **Harvey Fischer**, L.A. Zoo herpetologist. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at Jawbone Canyon Rd. Limited signup by phone with LAAS. Carpool from Denny's at Roxford and 5 Fwy at 6:00 A.M. if you wish. Details next month.

**Saturday and Sunday, June 10 and 11 — Yosemite.** Leader **Louis Tucker**. Will concentrate on Goshawk, Pileated and Black-backed Woodpeckers, Pine Grosbeak, Great Grey Owl, Blue Grouse, other specialties. Trip ends Sunday afternoon in Owens Valley. Possible snow on ground, in air. Strict silence enforced during owl watch. Bring Saturday night sack dinner. Meet 7:30 A.M. in the Mariposa Grove parking lot just beyond the Yosemite south entrance. Suggest staying in Oakhurst area south of park Friday night. We will plan to reserve free campsites for Saturday night at Crane Flat for twelve of the group (can't get more). Yosemite campsites on sale April 14 through Mistix (800/365-2267). Campsites and hotels in area sell out quickly. Limited to 14. Reserve with SASE and \$20 to LAAS for information sheet with itinerary and accommodations.

**Friday to Monday, June 23 to 26 — Southern Sierras Weekend** with **Bob Barnes**. Itinerary flexible, but similar to last year: Friday — tour Great Basin, Walker Pass, Troy Meadows. Saturday and Sunday — Butterbredd Springs, Kern River Preserve, Bloomfield Ranch, eastern Sierra. Monday — Western Divide, Giant Sequoias. Owling Sunday night. Limited participation. Reserve with SASE and \$11 for each day (\$44 for 4 days) to LAAS for more info and lodging. 

# EVENING MEETING

Meet at 8:00 P.M. in Plummer Park.  
ID Workshop may precede the meeting at 7:30 P.M.  
Call the Bird Tape for information on ID Workshops.

April 11, 1995

**Gene Cardiff**

## **Birds of the Bolivian Andes**

Do you want closeups of the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock and Paradise Tanager? Join Gene as he travels upslope inventorying species on a six-week LSU-sponsored expedition into the Andean Highlands of Bolivia.

May 9, 1995

**John Cox**

## **The Cox's Sandpiper Story**

Experience the story of this enigmatic bird, first thought to be a hybrid or an unknown race of Darwin. It was then described as a new species, but is now known to be a hybrid between Pectoral and Curlew Sandpipers.

E. A. Cardiff



*Andean Cock-of-the-Rock*

# F I E L D T R I P S

**B**efore 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

**Saturday and Sunday, April 1 and 2 — Owens Valley Grouse Trip.** Mary Carmona will orchestrate this road-intensive weekend. Rosy-Finches, Sage and Blue grouse, Sage Thrashers, Pinyon

Jays, Osprey and Golden Eagle expected. Limited to 20 participants. Send SASE with \$10 check to LAAS for 7:30 A.M. Saturday meeting location in Big Pine and lodging list.

**Sunday, April 2 — 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 Rd. (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, April 8 — Franklin Canyon.** Leader **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. Expect Wood Ducks. From the 101 Fwy, take Coldwater Canyon S into the hills. Immediately after Mulholland Dr. merges from the W with Coldwater Canyon, make a 90° right turn onto Franklin Canyon and continue on to the Nature Center. Meet at 7:30 A.M. in the parking lot past a gated drive on the left.

**Saturday, April 8 — Santa Monica Mountains BBA Practice Session.** Meet **Larry Allen** at Malibu Bluff Community Park with binoculars and a pencil. Emphasis

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*Continued on page 10*