

WESTERN TANAGER



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Los Angeles Audubon Society



Watching Butterflies

by Fred Heath

Most of the readers of the *Western Tanager* know the joy, the challenge and the excitement of birding. Most of the things which make birding such a pleasure are also to be found in butterfly watching. However, butterfly watching has a few pluses which many may feel make it superior to birding as an avocation.

First, butterflies begin to get active later in the morning with a peak of activity between 10:00 and 11:00 A.M. Thus there is no guilt or butterflies missed if you can't get out of bed at 5:00 A.M. to catch the dawn chorus.

Second, butterflies like warm sunny weather (don't we all?), so you don't even have to get up at all

if the weather looks bad. Imagine, no more searching for that American Oystercatcher on some jetty in the middle of winter with an icy wind blowing in your face and your telescope shaking as much as you

Anise Swallowtail. This butterfly uses fennel as a food plant and thus is common throughout our area.

are. By the way, this reminds me, you no longer have to worry, "Do I lug that heavy, awkward scope through two miles of deep sand or take the chance that I won't need it?" Of course, Murphy's Law will always apply here: You will always need your scope only if you do not have it with you. For butterflies all you will ever need is a pair of binoculars which focus fairly closely. And usually the close-focusing binoculars, such as the Minolta Pocket, are very light.

One of the other advantages of butterfly watching is that butterflies have only two sets of wings — forewings and hindwings — and thus have no tertials! Many birders who haven't yet gotten into the fine art of identification of obtuse shorebirds probably do not know what a tertial is. If you don't know, you don't want to know.

Of all the blessings of butterfly watching, none ranks higher for most people than the fact that there are no pelagic butterflies! An occasional migrating Monarch may be found out over the Gulf of Mexico, but you do not have to go out in a rocking boat to find **any** species of butterfly.

Enough bird bashing. Let's talk butterflies. Butterflies are classified as insects of the Order Lepidoptera (the Greek translation is scale wing). Both moths and butterflies belong to this order. The true butterflies and skippers form a suborder and are different from most moths in that they fly during the day rather than at night. There are, however, a number of day-flying moths, some which rival butterflies with their bright colors and striking patterns. The main obvious difference is that a butterfly has clubbed antennae while moths have simple straight or complex feathery antennae.

Skippers, with their generally heavy bodies and shorter wings, look more like moths on first glance, but their clubbed antennae give them away. Skippers are named for



American Lady. Not as common as the Painted and West Coast Ladies in our area. Note the clearly shown clubbed antennae which separate butterflies from moths.

their bouncing skipping-like flight. Because some of the tougher identification problems involve skippers, I always tell new butterfly watchers that it is okay to **skip-em**.

Butterfly watching is going through the same transition that birding went through 70 or 80 years ago. Up until then, most bird ID was done through the barrel of a shotgun. I have a book entitled *Key to North American Birds* by Elliott Coues which was published in 1894. Part I of this book is called "Field Ornithology" and begins with picking and caring for your gun and your dog, and segues into how to skin a bird properly. The bird descriptions themselves contain minute details and measurements, some of which would be all but impossible to see in the field. One of these days I would like to copy a few of these descriptions and see how long (if at all) it would take some top birders to figure out even the commonest species. Before Roger Tory Peterson's field guide, identification by sight was not considered completely reliable.

Much the same holds true with butterflies today. Many collectors feel that the only way to identify some species with certainty is from the head of a pin. When I asked one expert to identify a photo of a Duskywing (a group of medium-sized dark skippers

which look very similar), his reply was that you couldn't without examining its genitalia!

Although Duskywings are tricky, butterfly watchers are ferreting out field marks which can be reliably used to identify them. It wasn't too many years ago that Peterson was saying that you couldn't distinguish between the *Empidonax* flycatchers unless they sang.

One thing that makes butterfly identification a little easier than bird identification in general is that distribution is even more important with butterflies. The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) in their *Checklist & English Names of North American Butterflies* lists 717 species found in North America north of Mexico. This is somewhat comparable to the number of bird species in North America. However, whereas California boasts 586 bird species at last count, there have been only 240 species of butterflies recorded. For southern California, the number of butterfly species drops to about 170. Contrast this to over 460 species of birds which have been recorded in Los Angeles County alone.

Part of the reason is that there is not a lot vagrancy in butterflies. Al-

though, like birds, butterflies can fly, they are generally less mobile than birds. With some exceptions (like the Monarch or the Painted Lady), butterflies generally are a sedentary group, not venturing very far from where they hatched as caterpillars. A major reason for this is that many are tied to a specific food plant. The food plant, by the way, is the plant the caterpillar (or larvae stage) eats. The caterpillar is the eating part of the butterfly life cycle. The butterfly itself is the mating part and, except for sipping a little nectar now and then for energy, doesn't really eat. Many butterflies will nectar on various plant species but can be real particular about where they lay their eggs. The El Segundo Blue (an endangered subspecies of the Square-spotted Blue) both nectars and feeds on the local Sea Cliff Buckwheat and thus has a very limited distribution on the few coastal back dunes where this plant grows thickly.

While you might find a Pine Warbler or a Magnolia Warbler at a remote desert oasis many miles from the nearest pine or magnolia tree, you would never expect to see a Pine White or Mountain Mahogany Hairstreak more than a few hundred yards from the nearest pine or Mountain Mahogany tree.

At any one location, the number of butterfly species which you might have to sort through to make an ID is limited by the ecosystem you are in and the particular plants found there. Thus, in order to learn about butterflies, you become more aware of the exact nature of your surroundings. I have certainly learned a lot more about flowering plants since I began butterfly watching.

Another key to the identification of a particular butterfly is the time of year. Many butterflies are only found during a few months of the year. The El Segundo Blue, because its caterpillars eat only the flower heads of the Sea Cliff Buckwheat, will be out only from late June to early July when these flowers begin to appear. When trying to identify a butterfly, many very similar butterflies can be eliminated simply by

knowing their flight times.

Thus, in going afield looking for butterflies, it always helps to be prepared by knowing which butterflies might be flying in that type of habitat at that time of year. We are quite lucky here in southern California in having a number of books which can provide us excellent distribution information as well as good identification help, and most are available at the LAAS Bookstore.

One of the sources that I've found most helpful for beginner butterfly watchers in the Los Angeles area is actually a wall chart which is fanfolded into a handy Auto Club map sized document. It is entitled *Butterflies of Greater Los Angeles* by Rudi Mattoni and has 106 butterflies (a few are actually subspecies or extinct forms) found in the Santa Monica Mountains and the L.A. Basin up to about 2,500 feet elevation. Each species is depicted with a full color photo of, in most cases, the male, the female and undersides. In many species, especially the Lycaenidae (Hairstreaks, Coppers and Blues), the undersides are extremely important for field identification since the butterfly will normally land with its wings closed. Because many of the butterfly guides available assume that the butterfly has been collected, they may show only the upperside which is easy to see on a relaxed (euphemism for dead) butterfly. Mattoni's guide has missed depicting the undersides for only a very few butterflies, making it extremely user friendly in the field.

Aside from the pictures of each species, this wall chart has information on each species as to its habitat preference, food plant and timing of its life cycle. Like anything else in life, it is not perfect. The pictures of the five species of Duskywings are too dark to be useful, and a mistake made when the chart was being laid out makes the Duskywings even more confusing. Two of our local Duskywings, Mourful and Funeral, have white edges on their hindwings. The photos, which were sent to Hong Kong where the layout

was done, had white edges. Unfortunately, the decision was erroneously made to trim these pesky white edges off the photographs before the chart was printed.

Although this wall chart is handy in the field, having to unfold it and fold it again is awkward and eventually it gets torn at the folds. Marianne Ray, a local butterfly enthusiast, has come up with a simple and elegant solution. She bought a 4 1/2" X 6" photo album, cut up her wall chart and put it in the album. This has caught on with a lot of the local butterfly watchers.

We are fortunate to have one of the very best books on butterfly distribution in *The Butterflies of Southern California* by Thomas and John Emmel. Since this book was designed to be strictly distributional in nature, it contains almost no ID information *per se*. It does have ten good quality color plates which are photographs of specimens of each the species and subspecies found in southern California. Because there are just ten plates, to get all the butterflies in they are about half the actual size. This is a definite drawback for the smaller species. Most of the species have the undersides depicted except for an entire plate of Sulfurs and Whites. Every-

Marine Blue. Named for its color, not the habitat, this butterfly is generally identified by its striped undersides.



Herb Clarke

one who has watched butterflies knows how frustrating it is to wait for a Sulfur to land. If and when it finally lands, all you usually see are the undersides. The book does give food plants and, like many butterfly books, has a plant food index. The only problem with this plant food information is that the plants are all in Latin. Once you get over the Latin problem, a food plant index can help you close in quickly on an ID. Of course, you have to be able to identify the plant first!

Butterflies of California by Garth and Tilden is the best pure identification guide for our area. The color plates are all good paintings of dead butterflies. Although the various subspecies are covered in the text, not all are pictured. Some of the local subspecies may be quite differ-

with lots of identification and behavior information (which can be useful for an ID). The one unique thing about this book is the detailed information about the food plants including many line drawings of the plants. There are also some full page line drawings of a few of the tough ID problems which are quite helpful.

In the Peterson Field Guide Series, *A Field Guide to Western Butterflies* by Tilden and Smith has lots of good field marks but is very limited in the number of subspecies shown because of the large area covered. Many of the plates are in black and white which make the book less user friendly. *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies* by Robert Pyle is the only field guide that covers

nothing like the photos in this book. All that being said, there have been quite a few instances where the large clear photographs in this book have cinched an ID for me. This is especially true for butterflies outside southern California.

The Butterflies of North America by James A. Scott is a little large for a field guide but has lots of color plates of many different subspecies along with excellent in-depth natural history information on butterflies in general and on each species in detail.

Another book which should be mentioned even though it doesn't cover our area is *Butterflies Through Binoculars* by Jeffrey Glassberg, which covers the area from Boston to Washington, D.C. This book is the first book which was designed especially for butterfly **watchers** and has lots of photos of live butterflies showing upper and undersides with excellent comparisons with like species. It probably won't be too many years before such a book is completed for our area.

If you are traveling and wish to butterfly outside our area, keep in mind that there are many publications with distribution and identification information from around the world, but especially in the U.S. and Canada. Check with the LAAS Bookstore before you go.

One major problem with using different books is that many of the English names are different from book to book. Various local subspecies have names which may be different from a commonly accepted species name. Even the scientific names can vary from authority to authority. There is no organization, such as the AOU for birds, which determines what is a species and what its scientific and English names should be. The attitude of most butterfly scientists is "Who cares what the English name is? Use the scientific name!" The people at NABA felt, in order to make butterflies more accessible, that a standardized list of English names must be generated. They did just that and recently published *Checklist & English Names of North American*



Fred Heath

Western Tiger Swallowtail. A common garden butterfly which is the largest species found in the Los Angeles Basin.

ent from the particular subspecies depicted. However, using this book in conjunction with the plates in Emmel and Emmel usually works quite well at least in southern California.

One other book which covers the local area should be mentioned. That is *The Butterflies of Orange County, California* by Larry J. Orsak. The plates of specimens are in black and white and not very helpful. However the text is filled

our area with pictures of live butterflies in full color. And wonderful photographs they are. Unfortunately, in order to cover the entire area, there is seldom more than one photo of each butterfly. This problem is made worse by the fact that no information is given on where the photo was taken. Thus you have no idea if the subspecies is one found locally. There are a number of photos of butterflies I have seen in southern California which look



Becker's White. The distinctive underside pattern helps identify this butterfly from the more common Cabbage White.

Butterflies. This 40 plus page booklet has each of the 717 species found in North America north of Mexico with an English and scientific name, with a place to note the first sighting of each species and a section on why some of the names were chosen.

One last book to be mentioned is *Handbook for Butterfly Watchers* by Robert Pyle. This interesting and informative book opens the world of butterfly watching with all the fun and discovery it can bring.

Finally, you are ready to get out and watch butterflies. Where do you

start? At present there are not many organized trips of which I am aware. I've led a few Audubon trips during which we have looked at an occasional butterfly in between the birds. Maybe in the not-too-distant future we can have some strictly butterfly watching trips if there is enough interest.

In the meantime, I have two suggestions. The first is to join NABA (at least you will be kept up to date on the latest in butterfly watching throughout the country). A yearly membership is \$25. They publish a beautiful quarterly magazine called *American Butterflies* which is modeled somewhat after the ABA's *Birding* magazine. Send your check to:

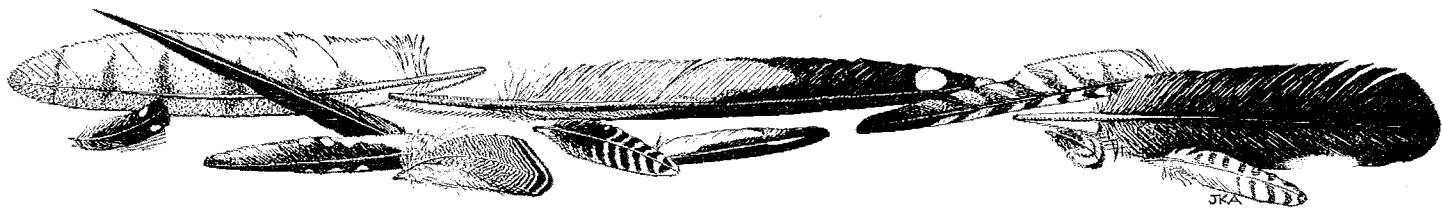
NABA Treasurer
909 Birch Street
Baraboo, WI 53913

The second suggestion is to participate in a Fourth of July Butterfly Count. These are very similar to the Christmas Bird Counts, only warmer. There were six such counts held in southern California last year, and Pasadena will probably become the seventh this year. Below is a listing of these seven counts and the contact information, as well as the three from Southeast Arizona. I probably will participate in most of them and will have updated information by the time you read this article. So if you need further information please feel free to call me. And oh, good butterflying! ☺

Fourth of July Butterfly Counts

San Juan Capistrano	June 18	Don Mitchell	714/550-7420 x3204
Pasadena	mid to late June	Pasadena Audubon Society	818/798-5522
Pomona Valley	June 24	Wanda Dameron	818/340-0365
Mt Baden-Powell	July 2	Fred Heath	310/826-0083
Santa Ynez Canyon	July 8	Walt Sakai	310/450-5150
Orange County	July 15	Larry Shaw	714/971-2421 x121
Palos Verdes Peninsula	July 22	Jess Morton	310/832-5601
Ramsey Canyon	August 6	(SASI*)	602/883-3945
Patagonia	August 13	(SASI*)	602/883-3945
Atascosa Highlands	August 20	(SASI*)	602/883-3945

* Sonoran Arthropod Studies, Inc.



A CLOSER LOOK

by Kimball L. Garrett

South for Summer?

One aid to understanding the biology of birds is to forget some things about being human. The calendar, for instance. Ask anybody when the first day of summer is and they'll answer (with a confidence interval of a day or two) June 21st. Most people will nail the spring equinox at March 21st, give or take a day. If birds do what we "think" they ought to do (from our north temperate point of view), they should be moving north to their breeding grounds in spring and happily breeding away in summer. "Summer," remember, we define as 21 June to 21 September. Luckily for the birds — whose annual cycle is a complex product of ultimate and proximate physical and biological input — they remain blissfully unaware of any human calendar constructs.

With this in mind, we can look at the phenomenon of southward shorebird migration. Even beginning birders realize that estuaries,

flooded fields and sewage pond shores are teeming with migrant shorebirds in July, August and September. By the time "official" fall rolls around on September 21st, only a handful of shorebird species (Dunlin, for example) are not yet well past their peak southward movement. This is especially well-illustrated by a few species — such as Willet and Short-billed Dowitcher (both pictured), Wilson's Phalarope, Western Sandpiper and others — in which the first southbound migrants may actually arrive in our area in "spring" (before the 21 June summer solstice)! Thus, the irony of "fall" shorebirds appearing in spring. This early southbound movement is due in part to the brevity of the far northern summer, and also to the limited parental involvement of one sex or the other in most shorebird species.

Our understanding of the "fall" arrival dates of shorebirds is confounded by the tendency of non-

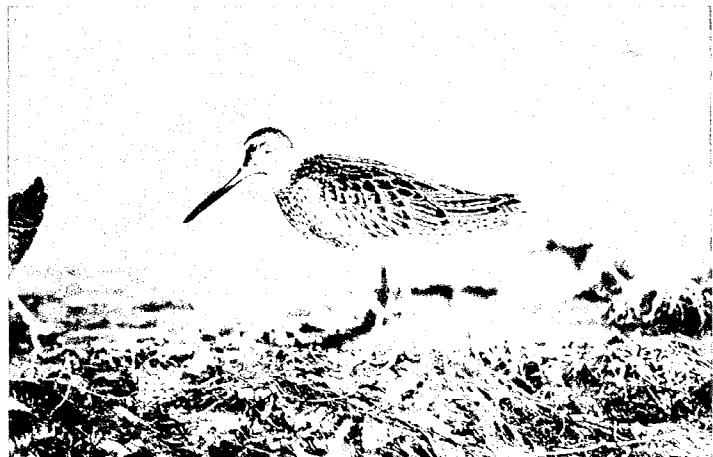
breeding individuals, usually year-old birds, of many species to remain in our area through the spring and summer. For this reason, we have a much better idea of the "fall" arrival dates of juvenile shorebirds, since these individuals clearly did not oversummer. We know, for example, that juvenile Short-billed Dowitchers (such as the bird pictured) arrive in the Los Angeles region about a month earlier than do juveniles of the more northerly-breeding Long-billed Dowitcher. For all species, we also know that southbound juveniles arrive later (often by several weeks) than the adults.

Thorough study of the intricacies of shorebird migration requires techniques such as banding, color-marking and telemetry of individual birds, along with the collection of specimens. But even the casual birder can't help but be impressed by the predictable annual calendar of these long-distance travelers. And again, this calendar makes more sense if we cast out our preconceived notions of the "seasons." ■

Willet. Ballona Creek, Los Angeles County, November 1994.



Juvenile Short-billed Dowitcher. Malibu Lagoon, Los Angeles County, September 1986.



A Note of Appreciation

by Herb Clarke

Much work goes on in the Los Angeles Audubon Society to make it run smoothly and provide services for our members. Many people are unaware of what goes on behind the scenes and of the dedicated volunteers who do those daily tasks except when something goes wrong and then they loudly complain.

Among the many services the Society performs are the Bookstore, the *Western Tanager*, conservation activities, publications and the weekly telephone tape recording of bird sightings.

With regret, David Koeppel, who has been doing our popular tape, is forced to resign due to increasing personal obligations. For more than five years, with little support from the membership, his clear enuncia-

tion and succinct comments have made the Los Angeles Audubon Society's tape one of the best in the country. For the many people who have listened to the "Voice of Audubon" over the years, we express our heartfelt thanks and wish him well in his new endeavors.

Fortunately, we have a new volunteer who will assume the tape operation, and an announcement will be forthcoming soon with additional details.

I want to use this forum to personally thank all the past and present volunteers who have made LAAS the envy of the nation. Many of these people have worked for years with little or no public recognition.

We urge anyone who has the time or ideas on improving the Society to join our highly intelligent and dedicated staff. You'll find your association to be personally rewarding and fun. If you're interested, call Audubon House at 213/876-0202 for more information. ■

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Western Tanager subscription rates for nonmembers are: \$15 per year for third class delivery or \$22 per year for first class delivery. LAAS members may receive first class delivery by paying an additional \$7. Make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

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10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.
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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY'S ANNUAL PICNIC

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 1995



Meet at Charlton Flat (lower picnic area)
off the Angeles Crest Highway,
approximately a 40-minute drive up Angeles Crest from the
Foothill (210) Freeway in La Cañada Flintridge.

Kimball Garrett and Fred Heath will lead a bird walk
looking for nesting birds to entice you to be part of the
Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas.

BUTTERFLIES • BOTANY • BIRDING

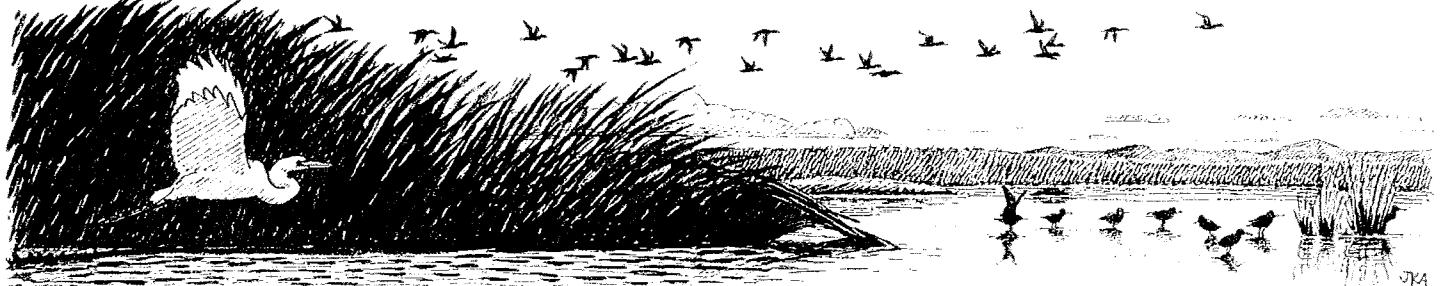
8:00 A.M. Bird Walk and Atlasing
10:00 A.M. Picnic Starts

Bring a lunch. LAAS will supply the cold drinks.

Everyone — kids, grandparents, friends, etc. — are invited!

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CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

Unbelievably, a glance at the Gingrich Congress makes one almost nostalgic for Ronald Reagan's Interior Secretary, James Watt. At least Watt never publicly advocated the repeal of the environmental legacy of the Johnson and Nixon administrations: the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the banishment of DDT and lots more. However, Watt's true progeny, now in the driver's seat, can't wait to mow down those frail roadblocks to unparalleled greed. They are the anti-environmental chairmen of committees most concerned with the environment. In the House they are supported by the 70-odd members of the hard-right Republican freshmen class eager to make a score.

Their agenda is incredible. And they haven't missed any tricks. "Property rights" are at the core of their mission. If the Feds want to save a wetland on part of your land or prevent the building of a toxic dump that will pollute a river, the God-given right to do what you want with your property is violated and the taxpayer must pay the bill. This gift to the huge oil, timber, mining and agricultural industries is embodied in the deceptively named Job Creation and Wage Enhancement Act. If an environmental rule lowers the value of property more than 10%, this new "Takings" entitlement for the rich creates a multibillion dollar obligation for the government. Bye-bye balanced budget. *Business Week* magazine calls the Job Act "a stealth environmental policy... a guerrilla war on green laws."

And that's only the beginning. This so-called Job Act sets up a panel of "experts" (employed by the polluting industries!) that can veto environmental regulations. The Act requires federal agencies to generate a formidable amount of cost-benefit studies and risk assessments before new rules are issued. (What is the monetary value of lung cancer or lead poisoning?) The Act provides all sorts of loopholes for companies to avoid penalties for breaking environmental laws. For example, polluters must be warned *before* their premises are inspected, allowing lawbreakers to hurry and clean up. The opportunities for obfuscation, legal entanglement and maddening delay are endless.

The sheer chutzpah of this frontal attack on the environment and public health is breathtaking. Only a year ago this destructive program was the property of the "wise use" crazies and their secret corporate sponsors. Today a majority of the Congress has adopted it as its proud answer for America. The Republican leadership claims that the voters gave them a mandate in 1994 for this kind of change and point to their vaunted Contract With America as proof. But the Contract was so general and nonspecific that hardly any ordinary person could tell what it meant. The word "environment" was significantly absent from the document. It swept through the House at breakneck speed with some members admitting that at times they had no idea what they were voting for. When the fine print got into the media people began to pay attention.

Are the voters ready to accept the destruction of 25 years of laws that protect the air we breath, the water we drink, the health of the natural world? When asked, 83% of Americans (*Washington Post* poll) called themselves environmentalists. They did not vote for more oil spills, more contaminated food, more toxic dumps. They did not want a moratorium on the Endangered Species Act, the first step toward its elimination. Where the wrecking crew may not be able to get rid of decent environmental laws they are planning to tie them up in red tape or refuse to fund their enforcement.

We can hope that when people get a clear look at the Contract and the Job Act they will see that *Business Week* was right, that they were indeed subjected to "a guerrilla war on green laws" and will holler loud and often. Which is what we all must do. Environmentalists are always being exhorted to "write to your congressman" or whatever politician — federal, state, local — is in a strategic spot on the issue at hand. Some of us write but many of us do not. Today is different. We are not applauding or protesting a particular bill or activity. We are faced with a malignant philosophy shared by a gung-ho bunch of militants who have the votes. This is the biggest environmental crisis of the century and we can't just sit by and wait for doomsday.

We must use the only weapon we have at the moment: Pressure. Senators, Representatives, the President must know that we are extremely unhappy about the omi-

nous blueprint of the future we are being offered by the majority party. Postcards, letters, phone calls to your two senators and House member are urgent, essential. No elaborate message is necessary. In your own words tell them you are concerned about the health of the natural world and the health of your family, that eliminating environmental laws will leave both unprotected. Senator Barbara Boxer has been a strong ally and deserves your thanks. Dianne Feinstein, the driving force behind the successful Desert Protection Act, has taken a dismaying shift to the Republican side and was a cosponsor of the bill that would suspend the Endangered Species Act for three years. Tell her you're disappointed. Ask Bill Clinton to veto any anti-environmental bills that cross his desk. ➤

Please write:

President Bill Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

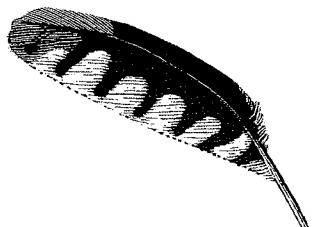
Hon. Barbara Boxer and
Hon. Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senate
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Hon. (Your Representative)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Or for their Los Angeles offices, see your local phone book.

If you would like to get up-to-the-minute details, call 800/659-2622.



An Introduction to Northern California Birds

Herbert Clarke
Reviewed by Hank Brodkin

Color photographs by Herbert Clarke, map by Jonathan Alderfer. Mountain Press, Missoula, Montana. 1995: 189pp., 225 color photographs and one map. \$14.

In 1989, *An Introduction to Southern California Birds*, also by Herb Clarke, was published. Many printings later, this book has proved its worth. There is scarcely a book store, book stand, tourist shop or camping supply outlet in southern California (and some places in northern California) that does not carry it. From Crown Books to the general store to the gas station in Coso Junction, copies can be found. The reason for its success is simple. This little volume delivers what the title promises — something all too rare today. Fred Heath, President of LAAS, told me that, on the nature walks he leads, this is the book he recommends for nonbirders who want to learn about birds.

Herb is a "world class" birder in every sense of the phrase. He has been birding since childhood and has, along with his equally bird-knowledgeable wife Olga, led bird tours to many parts of the world.

Herb's first love (besides Olga!), however, is bird photography. He gives lectures and slide shows regularly, and many of his photos have been published.

Northern California Birds follows the successful format used in the southern California book. It contains color photo portraits — two and sometimes three to a page — of some 205 species of birds. While many of the species are also depicted in the earlier volume, these photographs are all different and are generally, with one or two exceptions, beautifully reproduced.

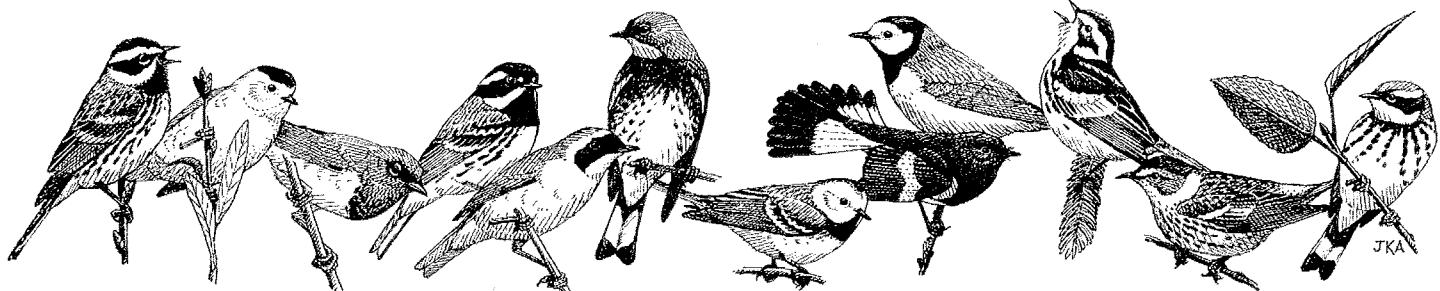
His opening chapter discusses how to identify birds, along with some general hints on how to observe and attract them.



Six of the seven chapters present the different habitats of northern California (cities and towns, the Central Valley, mountains and lowland coniferous forests, the coast and the nearby ocean, and freshwater wetlands and riparian woodlands). After a discussion of the habitat, the representative birds of that habitat are pictured with facing text discussing each species. Because many birds are not restricted to one habitat, at the end of the chapter is a list of birds also possible in that habitat that are pictured elsewhere in the book. The seventh chapter deals with six endangered species in California and some of the habitats that are also endangered.

This volume is paperback and is attractively presented on glossy paper. At 5 1/2" X 8", it is small enough to fit into a daypack or glove compartment.

An Introduction to Northern California Birds is a worthy companion to its southern California predecessor. Both make ideal gifts for someone who wants to learn about the birds of this great and varied state without the confusion of going through a field guide. ➤



BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Hank Brodkin

The first few weeks of June mark the end of spring migration, and some of the most unusual vagrants are seen during this time. Males will generally be singing, so listen for a song you do not recognize and track it down. It might be time to consider volunteering for one of many bird-related projects (besides the L.A. County Breeding Bird Atlas sponsored by LAAS). Call the American Birding Association at 800/634-7736 for a copy of their 1995 publication *Volunteer Opportunities for Birders*. If you are not already a member, you might consider joining the ABA. Actually it is hard to imagine anyone being a birder and not belonging.

The cold, wet, weather this spring seems to have held back the main push of migration a little. As of this writing (19 April), the main push has not yet started. However, some interesting sightings have been reported: a storm-grounded **Laysan Albatross** was reported from Gardena on 16 March (Mitch Heindel). An **American Golden Plover** was found in the Los Angeles River channel at Willow Street on 12 April (Kevin Larson), and a **Solitary Sandpiper** was reported from Cherry Creek in Beaumont on 9 April (John Branchwater). Up to nine **Red Phalaropes** at Bolsa Chica on 25 March (Jay Fuhrman) were among the many reported, up and down the coast, of this species that usually migrates well out at sea.

Four **Common Ground-Doves** were at Sepulveda Basin on 31 March (Richard Barth), and the first **Caliope Hummingbird** report of the season comes from Arcadia Wilder-

ness Park on 9 April (Tom Wurster).

A female **Vermilion Flycatcher** was seen in Saline Valley, Death Valley National Park, on 15 April (Larry and Pam Sansone), and on 30 March five **Purple Martins** and a **Sage Thrasher** were reported from Bear Valley Springs near Tehachapi (Gail Hightower). A **Gray Vireo** returned to Bob's Gap near Valyermo on 15 April (Jerry Friedman).

Our first local **Blue Grosbeak** was seen at Sepulveda Basin on 14 April (Rich Pagen), and the first **Lazuli Bunting** report comes from Chesebro Canyon on 9 April (Robert Weissler). Eight to ten **Grasshopper Sparrows** were back on territory in Rancho Sierra Vista on 15 April (JFu).

A male **Great-tailed Grackle** was seen at Malibu Lagoon on

31 March (Steve Hampton), and a **Baltimore Oriole** (this species will be split again from Bullock's by the AOU) was found in Redondo Beach on 26 March (Martin Byhower).

A **Black Rosy-Finch** was again seen at Aspendell on 1 April (Mary Carmona and Nick Freeman), and on the same L.A. Audubon field trip 1,000 or so **Evening Grosbeaks** were at Mono Lake on the same day.

Good Birding! ↗

Records of rare and unusual bird sightings reported in this column should be considered tentative pending review by the *FIELD NOTES* 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

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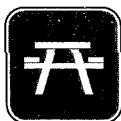
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FIELD TRIPS

Continued from page 12

staying in Oakhurst area south of park Friday night. We plan to re-serve 12 free campsites for Saturday night at Crane Flat. Yosemite campsites on sale April 14 through Mistix (800/365-2267). Trip limited to 14. Reserve with SASE and \$20 to LAAS for info sheet with accommodations and itinerary.



Sunday, June 11 — Annual Picnic. Charlton Flat Picnic Area. See details on page 7.

Friday through Monday, June 23 through 26 — Southern Sierras Weekend with Bob Barnes. Itinerary flexible, but similar to last year: **Friday** — Great Basin, Walker Pass, Troy Meadows. **Saturday and Sunday** — Butterbredit Springs, Kern River Preserve, Bloomfield Ranch, eastern Sierra.

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.

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.

Sunday, July 2 — Topanga State Park. Leader **Gerry Haigh**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See June 4 write-up for details.

Sunday, July 16 — 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 south 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 Hummingbird, mountain finches and White-headed Woodpecker. Come prepared for heat and bugs. Bring lunch.

Sunday, September 17 —
12-hour trip on the *R.V. Vantuna* out of San Pedro to Santa Barbara Island and the Osborne Bank. \$37.

Saturday, September 30 —
17-hour trip out of Ventura on the *M.V. Vanguard*. Land on San Miguel Island after birding adjacent waters. Dinner included. \$90.

Saturday, October 7 —
12-hour trip out of Ventura to Anacapa Island, Santa Rosa Island and Santa Cruz Island. Full galley on board. \$60.

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

Saturday, November 18 —
8-hour trip on the *R.V. Vantuna* from San Pedro to the Palos Verdes Escarpment and Redondo Canyon. \$25.

Friday, November 24 —
30-hour trip (10 P.M. Friday to 4 A.M. Sunday) on Island Packer's *M.V. Vanguard NW* out of Ventura 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. ↗

Sequoia and Kings Canyon Seminars

The nonprofit Sequoia Natural History Association announces their 1995 Spring/Summer Field Seminars in beautiful Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. This outdoor program is designed for the student, teacher, artist and the curious and adventurous! These excursions, field trips and workshops explore natural history topics to help park visitors better appreciate, understand and enjoy the wonderland of the Sierra Nevada. For more information or a free brochure, contact:

Sequoia Natural History Assn.
HCR 89 - Box 10
Three Rivers, CA 93712
209/565-3759. ↗



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.



June 13, 1995

Herb Clarke

An Introduction to California Birds

Herb will discuss and show selected pictures from his new book, *An Introduction to Northern California Birds*, along with reviewing the very successful previously published southern California companion volume. He will be happy to autograph either book, both of which are in stock at the LAAS Bookstore. Come and enjoy a beautiful and informative talk illustrated by Herb's slides, photographed at some of California's most scenic birding sites.

The next meeting will be Tuesday evening, September 12, 1995.

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

Saturday, June 3 — O'Melveny Park Bird Box Walk. Take in a morning of breeding birds with **Doug Martin**, concentrating on Western Bluebird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, House Wren and other

cavity nesters that use the nesting boxes he constructed in conjunction with the North American Bluebird Society and National Audubon's Birds in the Balance. Learn general information about the importance of nest boxes and how to be successful in the construction and placement of them. Take the 405 Fwy N to the 118 Fwy W. Take the Balboa Blvd. offramp N. Turn left onto Jolette Ave. and right onto Meadowlark Ave. Park at the side of the street where Meadowlark deadends into Van Gogh St. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

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7377 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694

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Sunday, June 4 — 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 turn left into the park. Meet at 8:00 A.M. in the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. \$5 parking fee.

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 local 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 at 7:30 A.M. in the Mariposa Grove parking lot just beyond the Yosemite south entrance. Suggest

Continued on page 11