

WESTERN TANAGER



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Los Angeles Audubon Society

High on a hilltop the scent of damp sagebrush fills the early spring air. A Gray Fox saunters by below us, making a half-hearted move toward a young Desert Cottontail that crouches under a toyon. The rabbit bolts, and the fox moves on, settling for a nibble of toyon berries and a juicy beetle for dessert. The flat buzz of a Spotted Towhee competes with the musical overtures of Bewick's Wrens and Song Sparrows, and the chorus is occasionally punctuated by a California Quail's "chi-CA-go!" (or is it "pa-COI-ma!?"?) call. Nestled in a nearby patch of prickly-pear are the remnants of an old Cactus Wren nest, and well within the tangle of armored cactus pads is a Desert Woodrat's midden (with the rodent fast asleep within).

This hardly seems like a scene from the middle of the Los Angeles Basin, but all of this and more awaits the visitor to the Baldwin Hills. Within a mile or two of the most heavily urbanized parts of Los Angeles, Culver City, and Inglewood, these hills retain a considerable expanse of natural coastal scrub habitat, dominated by California sagebrush, coyote brush, and California bush sunflower. This habitat, in turn, harbors populations of a number of vertebrates which simply can't make a living in the surrounding urban lowlands. A team of biologists from the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County has completed a study of the plant and animal life of the Baldwin Hills, and some of the highlights are summarized here.

Natural History Museum Ecological Study

The original landscapes of the Baldwin Hills have long been altered by grazing, agriculture, oil extraction, and

THE SECRET LIFE of the BALDWIN HILLS



by Kimball L. Garrett

urbanization. Many steeper slopes still support coastal scrub plant associations, but even the floristic composition of that habitat has probably changed over many decades of disturbance. The Hills are part of the Ballona Creek Watershed, all of which has undergone dramatic alteration over the years. A few hundred years ago a trip inland from the coast (at what is now Marina del Rey) would have traversed a coastal wetland teeming with wildlife, harboring breeding birds like Clapper Rails, Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, and Northern Harriers that are scarcely imaginable today. Tall sand dunes, in some places cloaked in maritime scrub and coastal prairie gave way inland to sparse scrub and grassland, interrupted by willows and other trees along Ballona Creek, until the relief of the Baldwin Hills added a mosaic of coastal sage scrub and "woodlands" of toyon, elderberry,

and other tall shrubs. Inland from the Baldwin Hills lay an extensive network of freshwater marshes or "cienegas."

The ravages of a growing human megalopolis have erased most of this scene. Now we work our way upstream along the Richard M. Nixon Freeway

from a yacht harbor (and a remnant of the coastal wetlands) ringed by office buildings and condominiums through a morass of industrial buildings, shopping malls, and housing tracts, and beside a Ballona Creek now entombed in concrete, until we reach the Baldwin Hills.

Refreshingly, open space and natural habitat remain here – some 1200 acres in all – until we descend the northern flank of the hills and back into the urban expanses.

Now largely isolated from other natural coastal scrub habitats in places like the Santa Monica Mountains and Palos Verdes Peninsula, the Baldwin Hills harbor populations of vertebrates and arthropods which are at risk from the effects of habitat degradation and isolation. The California Quail, Bewick's Wren, and Spotted Towhee still maintain rather healthy populations, but California Thrashers and Rufous-crowned Sparrows are gone, or nearly so. The Baldwin Hills were well known among birders as *the* place to find Cactus Wrens within the Los Angeles Christmas Count circle, but populations appear to have declined after the 1970s, and the last confirmed sightings were in 1996. Populations of Cactus Wrens on the coastal slope of southern California are gravely threatened by

urban development, so their apparent recent loss from the Baldwin Hills is a wake-up call warning of the perils of habitat degradation. With many cactus patches remaining, the wrens' probable demise may also be attributable to an unnatural abundance of medium-sized mammal predators, including raccoons, skunks, foxes, and (of greatest concern) feral cats. It seems likely that populations of these predators have increased with the local extirpation of the area's "top" predator, the Coyote, and with the subsidies they receive from humans (for example in the form of pet food, and increased rat and house mouse populations).

The Natural History Museum's study documented 166 species of birds from the Baldwin Hills; 41 of these are documented as breeding, with another 18 species formerly or occasionally breeding. In addition to the Cactus Wren, losses from the breeding avifauna include Greater Roadrunner, Burrowing Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, and Western Meadowlark. But much diversity remains, with several pairs of Red-tailed Hawks, nesting Phainopeplas and Lazuli Buntings, and a variety of migrants and winter visitors.

Twenty-eight species of mammals occur, or are expected to occur, within the Baldwin Hills; 21 of these are native to the area. The area's herpetofauna includes at least two salamanders, two frogs, four lizards, and six snakes, plus an introduced turtle. A diversity of arthropods, including at least twelve species of butterflies, was recorded during the recent study. These aren't stunning numbers, but they represent a diversity of organisms that are unique to our natural areas and cannot be found in the urban lowlands.

The possibilities for extensive habitat restoration in the Baldwin Hills are real; planners envision a park that will not only satisfy the recreation demands of an underserved public, but also will protect and enhance areas of natural habitat large enough to sustain healthy plant and animal populations. With parallel efforts to restore the wetlands at the mouth of Ballona Creek, perhaps some day we'll be able to recreate a more natural journey from the ocean and coastal marshes to the upland habitats of the Baldwin Hills.



Baldwin Hills Suggested Birding Spots

Currently the most accessible birding area in the Baldwin Hills is within Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, located off La Cienega Boulevard, 1 1/2 miles south of the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) and 1 1/2 miles north of Slauson Avenue. There is a parking fee of \$3.00 on weekends and holidays; parking is free on weekdays. Park just after the entrance kiosk and check the fishing lake for Pied-billed Grebe, Ring-necked Duck (winter), and even the occasional Hooded Merganser. The landscaped park is good for Bullock's and Hooded orioles, and migrant flycatchers, vireos and warblers; planted pines occasionally harbor Mountain Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Golden-crowned Kinglets in late fall and winter. The largest tracts of natural coastal scrub are found on the east slope of the park, above La Brea Ave. Drive (or walk) to the uppermost parking lot on the top of the ridge, and walk south along the broad dirt path, checking the scrub to the east; Bewick's Wrens, Spotted Towhees, California Quail, Orange-crowned Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Song Sparrows, and many migrant and wintering species such as Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Golden-crowned Sparrows occur here. Watch for soaring raptors, including the ubiquitous Red-tailed Hawks, but also the occasional White-tailed Kite and Red-shouldered Hawk. Check the tall transmission towers for Cassin's Kingbirds.

Unusual sightings in the park include Clay-colored and Vesper sparrows, "Red" Fox Sparrow, and summering Yellow-breasted Chat and Wilson's Warbler. Among the exotics, Nutmeg Mannikins are frequent around pampas grass and weedy annuals at the edge of the park landscaping, and European

Goldfinches established a small population in the late 1990s.

Other tracts of coastal scrub habitat, not currently accessible to the public, exist north of Holy Cross Cemetery and east of West Los Angeles College. The cemetery (enter off Slauson Avenue about 1 mile west of La Cienega) hosts open field species such as American Pipit and Western Meadowlark (both fall through early spring) and an occasional winter flock of Tricolored Blackbirds.

Although not currently on the "radar screen" for most birders in the Los Angeles area, the Baldwin Hills promise to become a prime birding destination as a mixture of well-planned landscaping and restored coastal scrub eventually replaces the extensive scars of decades of oil drilling. Monthly bird walks in Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area sponsored by the Los Angeles, Santa Monica Bay, and Palos Verdes Audubon Societies will be a great way to begin to explore this treasure.

Baldwin Hills Public Planning Workshops

Community Conservancy International (CCI), a broad-based coalition of community, conservation, and park and recreation organizations, is developing a visionary plan for converting the Baldwin Hills oil drilling fields into a two-square mile park, recreation, and restored natural open space. CCI is a Los Angeles based non-profit organization dedicated to combining the preservation of natural lands and waters with protection of local communities. CCI is hosting public workshops to review draft plans for the expanded Baldwin Hills Park and your input will be welcomed.

BALDWIN HILLS PARK PUBLIC WORKSHOP INFORMATION:

West L.A. College Fine Arts Theater
4800 Freshman Drive
Culver City

Wednesday, March 14, 2001

5:30-6:30 P.M. - View Draft Plans
6:30-9:00 P.M. - Workshop

Saturday, March 17, 2001

1:00-2:00 P.M. - View Draft Plans
2:00-4:30 P.M. - Workshop



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

CALIFORNIA RAVENS ARE UNIQUE: New DNA research indicates that California ravens are genetically different from ravens in other areas in North America and in other parts of the world. While it is too soon to consider them a separate species scientists speculate that the division occurred two million years ago and that individual California birds may still continue to mate only with their own type.

ARCTIC REFUGE UNDER THE GUN: When President Bush nominated Gale Norton as Interior Secretary he followed the path of Ronald Reagan when James Watt was appointed to that cabinet position. Norton agrees with Bush that oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a great idea a thought that sends shivers down the back of the environmental community.

PESTICIDE KILLED FLORIDA BIRDS: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has documented the demise of 16 species of birds in Florida caused by helicopter spraying of fenthion, a pesticide to control mosquitoes. Species include Sanderlings, Dunlin, Black Skimmers, and the endangered Piping Plover. The study, submitted to the EPA, says that the pesticide is toxic when it is absorbed through the skin or inhaled.

SAGEBRUSH POACHERS? U.S. Fish and Wildlife agents have confiscated 1500 lbs. of sagebrush seed illegally harvested from the Hanford Reach National Monument in Washington. Land managers are concerned by this theft as native sagebrush is disappearing at an alarming rate because of invasive Eurasian weeds and widespread fire loss. Half of last

year's vegetation that burned was sagebrush. (No report yet on what the miscreants were going to do with the stuff.)

DRILLING REGULATIONS THREATENED: Oil companies may be in line for a bonus following the victory of our court-appointed President. They are uniting to "loosen a web of regulations" limiting the drilling on federal lands, citing, among others, the ban on road building and the protection of endangered species. Environmentalists say that 95% of federal land in five western states is open to drilling. There is no secret where the former oil executive stands on this matter.

NEW WILDLIFE REFUGE FOR HAWAII: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has purchased 4500 acres for the Oahu Forest National Wildlife Refuge. It encompasses nine natural native communities that include habitat for the endangered 'Elepaio, honeycreepers, and the Hawaiian Short-eared Owl as well as 17 endangered plants, tree snails, and native fishes. This excellent project, it is hoped, will slow the predicted demise of Hawaii's unique flora and fauna.

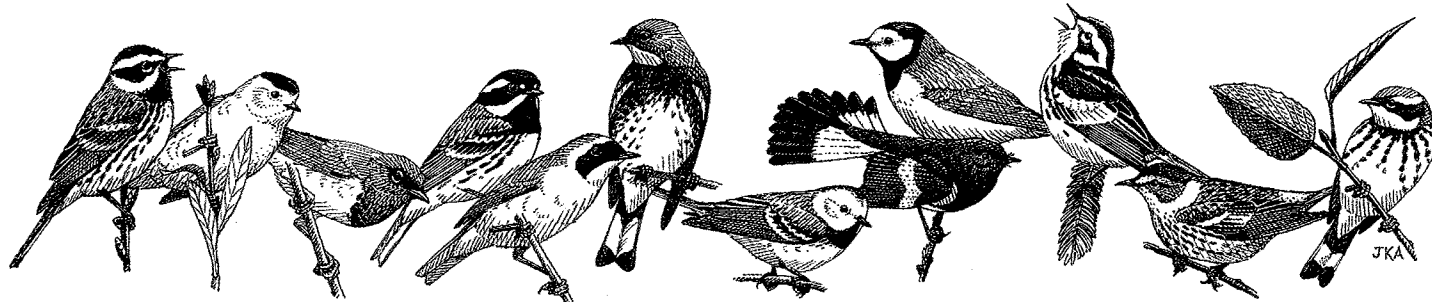
CONGRATULATIONS, HOME DEPOT: Under intensive persuasion by environmental groups the giant do-it-yourself Home Depot chain has agreed to eliminate purchases of wood products from endangered ecosystems. It will buy its wood from "certified" forests; those that have been independently verified as well managed.

GLOBAL WARMING LEADS TO ENDANGERMENT: A new study by the Pew Center on global warming finds that human-induced climate change "will cause ecological havoc in the United

States." Climate change, which could be "10 times greater than that during the last Ice Age," would force animals and plants "to migrate in a desperate search for new habitat where they can survive." Many common U.S. species such as sugar maples could be wiped out, while other ecologically rich habitats could shrink to critically small territories."

WIN-WIN PARROT PACT SIGNED: The Wildlands Project and Pronatura, Mexico's largest conservation group, signed an agreement that will protect 6000 acres of habitat vital to the survival of half the world's remaining Thick-billed Parrots, stop logging on a large tract of virgin forest, and give a community land cooperative the means for long-term sustainability. In exchange for habitat protection the historic agreement provides for cash payments for lost logging income and provisions for developing eco-tourism and sustainable logging outside the protected area.

DEVELOPERS ATTACK SALMON CRITICAL HABITAT: Building and development interests have gone to court to nullify the National Marine Fisheries Service designation of critical habitat for 19 evolutionally significant units of salmon and steelhead in the Northwest. According to the lawsuit, the NMFS designated "patently excessive amounts of land and water that are not "essential or even reasonably related to conservation." The Pacific Coast Fisherman's Associations contend that if successful the lawsuit would "destroy the most effective laws we have for protecting and restoring salmon stocks that support so many fishermen, small businesses and coastal communities."



BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Daniel S. Cooper

Let me begin by thanking Kimball Garrett for the opportunity to take over *Birds of the Season*. I met Kimball when I volunteered at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History in the 1980s, a high school kid eager to absorb all I could about birds. I've been in awe of his abilities as a scientist and his dedication to bird conservation ever since.

Like Kimball, I hope to use this column to interpret the significance of recent bird sightings, rather than just summarizing what was seen where. Along the way, I expect to call on you, the reader, to help me fill in gaps in our understanding of our big backyard. You can hold up your end of the bargain by continuing to send in reports and descriptions of unusual observations to Kimball Garrett at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. He will continue to compile bird records for Los Angeles County for publication in *North American Birds*. So, if you have reported a rare bird, and don't see it here, don't think I'm ignoring you. To uphold the high standards set for *Birds of the Season*, I will include really unusual species only after receiving complete descriptions by at least one observer.

With California's bird list so long, adding new species often means taking multi-day boat trips in hopes of glimpsing deep-water pelagic species, or talking your way onto the Farallon Islands in fall. But, sometimes it can be done by diligently checking a neighborhood greenbelt over the course of several years. The birding event of the winter of 2000-01 has been the discovery and careful identification of a **Nutting's Flycatcher** adjacent to Mason Regional Park in Irvine, Orange Co. (Jim Pike, Doug Willick). A potential first for California and one of few to have ever been found north of Mexico, this is one of a suite of species confined to a band of deciduous forest along the Pacific slope of Mexico and northern Central America. Since it is

not kept as a cage-bird and has already occurred in winter elsewhere in the Southwestern U.S., there is little doubt that this bird, like the Couch's Kingbird that preceded it, is just the latest in the amazing list of tropical vagrants to reach Orange County. Originally reported as a Dusky-capped Flycatcher on 11 November, its true identity was re-assessed by the end of December as it settled into a routine of foraging (and calling!) along the willow-lined creek.

As with the Couch's Kingbird, this bird presents an important lesson in the importance of taking into account all possible

field marks when identifying birds – aside from its distinct call and extensively rufous tail feathers, several observers commented on the behavior of this Nutting's Flycatcher, keeping close to the ground, often methodically feeding in the understory – quite different from similar Dusky-capped and Ash-throated, the two "expected" (though very rare) similar species in winter.

Many birders have noticed an upsurge of attention to our local subspecies – Fox Sparrows are now being reported as "Sooty Fox Sparrows" or "Red Fox Sparrows" based on obvious plumage differences – and what used to pass as a "weird-looking Orange-crowned Warbler" in California in fall can be assigned to the Rocky Mountain subspecies, *Vermivora celata orestera*, or the "orestera" race of Orange-crowned Warbler. Paying attention to such subspecies enriches the birding experience for many, including the keen-eyed Roger Higson, who reported a "**dorsalis**" **Dark-eyed Junco** (*Junco hyemalis dorsalis*) at a cemetery in Blythe, Riverside Co. on 11 December. This southern Great Basin subspecies, named "Red-backed Junco" by early ornithologists, normally winters west to northwestern Arizona, and, like Canyon Towhee and Eastern Meadowlark, is one of the few bird taxa that is fairly widespread in Arizona but unrecorded in California.

The great montane invasion of 2000 continues, with species like **Pinyon Jay**, **Clark's Nutcracker** and **Williamson's Sapsucker** making several very rare desert or even coastal-slope appearances. Thomas Miko encountered several nutcrackers foraging on trunks of oaks (!) at Mt. Wilson for the Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley Christmas Bird Count on 16 December. He also found several **Cassin's Finches** up there, another species normally confined to the highest peaks in the area, rarely descending to the middling oak zone. A massive irruption of this bird has been evident across the

Records of rare and unusual birds reported in this column should be considered tentative pending review by the regional editors of *North American Birds* or, if appropriate, by the California Birds Records Committee.

Send observations with details to:

Birds of the Season

Daniel S. Cooper
The Audubon Center
6042 Monte Vista St.
Los Angeles, CA 90042
Phone: (323) 254-0252
Email: dcooper1@pacbell.net

North American Birds, Los Angeles County

Kimball L. Garrett
Ornithology Collections Manager
Natural History Museum of L.A. County
900 Exposition Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90007
e-mail: kgarrett@nhm.org

California Bird Records Committee

Guy McCaskie
P.O. Box 275
Imperial Beach, CA 91933-0275
e-mail: guymcc@pacbell.net

To report birds for the tape, call:

Raymond Schep (323) 874-1318
e-mail: yoohooray@cs.com

western U.S. since fall, with individuals as far east as the Texas coast!

Since several taxa involved in the invasion are not "montane" at all (incl. the interior race of Western Scrub-Jay, known as "**Woodhouse's**" **Scrub-Jay** reported from many desert locales), this event may be more accurately treated as an exodus of species out of the Great Basin, with Great Basin species and races being observed far east and west of their usual range. Another rarely-seen irruptive species in the Los Angeles Basin has been **Lewis' Woodpecker**, with birds at Chatsworth Reservoir (Art Langton, m. ob.) and Glendora (Bob MacMillan, Ed Stonick), along with many others in the mountains and desert. More regular montane invaders, **Golden-crowned Kinglet** and **Red-breasted Nuthatch** are still being reported from the northern Mojave to the coast, where they have been numerous since at least October. Expect a full discussion of the 2000-01 invasion in upcoming ornithological literature.

Mountain Bluebird is not as dramatically irruptive as the preceding species, and is generally present in more extensive agricultural areas of southern California each year, though in varying numbers. They seemed more common and widespread than usual, with 30+ birds at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale on 15 December (Andrew Lee) and several birds at Brackett Airport in La Verne on 1 January (BMacM). With virtually all of their preferred habitat now eliminated on the coastal slope of Los Angeles and Orange County, they are normally confined to the Antelope Valley and the eastern "Inland Empire".

Yet another montane visitor barely annual in the L.A. Basin, **Red Crossbills** appeared in the extensive pine plantation at Bonelli Park in San Dimas on 5 December (Mike San Miguel), and were seen for several weeks thereafter. While these planted pines can be exciting to bird in winter, here they have come at the expense of precious native **California Gnatcatcher** habitat. Indeed, San Miguel reported a handful of gnatcatchers on the same day, in the sage scrub nearby, one of the last remaining Los Angeles County micro-populations.

Ross' Geese at local lakes (Steve Hampton, AL, TM, Matthew Schmahl, Thomas Wurster) and multiple **Hooded Mergansers** wintering along the Los Angeles River in Atwater Village/Cypress Park (Ed Stonick) may now be expected, but at least three **Common Goldeneyes** on the

river in November and December (Dan Cooper, Steve Sosensky) were unusual. As the riparian vegetation of this soft-bottom section of the river is allowed to mature, perhaps it is becoming more attractive to these ducks, which seem to feed principally on introduced crayfish. Other unusual waterbirds included a **Red-necked Grebe** spotted by Lori Conrad off Dockweiler State Beach (near LAX), now known to be a consistent wintering spot for all three scoters (Richard Barth). Any alcid seen near shore south of Mugu Rock (Ventura Co.) is notable, such as the **Cassin's Auklet** observed just west of Queen's Gate, Long Beach on 30 November (Bob Schallman).

As the native plantings at Sepulveda Basin mature, they become increasingly attractive to wildlife, most recently including a fairly cooperative wintering **American Bittern** (m. ob.), **Costa's Hummingbird**, **Varied Thrush**, and several lingering warblers and orioles in December (Jim Royer). Bitterns require fairly extensive tracts of freshwater marsh, and Costa's Hummingbirds typically winter in more xeric environs toward the low desert (e.g. common in residential Riverside). 🐦



Birding in the 21st Century

The Nutting's Flycatcher was big news! So big in fact that photos were disseminated worldwide within two hours.

Digital photography and the World Wide Web mean that identification photos may get to you before you leave home to chase your next vagrant. This is one of Joel Weintraub's photos that he posted to: www.egroups.com/files/OrangeCountyBirding to whet everyone's appetite.

Of course it is easier to identify when the photo is in color, but we were excited by the technology. Will fast cellular-modem connections mean streaming video and audio of vagrants in the near future?

WESTERN TANAGER

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EDITOR: Jean Brandt
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Tom Frillman
CONSERVATION: Sandy Wohlgemuth
ORNITHOLOGY CONSULTANT:
Kimball Garrett
FIELD TRIPS: Mari Johnson
PELAGIC TRIPS: Phil Sayre
PRINTING: CP Graphics

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Tuesday – Saturday
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(323) 876-0202 – office
(323) 876-7609 – fax
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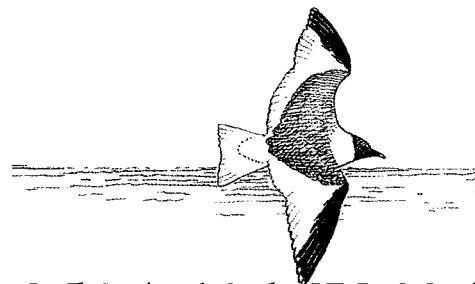
New Zealand – Sept 26-Oct 13, 2001

Australia's aridity and isolation have shaped the unique fauna and flora of this island continent. We will visit many eastern and northern areas including Sydney, Cairns, the Atherton Tablelands, the Great Barrier Reef, Darwin, Kakadu National Park, Brisbane, and Lamington National Park, viewing incredible birdlife, (many endemics), animal life, and Aboriginal culture.

Andy Anderson, a top local "Aussie" birder/guide, and Olga Clarke will lead this tour for birding and photography.

An optional 18 day tour of New Zealand will follow, with visits to many spectacular areas from Auckland to Stewart Island. Here again, we will observe magnificent scenery while enjoying special birds and other wildlife. This may be taken as an extension or separate trip.

For more information, contact: Olga Clarke, Travel Director
2027 El Arbolita Drive
Glendale, CA 91208
Ph/fax: (818) 249-9511
e-mail: oclarketravel@earthlink.net
www.LAAudubon.org



PELAGIC TRIPS

Sunday, May 6 –

Marina del Rey and out to sea

Leaders: Barney Schlinger and Michael J. San Miguel

\$50 – no galley.

Saturday, June 9 –

Santa Cruz Island, landing at Prisoner's Cove

Leaders: Kimball Garrett and Mitch Heindel
\$60 – no galley.

Saturday, August 18 –

San Nicolas Island out toward Cherry Banks – a deep water trip

Leaders: Kimball Garrett, Mitch Heindel and Michael J. San Miguel
\$135 – price includes three meals.

Saturday, September 8 –

Anacapa Island to Santa Rosa Island through the Santa Rosa Passage to Santa Cruz Island

Leaders: Mitch Heindel and Michael J. San Miguel
\$70 – galley on board.

Saturday, October 13 –

East end of Santa Catalina Island and out toward San Clemente Island

Leaders: Mitch Heindel and Michael J. San Miguel
\$50 – tea and coffee, no galley.

Sunday, October 21 –

San Pedro Channel and out to sea toward Santa Barbara Island

Leaders: Michael J. San Miguel and TBA
\$45 – tea and coffee, no galley.

Saturday, November 17 –

San Pedro Channel along the coastal escarpment

Leaders: Kimball Garrett and Mitch Heindel
\$35 – tea and coffee, no galley.

See Jan/Feb *Western Tanager* or LAAS on the web: www.LAAudubon.org or call Audubon House (323) 874-0202 or for more details on these trips.

BOOKSTORE NEWS

New from the Library of Natural Sounds
— Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology:

Bird Songs in Jamaica

George B. Reynard and Robert L. Sutton
(2-CD set) \$18.95

Voices of Amazonian Birds:

Birds of the Rainforest of Southern Peru and Northern Bolivia

Thomas S. Schulenberg, Curtis A. Marantz and Peter H. English

Volume 1: Tinamous (Tinamidae) through Barbets (Capitonidae)

(1-CD) \$14.95

Volume 2: Toucans (Ramphastidae) through Anthbirds (Thamnophilidae)

(1-CD) \$14.99

Voices of Andean Birds

Thomas S. Schulenberg

Volume 1: Birds of the Cloudforest of Southern Peru and Bolivia

(1-CD) \$14.95

Volume 2: Birds of the Cloudforest of Southern Peru and Bolivia

(1-CD) \$14.95

The Roadrunner

James W. Cornett, 2001 \$9.95

Harriers of the World

Their Behavior and Ecology

Robert E. Simmons, 2000 \$45.00

A Flower-Watcher's Guide to Wildflowers of the Western Mojave Desert with Emphasis on Uses by Native Americans

Milt Stark, 2000 \$14.95

Princeton Field Guides – Birds of Nepal

Richard Grimmett, Carol Inskipp, Tim Inskipp, 2000 \$29.95

John James Audubon in the West: The Last Expedition Mammals of North America

Sarah E. Boehme, 2000 \$45.00

Birds of Big Sur – A Guide to Their Seasonal Status

Jeff N. Davis and Don Roberson, 2000 \$5.00

continued from page 8

Saturday, March 17 – Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in Baldwin Hills

Leader to be announced.

These monthly trips are designed for beginning birders and members of the community. We will cover landscaped parklands and natural coastal scrub habitats. The park entrance is off La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$3 parking fee on weekends), take the first left turn (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Sunday, March 18 – Ballona Wetlands

Bob Shanman will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland. Shorebird migration and early sea ducks among the expected fare. Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot. Take the Marina Fwy (90W) to Culver Blvd. and turn left for about a mile, then right on Pacific Ave. The lot is on the right. Lot or street parking is usually not a problem. A three hour walk. 'Scopes helpful. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

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). 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.

Sunday, April 1 – Topanga State Park Leader **Gerry Haigh**

See March 4 for write-up for details.
Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Saturday–Sunday, April 7-8 – Sage Grouse Trip

Leader **Mary Freeman**
Blue Grouse, Sage Grouse, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, Pinyon Jay, Golden Eagle, and Juniper Titmouse all likely. Meet early Saturday in Big Pine. Limited to 20. To sign up, send \$15 and a SASE to LAAS for motel list and detailed information.

Sunday, April 8 – Whittier Narrows

Leader **Ray Jillson**
See March 11 for write-up for details.
Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Saturday, April 14 – Ventura Game Preserve

Leader **Irwin Woldman**
Join us to visit the Game Preserve and Ventura Harbor in search of spring migrants and shorebirds. Bring lunch. Meet at the corner of Casper and Hueneme Roads. Take 101 N to Las Posas Rd. Head W to Hueneme Rd. and turn right. Go to Casper Rd. Meet at 7:30 A.M.

Sunday, April 15 – Ballona Wetlands

Leader **Bob Shanman**
See March 18 write-up for details.
Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Saturday, April 21 – Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in Baldwin Hills

See March 17 write-up for details.
Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Saturday–Sunday, April 21-22 – East Mojave National Preserve

Leader **Larry Allen**
We will search for Juniper Titmouse, "Woodhouse's" Scrub-Jay, "Lead-colored" Bushtit, thrashers, and other desert birds and migrants. We will camp Saturday. Send SASE and \$12 to LAAS for additional info and list of motels in Baker. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Saturday, April 28 – Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

Ray Schep will lead us through this renowned desert oasis in search of migrants and resident desert birds. Meet in the Preserve parking lot. Take the 10 Fwy past Beaumont, turn N on State Rt. 62 to Morongo Valley, turn right on East Drive across from Rocky's Pizza. Take the first driveway left into the lot. About two hour drive from Los Angeles. Anticipate heat, sun, hunger, and thirst. Sign-up by phone with LAAS. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Saturday, May 12 – Santa Anita Canyon

Leader **Mary Freeman**
Take the 210 Fwy toward Arcadia and take Santa Anita Ave. N to the parking lot at the very end of the road. Meet at the trailhead at the bottom of the lot. A four mile moderately strenuous walk through oak and chaparral canyons. Good selection of breeding and migrating birds including warblers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Band-tailed Pigeon. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Sunday, May 13 – California City and environs

Leader **Nick Freeman**
We will search for brightly colored warblers and probably Chukar, but give particular scrutiny to tyrant flycatchers, which peak at this time. Take Hwy 14 N past Mojave, about 10 miles, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive thru town about a mile past the shops and turn left into the Central Park Golf Course parking lot just past the driving range. About two hours driving time from L.A. Limited sign-up of 15. Call LAAS to register. Bring lunch and sun block. Meet at 7:30 A.M.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 22-25 –
Southern Sierras with Bob Barnes**

**July 14-16 –
Yosemite with David Yee**

EVENING MEETINGS

MEETING LOCATION

The Los Angeles River Center and Gardens
570 W. Avenue 26
Los Angeles, CA 90065

Just off the 110 Freeway on Avenue 26. It is very accessible with lots of free parking. (This was formerly Lawry's California Center Restaurant.)

7:00 P.M. – Refreshments begin

7:30 P.M. – Program

Meeting Raffle:

Many of you have enjoyed the raffle prizes at the monthly meetings. To increase your chances of winning, visit the LAAS Bookstore and Headquarters either on meeting day or the Saturday immediately preceding the monthly meeting and receive an extra raffle ticket to submit at the meeting. Good luck!

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Carol "Kiwi" Donovan

"Exploring Polynesia"

Carol "Kiwi" Donovan retired from the LAAS Bookstore December 1999. As planned, she has spent most of the year traveling around Polynesia birdwatching. Come share her eight month adventure, searching for birds and indulging in the traditional lifestyle of these beautiful islands.

Tuesday, April 10, 2001

Bill Bornemann

"Midway Atoll: Nexus of Life"

Comprised of two small oceanic islands, Midway is a coral atoll located 1200 miles west, and a little north, of Honolulu, Hawaii. Bill had the rare opportunity to visit Midway in March and again in July of 1999, spending a total of three weeks there. During this time he was able to see Laysan Albatross as hatchlings and again as fledglings. Bill will present a brief over-view of coral atolls, discussing the local fish, turtles, dolphin, human debris, and of course, the variety and abundance of the local bird life. Slides, charts and samples of debris will be featured.

F I E L D T R I P S

Before setting out on any field trip, please call the LAAS bird tape at (323) 874-1318 for special instructions or possible cancellations that may have occurred by the Thursday before the trip.

Sunday, March 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 biologist

is often present. From Ventura Blvd., take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 7 miles S, turn E uphill on Entrada Rd. Follow the signs and turn left into the parking lot of Trippet Ranch. \$6 parking fee or park on the road outside the park. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Los Angeles Audubon Society
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694

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Sunday, March 11 – Whittier Narrows

Join leader **Ray Jillson** to look for colorful resident and migrating birds, including the Northern Cardinal. Take Peck Dr. off the 60 Fwy in South El Monte (just west of the 605 Fwy). Take the off ramp onto Durfee Ave. heading W (right) and turn left into the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave. \$2 donation. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

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