

WESTERN TANAGER



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Los Angeles Audubon Society

LAAS Retreat . . . Moving Forward

by Dexter Kelly, Retreat Chair

A group of seventeen dedicated and involved officers, committee chairs, and members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society met on January 19 at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino for a full day of retrospect, discussion, and planning. The purpose of the retreat, led by professional facilitator, Deb Amen, was to create a Vision Statement consistent with our existing Mission Statement. Input from the responses to the members' questionnaire published in the last *Western Tanager* provided the springboard for the discussion. These responses included the following comments:

LAAS has much to be proud of:

- our great pelagic trip program
- the best newsletter of any chapter
- the best nature bookstore in the west
- our leadership in Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Atlas projects
- our generous and long ongoing financial support for a wide variety of conservation projects.

But in order for us to fulfill our mission better, changes and improvements must be made in the near future. Our discussion focused on what should be changed.

LAAS Mission Statement:

The Los Angeles Audubon Society is people dedicated to the enjoyment and preservation of the natural world. Through birding, education, and conservation activities in our community, we raise awareness and promote the cause of global environmental protection.

RETREAT AGENDA: For each of the following categories we:

- Reviewed where we are now
- Discussed our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
- Suggested ideas for the future and action plans for achieving our goals
- Suggested ways to measure success in each category

Some of the realizations and conclusions from the retreat:

MEMBERSHIP: It's large, but declining, and only a small percentage is actively involved in our activities. Our leadership is aging and burned out; too much is done by too few. We need new blood, new ideas, more people involved in more interesting activities.

FIELD TRIPS: More trips to new and/or more interesting locations. Trips should be challenging enough to attract advanced birders, and novices should be acknowledged and helped so they don't feel "left out".

BOOKSTORE: The best of its kind, and it looks better than ever. But it needs more space, more publicity, and more recognition, especially for its vol-

unteers. Periodic and annual financial reports should be published to determine how much income is gained from it.

MEETINGS: We need a more attractive setting for our meetings. Newcomers should be made welcome, and there should be more reporting of activities like field trips. Meetings should be better venues for communication with and among our members.

EDUCATION: We have given thousands of dollars to support environmental education by other agencies, and others have taken the credit and recognition. We need to play a more active role in working with students, teachers, and the general public, raising awareness and knowledge of birds and the environment in general. Field trips for schoolchildren at Kenneth Hahn Park could begin almost immediately.



Photo by Herb Clarke

Ann, Cheryl, Bob, Olga, Karen, Pat, Pat, Jean, Tom
Fred, Dexter, Herb, Anne, Ray, Richard

CONSERVATION: Our conservation chair, working alone, has worked wonders in reporting and overseeing conservation issues. But our profile should be raised by greater direct involvement at the political level.

COMMUNICATION: Our greatest weakness. We communicate poorly with the general public and even with ourselves. We should hire a professional publicist (or get one to volunteer), to make our activities and achievements known to the community and attract more participants. The web page and its links should be updated regularly, made more user-friendly, and loaded with more chapter news, and even educational features. The phone tape should be reformatted for greater clarity and ease of use. Even the *Western Tanager* could be augmented with news about current chapter issues, field trip and count reports, and periodic and annual financial reports, so that our members will know better where we stand financially.

RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS: All of our activities could be used to recruit new members, and we should make greater efforts to contact those out there who are interested in birds, but probably don't know we exist. Our field trips should be publicized, as well as our meetings and workshops, and new attendees recruited as members at all events. We should contact new subscribers to *Audubon Magazine* that have been assigned to us as members. We should continue to recruit members at appropriate events like Earth Day, the LA Marathon, etc. Parents of students involved in our educational activities could also be solicited.

INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS: All of our activities should be structured to maximize membership involvement. Direct face-to-face contact should be made with new and casual members when the opportunity is there. Volunteers should work in teams rather than in isolation, and members should be encouraged to volunteer for ad-hoc tasks that would not necessarily have a long duration. Volunteers should be recognized for their contributions. Informal get-togethers like the annual picnic may be

revived, to socialize members and improve contact with leaders and advanced birders. High school students could be hired as interns, getting specific tasks done at relatively low cost, and providing an educational and community service experience. Some of these young people may want to get involved in LAAS.

FACILITIES: Our current facilities in Plummer Park are insufficient for our needs. We need space for our meetings, our bookstore (including separate areas for shipping and storage), our library, and a room for educational exhibits and student/teacher training. Preferably, this headquarters should be within or adjacent to a natural area.

FISCAL ISSUES: As noted above, little can be undertaken without a clear picture of our financial status. An accountant should be engaged to provide a review and compilation of our finances, with periodic and annual Financial Reports for both the bookstore and the society as a whole.

These are only some of the points brought up at the retreat. Further membership input on these and other issues is still welcome.


After they are transcribed and summarized for Master Plan preparation, full minutes of the retreat will be on file at Audubon House. By then, a draft of the Master Plan may also be ready for members' comments.

OUR VISION – for the next five years:

- Develop an informed and new generation of LAAS members through improved educational and recreational programs

- Significantly increase membership numbers and involvement

- Improve commitment within LAAS

- Raise LAAS profile within the community and work towards developing an all-encompassing headquarters for the bookstore, library, meeting place, educational displays, and Nature Center 

Volunteer Opportunity

Get active, get involved in
Los Angeles Audubon Society.

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area clean-ups are the first Saturday of each month (October-May), 8:00 A.M.

The projects are arranged by the
Park Manager, Lori Bennett.

The Clean-Up Organizer chair is responsible for recruiting reliable volunteers to assist in publicizing the clean-ups:

- Release notices to:
 - newspapers, TV, radio, and LAAS web
 - groups like homeowners' associations, schools, and scout troops
 - announcements at LAAS meetings
- Coordinate with the Park Manager and Hospitality Chairperson for large group participation (such as a Boy Scout troop)
- Attend the clean-up and thank participants. Distribute information on Los Angeles Audubon Society membership and other activities and invite them to join in.
- Report on each clean-up and the number of attendees to laas@LAAudubon.org
- Chairperson is encouraged to participate in LAAS Board meetings.

Please – call Cheryl Epps at Audubon House (323) 876-0202 for more information.

Book Review:

Birds of Peru

Written by James F. Clements and Noam Shany

Illustrated by Dana Gardner and Eustace Barnes, et al

Ibis Publishing Co., 2001

283 pages, soft cover \$60.00

Birds of Ecuador (2 vols.)

Written by Robert S. Ridgely and Paul J. Greenfield, et al

Illustrations by Paul J. Greenfield

Cornell University Press, 2001

Vol. I: Status, Distribution and Taxonomy
768 pages, soft cover, \$70.00

Vol. II: Field Guide
740 pages, soft cover, \$50.00

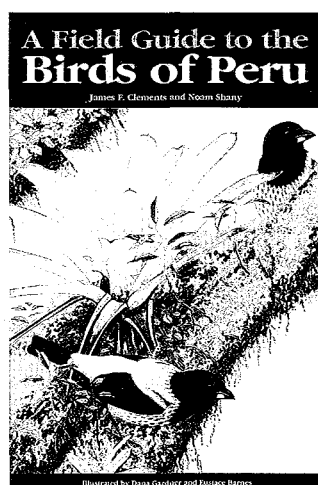
Last year's release of two long awaited field guides for Ecuador and Peru were giant leaps in the race to reach the growing world bird watching market. But, are we listing or are we learning?

Robert S. Ridgely and Paul Greenfield's two volume work on the 1600 or so species of *Birds of Ecuador* (740 page field guide and 848 page companion volume on status, distribution, and taxonomy) preceded the recently released James F. Clements, Noam Shany, Dana Gardner, Eustace Barnes and others guide to the 1800 species of *Birds of Peru* (281 page single volume field guide at half the price) and they illustrate the two approaches to world birding.

Clements' *Birds of Peru* is mean and lean for world listers with field guide innovations such as references to commercially released tape recordings in the species text, GPS locations of the most common birding sites, and a map of the major protected areas to help plan trips. But the species text is incredibly thin considering a four page bibliography, there are no range maps, and no text opposite the plates except for name, gender, and a reference to a page number. This minute amount of information

swims in huge white empty space — room for plenty more text, maps, and other information useful in the field. And it's surprising that Clements doesn't elaborate much on subspecies considering that is his recent taxonomic specialty.

The plates are credited in the opening text as created by Dana Gardner and Eustace Barnes but it's difficult to know who did what as there are no credits on the pages. The stylistic differences of the two main artists are glaring and it would

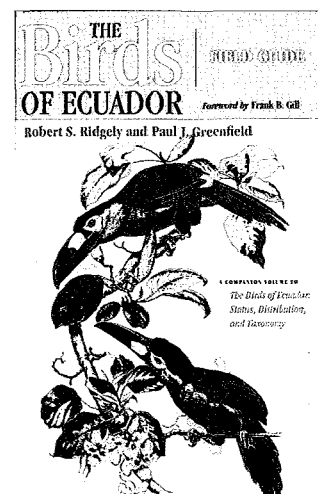


have been easier on the reader if Clements had stuck with one artist at least for an entire genera rather than jumping back and forth page by page. Compare adjoining pages, especially of swallows and hummingbirds. The plates also swim in huge white wasted space with few illustrations of the females especially hummingbirds, manakins, antbirds, and tanagers which are next to impossible to identify in the field even with good illustrations.

Listers might buy this book because it's the only one available on Peru (for now) even at the steep price of \$60 for only 281 pages and because they couldn't borrow one for the trip. Learners will take along their companion *Birds of South America* by Ridgely and Tudor and copies of text and plates from the

superior *Handbook of The Birds of The World*. This will be easier when and if Lynx Edicions and BirdLife International launch their rumored online field guide service where world birders will be able to download text and/or plates to their own color printer in a choice of sizes for a specified political territory.

In contrast, Ridgely's *Birds of Ecuador* cites only two pages of bibliography but provides in depth taxonomic history and current status, distribution,



range maps, discussion of subspecies, and detailed descriptions of the birds. In a nod to the world birding market, he breaks down the volume into two parts: a 740 page field guide (compared to Clement's 281 pages) and a volume on status and distribution to study before, during, or after the trip or to leave at the campsite or lodge for when you return. You won't need to bring along *Birds of South America* unless you just want to. Paul Greenfield's consistent, extensive, gorgeous plates make identification and study a joy and the birds practically fly off the pages. Even if I weren't going to South America I would buy the Ecuador book anyway just to drool over the birds and dream of future expeditions.

Review by: Garry George



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

In late October 2001, 18 birders from the Los Angeles, Davis, and San Diego areas joined Kimball Garrett on a tour of the entire length of Baja California sponsored by the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. Comfortably seated in three vans, we spent a leisurely journey south from Tijuana, stopping for birds and enjoying the strange desert vegetation. About halfway down the peninsula we stopped



Facho Arce, Sandy Wohlgemuth, Raúl López

at El Vizcaíno and were ushered into an astonishing, unexpected experience. This was *Plan de Recuperación del Berrendo Peninsular*, (the Recovery Plan for the Peninsular Pronghorn Antelope). For many years scientists have been increasingly concerned about the dwindling numbers of these beautiful animals. Once they thrived throughout Baja but gradually the pressure of increased human population, illegal hunting, and predation by coyotes reduced their numbers to barely 200 in the rugged climate of the Vizcaíno Desert. We wondered why pronghorn from the United States could not be brought into Baja to augment the diminished numbers of native animals. Later we learned that the Mexican pronghorn have darker faces than the American

pronghorn and are a subspecies: *Antilocapra americana peninsularis*.

Some seven years ago, the Mexican government decided to try to save the pronghorn from inevitable extinction by creating the Recovery Plan. A camp was built on a square mile of treeless desert with a cluster of wooden buildings that provide the crew with sleeping quarters, shower, latrines, and a kitchen-dining room. Power is obtained from solar panels and water comes from an underground main line that serves neighboring towns. The pronghorn are kept in a spacious enclosure surrounded by two miles of low, electrified fencing with the males and females separated.

When we piled out of our vans we could see three or four animals close by and we walked down to get a better look. They were quite tame and some of us were allowed to feed them sliced carrots by hand. These were all females that had been raised by the camp crew from birth. The male pronghorn were some distance away, gathered in the shade around racks of food. The excellent water supply permits copious irrigation to grow edible, native greenery and provides drinking water for the antelope.

The camp includes a tall observation tower where the men can check on the captive animals and spot wild pronghorn outside the enclosure. The early spring fawning season is especially important as the wild females may drop their young in the open fields where hungry coyotes may snap them up. The newborn are picked up and brought into the *crianza*, (the fawn barn), where they are hand-fed and treated royally with a bed for one man

who may spend the night watching over the infant. One of our drivers, Raúl, was once a member of the staff here. A very pleasant guy with a good command of English, he joked that he spent more



time and energy taking care of the fawns than he did with his own children. The wild fawns become part of the pronghorn project and when they grow up and produce their own offspring their wild genes are added to the captive herd, bringing it a healthy diversity. When the numbers of antelope become large enough, some will be released to the wild.

It is heartening to realize that this is an indigenous Mexican project and that the country has a conservation sensitivity



Martina - first antelope captured five years ago.


Photos by Jean Brandt

and is willing to spend its capital to serve it. There are others who are helping. The largest donor is the Ford Company Mexico. The Los Angeles Zoo has been most enthusiastic about the pronghorn and has for years given the camp necessary equipment and funds to build a visitors/education center. Our zoo has also sent experienced keepers to the project for weeks at a time to pass on their knowledge and help out with daily chores like searching for wild fawns, pulling weeds, and working on construction.



Our trip was a great success bird-wise too, with 189 species seen including Gray Thrasher, Xantus's Hummingbird, Belding's Yellowthroat, Magnifi-

cent Frigatebird, Reddish Egret, Scarlet Tanager, and Philadelphia Vireo. The unforeseen discovery of *El Berrendo Peninsular* was icing on the cake and for many of us will remain a memory to be treasured.

Reference: *Ghosts of the Desert* by Kim Brinkley, keeper at the Los Angeles Zoo who has cared for pronghorn, bison, oryx, zebras, and many more animals. She was one of the first LA Zoo staff to spend time at Vizcaíno and is quite enthusiastic about the project 

8th Annual Kern River Valley Bioregions Festival: April 26-28, 2002

Post-BioFest Trips April 29 - May 2

Venues: Kernville, Weldon, and Wofford Heights in Kern County's Kern River Valley, California

Free Registration, Free or Low Cost Field Trips and Workshops, Great Field Trip Size (5-15 participants per trip)

Birds, Birds, Birds: 227 species at 2001 BioFest – spring migration height. **BioFest Photographer:** Bob Steele

Field Trip Locations: Butterbrecht Spring Nationally Important Bird Area (IBA), Canebrake Ecological Reserve, Kern River Preserve, Lake Isabella, Giant Sequoia National Monument, Kern National Wildlife Refuge, Mojave Desert, Sequoia National Forest Global IBA, South Fork Kern River Global IBA, South Fork Wildlife Area.

Leaders (partial list): Bob Barnes, Kathy Biggs, Dan Cooper, Michael Cunningham, Sam Fitton, Terri Gallion, Murrelet Halterman, John Harris, Rob Hewitt, Joan Humphrey, Denise LaBerteaux, Gary Potter, Jim Royer, John Schmitt, Alison Sheehy, Jim Shevock, Susan Steele, Reed Tollefson, Mary Whitfield, John Wilson.

BioFest Components: Astronomy Night * BioFest Symphony Concert * Birds, Bird Banding, and Birding * Butterflies * Children's Activities * Dragonflies * Fishes and Fishing * 5K/10K Run/Walk * Friday Kick-off Dinner and Program * Geology * Hiking * Hot Springs * Kayaking and Rafting * Mammals * Music * Native American Heritage * Owling * Plants and Wildflowers * Reptiles and Amphibians * Resource Management * Speakers' Forum * USPS BioFest Postal Station and Cancellation * Western and Kern Valley Heritage * Wildlife Artists Association (of America) Art Show.

Superlatives: Within the intimate wild mix of "Valley Wild" habitat types and bioregions may be found plants and animals of the Central Valley, Chaparral, Great Basin, Mojave Desert, and Sierra Nevada. "Valley Wild" is one of nature's most diverse homes: 335 bird species (c. 200 species per BioFest and an incredible 200 nesting species!), 137 butterfly species (60%+ of California's lepidoptera), 2,000+ species of plants (1/3 of California's flora), and America's highest mammal diversity (115+ species)! **This grand mix is unparalleled anywhere else in the U.S. and Canada.**

The Kern River Valley has been named the **#1 Outdoor Recreation Area in the United States:** bicycling, camping, catch-and-release fishing, cross-country skiing, golfing, hiking, horseback riding, kayaking, lake fishing, mountain biking, rafting, rock climbing, sailing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, spelunking, wild trout fishing, and wind surfing are among the myriad outdoor recreational opportunities found here; many of them widely known as world-class.

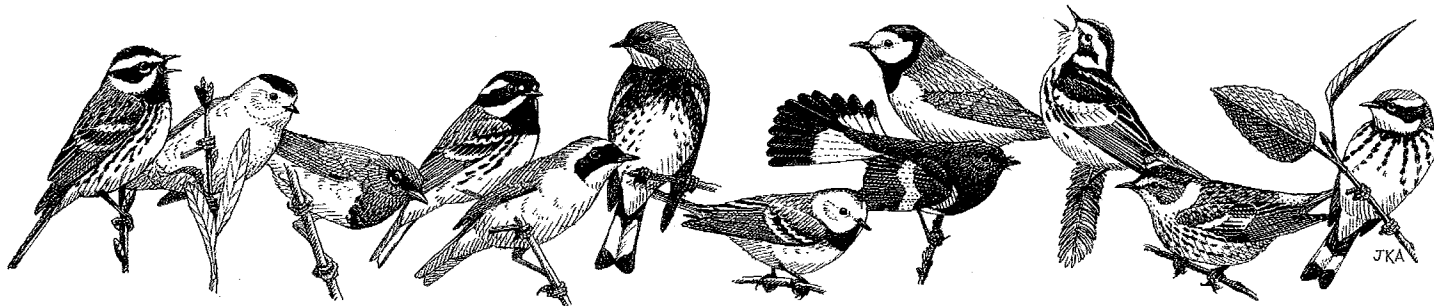
More Information ? ? ?

BioFest at a Glance: www.valleywild.org/bioregionsfest.htm

BioFest Activities in Depth: www.valleywild.org/bioregionactivities.htm

E-mail: krpfriends@lightspeed.net **Phone:** (760) 378-3044 (24 hours)

Address: Valley Wild Nature Festivals, PO Box 410, Weldon, CA 93283



BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Daniel S. Cooper

Already, the winter of 2001-02 has lived up to expectations of southern California winter birding. Vying for top billing in the vagrant category would be either the **Brown-crested Flycatcher** found by Richard Barth at DeForest Park in Long Beach on 5 December (last reported by Ron Holland on 8 December) or the **Bay-breasted Warbler**, a drab female picked out by Kimball Garrett at El Dorado Park, also in Long Beach, on 29 December (last reported by Andrew Lee on 5 January). The flycatcher, which breeds widely in Arizona (and south), nests at just a handful of riparian areas on the California desert, and almost never occurs away from these oases. This represents only the second record for Los Angeles County (*fide* KG), and one of just a handful of winter records for the state. The warbler is a very rare but regular fall vagrant in California, and almost as unexpected in winter. Interestingly, Marshall Iliff, visiting from Maryland, found a Brown-crested Flycatcher in coastal Orange County a week later.

Building on the last *Birds of the Season*, the incursion of **American White Pelicans** into our area tapered off after Thanksgiving, though double-digits remained at several sites around the Los Angeles Basin in December and January. Urban-dwelling raptors again made news, with an adult **Golden Eagle** soaring over the Rio Hondo Flood Control Channel for the Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley Christmas Bird Count on 15 December (Dan Cooper), and a **Ferruginous Hawk** on the Palos Verdes Peninsula for their CBC on 23 December (*fide* Mitch Heindel). This bird was found at Friendship Park in San Pedro, the site of recent singing

Grasshopper Sparrow records – could this be the most significant grassland patch along the coast of Los Angeles County? Christmas Bird Counts, predictably, dug up more exciting winterers, as well they should – groups of people out birding all day are bound to turn up good birds, regardless of whether they are “crack birders”. One of the most mind-boggling sights must have been the 21 **Tundra Swans** winging over a

Pasadena CBC group at Whittier Narrows on the cold, foggy morning of 15 December (m. ob.).

The Malibu CBC produced an **Ancient Murrelet** on 16 December (*fide* Larry Allen). Irregular in southern California, they are still more often recorded north and south of our area (e.g. La Jolla). This seems to be a good winter for alcids in general, with small groups of **Rhinoceros Auklet** seen from the bluffs of the Palos Verdes Peninsula during late December and January (Kevin Larson), and 47 from a whale-watching boat off the same area on 5 January (Bernardo Alps). Other noteworthy pelagic species included a very rare **Buller's Shearwater** and a **Xantus's Murrelet** among a concentration of “thousands” of Black-vented Shearwaters just off the end of the Hermosa Beach pier on 11 December (Lori Conrad). A **Pink-footed Shearwater** was off San Pedro's Royal Palms Beach on 24 December (MH). In sharp contrast to last winter, fulmars and Black-legged Kittiwakes have been scarce to non-existent.

Moving to shorebirds, single **Pacific Golden-Plovers**, irregular at best in the county, were associating with Black-bellied Plovers at Hermosa Beach on 30 November (KL) and flying over Torrance in late December (MH). Snowy Plovers, which in our area represent the federally threatened “**Western**” **Snowy Plover**, occur in small numbers in winter on our beaches, where they dodge beach “grooming” tractors and marauding pets. A concentration of 20-25 surprised LC on 23 November, who had not observed them Hermosa

Beach in several years of observation. The status of **American Oystercatcher** in our area (of the west Mexican

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

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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

breeding race) is muddled by hybrids, but one on 24 December looked "pure enough to count" at Royal Palms Beach (MH).

Other waterbirds of note included three **Long-tailed Ducks** at the mouth of the Los Angeles River in Long Beach on 23 December (KL), and one on 29 December off the nearby Belmont Pier (Bob Schallman). **Hooded Mergansers** are still apparently increasing – a group of 14 was on Silver Lake Reservoir on 29 December (DC), and six at Hansen Dam on 15 December (Steve Sosensky).

Lewis' Woodpeckers once again invaded, with individuals on 26 November in Duarte (BA), at San Marino's Huntington Library on 15 December (DC, first record in 15 years of observation?), at Rose Hills in Whittier on 30 December (Andrew Lee), and 12+ near Wrightwood on 4 January (Bob MacMillan). **Varied Thrush**, similarly unpredictable, made a strong showing with birds in Redondo Beach on 7 December (Tom Miko), at Chilao in the Angeles National Forest on 9 December (Lance Benner), along Big Santa Anita Canyon on 15 December (Ron Cyger), and five in residential sections of the Palos Verdes Peninsula on 23 December (m. ob.). Unlike last winter, several irruptive species were felt to be quite rare, with Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Pine Siskin, and Purple Finch nearly absent over much of the basin. Veteran's Cemetery, Sylmar, a "classic" spot for montane visitants, held a female **Williamson's Sapsucker** on 18 November (RB).


What's going on with **Barn Swallows**? Normally unexpected in mid-winter (especially during our cool, rainy December!), groups of 5-10 birds were widely recorded near water throughout the period, with 15 at the San Gabriel River settling ponds in Pico Rivera on 31 December (Larry Schmahl). Time will tell whether they, like Vaux's Swift, become a regular component of our aerial avifauna in winter. For the first time in 50+ years of observation, **Loggerhead Shrike** went unrecorded on the Pasadena CBC, the inevitable end to a steady decline since the 1970s (*fide* Jon Fisher).

As expected, rare songbirds continue to make birding headlines in our area.

Noteworthy flycatchers included a **Greater Pewee** wintering in Pomona from 1 December (Dan Guthrie); single **Eastern Phoebe**s at Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area (found 5 December by Dick Branton) and Peck Park in Torrance in late December (m. ob.), and a "**Western**" **Flycatcher** at Peck Rd. Park in El Monte on 15 December (*fide* JF). The two **Vermilion Flycatchers** continued at El Dorado Park in Long Beach, and a female was found at Forest Lawn Hollywood south of Burbank on 29 December (Jean Brandt). A **Myiarchus** flycatcher, thought to be a Dusky-capped, was at Hansen Dam on 26 November (Herb Clarke, Steve Sosensky).

Scarce late fall and winter warblers included a male **Virginia's** at Hansen Dam on 13 November (RB); a **Northern Parula** in Gardena on 23 December (KL); **Chestnut-sideds** at the Sepulveda Basin (Lake Balboa) on 5 January (Ron Beck), and continuing along the Los Angeles River in Glendale (RB); single **Black-throated Greens** wintering in Thousand Oaks on 3 January (RB) and moving late in Malibu on 23 November (Walt Sakai); two continuing **Pines** in El Dorado Park (m. ob.); **Palms** at Peck Pit Park in El Monte on 15 December (two, *fide* JF), in San Pedro on 24 December (MH), and in residential Long Beach on 31 December and 9 January (John McCoy); a **Black-and-white** at Hansen Dam on 1 December (Kimball Garrett); an **American Redstart** back for his fourth winter at Harbor Park in Wilmington (MH, Don Sterba); and a **MacGillivray's** at Legg Lake on 15 December (JF). **Summer Tanagers** are regular in small numbers in winter, with up to five on the Palos Verdes Peninsula in late December (*fide* MH) and another in southwestern Pasadena on 27 December (Cin-Ty Lee). The **Hepatic Tanager** at Bonelli Park in San Dimas returned for a second winter on 22 November (Michael San Miguel, Jr.), and a very late migrant **Indigo Bunting** was in DeForest Park in Long Beach on 3 December (RB).

Among the rare-but-regular **White-throated** (six) and **Swamp** (two) sparrows were two nearly unprecedented winterers: a **Black-chinned Sparrow** in coastal sage scrub on the Palos Verdes

Peninsula on 23 December (Charles Collins) and a **Grasshopper Sparrow** just south of Eaton Canyon Park on 5 January (Jon Feenstra). Both winter in very low numbers in southern California, but generally far from the urban Los Angeles Basin. Elsewhere, Tom Wurster found a rare **Harris' Sparrow** in Long Beach on 13 January, and a "**Red**" **Fox Sparrow** was at Kenneth Hahn Park from 21-28 December (RB). 

Birding 101

Spring 2002

Due to the numerous requests we have received for another "Birding 101" class, a new series of beginning bird-watching classes will be offered this spring.

This series will emphasize a "hands-on, learn-while-doing" approach to field identification and discovery of prime, nearby birding locales.

One introductory lecture covering birding basics plus tools and techniques of bird identification will be held at Audubon House, Plummer Park from 7-9 P.M. on Thursday, March 21, 2002.

Three field classes will follow on Saturday mornings, March 23, March 30, and April 6, each in a different habitat.

Our spring instructor will be well-known expert birder Karen Johnson.

Cost for the series will be:

\$45 for members of Los Angeles Audubon \$55 for non-members.

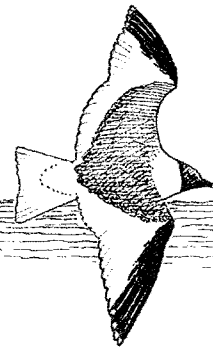
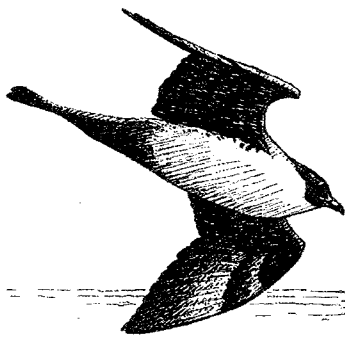
(Not a member? Join while enrolling in the class, \$65 will cover the class and a one-year membership.)

To enroll send your name, address, phone number, and check to:

Los Angeles Audubon Society
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
West Hollywood, CA 90046
Attn: Birding 101

Class is limited to 15 participants.

Enroll today!



PELAGIC TRIPS

Saturday, May 4 –

Marina del Rey and out to sea. The R/V UCLA Seaworld departs from Marina del Rey at 6:00 A.M. on this 12-hour trip. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Black-vented, Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters; Pomarine Jaeger; Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Common Murre; Pigeon Guillemot; Xantus's Murrelet; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Rarities: puffins (twice in 15 years). Gray whales and dolphins are seen on this trip. Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kevin Larson, and Bernardo Alps.** \$50 – tea and coffee, no galley.

Saturday, June 8 –

Santa Cruz Island – landing at Prisoner's Cove. Eleven-hour trip departs at 8:00 A.M. from Island Packers dock in Ventura on the M/V Jeffrey Arvid. The endemic **Island Scrub-Jay** is easily seen here. We will then cruise south of the island toward Anacapa for pelagic species. Birds on prior trips: Northern Fulmar, Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters; Pomarine Jaeger; Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Pigeon Guillemot; Xantus's Murrelet. Rarities: Buller's and Flesh-footed shearwaters. Leaders: **Mitch Heindel and Kevin Larson.** \$69 – no galley.

Saturday, August 3 –

San Nicolas Island toward Cherry Banks – a deep-water trip. Twenty-hour trip departs from San Pedro at 4:00 A.M. on the R/V Yellowfin. Birds seen on prior trips: Red-billed Tropicbird; Black, Least and Leach's storm-petrels; Long-tailed Jaeger; South Polar Skua; Sabine's Gull. Rarities: Black-footed Albatross, Buller's

shearwater; Arctic Tern; Craveri's Murrelet. Blue Whales and several species of dolphins have been seen on this trip. Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kimball Garrett, David Pereksta, and Kevin Larson.** \$140 – price includes three meals.

Saturday, September 7 –

Northern Channel Islands Monument Trip: Anacapa, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz Islands, toward San Miguel Island.

12-hour trip departs from the Oxnard Marina at 7:30 A.M. on the M/V Vanguard. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Sooty, and Black-vented shearwaters; Black, Least, and Ashy storm-petrels; cormorants (three); Sabine's Gull; Arctic Tern; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Common Murre; Craveri's and Xantus's murrelets; Cassin's Auklet. Rarities: Buller's and Flesh-footed shearwaters; South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger. Blue, Finback, and Humpback whales have been seen on this trip. Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, David Pereksta** \$79 – Galley on board.

Saturday, October 12 –

From Marina del Rey out to sea toward the Channel Islands National Monument.

Twelve-hour trip departs from Marina del Rey at 6:30 A.M. on the R/V UCLA Seaworld. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Sooty, and Buller's (rare) shearwaters; Black, Ashy, and Least storm-petrels; Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Rarities: South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger; Common Murre; Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel. Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kevin Larson and Bernardo Alps.** \$50 – tea and coffee, no galley.

Saturday, October 26 –

San Pedro Channel past the east end of Santa Catalina Island toward San Clemente Island. Twelve-hour trip departs from San Pedro at 6:00 A.M. on the R/V Vantuna. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Buller's and

Pink-footed shearwaters; Black and Ashy storm-petrels; Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Common Murre; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets; Xantus's Murrelet. Rarities: Long-tailed Jaeger; South Polar Skua; and perhaps Red-billed Tropicbird. Several

Photo by Herb Clarke



Island Scrub-Jay

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species of dolphins as well as Elephant
Seals are seen on this trip.

Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kimball
Garrett, and Kevin Larson.**

\$59 – tea and coffee, no galley.

Saturday, November 9 –

**Ventura Marina toward San Miguel
Island** on the new fast Catamaran M/V

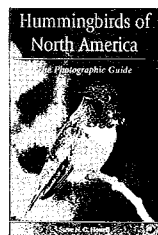
Islander. Nine-hour trip departs from
Ventura at 8:00 A.M. and returns by
5:00 P.M. After dropping off campers on
Santa Cruz Island, we have the boat to
ourselves, and head toward the

1000 fathom water about 10 miles from
San Miguel Island. Expected birds:
Northern Fulmar; Black-vented, Sooty,
and Pink-footed shearwaters; Black
Storm-Petrel; South Polar Skua; Poma-
rine Jaeger; rocky shorebirds (up to
five); Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets.

Occasionally: Craveri's Murrelet; Rari-
ties: Leach's Storm-Petrel; Flesh-footed
and Buller's shearwaters; Black-footed
Albatross, perhaps Laysan Albatross.

Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kevin Larson,
David Pereksta and Bernardo Alps.**

\$79 – full galley on board.



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Focuses on the field identification of North American hummingbirds.
Comprehensive text; over 200 stunning photographs. (Soft)
Steve Howell, 2002

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Robert A Cheke, Clive F Mann; Illus. by Richard Allen, 2001

\$50.00

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Ernst Mayr and Jared M. Diamond, 2001

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A birding site guide for Napa and Solano counties. Includes directions
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Napa-Solano Audubon Society, 2001

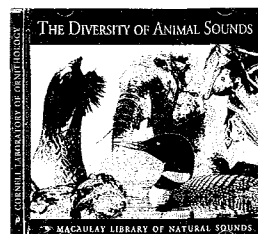
\$13.95



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If a participant cancels 31 days or more
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a possible replacement. Please do not offer
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those on the waiting list.

*All pelagic trips must be filled 35 days
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Please reserve early.*



The Diversity of Animal Sounds (CD)

This CD features some of nature's most spectacular songs, calls,
and other animal sounds from across the globe. Accompanied by
booklet putting each sound in behavioral context.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2001

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Audubon Advisory

Saving the Arctic Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling; protecting migratory song-birds, wetlands, forests, and endangered species; and improving National Wildlife Refuges – these are just a few of the issues we'll face once again in the U.S. Congress in 2002. With a 1-seat margin in the Senate, and a 9-seat margin in the House, Congress is narrowly divided.

That's why Audubon is committed to providing you with the best information on conservation legislation pending in Congress. This information can be delivered to you every other week, free of charge, through the AUDUBON ADVISORY. Each issue will provide you with information and insider reports on pending conservation legislation.

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LAAS TOURS

South Africa – October 21 – November 7, 2002

Namibia Extension: November 4 – 17, 2002

See South Africa in spring, with numerous birds in stunning plumage and unforgettable views of wildlife. Travel along the West Coast from Table Mountain to the Little Karoo, home of the largest number of endemic birds in South Africa, then east to Mkuze, the Hluhluwe River, the Greater St. Lucia Wetlands, Ndumo, and the grand finale: Timbavati Nature Reserve, adjoining Kruger National Park.

Experience Namibia, from lush game parks such as Etosha National Park to arid landscapes of the legendary Skeleton Coast, where the desert meets the Atlantic Ocean, and observe bird species and other wildlife found nowhere else.

FOR ITINERARIES and MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Olga Clarke, Travel Director
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
2027 El Arbolita Drive
Glendale, CA 91208-1805 USA
phone/fax: (818) 249-9511
e-mail: oclarketravel@earthlink.net

Earth Day Celebration 2002 Saturday, April 20

Los Angeles Audubon will be participating the Earth Day Celebration at Kenneth Hahn Recreation Area in Baldwin Hills. Events will include a bird walk/nature hike, work on a restoration project, and an afternoon of fun-filled activities and informative displays.

The park entrance is off La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. Events will start at 8:00 A.M.

If you would like to help with the event please contact:

Cheryl Epps at cepps@flash.net or (213) 629-9755.

Otherwise, just join us for the fun!

WEBMASTER NEEDED!

www.LAAudubon.org

Have you ever "clicked" on the LAAS website? It is an excellent place to get information about our chapter and events. However, there is a lot more information that can be disseminated and we need someone with the expertise and time to update and maintain the site.

We would like to post the bi-monthly *Western Tanager*, for instance. We also need to create "links" with other birding resources. We have many ideas for improving the site but we NEED a webmaster.

This work could be done from a home computer so you wouldn't have to work at Audubon House.

Please – if you are able to give us help, call Audubon House and ask to speak with Richard Epps.

FIELD TRIPS

continued from page 12

Sunday, March 24 –

Ventura Game Preserve (Oxnard).

Leader: **Irwin Woldman**. We will look for wintering birds and early migrants.

Take the 101 Fwy west to Las Posas Rd. Go south on Las Posas to Hueneme Rd. Turn west to Casper Rd. We will meet at the corner of Casper and Hueneme roads.

Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Sunday, April 7 –

Topanga State Park.

See January 6 for write up.

Sunday, April 14 –

Whittier Narrows.

See January 13 for write-up.

Saturday, April 20 –

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.

Leader: Karen Johnson.

See January 19 for write up.

Sunday, April 21 –

Ballona Wetlands.

See March 17 for write-up.

**Saturday and Sunday, April 6 and 7 –
Owens Valley Grouse Trip.**

Leader: **Mary Freeman**. Limited to 20 participants. Meet early in Big Pine Saturday. To sign up, send \$12 and a SASE to LAAS. More details in mailer. Reserve rooms early.

Sunday, April 28 –

Big Morongo Preserve.

Leader: **Ray Schep**. Join us at this desert oasis for resident and migrant birds.

Take I10 east past Beaumont, turn north on State Rt. 62 to Morongo Valley, and turn right on East Dr. (across from Rocky's Pizza). Take the first driveway left into the lot. About 2 hrs. drive from LA. Anticipate heat, hunger and thirst. Meet at 8:00 A.M. in the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve parking lot.

CLEAN - U P S

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in Baldwin Hills

Get Outdoors Get Involved

The first Saturday of each month LAAS will be sponsoring a work project at the park.

The park manager will arrange to have projects ready for us, with any equipment needed. Park staff will do the heavy work ahead of time but they can really use our help on a variety of projects so please come join in!

Check in at the parking kiosk about 8:00 A.M. The attendant will give you directions to the current project and the \$3.00 parking fee will be waived. The park entrance is off La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St.

Please join us:

Saturday, March 2

Saturday, April 6

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.

EVENING MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 12, 2002

Solstice Canyon "MAPS" Program

Walter Sakai

Walt will discuss the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program, how it is implemented at Solstice Canyon station in the Santa Monica Mountains, and the first year's information collected there.

Come hear about this great program, and learn how you can participate.

Tuesday, April 9, 2002

South-East Brazil: Birds and Ecology

Garry George

Magnificent presentation of 24-day birding trip in south-east Brazil!

Garry will talk about the birds they saw, including many endangered and endemic species, and the ecology of the region.

Meet at 7:30 P.M.

in

Plummer Park

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

Meeting Raffle:

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!

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 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 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 Trip-pet Ranch parking lot. \$6 parking fee or

park on the road outside the park.
Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Sunday, March 10 – Whittier Narrows.

Leader: **Ray Jillson**. View colorful resident and migrating birds, including the introduced Northern Cardinal. Take Peck Dr. off the 60 Fwy in South El Monte (just W 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.

Saturday, March 16 –

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in Baldwin Hills.

Leader: **Irwin Woldman**. Trips covering landscaped parklands and natural coastal scrub habitats are designed for beginning birders and members of the community. The park entrance is off La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$3 parking fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces.
Meet at 8:00 A.M.

Sunday, March 17 –

Ballona Wetlands.

Bob Shanman will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland. Meet at the Del Rey Lagoon parking lot. Take the Marina Fwy (90 W) to Culver Blvd. and turn left for a mile, turn right on Pacific Ave. The lot is on the right. Lot or street parking is usually not a problem. Three-hour walk. Telescopes helpful.
Meet at 8:00 A.M.

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