

# WESTERN TANAGER



Volume 69 Number 5 May/June 2003

Los Angeles Audubon Society

## *Back to Ecuador (Part II)*

*by John McCoy, PhD*

Quito, Ecuador, July 10, 2002: There was just enough time to wipe off the Andean mud, stow all but the most essential jungle gear, find dinner, and get a good night's sleep at our hotel, La Cartuja. Richard Hoover and I had just trekked, waded, and squished our way up and down the eastern slope of the Andes in search of birds and adventure. By tomorrow afternoon, we would be at Sacha Lodge, deep in the Amazon jungle!

Getting to Sacha Lodge is half the fun. Icaro Airlines took us east from Quito to the booming frontier town of Coca, a flight made more of an adventure by stormy weather. A truck relayed us to the docks, where we were herded onto a covered boat. We headed down the wide Napo River, through sun and mist and rain, with good birds en route. About two hours later, we landed on a muddy bank, then hiked for half an hour through the rain to a partly submerged dock. Next, a ride in a dugout canoe across a blackwater lake. We spotted Hoatzin along the edge of the lake. The lodge was worth the effort to get there: this Amazon jungle came with hot and cold running water, lights, and ceiling fans!

Next morning, we ventured into the jungle before dawn, hiking through sucking mud. At length, we reached a huge Ceiba tree with a sturdy wooden staircase built around the trunk. It was still dark when we began the ascent.

When we reached the viewing platform, about 150 feet above ground level, it was barely light enough to make out a flock of Many-banded Araçari in a neighboring tree, soon joined by Spangled Cotinga and several tanagers. At such a height, the trunk of the Ceiba tree was still four feet across, and it was here that the first limbs branched out. There were birds to be seen, though not as many as we had hoped. There was a view of the Amazonian Umbrellabird so far away it was barely a smudge in the scope. Mostly, it rained! Being in the presence

of a group of "gung-ho" birders, we stood up there for about three hours before the morning was finally declared a wash out. Even so, seeing the jungle from above was thrilling.

Though the weather seldom cooperated, the jungle experience was memorable. Every night, we were lulled to sleep by the sounds of cheerful crickets and frogs. An occasional unseen critter added a "kerploosh" as it jumped into the swamp under our thatched hut. By day, another very wet trek, this time a boat ride. The Napo River was still rising after days of



*Sacha Lodge*

heavy rain, but the guide was not about to chicken out. The rising waters had flooded the forested islands in the river. We landed on any available sandbar and waded into the vegetation in search of birds, such as the Ladder-tailed Nightjar. We stopped on the opposite shore in hopes of seeing parrots at a salt lick, but the day was too wet. However, new birds kept appearing, one by one. The sun began to peek out as we landed at Yasuni National Park on the south bank of the Napo. The jungle was muddy and slippery. Dazzling butterflies floated by. Birds were there too, though we had to work hard to see them. When it was time to turn back, we realized we had to make our way back down the same slippery hillsides. What a relief when we finally reached the boat! On the river again, the afternoon sun sparkled on the muddy waters. A warm breeze and the rocking of the boat soothed us into a state of bliss, interrupted once to view a small Anaconda sleeping on a branch, and again when we finally landed at Sacha.

On our last morning at Sacha, the weather cleared, just in time to see four dark birds rising across a misty sky. Ibis! Could it be? The only ibis in these parts would have to be . . . Green Ibis, a bird I had always missed in Costa Rica!

We retraced our steps: the dugout canoe across the lake, the path to the river, the boat back to Coca. This time, no storms, just a smooth flight all the way to Quito. Jane Lyons, of Mindo Bird Tours, greeted us at the airport. "What did you see?" she asked. "Many-spended Araçari", I replied, "and many colors of mud." Here at last was the person who had put together our itinerary. She was afraid we had been disappointed by bad weather and uncooperative birds. Far from it, the eastern half of Ecuador was simply dazzling! Now, we cleaned off the mud again and prepared for our final adventure.

Next morning, Vinicio Pérez met us at the hotel. Minutes later we were on the old road west of Quito, dodging the omni-present road and pipeline construction. The western slope of the Andes was dry. No more mud! The

birds were out too, enjoying the morning sun. On a cold mountain-side we waited for hummingbirds: pufflegs, brilliants, coronets, and a fabulous Swordbill.

We expected to stay at the Bird-watcher's House in Mindo. Jane and Vinicio had other plans for us! They found running the lodge kept them from what they really wanted to do, leading tours. The owners of the new Sachatamia Lodge above Mindo were ready to show off their new facilities and their chef. So, the Birdwatcher's House is closed, and Jane's guests stay at Sachatamia. It was so luxurious, we were sure there had been some mistake. Our room was full of fresh flowers, with a view of the garden (Olive-striped Flycatcher, Red-faced Spinetail, Brown-capped Vireo, and numerous tanagers, gorging themselves on caterpillars from the alder trees). The trails at Sachatamia are still being developed, but there is already plenty to see without leaving the grounds. A short ride on the new paved highway provides easy access to several reserves and forests in the area.

One day we left the pavement behind for an all-day loop up to the Bellavista Lodge, then down the old Nono-Mindo Road, stopping to see how many hummingbirds can be attracted by 100 pounds of sugar. The road itself should perhaps be called the "Oh, no! Mindo Road". Even on foot, the sharp stones hurt our feet. The van jolted every inch of the way. Nevertheless, the birds were worth the pain!

Perhaps the oddest sight in the forest is the hillside house and garden of Tony Nunnery. There is no electricity or telephone, no car, no technological distractions from the simplest life, but there is one exceptional indulgence: something like 100 pounds of sugar per month are delivered by taxi, and converted into hummingbird food. There are dozens of feeders. Someone has to be on the property at all times to keep them filled. About 20 species were visible, all zipping around so fast it became painful to follow them. The number of individuals was in the hundreds, not counting the flowerpiercers that were also in attendance.

Quite a few birds along the road

stayed out of sight. We carried on an extended conversation with a Chestnut-capped Antpitta for 20 minutes without seeing any movement. I settled for the Lined Foliage-gleaner higher in the same thicket. Cryptic birds are hard to see, there is no mystery about that! The first time Olga Clarke tried to show me a tinamou in Costa Rica, I looked right at it and still couldn't see a thing. After a couple more trips to Costa Rica, I made progress. I could follow the shadowy, featureless form of the Little Tinamou through the underbrush, and point it out to others. With more practice, I finally managed to see part of an antpitta and most of a tapaculo in Costa Rica.

But these skills need practice! Now, I was happy to discover I still had the knack. I saw almost all of a Unicolored Tapaculo, several parts of the Rusty-belted Tapaculo, an entire Tawny Antipitta, and best of all, the Giant Antpitta, which has the benefit of being too big to miss, about the size of a chicken! Even at that size, the Giant Antpitta sneaks around without making a sound, and Richard, less experienced with these skulkers of the forest floor, struggled to locate the bird with the binoculars. We were told the Giant Antpitta eats giant earthworms, but Vinicio enjoys teasing the gullible tourists! This wonderful bird makes its home in one of Jane and Vinicio's private reserves near Mindo. To be fair, I have to admit most of the other tapaculos and antpittas got away.

One bird at Sachatamia had its 15 minutes of fame while we were there. The first documented nest of the endangered Long-Wattled Umbrellabird was discovered in the crown of a tree fern, near the new oil pipeline. After much anticipation, the egg hatched to reveal an ungainly chick covered with bright yellow down. The story was picked up by a local television station, and Jane spent most of a morning with the camera crew. However, a week after the story aired, the chick turned up dead, the nest destroyed, in uncertain circumstances. An attempt to prevent the chick from delaying completion of the pipeline? Or did the chick's unusual color make it a sort of sitting duck?

# WESTERN Tanager

Published by  
Los Angeles Audubon Society,  
a chapter of  
National Audubon Society.

EDITOR: Jean Brandt  
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Tom Frillman  
CONSERVATION: Sandy Wohlgenuth  
ORNITHOLOGY CONSULTANT:  
Kimball Garrett  
FIELD TRIPS: Nick Freeman  
PELAGIC TRIPS: Phil Sayre  
PRINTING: Holden Color Inc.

Opinions expressed in articles or letters  
herein do not necessarily express the  
position of this publication or of LAAS.

PRESIDENT:  
Raymond Schep  
1st VICE PRESIDENT:  
Dexter Kelly  
2nd VICE PRESIDENT:  
Garry George  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:  
Mildred Newton  
RECORDING SECRETARY:  
Johanna Dawes  
TREASURER:  
Elizabeth Prigge

Annual membership in both societies is  
\$35 per year and \$20 for new members  
for their first year. Members receive the  
*Western Tanager* newsletter and *Audubon*  
magazine, a national publication.  
Renewals of membership are computer-  
ized by National Audubon and should not  
be sent to LAAS; however, new member-  
ships may be sent directly to LAAS.  
Make check payable to the National  
Audubon Society.

*Western Tanager* subscription rates for  
non-members are \$9 per year for third  
class delivery or \$15 per year for first  
class delivery. LAAS members may  
receive first class delivery by paying an  
additional \$5. Make check payable to Los  
Angeles Audubon Society.

Los Angeles Audubon Society  
Headquarters, Library  
and Bookstore are open to the public  
Tuesday – Saturday  
10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

(323) 876-0202 – office  
(323) 876-7609 – fax  
(323) 874-1318 – bird tape

WesternTanager@LAAudubon.org – e-mail  
LAAS@LAAudubon.org – e-mail  
www.LAAudubon.org – website

Printed on Recycled Paper



Photos by the author



*Lake at Sacha Lodge*

But the point was proved; these remarkable creatures might survive deep in the forest, but in our midst they surely won't survive without protection. We console ourselves in the thought that, next time, the bird may build its nest in a safer location, far from human eyes.

Seeing the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock required getting up at 3:45 A.M. The lek is close to Sachatamia Lodge, but we had to hike in the dark across cow pastures and forest trails to reach the viewing spot, at a discreet distance from the lek. There was no moon and the sky was bright with thousands of stars. As we entered the forest I glanced up to see a shooting star. We arrived at the site, not knowing where we were or what we were sitting on. We waited for some time as dawn crept in. Suddenly, a loud SQUAWK. It came from a dense tree on the hillside across from our vantage point. We couldn't see anything. A few minutes later, another SQUAWK, then a series of strange hooting and cackling sounds. "Like monkeys in the hen house" was one opinion. In spite of all the racket, it was very difficult to get more than a partial glimpse of the birds. They stayed well hidden in the tree, but occasionally one would jump out in the open for an instant. The chorus continued for nearly an hour. When quiet returned to the jungle, we made

our way out of the forest, this time amazed to see where we had been, and what we had stepped over. Sickie-winged Guan and a well-named Powerful Woodpecker delayed our departure. The woodpecker's drumming was so loud, it could have been a gunshot. I was relieved finally to see the bird.

We returned to Quito once more, a little damp and tired, but not entirely ready to leave Ecuador. A newly remodeled dining room had opened at La Cartuja during our absence. The new chef fixed a fine dinner, and we chatted with the manager, who had come from Spain some years ago to run this charming establishment. She had weathered volcanic eruptions, political coups, and hyper-inflation. But that is all part of the adventure in this land of dreams, as seductive today as it was for the conquistadors almost 500 years ago.

In spite of bad weather on the eastern slope, and excessively dry weather in the west, our trip list came to about 335 species reasonably well seen, of which 47 were hummingbirds. We'll get the remainder next time! 🐦

*John McCoy received his Doctorate in Zoology from the University of Illinois and is currently a software engineer in the L.A. area.*



# CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

UPDATES:

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

**ENVIRONMENTALISTS SUE TO PREVENT DEVELOPMENT:** The Endangered Habitats League has filed a suit to oppose approval by Orange County officials of development in rural areas that would include chopping down nearly 500 trees. The League says that the county did not properly consider habitat concerns for endangered species nor provide crucial wildlife corridors between two nature preserves. A second suit was filed in the same court by Ray Chandos, a Trabuco Canyon activist who for decades has fought to maintain his area's wild ambience. For many years, Los Angeles Audubon has supported the splendid work of the Endangered Habitats League in preserving the vital environment that maintains California's invaluable species like the quino checkerspot butterfly and the California Gnatcatcher.

**FISH AND MAMMALS SUFFER FROM LOUD NOISES:** Fish, like large marine mammals, have sensitive ears and are put at risk by seismic explosions by oil and gas exploration companies, Navy sonar, and other loud noises. Studies by scientists at the University of Maryland found that the damage was greater than expected. Fish ears are similar to those of whales and are used to find prey, communicate, and locate mates.


**AVIAN DESTROYER – CARBOFURAN:** Of all agricultural pesticides, carbofuran is perhaps the most toxic. A single granule is lethal. The 50 or more species that are vulnerable include Golden and Bald eagles, Great Horned Owl, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Pintail and Blue-winged Teal. At one point the EPA estimated that up to two million birds were killed by carbofuran every year. In

1991 the EPA declared its use illegal and the poison was out of the picture until 2002 when, under a plea of Emergency Use, the agency was considering permitting carbofuran application on 100,000 acres of rice crops in Louisiana to control the rice water weevil. Environmentalists who had protested were shocked when a permit was issued for use on 10,000 acres by the EPA without notifying the Fish and Wildlife Service, the general public, or conservationists. Under considerable pressure the agency reduced the acreage to 2500 acres. When a scathing letter signed by 55 leading conservation organizations and 6000 unhappy public comments were received by EPA, the permit was revoked.

**WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GLOBAL WARMING?** Most of us are familiar with the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 that eventually was ratified by over 100 nations. Global warming, which was accepted as fact by the signers, is caused by excessive carbon dioxide that produces world climate change, rising seas, and a frightening vision of the future of this planet. But when the Bush administration took over, it released the United States from the treaty though our huge industrial capacity is responsible for the lion's share of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> pollution. Our next-door neighbor, Canada, with only 30 million people, is vigorously pursuing a program to reduce global warming. Each Canadian generates about five tons of carbon dioxide a year, half from auto use. With the new plan at work there could be a saving of one ton. The federal agency, Environment Canada, says that driving a car 10% less and turning down the thermostat at night and when out of the house will account for that one ton a year. To deal with recalcitrant citizens and businesses Canada is

exploring financial incentives for using public transportation and making homes and businesses more energy efficient. The use of wind and hydrogen power may compensate for economic losses caused by the necessary reduction of excess carbon dioxide. When will the United States join the Good Guys?

**CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY-GENERAL SPEAKS HIS MIND:** In late February, Attorney General Bill Lockyer underlined his opposition to the Ahmanson Ranch by joining the ongoing lawsuit as a "friend of the court." This 3,050-home development near Calabasas, he says, will destroy rare grasslands, oak savannas, and valuable open space. He is particularly concerned about the undesirable effect the two billion dollar golf-oriented project will have on traffic on the nearby Ventura freeway and on major streets throughout the Valley that are already overcrowded. The 1992 traffic survey is considered inadequate for today's highway conditions but a new survey is not accepted by the Ventura County supervisors as necessary. Lockyer favors purchase of the 2800-acre parcel by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

**SHARK FIN SOUP PUTS WORLD BANK IN HOT WATER:** Many folks at the World Bank were upset when the Washington, D.C. cafeteria served shark fin soup in honor of the Chinese New Year. One environmental official complained that "sharks around the world are seriously threatened and in decline because of over fishing." "Our serving shark fin soup in the bank," the official said, "is just another example of the disconnect between the message we deliver to our clients (mostly developing countries) about environmental responsibility and our corporate actions." 

# NEWS FROM THE BOARD

## FACILITIES

President Ray Schep, 1st VP Dexter Kelly, and 2nd VP Garry George attended a public scoping meeting in Plummer Park regarding the City of West Hollywood's renovation of the park. The Master Plan of the renovation of the park is online at [www.weho.org](http://www.weho.org) (search Plummer Park Master Plan) and includes destruction of the Great Hall and Long Hall, current Headquarters of L.A. Audubon and the Bookstore. Ray offered a letter outlining the 60 year relationship between Plummer Park and L.A. Audubon which was accepted into public record, and discussion groups emphasized the important contribution that LAAS makes to the park and the community.

By the end of the meeting, keeping LAAS as part of the park renovation was accepted as a priority consideration in the renovation plans. A further meeting of the park planning committee was attended by Dexter Kelly and Garry George, and again assurances were given to accommodate LAAS when the Long Hall and Great Hall are destroyed, but there was no mention of specifics or space size. The City of West Hollywood is trying to acquire store-

front space along Santa Monica Blvd. to add to the park, and there is some discussion of re-locating LAAS to an off-site location. The City of West Hollywood would need to pass a bond issue in order to fund the renovation, so there is no start date until after that process which could be a while in today's economic and political environment. Ray, Garry, and Dexter formed a Facilities Committee to explore all options for a future home for LAAS.

## EDUCATION

Dexter Kelly is interviewing candidates to head the Education Program for Los Angeles Audubon. Education, one of the principal programs in the mission of the L.A. Audubon Society, is funded in part by a grant from the Johnny Mercer Foundation and promises to be an ongoing program targeted to grades K-8. Interested candidates can contact Dexter at [kellygd@email.laccd.edu](mailto:kellygd@email.laccd.edu)

## CONSERVATION

The Board voted to renew a grant of \$1,000 to Walter Sakai for his MAPS bird banding and study program at Solstice Canyon (see WT v.68 (6:1-3). L.A. Audubon

members who are interested in assisting this program by banding or studying birds should contact Ray Schep at [rayoohoo@yahoo.com](mailto:rayoohoo@yahoo.com).


The Board has also pledged a reward of \$1,000 for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the shooting death of the female California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) found February 13, 2003. (Details may be found below).

## LAAS WEBSITE

Currently, 2nd VP Garry George is reviewing estimates to re-design the website, add an online email database and create an online bookstore. Candidates are invited to submit resumes or bids and members are invited to submit suggestions to:

[laasweb@hotmail.com](mailto:laasweb@hotmail.com)

## NEW OFFICERS

The Nominations Committee chaired by 2nd VP Garry George and members Margo deGross and Mary Freeman have prepared a slate of Executive Officers to take office in July, 2003. The slate will be presented in the April 8, 2003 meeting and voted in the May 13th meeting. Please plan to attend and vote. 

## Condor Death

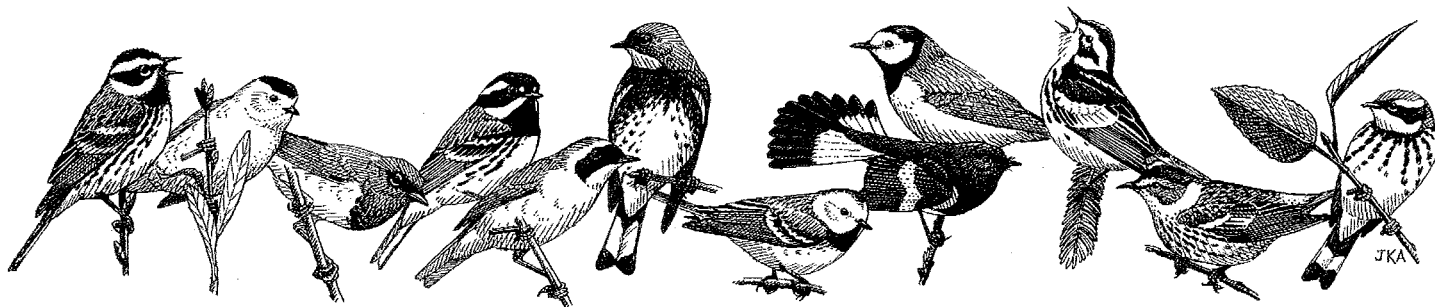
California Condor AC-8, was found shot to death February 13, 2003.

The female bird was one of the condors caught by government biologists in the last-ditch attempt which has saved the species from extinction. She had been an important member of the captive breeding program for 14 years, hatching 12 eggs while in captivity. AC-8 was released back into her native environment in 2000, the first of the original wild birds in the program to be set free.

Killing a condor is a felony that carries a maximum penalty of one year in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is investigating the killing of AC-8, has joined many conservation organizations in offering the reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the culprit.

In addition to the approximate 80 endangered condors in the wild, in California, Arizona and Utah, 118 remain in captivity at the San Diego Wild Animal Park and the Los Angeles Zoo.



# BIRDS OF THE SEASON

**P**elagic trips at any time of the year can be exciting off the southern California coast and the eight hour February 22nd trip out of Marina del Rey proved to be one of the best. The boat headed south to the Redondo Canyon, Redondo Knoll, and San Pedro Escarpment areas. Black-vented Shearwaters were seen in low numbers and the only other tubenose was Northern Fulmar. Alcid species made an excellent showing however. Cassin's Auklets were seen in very good numbers and the highlight was a pair of Ancient Murrelets on the water that were well seen by all.

Kevin Larson reported the following totals (limited to species of pelagic interest):

Northern Fulmar - 13  
Black-vented Shearwater - 250  
Red Phalarope - 2  
Pomarine Jaeger - 1  
Common Murre - 22  
**Ancient Murrelet** - 2  
Cassin's Auklet - 383  
Rhinoceros Auklet - 40

Many thanks go to the leaders: Kimball Garrett, Kevin Larson, and Bernardo Alps.

Once again, the *Birds of the Season* column is a compilation of bird reports from Los Angeles County taken from the RBA tape that is recorded weekly by Jon Fisher. The birds mentioned were seen during the week indicated.

## January 23, 2003 —

A **Long-tailed Duck** continued at the Los Angeles River mouth. It was last seen on January 19.

The **Gray Flycatcher** continued at Hahamongna Watershed Park, formerly Oak Grove Park, in Pasadena. In the Antelope Valley, at least three **Le Conte's Thrashers** were on the north side of Avenue O, just east of the intersection with 10th St. West. Early morning seems to be a good time to check for them. (These birds are on territory and singing, so please exercise restraint when searching.)

The **Brown Thrasher** at Eaton Canyon in Pasadena was reported through January 19. A **Plumbeous Vireo** was at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area on January 22. One or more **Common Grackles** continue

at the Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook. The Recreation Area is south of the 105 Freeway and east of the 110 Freeway. Park in the lot off Avalon Blvd., north of El Segundo Blvd. and look for the grackles along the fenced edge of the lake near the parking lot.

## February 6, 2003 —

The **Glaucous Gull** reported several weeks ago near Pacific Palisades was seen again on February 3.

A **Tropical Kingbird** continued at Malibu Lagoon.

A **Plumbeous Vireo** was at Oak Grove Park (aka Hahamongna Watershed Park) near JPL in Pasadena on February 1. Several **Varied Thrushes** have been seen at Descanso Gardens in La Cañada.

## February 20, 2003 —

A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was found at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale on February 16. Two **Tropical Kingbirds** continue to be reported. One at Ormond Beach in Oxnard and the other at Malibu Lagoon. At Camino Real Park in Ventura, three **Baltimore Orioles** were reported on February 13. The birds, two males and a female, were feeding in the ravine by the westernmost ball field.

Seabird watching from Mugu Rock in southeastern Ventura County was good on February 18. Among the birds reported were several **Common Murres** and **Rhinoceros Auklets**. Mugu Rock is on the Pacific Coast Highway, just north of Big Sycamore Canyon.

## February 27, 2003 —

Two **Eurasian Wigeons** continue at the Woodley Avenue golf course ponds in Van Nuys.



Brown Pelican. Taken on the February 22, 2003 pelagic trip out of Marina del Rey by Larry Sansone.

**March 6, 2003 —**

Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at Santa Fe Dam.

A **Dusky Flycatcher** was found at Hansen Dam in Lake View Terrace on March 2. Also of interest was a female **Common Goldeneye** on the small lake that lies within the willow forest.

The **White-throated Sparrow** at Eaton Canyon in Pasadena continued through March 2.

**March 13, 2003 —**

**Swainson's Hawks**, scarce along the coast, were seen over Altadena on March 7 and 8. The flocks numbered three and six individuals.

On March 9, seabird watching from Leo Carillo State Beach produced thousands of **Black-vented Shearwaters**, two **Xantus's Murrelets**, nine **Rhinoceros Auklets**, and a **Black Scoter**.


The **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** is still being seen at Santa Fe Dam in Irwindale and was reported through March 9.

**March 20, 2003 —**

At Point Vicente on March 14, good numbers of seabirds were observed. Highlights included **154 Rhinoceros Auklets**. On March 17, a **Manx Shearwater** was reported from the same location.

The **Eurasian Wigeon** continues on the Woodley Golf Course ponds in Van Nuys. It was last reported on March 19.

A **White-throated Sparrow** was observed at a residence in Topanga Canyon on March 16.

LAAS has sponsored the telephone RBA for over 30 years and many people have made the weekly recordings. The current reporter is Jon Fisher and we gratefully thank him for his timely and excellent recordings of rare and unusual bird sightings. 

**R**ecords of rare and unusual birds reported for *Birds of the Season* 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:

*North American Birds*, L.A. Co.  
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:**

Jon Fisher: (818) 544-5009 (work)  
e-mail: Jon.L.Fisher@disney.com

## **Western Field Ornithologists and New Mexico Ornithological Society Joint Meeting**

The 28th Annual Meeting of the Western Field Ornithologists and the 41st Annual Meeting of the New Mexico Ornithological Society will be jointly held at the campus of Western New Mexico University in Silver City, New Mexico from July 24–27, 2003.

The theme of the meeting will be the birds of the Mexican Borderlands, and it will promote exchange of biological information with professional and amateur ornithologists from both sides of the international border.

This area affords great opportunities for viewing many southwestern specialty species such as Common Black-Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, Montezuma Quail, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Flammulated and Spotted owls, Greater Pewee, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Mexican Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Crissal Thrasher, Olive and Red-faced warblers, Painted Redstart, and Abert's Towhee.

For more information go to:  
[www.wfo-cbrc.org/confer.html](http://www.wfo-cbrc.org/confer.html)

## **Birding 101 – Fall 2003**

Karen Johnson, well-known expert local birder, will be our instructor for Birding 101.

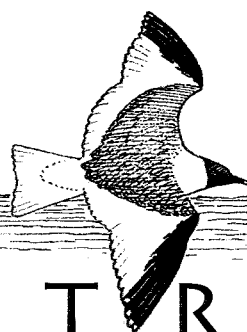
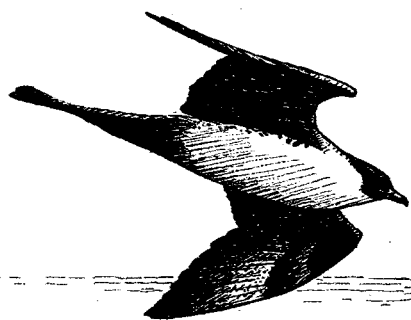
Birding 101 a very popular, hands-on, learn-while-doing, series of birdwatching classes and field trips, geared for new birders, will be offered again this fall.

One introductory lecture covering birding basics, tools, and techniques of bird identification will be held at Audubon House, in Plummer Park on Thursday evening, September 25, 2003.

Three field classes will be to prime, nearby diverse habitats, on Saturday mornings, September 27, October 4, and October 11.

Cost will be: \$45.00 for members of Los Angeles Audubon \$55.00 for non-members.  
(Not a member? Join while enrolling in the class, \$65.00 will cover the class and a one-year membership.)

To enroll or for further information, please call Audubon House, (323) 876-0202, Tuesday–Saturday, 10–4. Enroll soon, class size is limited to 15 participants!



# PELAGIC TRIPS

## Sunday, May 4 —

### **Marina del Rey** toward the **Channel Islands National Monument**.

The R/V UCLA Seaworld departs from Marina del Rey at 6:00 A.M. for this twelve 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.

Leaders: **Michael J. San Miguel, Bernardo Alps** (Cetacean Society).  
\$65 — Coffee, no galley.

## Saturday, June 7 —

Landing on **Santa Cruz Island** at Prisoner's Cove for about one hour and then pelagic birding south toward Anacapa Island. This ten hour trip departs from Island Packers dock in Ventura at 8:00 A.M. on the M/V Sunfish.

The endemic **Island Scrub-Jay** is easily seen here. Then we will cruise south of the island toward Anacapa Island. Birds seen 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: Flesh-footed Shearwater; South Polar Skua. Tufted Puffin seen in 2002.

Leaders: **Michael J. San Miguel, Jonathan Feenstra, Bernardo Alps**.  
\$75 — No galley.

## Saturday, September 6 —

A **deep water trip** toward **Cherry, Tanner, and Cortez banks**. This thirteen hour trip departs from Santa Barbara Harbor at 7:00 A.M. on the fast catamaran the Condor Express.

This is our **Red-billed Tropicbird** trip.

We go far offshore in three counties, Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara.

Birds to be expected: Black, Least, Ashy, and Leach's storm-petrels; Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers; South Polar Skua; Sabine's Gull. Rarities: Black-footed Albatross; Buller's Shearwater; Arctic Tern; Craveri's Murrelet. Blue, Fin, and Minke whales as well as several species of dolphins have been seen on this trip.

Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, Kimball Garrett, David Pereksta, Todd McGrath**.

\$150 — There is a full galley on board which seats 60 people in comfort. There are large windows that allow you to observe the ocean while seated.

## Saturday, October 4 —

A **deep water trip** south of **San Miguel Island** to **Richardson's Rock** and cruise out to 1000 Fathoms. This eight hour trip departs from Santa Barbara Harbor at 8:00 A.M. on the fast catamaran the Condor Express.

Birds to be expected: Black-vented, Pink-footed, Buller's, and Sooty shearwaters; Black, Ashy, Leach's, and Least storm-petrels; Pomarine Jaeger; South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger; Sabine's Gull; Xantus's Murrelet; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets; perhaps Common Murre and Pigeon Guillemot. Rarities: Flesh-footed shearwaters.

Leaders: **Mitch Heindel, David Pereksta, Barney Schlinger, Peter Cantle, Bernardo Alps** (Cetacean Society).

\$110 — There is a full galley on board which seats 60 people in comfort, with large windows which allow you to observe the ocean while seated.

## Saturday, October 25 —

### **Northern Channel Islands Monument.**

Anacapa, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz islands toward San Miguel Island. Eleven 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; Leach's, 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: Flesh-footed, and Buller's shearwaters; South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger. Blue, Finback, and Humpback whales have been seen on this trip.

In 2002 a Streaked Shearwater was seen. Leaders: **David Pereksta, Michael J. San Miguel, Jonathan Feenstra, Bernardo Alps** (Cetacean Society).

\$90 — Limited galley on board. Box lunches can be ordered from a nearby deli.

## Saturday, November 8 —

**Ventura Marina** toward and past **San Miguel Island** on the 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. Birds seen this time of year: Northern Fulmar; Black-vented, Sooty, and Pink-footed shearwaters; Leach's Storm-Petrel; South Polar Skua; Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; rocky shorebirds (up to five); Common Murre; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Occasionally: Craveri's Murrelet; Rarities: Flesh-footed and Buller's shearwaters; Black-footed Albatross.

Leaders: **Kimball Garrett, David Pereksta, Michael J. San Miguel, Bernardo Alps** (Cetacean Society).  
\$95 — Limited snack type galley on board.



## 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 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.

### REFUND POLICY FOR

#### PELAGIC TRIPS

If a participant cancels 31 days or more prior to departure, a \$4 service charge will be deducted from the refund. There is no participant refund if requested fewer than 30 days before departure, unless there is a paid replacement available. Call LAAS for a possible replacement. Please do not offer the trip to a friend as it would be unfair to those on the waiting list.

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

# NEW AT THE BOOKSTORE

### Toll Free Phone Number

### Sales and Inquiries

(888) LAAS428 or (888) 522-7428

## Early Bird Special

Stop by the bookstore before our evening meetings on Tuesday, May 13 or Tuesday, June 10 between the hours of 4 and 7:30 p.m. and receive a 10% discount on book purchases\*.

\*Sale items and optics not included

The bookstore is pleased to announce that we are now carrying the following models of Brunton binoculars:

Brunton Epoch 7.5 x 43 mm and 10.5x43 mm

Brunton Eterna 7.42 mm and 10x42 mm

Brunton Lite-Tech 8x32mm and 10x42 mm

All models are roof prism construction, waterproof, fogproof, extreme close-focus, and much much more!

Visit the bookstore and field test these remarkable optics.

As a special introduction to our new line of Brunton optics, we will include a free copy of The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior with the purchase of any Epoch or Eterna model.

## Birds of Baja

October 19-27, 2003

Kimball Garrett will once again lead this overland expedition down the Baja California peninsula in search of over 150 species of familiar and exotic birds, including all three endemic species – Gray Thrasher, Belding's Yellowthroat, and Xantus's Hummingbird – as well as the "Mangrove" Yellow Warbler (a subspecies, and not endemic, but does not occur in California), Magnificent Frigatebird, Crested Caracara, Least Grebe, Pyrrhuloxia, and more. The trip goes during prime time for unusual migrants and vagrants (last year's birds included two Scarlet Tanagers, a Philadelphia Vireo, and Baja California Sur's first Lewis's Woodpecker!)

Pass through unique desert woodlands of cactuses, elephant trees and cirios, mangrove swamps, tropical deciduous woodland, rare freshwater lagoons, and hidden oases, visiting the towns of San Quintin, Cataviña, Guerrero Negro, San Ignacio, Loreto, and La Paz. Enjoy hotel comfort each night. Depart by bus from Los Angeles to enjoy the whole 8 day trip; then return north from La Paz to Los Angeles by air. This trip is sponsored by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Cost is \$1975 plus airfare from La Paz to Los Angeles. For additional information, please email the museum Travel Office at [travel@nhm.org](mailto:travel@nhm.org) or call (213) 763-3350.

# 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, May 4 —**

**Topanga State Park. Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin** will lead participants through this diverse coastal mountain area. An ideal trip for a beginning birder or someone new in the area. From Ventura Blvd., take Topanga Canyon Blvd. 7 miles S, turn E uphill on Entrada Rd. Follow the signs and turn left into Trippet Ranch parking lot. From PCH, take Topanga Cyn. Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking \$2. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

## **Sunday, May 11 —**

### **California City and Galileo Hills.**

Leader: **Nick Freeman**. This is arguably the best migrant trap in a state known for great migrants. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Take Hwy 14 past Mojave, continue N on Hwy 14 about 10 miles, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through the town, under the overpass, and turn left past the golf course on Randsburg-Mojave Rd. Veer right onto 20 Mule Team Rd. where it forks. Follow the signs to Silver Saddle. Turn left on the paved road before the hill, take your first right, your first right again, into the Silver Saddle Country Club, followed by two lefts into the lot. Park by the pond. Allow over two hours driving time from L.A. LAAS phone sign-up mandatory. 12 max. Bring lunch, sun block. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

## **Sunday, May 11 —**

**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 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 8:15 A.M.

## **Saturday, May 17 —**

**Santa Anita Canyon.** Leader: **Mary Freeman**. Take the 210 Fwy toward Arcadia, and take Santa Anita Avenue N to the parking lot at the very end of the road. Meet at the trailhead at the bottom of the lot. Four-mile RT moderately strenuous walk through oak and chaparral canyons. Good selection of breeding and migrating birds including warblers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Band-tailed Pigeon, three hummers, and American Dipper possible. Pack in a lunch and water. Meet at 7:30 A.M.

## **Saturday, May 17 —**

### **Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.**

Leader: **Dick Barth**. This trip covers landscaped parkland and natural coastal scrub habitats. It is paced for beginning birders and members of the Baldwin Hills community. The park entrance is off of La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Road and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$3 entry fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

## **Sunday, May 18 —**

**Ballona Wetlands.** **Bob Shanman** will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland and adjacent rocky jetty. Late seabirds and shorebirds. 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, spotting 'scopes helpful. Meet at 8:00 A.M.

## **Saturday, May 31 —**

**Big Morongo Wildlife Preserve.** Leader **Dexter Kelly** will be searching for breeding desert and oasis birds such as Brown-crested and Vermilion flycatchers, Summer Tanager, Scott's and Hooded orioles, Yellow-breasted Chat, and probable migrating empidonax flycatchers. Meet at 8:00 A.M. in the parking lot, or scout earlier with Dexter next door in

Covington Park, or catch up a little later. To get there, take the 10 Fwy E about 17 miles past Banning to Hwy 62 N. Pass through the town of Morongo Valley, take a right on East Dr., then a left into the preserve. Bring lunch, water and sun block. Desert Hot Springs offers the nearest accommodations, or camp at Joshua Tree NP. Possible extension to nearby areas, depending on interest.

## **Sunday, June 1 —**

**Topanga State Park.** Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin**. Meet at 8:00 A.M. See May 4 listing for details.

## **Saturday, June 7 —**

### **Hansen Dam.** Leader: **Kimball Garrett**.

Come frolic with the guy who wrote the book on bird status and distribution in SoCal. Bell's Vireos, Yellow-breasted Chats, and other riparian and marsh species in one of the premier (though threatened) lowland riparian areas in Los Angeles County. Exit 210 (Foothill) Freeway at Osborne Street in Lake View Terrace. At the end of the offramp (from either direction) turn west on Foothill Blvd. Go about 100 yards and turn left into the Hansen Dam Sports Center parking lot. Meet at 7:00 A.M. in this parking lot. Long, easy walk; bring water!

## **Sunday, June 8 —**

**Whittier Narrows.** Leader: **Ray Jillson**. Meet at 8:15 A.M. See May 11 listing for details.

## **Saturday, June 21 —**

**Mt. Pinos Vicinity.** Leader: **Jean Brandt**. Hopeful Calliope Hummingbird, mountain woodpeckers, Hermit Warbler, Mountain Quail. Anticipate the elements, and bring a lunch. Take Hwy 5 N past Tejon Pass to the Frazier Park offramp, turn left, and follow Frazier Mountain Park Rd. bearing right onto Cuddy Valley Rd. Meet promptly at the "Y" formed by the junction of Cuddy Valley Rd. and Mil Potrero Hwy at 8:00 A.M., and park in the obvious dirt clearing. Rain cancels.

**Saturday, June 21 —**  
**Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.**  
Leader: **Dick Barth.** Meet at 8:00 A.M.  
\$3 entry fee. See May 17 listing for details.

**Sunday, June 22 —**  
**San Gabriel Mountains Day Trip and Night Owling Trip.** Leader: **Raymond Schep.** Targeted day birds will be Green-tailed Towhee, White-headed Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Purple Finch, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Band-tailed Pigeon, Williamson's Sapsucker, Western Tanager, etc. Bring a picnic lunch, a warm jacket, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass. Meet at 8:00 A.M. where the 210 Fwy and Angeles Crest Highway intersect in La Cañada. Exit the 210 N on Angeles Crest Highway. About one block north is a frontage road on the right, where we will park and carpool. We will have dinner about 6:00 P.M. at Mile High Pizza located at 5996 Cedar Street, Wrightwood. Owling after dinner. Those interested only in owling can meet the group at the dinner spot. Target night birds include, Northern Pygmy, Western Screech, and Northern Saw-whet owls, and Common Poorwill. Finish around midnight. They're all up there, but no promises! Send \$5 and a SASE to Audubon House to sign up. Limit 16.

**Friday through Monday, June 27-30 —**  
**Southern Sierras.** Leader: **Bob Barnes.** High deserts to High Sierra. The most diverse, species-rich region in the state, and Bob knows it like few do. Likely: Northern Goshawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Pileated Woodpecker, and owls. 150 species likely in four days. Participation limited. For information flyer, reserve with SASE. Fee: \$11 for each day attended (\$44 for four days). Dawn to dusk (and more) birding ideal for enthusiastic beginning to advanced birders. Reserve rooms in Kernville early.

**Sunday, July 6 —**  
**Topanga State Park.** Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin.** Meet at 8:00 A.M. See May 4 listing for details.

**Friday through Sunday, July 4-6 —**  
**Camp Nelson, Southwest Sierras Relaxed Weekend.** Leaders: **Nick Freeman, Irwin Woldman,** and **Margo De Grosse.** An hour east of Porterville, Camp Nelson boasts some of the best Giant Sequoias anywhere! Summer home rentals, fishing, berry picking, book reading, and one or two optional bird walks in beautiful country each day. Hopeful Pileated Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Spotted Owl, many more. Well-behaved teenagers very

welcome. Limit 15 with leaders; last two sign-ups sleep on sofas. We will eat in, dine out, pot luck/fish fry per itinerary. Bring large sheet sets and towels. Send \$44 each with SASE to LAAS. Meet there at 8:00 A.M. Friday, details in itinerary. Thursday afternoon arrival OK. Designate arrival day and time, phone number, and e-mail when signing up. Info will be shared for carpooling, unless requested otherwise.

**Sunday, July 20 —**  
**Big Bear Lake Vicinity.** Leaders: **Nick and Mary Freeman.** Meet in the Aspen Glen Picnic Area parking lot in Big Bear at 7:30 A.M. Take Hwy 18 or 38 to Big Bear Lake, then proceed about half way along the south side of the lake on Hwy 18 and turn south on Tulip Lane. The lot will be on the SW side of this short street. Target birds include Williamson's Sapsucker, Calliope and Rufus hummingbirds, mountain finches, and White-headed Woodpecker. It should be warm and there may be bugs, so come prepared. Bring lunch for a full day.

## LAAS INTERNATIONAL TOURS

### AMAZON VOYAGE – PERU – June 14-22, 2003

#### Machu Picchu Extension – June 22-27

Cruise the upper Amazon aboard a graceful 19th century style expedition ship. Excursions up streams in small boats into seasonally flooded forests, and walks in dry forests offer specialized birding and wildlife.

A perfect combination of comfort and adventure.

Continue your journey to Machu Picchu the Heart of the Inca Empire.

### SOUTH AFRICA – BOTSWANA – November 13-23, 2003

#### ZAMBIA Extension – November 23-29

Travel with renowned Derek Solomon through this magnificent land of untamed beauty by way of a modern safari. Wildlife is prolific.

Then continue your adventure to Zambia, with views of Victoria Falls, and the Luangwa National Park, where one of the richest concentrations of mammals and birds in Africa can be found.

#### FOR ITINERARIES and MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Olga Clarke, Travel Director

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Ph/Fax: (818) 249-9511

e-mail: oclarketravel@earthlink.net

# EVENING MEETINGS

**Meet at 7:30 P.M. in Plummer Park  
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard West Hollywood, CA 90046-6694**

**Tuesday, May 13**

**David Pereksta  
Birding USA**



David Pereksta, expert birder, photographer, trip leader, and professional biologist, will present a video program celebrating the diversity of birds and birding locations in the North American ABA area. Highlight seasonal hotspots throughout the country, starting with winter in southern California and progressing through Colorado, Alaska, the western mountains, southeast Arizona, Pacific pelagic trips, and the eastern U.S. in winter. With digital video technology, David will project the videos on a large screen; we will see the birds in action, and hear their songs. Bring your checklists . . . you may see some new ones!

**Tuesday, June 10**

**Tom Stephenson and Eddie Thomas  
Digiscoping: Everything you need to know about how to take great looking digital pictures through a telescope.**



Ever see a bird that you wanted to take home with you? Now you can. If you own a digital camera and a telescope, you probably already have what you need to begin *digiscoping*. Come to the meeting and learn how to choose a digital camera, how to adapt one to your scope, and some of the processing procedures available to help you make incredible looking bird and wildlife pictures for printing, e-mailing, and even using as aids to identification.



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

*DATED MATERIAL  
Please Expedite*

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Glendale, CA  
PERMIT NO. 276

