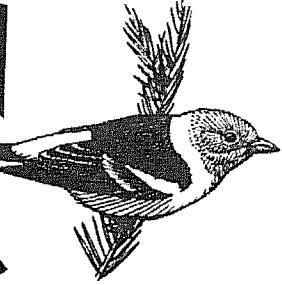


# WESTERN TANAGER



Volume 71 Number 5 May/June 2005

Los Angeles Audubon Society

## *Western Tanager*

Now available online!

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Ever mindful of our fiduciary responsibilities, the Society's Board voted to make *Western Tanager* available online at [www.laadubon.org](http://www.laadubon.org). On the main menu, click e-mail newsletter; select *Tanager* alert and subscribe. Be sure to let us through your spam filter.

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LA Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
West Hollywood, CA 90046.

The cost of printing and mailing this fine publication (printed on recycled paper) runs approximately \$20,000.00 per year. That cost plus early deadlines to meet printing and mailing needs makes many of us feel that this expenditure is not consistent with the needs of the Society in the 21st Century.

Thanks for understanding.

The LAAS Board

## Pelagic Birding in the Southern California Bight: Part I

by Todd McGrath and Jon Feenstra

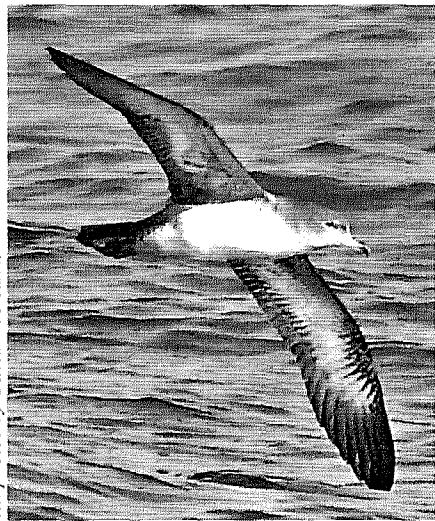
By taking a spotting scope to a coastal bluff during the proper season we can glimpse the remarkable world of pelagic birds. A January morning might reveal hundreds or even thousands of Black-vented Shearwaters moving along the coast, while in April, it might be Sooty Shearwaters, or a few jaegers moving north. A variety of nearshore pelagics can be seen during these "seawatches", and many active birders regularly spend parts of their birding days looking offshore. As fascinating as these seawatches can be, to truly experience the richness of southern

California's pelagic life, it is necessary to venture offshore by boat, which is the subject of this article. In Part I we will describe how the ocean topography in the Southern California Bight combines with wind, current, and water temperatures to produce the conditions required for pelagic birds to flourish. We will also describe the pelagic birding opportunities available in our region. In Part II, we

will provide a list of the pelagic bird species recorded off southern California as well as notes on their status and distribution in our region.

For purposes of this article, we are defining a pelagic bird as any species that spends the vast majority of its time in southern California out at sea or on offshore islands, and the majority of its non-breeding time at sea.

Southern California is well represented in this regard as the following groups have been recorded in our waters (the parentheticals indicate the number of species recorded from each group): albatrosses (3), fulmars (1), petrels (6), shearwaters (9), storm-



Pink-footed Shearwater

*All photos by David W. Nelson*

petrels (7), boobies (3), tropicbirds (3), phalaropes (1), jaegers (3), skuas (1), kittiwakes (1), gulls (1), terns (1), and alcids (12). That totals to a remarkable 52 species, and while a number of those are accidental vagrants, it is still a remarkable total. Note that only the pelagic members of each group are counted here. Sea ducks, loons, Brandt's Cormorant, Brown Pelican, Red-necked

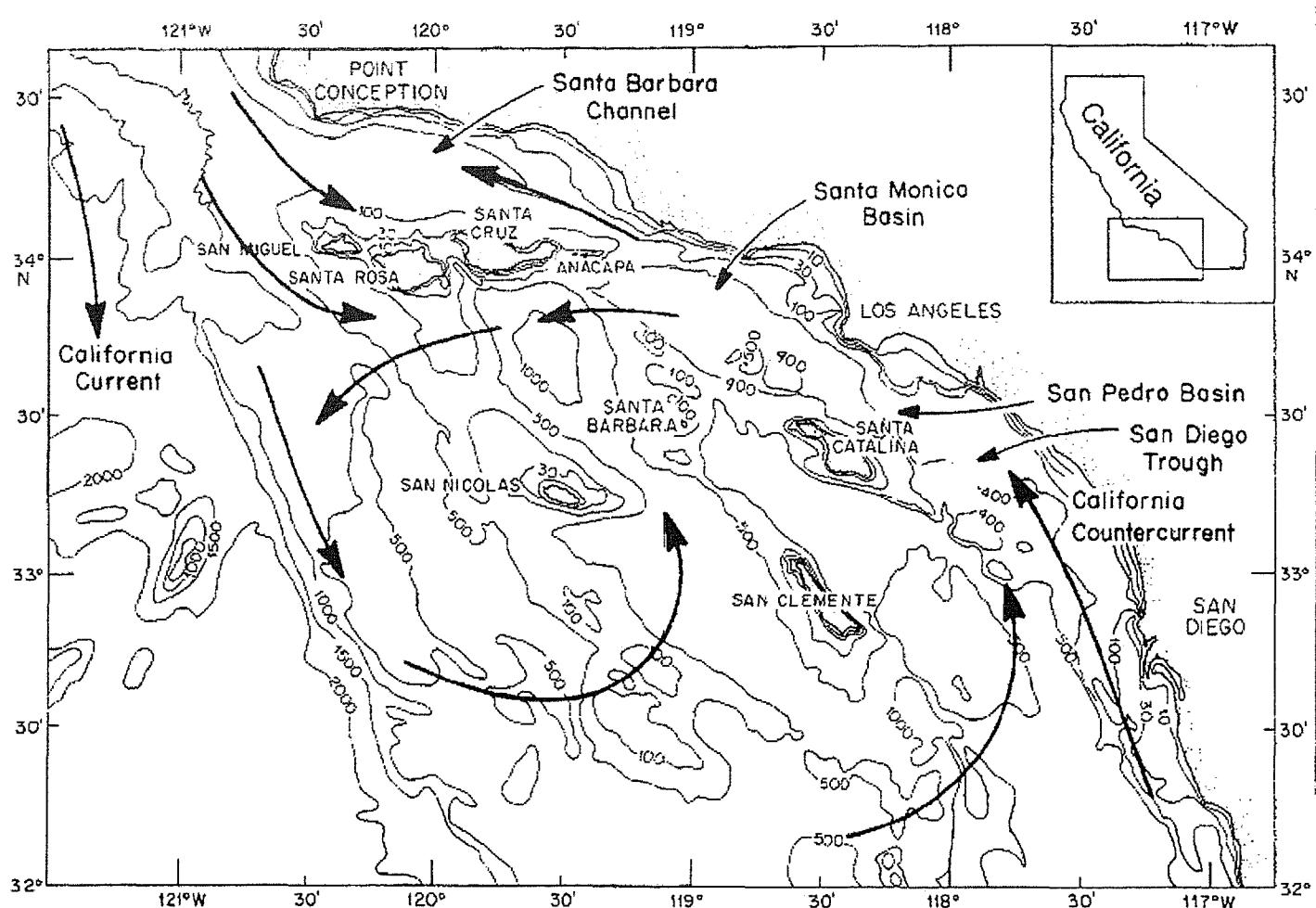


Figure 1: Yearly averaged ocean currents of the Southern California Bight. (Hickey, B.M. 1997.)

Phalarope, gulls, and terns are also often seen on pelagic trips but are not discussed in detail here, due to the fact that these species may also be commonly seen onshore. Our discussion is further limited to the area south of Pt. Conception and north of Baja, Mexico, as it is the area most frequently visited by organized pelagic trips.

Anyone who has been on a pelagic trip knows that birds are not evenly distributed over the ocean. Some areas hold large numbers of birds, while other areas are almost completely barren. As would be expected, this is most often due to the presence or absence of food. On land, birders regularly predict the species they will encounter in a particular location by looking at the habitat. Areas that can provide food, cover, and water are likely to hold good numbers of birds. The ocean has habitats as well, but as land dwellers, we are ill-equipped to differentiate between the various ocean environments using only our senses. Instead we must use charts and satellite imagery to

look for the features that may indicate the presence of pelagic birds. We say "may" deliberately. In spite of what we have learned, it is still difficult to predict or understand why areas will have large numbers of birds one day, and be relatively barren the next.

The oceanic neighborhood off Los Angeles is part of a greater geographic area known as the Southern California Bight (the Bight). It is bordered by land to the north and east, by the California Current to the west, and it extends south roughly to Cabo Colnett between Ensenada and San Quintin, Baja California. It can be thought of as a pocket of slack-water on the edge of a stream. In this case the stream is the California Current which flows south along the coastline of northern and central California and consists of cold, nutrient-rich water. It continues flowing south as the coastline curves east at Point Conception. At the south end of the Bight, the current forks and some (the Southern California Countercurrent) returns north up the coast creating

a counterclockwise eddy (see Figure 1). The relative influences of the current and countercurrent vary according to season. In the late winter and spring, with the help of northwest winds, the Bight is dominated by the cooling effects of the California Current. In the late summer and back into winter the region succumbs to the warmer, less biologically productive current from the south. In addition, water properties are strongly affected by wind and such climate conditions as the unusually warm waters associated with the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), and the related cooler waters of La Niña. ENSO events occur every 2-7 years, and vary greatly in intensity and duration. Most last 6 to 18 months and affect the tropics strongest, with smaller, less predictable effects in the North Pacific. The strongest ENSO events can have a devastating impact on breeding seabirds in the tropics and the North Pacific causing some species to disperse from their normal ranges in search of cooler nutrient-rich waters. During the

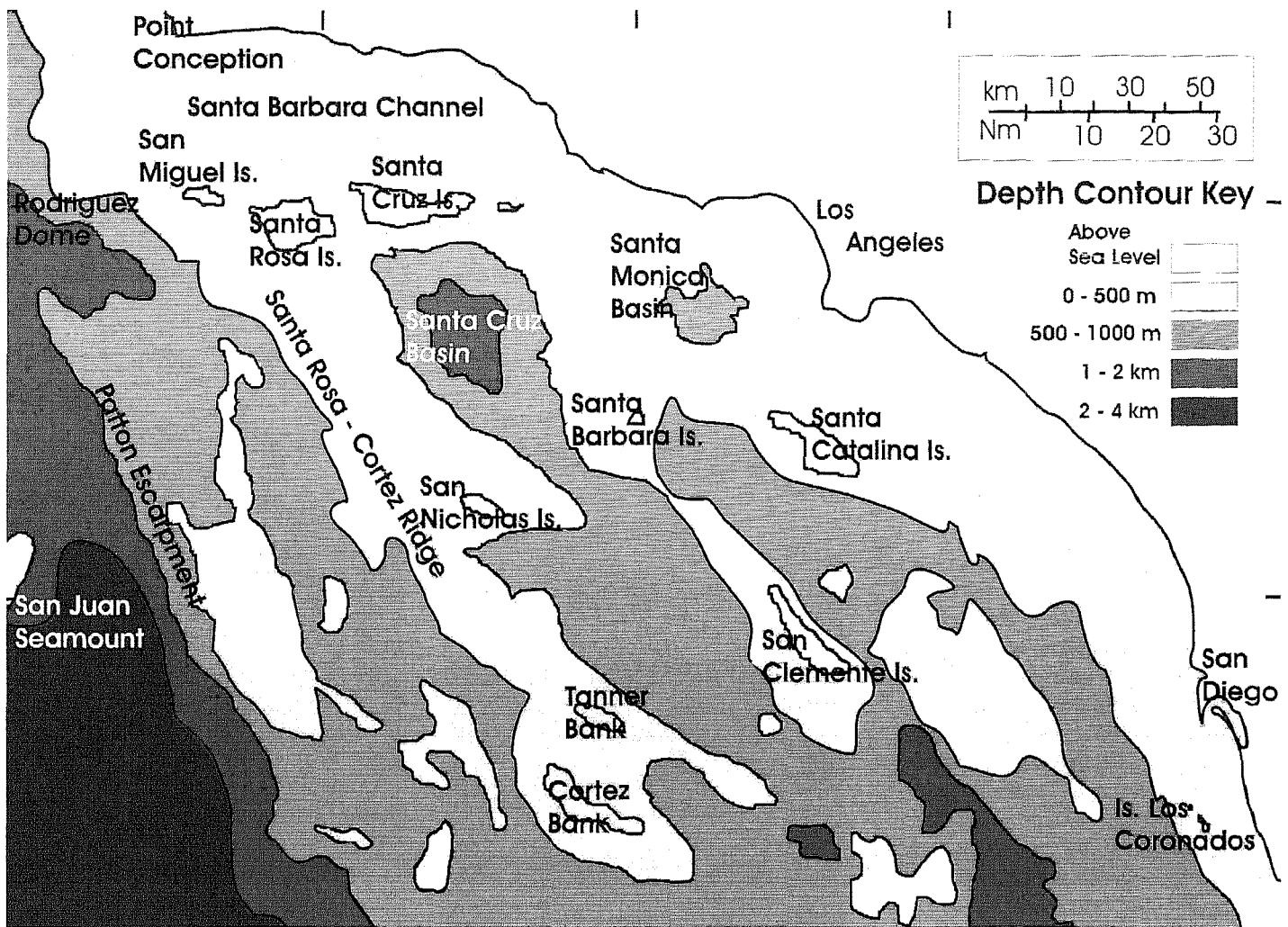


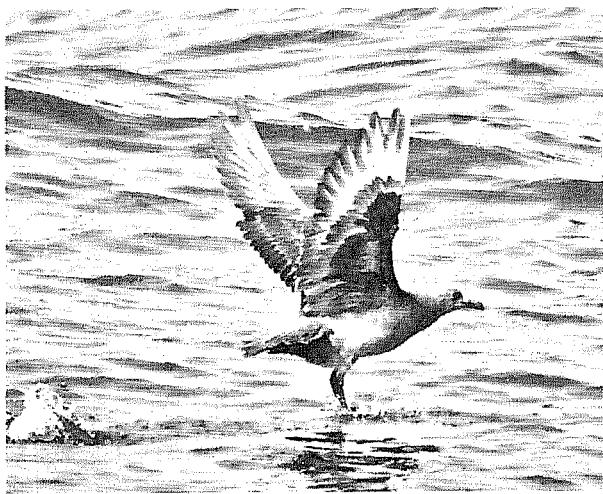
Figure 2. Submarine topography of the Southern California Bight. (adapted from Briggs, K.T., et al. 1981)

rather strong 1997-1998 ENSO, vagrant species like Great-winged Petrel, Bulwer's Petrel, and Wedge-tailed Shearwater were all recorded in Monterey Bay to our north, but it is unclear whether those occurrences were directly related to the ENSO event. Perhaps more interesting is the discovery of a longer term trend of warming and cooling waters in the North Pacific (with some impacts in the tropics) called the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO). This phenomenon is similar to an ENSO event, but the trends last 20-30 years. Some scientists believe the strong 1997-1998 ENSO event was the end of a warm cycle PDO that started in 1977 (Bond and Harrison, 2000). If that assertion proves true, a cooling of the California Current should result in excellent conditions for observing pelagic birds off southern California in the coming years.

As discussed above, while water temperatures vary from year to year, the combination of cool nutrient-rich water from the north and warm water from the

south in part explains the diversity of pelagic species recorded in southern California, as warm water species such as Black and Least storm-petrels reach the northern end of their normal range a few hundred miles up the coast, and Red-billed Tropicbirds are rarely recorded to the north of our region. The southern limit of breeding for Cassin's Auklets (a cold water species) occurs a few hundred miles south of our region on Guadalupe Island, off Baja (Jehl and Everett 1953), providing an example of how both cold and warm water species can thrive in the mixed waters off southern California. The Channel Islands also play a role in the diversity of pelagic bird life, as they are important nesting areas for pelagic birds, most notably for Ashy Storm-petrel (except for a few pairs that may breed on Los Coronados, an endemic California breeder) and Xantus's Murrelet. More information on the breeding pelagic birds of the Channel Islands will be included in the species accounts in Part II of this article.

The most significant biological productivity and often the highest bird numbers occur in locations where cold nutrient-rich water is pushed to the surface. Surface-bound nutrients support phytoplankton, which makes up the base of the entire marine food chain. The plankton feed the anchovies, squid, and krill that eventually end up in the bellies of seabirds and marine mammals. Hence, to find the birds, we have to find their food. The complicated undersea landscape (see Figure 2) of the Southern California Bight makes points of nutrient upwelling widespread. The Channel Islands and the assorted ridges, basins, mounts, banks, and canyons that pepper the area act as ramps for the submarine currents. Much in the same way that newspapers and grocery bags are blown skyward by wind banking off buildings in downtown Los Angeles, nutrients are brought up by the deflection of currents from these obstacles. Upwelling can also occur at the interface between different types of water. Sharp changes in surface temperature,



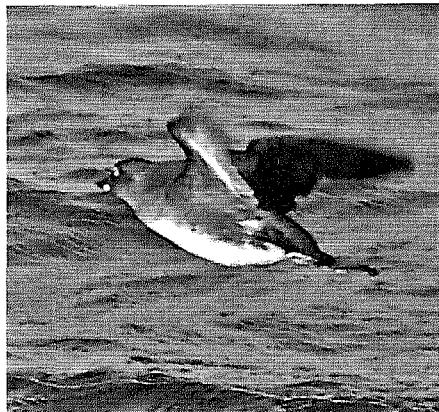
South Polar Skua

salinity, or current direction will cause a churning effect as the water masses equilibrate. Nutrients are often trapped in the region between. Sharp changes in water surface temperature can be located using satellite imagery. This approach is particularly applicable in the deepwater areas along the continental shelf where upwelling due to ocean floor topography plays a smaller role. However, these sharp temperature breaks are only present when the wind and currents create them, and they can disappear quickly, adding frequent frustration to birding by this method.

Points of greatest nutrient upwelling caused by permanent aquatic features are the destinations for most pelagic birding trips. For instance, flip to the Pelagic Trips page in the back of the *Tanager* and read the descriptions for a few of the trips. Now, take a look at Figures 1 and 2 and locate the places mentioned. Features showing steep slopes and a large change in elevation are natural places to find an upwelling of nutrients. Notice how the current flows west directly across the deep-water (1000+ fathoms) of the Santa Cruz Basin and hits the Santa Rosa-Cortez Ridge just south of Santa Rosa Island (the Santa Rosa Flats). These areas are prime targets on fall pelagic trips when the flux of the California Countercurrent is at its height. Further out, the Condor Express trips leaving Santa Barbara often focus on the features west of San Miguel Island (e.g. Rodriguez Dome and Arguello Canyon). These areas are the sites where upwelling of the cold California Current occurs –

just on the edge of the Southern California Bight, and along the deepwater of the continental shelf.

Still further out, the multi-day trips from San Diego on the Searcher look at the edge of the continental shelf and well beyond. One of the advantages of these trips is that one can spend days in the deep waters where *Pterodroma* petrels and albatrosses are most likely to be found. The density of these species in southern California can be quite low, so spending days rather than hours in the proper habitat greatly increases your odds of seeing these birds.



Cassin's Auklet

Whether you venture just a few miles offshore, or go out hundreds of miles off the southern California coast, you will see some of the remarkable birds that call the Pacific Ocean home. Organized pelagic birding trips regularly encounter other interesting marine life such as seals, dolphins and whales. Often many forms of marine life including pelagic birds will all be exploiting the same food supply. The sight of a large herd of dolphins with hundreds or thousands of pelagic birds circling is simply awesome. Below is a list of pelagic tour operators in southern California. We hope to see you on one of these trips soon.

## Pelagic Birding Opportunities in Southern California:

As a disclaimer, Jon Feenstra is a frequent leader on Los Angeles Audubon Pelagic trips, and Todd McGrath has led trips for all the operators listed here.

### Los Angeles Audubon Society

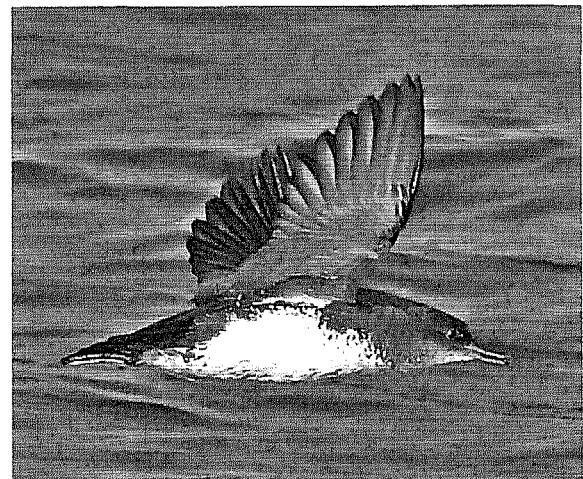
[www.laaudubon.org](http://www.laaudubon.org)

Los Angeles Audubon offers a schedule of about six pelagic trips a year. For exact dates visit the website listed above or check the Pelagic Trips section of the *Western Tanager*. The annual Tropicbird trip at the beginning of September is quite popular and books up rather quickly. Many of the other trips visit the ledges and canyons surrounding the northern Channel Islands. The spring trip to Santa Cruz Island to see the Island Scrub Jay also usually encounters numbers of pelagic species including Xantus's Murrelet. All trips are staffed with experienced volunteer leaders that know the birds and marine life.

### Searcher Natural History Trips

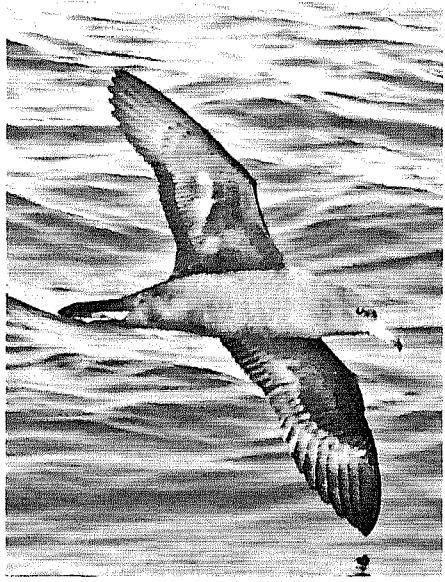
[www.bajawhale.com/birdingtrips.html](http://www.bajawhale.com/birdingtrips.html)

The Searcher offers four day trips from San Diego that venture out to areas past the continental shelf. There are generally at least two trips a year, one in April and another in early September. These trips generally proceed up to the northern Channel Islands and then south along the edge of the continental shelf. These trips are the best chance to see *Pterodroma* petrels such as Murphy's, as many were seen on both spring trips in 2003. See the species accounts in Part II



Black-vented Shearwater

for a discussion of other *Pterodroma* species. Laysan and Black-footed albatrosses are also regular on the spring trips. The fall trip has produced such rarities as Bulwer's Petrel and Red-tailed Tropicbird. A fine variety of marine mammals has also been recorded on these trips. The captain and crew of the Searcher provide an outstanding level of



Flesh-footed Shearwater

service, and the trip price includes all meals and beverages. With advance notice the Searcher crew can accommodate any special dietary requirements.

#### Condor Express

[www.condorcruises.com](http://www.condorcruises.com)

Based in Santa Barbara, the Condor Express is one of the premiere boats in southern California. This fast, stable Catamaran can get out to the deepwater quickly, maximizing the birding time in the productive offshore areas. The large enclosed cabin and full galley with excellent food are also plusses. The excellent, friendly crew is always joined by a group of experienced pelagic leaders. The LA Audubon Society has used this boat for the past two years to conduct its very popular "tropicbird trip." Murphy's, Cook's, and Dark-Rumped (Hawaiian/Galapagos) petrels have all been recorded on deepwater trips aboard this boat.

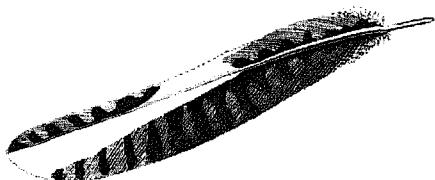
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- Part II of this article appearing in the next issue of the *Western Tanager* will contain accounts of the status and distribution of pelagic species in southern California, including breeding pelagic birds of the Channel Islands.

#### The Authors:

*Jon Feenstra is a native of Appalachian New Jersey and a lifelong outdoors enthusiast. He moved to Pasadena in 2000 where he is currently a graduate student in physical chemistry at the California Institute of Technology. In addition to working on his PhD and occasionally birding, Jon also leads field trips for the Pasadena and Los Angeles Audubon Societies and writes the Birds of the Season article for the Western Tanager.*

*Todd McGrath has more than 250 days at sea studying pelagic avifauna. He has over 100 days at sea on each coast of the United States. Todd has visited Australia, South Africa, and Antarctica to view seabirds. He also serves on the Board of Directors of Audubon California, and is a frequent leader of LAAS pelagic trips. A resident of California since 1997, he lives in Marina del Rey with his wife Pamela and their two daughters Katelyn and Sarah.*



## Bird Tape

(323) 874-1318

Jon Fisher records the Bird Tape. Please report interesting bird sightings to him at:

Jon Fisher  
(818) 544-5009 (work)  
JonF60@hotmail.com



*The Los Angeles Audubon Society proudly announces the creation of the*  
**Arnold Small Bird Conservation Award**

This Award was established on March 3, 2005 by a unanimous vote of the Directors to honor and recognize one of America's outstanding field ornithologists who was a teacher, author, photographer, and a long time friend of LAAS. The Award will be presented to a Foundation, Organization, or person for the purpose of bird habitat preservation. It will be made at the discretion of the Board of LAAS. It is limited to \$25,000 per fiscal year and may be granted in one or two Awards.

It was also voted and approved that the first recipient of the **Arnold Small Bird Conservation Award** would be *The Jocotoco Foundation of Ecuador*.

The presentation of the \$25,000 Award was made 19 March to Dr. Robert Ridgely on the occasion of his visit to Los Angeles to speak at the Natural History Museum about his Jocotoco Foundation which has created six habitat reserves in Ecuador.

Persons wishing to make donations to help fund this Award in memory of the late Arnold Small may do so by indicating that wish when making a contribution to the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

*The Jocotoco Foundation* is an Ecuadorian organization established to protect land of critical importance to the conservation of Ecuador's avifauna and associated biodiversity. The Foundation achieves this by purchasing lands and managing them as private ecological reserves.

In November 1997 Robert Ridgely, John Moore, Mercedes Rivadeniera, and Lelis Navarette discovered a spectacular bird new to science, the Jocotoco Antpitta, in southern Ecuador. It was a stunningly unexpected discovery that made a big splash

in the bird world. Fortunately the ornithologists who discovered the bird were very concerned for its survival, and they vowed to protect this severely threatened forest. They started a foundation, the Jocotoco Foundation, and got other ornithologists and conservationists involved. With the financial help of Nigel Simpson and others, they were able to buy the original Jocotoco Antpitta site, naming it the Tapichalaca Reserve. Since then, they have continued to raise money and buy up habitat for other severely endangered Ecuadorian birds, and they now own six reserves totaling six thousand hectares.

The Tapichalaca Reserve is on the Yangana-Valladolid road just south of Loja, in the province of Zamora near Ecuador's border with Peru. It happens to include a famous mountain pass that has been the focus of much botanical work over the last century and a half, and the area is one of the richest in Ecuador for orchids. One could say that the reserve is even more important for orchids than for birds. An astonishing 29 species of orchids appear to be strictly endemic to the reserve and the immediately surrounding forest – in other words, these 29 species have never been found anywhere else on earth.

This remarkable foundation, led by the foremost neotropical ornithologists, has virtually no overhead, a tightly focused mission, and is the best example of private-initiative conservation in Latin America.

While the reserves are primarily established to protect habitat for endangered birds, many other plants and animals are protected as well. The Foundation's reserves are home to nearly 700 species of birds, of which over 100 are range-restricted or endemic species, and about 40 are globally endangered species. They are also home to several species of large mammals such as the Spectacled Bear, Mountain and Baird's Tapir, Puma, Jaguars, and Howler, Spider, and Capuchin Monkeys.

## Schreiber Research Grants

Grant Committee Chair Walt Sakai and the Board of LAAS announce the winners of the 2005 Ralph B. Schreiber research awards. The awards are given annually in memory of Dr. Schreiber who was Curator of Ornithology at the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum and an active member of Los Angeles Audubon Society. The research awards go to:

Lori Hargrove of UC Riverside for her project on reproduction consequences of avian distribution and abundance in a chaparral-desert scrub ecotone.

Susana L. Peluc of UC Riverside for her project on the role of nest predation in shaping nest site selection and clutch size in songbirds.

Diego Sustaita of Cal State University Northridge for his project of ecomorphological comparison of prey handling and feeding capabilities of North American hawks and falcons.

Deadline for 2006 grants is December 31, 2005.

Grant proposals can be mailed to:

LA Audubon  
Attn: Schreiber Grants  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd  
West Hollywood, CA 90046.

## 2005 Statewide Tricolored Blackbird Survey

Qualified volunteers needed for this survey which will be conducted over two three-day periods.

Southern two-thirds of California: April 22-24, 2005

Entire State: June 3-5, 2005

Please mark these dates on your calendar.

Contact Leo Edson, Coordinator, for more information: [Email](mailto:Email) or call (916) 414-5813. Sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## July 4th Butterfly Counts

Like Christmas Bird Counts, NABA (North American Butterfly Association) sponsors July 4th Butterfly Counts throughout North America. Unlike the CBC's, these counts are run over a much longer time period.

Count	Date	Contact
Sequoia Nat. Forest	Saturday, June 4	Bob Barnes <a href="mailto:bbarnes@lightspeed.net">bbarnes@lightspeed.net</a>
Big Bear	Saturday, June 18*	<a href="mailto:stepenmyers@earthlink.net">stepenmyers@earthlink.net</a>
O'Neil Conservancy, Orange Co.	Saturday, June 25	Liz Cooper <a href="mailto:Lizhikes@aol.com">Lizhikes@aol.com</a>
Pomona Valley	Saturday, June 25	Wanda Dameron <a href="mailto:be496@lafn.org">be496@lafn.org</a>
O'Neil Park, Orange Co.	Sunday, June 26	Liz Cooper <a href="mailto:Lizhikes@aol.com">Lizhikes@aol.com</a>
Mt. Baden-Powell	Sunday, June 26	<a href="mailto:fred.heath@earthlink.net">fred.heath@earthlink.net</a>
No. Fork Kern River	Saturday, July 2	<a href="mailto:bbarnes@lightspeed.net">bbarnes@lightspeed.net</a>

\*date not confirmed

For information on any southern California Butterfly Count  
please contact, Fred Heath [fred.heath@earthlink.net](mailto:fred.heath@earthlink.net)

## LAAS INTERNATIONAL TOURS BRAZIL'S PANTANAL AND IGUAÇU FALLS

October 15-24, 2005

Plus a 4-day Extension to Rio de Janeiro  
Poca das Antas Biological Reserve, Tijuca  
Botanical Gardens and Itatiaia National Park

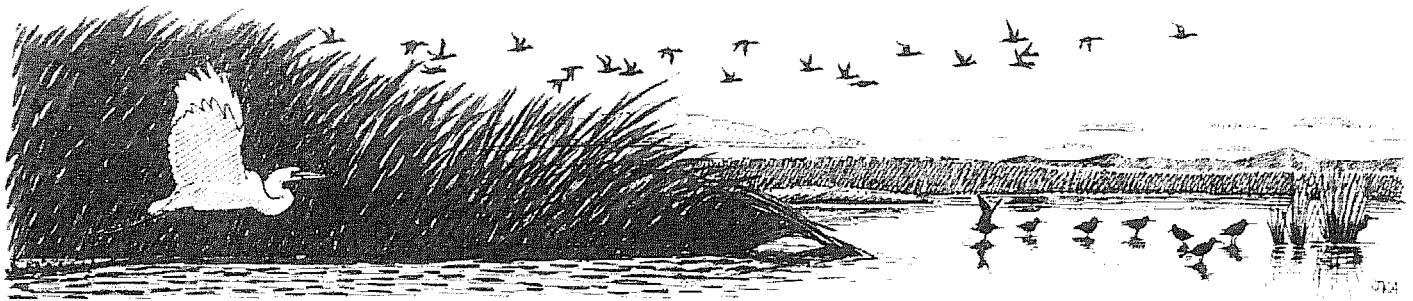
Wildlife viewing on the Pantanal is likened to that on the plains of Africa. See Rheas, Seriemas, Jabirus, Plumbeous Ibis, Hyacinth Macaws, hummingbirds, Toco Toucan, among an extraordinary concentration of birds and other wildlife. Even a jaguar was seen on our last trip. This tour is climaxed by visiting the incomparable Iguacu Falls, the largest waterfalls on earth.

*Special price includes International Airfare from Miami and all internal flights within Brazil.  
Space is limited!*

## THAILAND – March 2006

Planning is underway for a birding, natural history, and photography excursion to Thailand.

For information and itinerary, contact:  
Olga Clarke, Travel Director, Los Angeles Audubon Society  
2027 El Arbolita Dr., Glendale, CA 91208  
Ph/Fax: (818) 249-9511 e-mail: [oclarke@earthlink.net](mailto:oclarke@earthlink.net)



# CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Garry George

## Notes:

### Island Shrike

The LA Audubon Board approved a special research grant of \$2,500 to Hartmut S. Walter, PhD for a breeding survey of the Loggerhead Shrike on the northern Channel Islands. This important research will be conducted by Dr. Walter and students from UCLA. Details of the research are in Dr. Walter's article in March/April 2005 *TANAGER*.

This research grant is part of the Conservation program of Los Angeles Audubon Society, and from the Sandy Wohlgemuth conservation fund.

### More WIND at Butterbredit

As of this writing, LA Audubon's written comments to the EIR prepared by EDAW, Inc. for DWP on the Pine Tree Canyon Wind Farm Development has not been responded to in writing. DWP has assured us that they will continue their surveys during peak migration period April 15-May 30 and look for migratory songbirds. However, they wouldn't give specific dates, the methodology they would use to do the survey, or specific mitigation measures if they DO find migratory songbirds on the site. Thanks to the efforts of LAAS and others, DWP has withdrawn their EIR to amend it, and will publish the new EIR in a few weeks, according to a DWP spokesperson. Vote on the EIR by the DWP Board of Commissioners, appointed by Mayor Hahn, will not take place until May but LAAS, Santa Monica Bay, and Kern Audubons among others will be there to comment publicly on the new EIR. If they vote to approve the EIR, we will have 30 days in which to file a lawsuit challenging the EIR. But in fact, the project will move forward with the vote as the construction on the switching stations will begin the following day.

Nothing less than a three year study of migratory songbirds on that North-South flyway including radar and audio studies conducted at night will let us know what the real risk is to migratory songbirds, and we will fight to get that study done for this and future wind farm developments.

Part of our educational process has been to inform other environmental groups of the hazards to birds of these wind farms as all environmental groups support wind energy, and in fact demand it of their politicians and energy agencies. We support it too, as long as the proper studies and mitigation are done, as they have NOT BEEN on this project. Check the website for updates on the progress of this important conservation effort by LAAS.

### "Dirty Skies" goes south

There is some good news. President Bush's "Clean Air" Act stalled in the Senate!

### Audubon at Home – KILL YOUR LAWN!

Think about your own conservation program at home – kill your lawn – and plant California native plants reducing air pollution from mowers and blowers, water pollution from fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides, and reduce water use. Plus, you'll provide important habitat for birds, especially species during migration that are desperate for the berries, insects, and seeds produced by native plants as they pass through. LA Audubon is developing an Audubon at Home program aimed at the southern California area. The first grant of \$1,000 came from Audubon California and was awarded to LA Audubon at a fund-raiser at Debs Park on April 16. Watch this publication and the website for more news on Audubon at Home. And kill your lawn.

### Land donations not deductible?

The Joint Committee on Taxation of the US Senate just made a policy recommendation to the Senate Finance Committee to eliminate tax deductions for land and land easements. If the Senate decides to enact this into law, these proposals would dramatically reduce voluntary donations that have played a major role in conservation over the past thirty years, through gifts of land and interests in land, including gifts of conservation and historic preservation easements. National Audubon has signed on with other conservation organizations to oppose these recommendations. Senators Grassley and Baucus are chairmen of the Senate Finance Committee.

### Oil Slick in Senate

Amid the backdrop of soaring oil and gasoline prices, a sharply divided Senate voted to open the ecologically rich Alaska wildlife refuge to oil drilling, delivering a major energy policy win for President Bush. 

### May Election of Officers of the Board!

The slate of officers for the Executive Board of LAAS will be voted on by the Members at the May 10, 2005 evening meeting. Be sure and attend.

The slate as announced by Mary Freeman, Nominating Committee Chairperson, at the April meeting, is also online!

# Message from the President

## Thinking Out Loud

There's good news and bad news in our search for a new headquarters. The good news is that we won't get kicked out of Plummer Park in the near future. The funding for the park's makeover is nowhere in sight, and there is no immediate threat to tear down Audubon House. The "bad" news is that we couldn't afford to move now anyway. Our income isn't big enough to pay rent or a mortgage, and anyway our funding should be spent on programs that fulfill our mission of education and conservation. Our grant to the Jocotoco Foundation is far more appropriate than spending such a sum on a down payment for a building.

We do have a long term prospect to develop a headquarters that would be part of a community center in our service area. This would require a development campaign similar in scope to what National Audubon put on to build the Debs Park Nature Center, raising millions of dollars.

To attract that scale of support, we would have to raise our public profile by increasing the scope and visibility of our programs. We should bring our now classroom-ready education program into the schools; it has already been submitted to the California EPA to serve as a model for environmental education at the K-6 level. We should reach out to day camps, and develop programs for schoolchildren in the Baldwin Hills. Ongoing programs at Ballona Creek and Debs Park should get our support. For grownups, we should launch the Audubon at Home – Kill Your Lawn program in southern California. On the conservation front, we should also lead in heading off the potentially disastrous windmill farm near Butterbredit Springs, which could pulverize thousands of migrants if it's not designed with migration in mind.

But shouldn't we be doing these things anyway? Aren't they our mission and purpose?

Maybe we are tieing ourselves too much to a single physical location, at

least for general meetings. With the massive increase in traffic and rising gasoline prices, it's a greater ordeal to get to Plummer Park. Fewer and fewer people are showing up, and almost no new faces. Some of our members have proposed that we shift our meeting sites to more pleasant natural sites on weekend days. Our meetings could be given at different locations each month, at such places as Placerita Canyon, the Baldwin Hills, the Madrona Marsh, or Debs Park. They could include family-friendly field trips and picnics, attracting a new and different crowd at each location, and making us more visible. Meeting in the field would be less of an ordeal, and might just attract more active members, which we sorely need if we are going to accomplish anything.

How do you feel about this issue? Let us hear from you! Call or e-mail us—(323) 876-0202 or [WesternTanager@LAAudubon.org](mailto:WesternTanager@LAAudubon.org), or talk to me at a general meeting – if you can get to one. We need your input as well as your support.

In the meantime, *keep your eye on our website* ([www.laadubon.org](http://www.laadubon.org)). Things are changing fast, and the website is our best means of fast communication with our members and friends. Now that the *Western Tanager* is available there (in PDF format) you can get news of our activities much sooner than snail mail would provide. (We'll continue to print copies of the *Tanager* for those who want a hard copy.)

And be sure to contact us at Audubon House if you're willing to volunteer for day camp visitations, school class bird walks, committee and board positions, or anything else. I want to be sure I have some available volunteers before we approach day camps or schools to offer our services. Request for specific activities will be posted on the website.

Thanks for your help – if you will give it!

Dexter Kelly

EDITOR: Jean Brandt  
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Tom Frillman  
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FIELD TRIPS: Nick Freeman  
ORNITHOLOGY CONSULTANT:  
Kimball Garrett  
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Opinions expressed in articles or letters herein do not necessarily express the position of this publication or of LAAS.

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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. LAAS Chapter Only memberships do not include *Audubon* magazine and are \$25, \$35, \$50, \$100, and \$250.

*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.

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Headquarters, Library  
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## ***Proposed changes in By-laws***

In order to have more flexibility in the dates, times, and locations of meetings of the Society and the Board of Directors, and to address the definition of a quorum of the Board of Directors, the By-laws Committee has drafted the following proposed amendments. These proposed amendments will be read and discussed at the May meeting and will be voted on in the June meeting. The current by-laws are on the website at [www.laaudubon.org](http://www.laaudubon.org). Click on "About Us", "Our Bylaws".

If there are any questions on these amendments, please email the By-laws committee Chair Richard Epps – [repps@2z.net](mailto:repps@2z.net) or committee members Pat Heirs – [patheirs@netzero.net](mailto:patheirs@netzero.net) or Garry George – [garrygeorge@laaudubon.org](mailto:garrygeorge@laaudubon.org)

**Please plan to attend this meeting for this important vote.**

---

### **Current By-laws**

#### **ARTICLE 4: MEETINGS**

Section 1. Regular meetings of the Society shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month from September through June and the Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held the second Tuesday of May.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the President, or pursuant to a resolution of the Board. Ten days written notice of such special meeting, stating objectives thereof, shall be sent to each member at his last known mailing address, and published on the Society website.

Section 3. Twenty current memberships shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any regular or special meeting.

Section 4. The Board of Directors shall meet the first Thursday of each month from September through June, for the transaction of business, and shall hold such special meetings as the President or a majority of the Board deems necessary following ten days written notice of such meeting unless such notice is otherwise waived. Any member may attend a Board of Directors meeting as an observer.

Section 5. Any member of the Board of Directors must withdraw from any discussion and/or vote where there may be a conflict of interest.

#### **ARTICLE 5. MANAGEMENT**

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of seven (7) directors and be composed of the elective officers and the Executive Past President, five of whom shall constitute a quorum.

### **Proposed changes**

#### **ARTICLE 4: MEETINGS**

Regular meetings of the Society shall be held monthly from September through June generally on the second Tuesday of each month. Time and place of meetings shall be announced on the website and in the newsletter.

Special meetings of the Society may be called by the President or pursuant to a resolution of the Board. Notice of such special meetings shall be posted on the website at least ten days in advance.

The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held in May. Twenty current memberships shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a regular or annual meeting.

The Executive Committee shall meet generally on the first Thursday of each month from September through June. Time and place of meetings shall be announced on the website following the prior Executive Committee meeting. Any member may attend an Executive Committee meeting as an observer. The Board of Directors shall hold special or closed meetings as the President or a majority of the Board deems necessary.

Any member of the Executive Committee must withdraw from any discussion and/or vote where there may be a conflict of interest.

#### **ARTICLE 5: MANAGEMENT**

The Board of Directors shall consist of seven (7) directors and be composed of the elective officers and the Executive Past President, a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum.

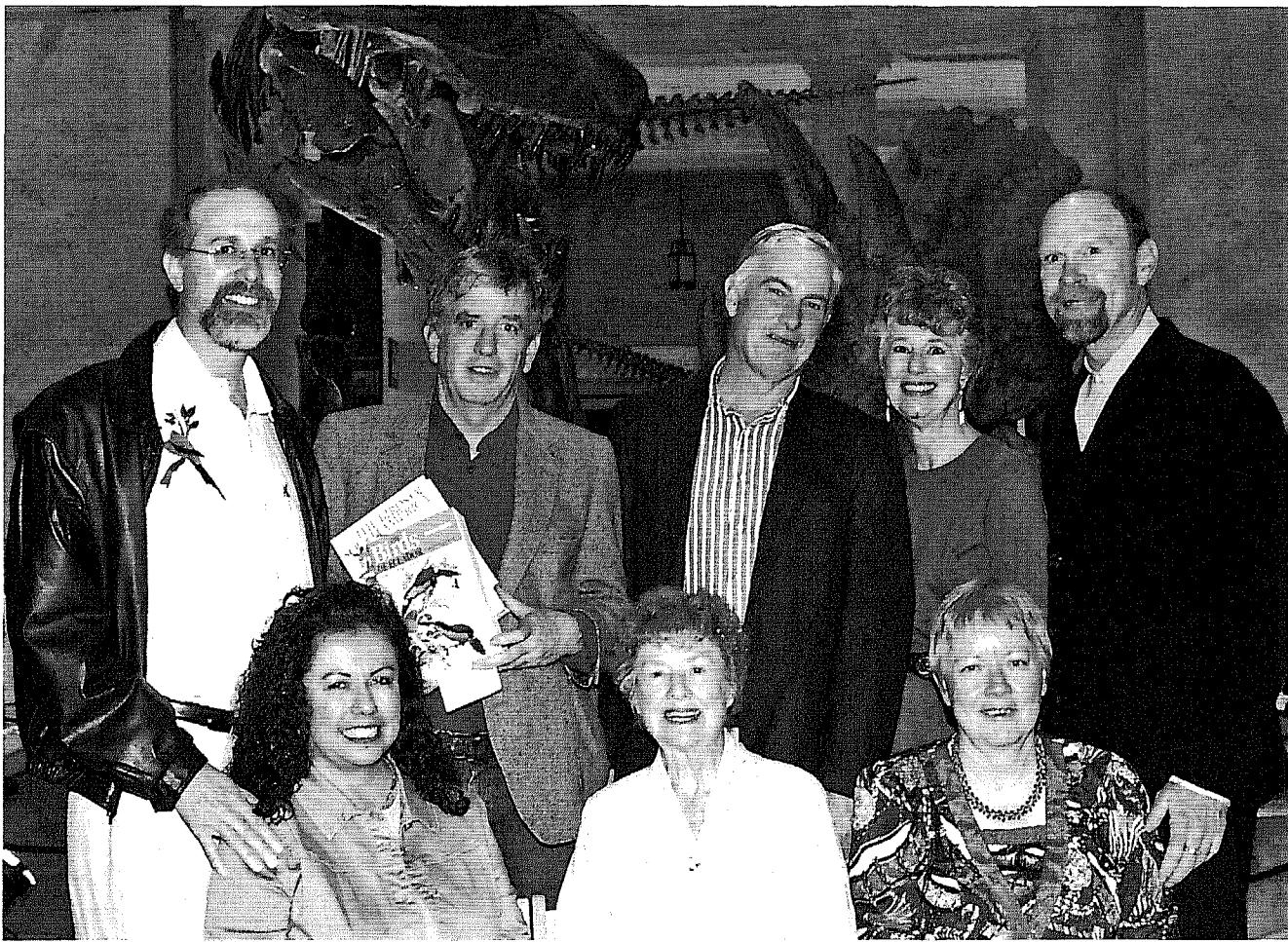
## ***Dr. Robert Ridgely Speaks at Local Audubon Event***

Members of LA Audubon joined Pasadena, Palos Verdes/South Bay, San Fernando Valley, and Santa Monica Bay Audubons in a conservation event on Saturday, 19 March at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Delacourt Auditorium and at a reception in the Grand Hall.

Dr. Robert Ridgely presented a program titled "The Changing Face of Conservation of Neotropical Birds" which included the story of his transformation from ornithologist to conservationist with the discovery of a new

species of bird in south Ecuador in 1997. The presentation was accompanied by photographs of many of the migrants and endemic species of birds found in Ecuador. The event also benefited the Jocotoco Foundation in Ecuador which has created six reserves for birds in Ecuador.

Donations in Ridgely's honor can be made to the Jocotoco Foundation via the American Bird Conservancy,  
Attn: Richard W. Moore  
8 Perkins Road  
Deerfield NH 03037



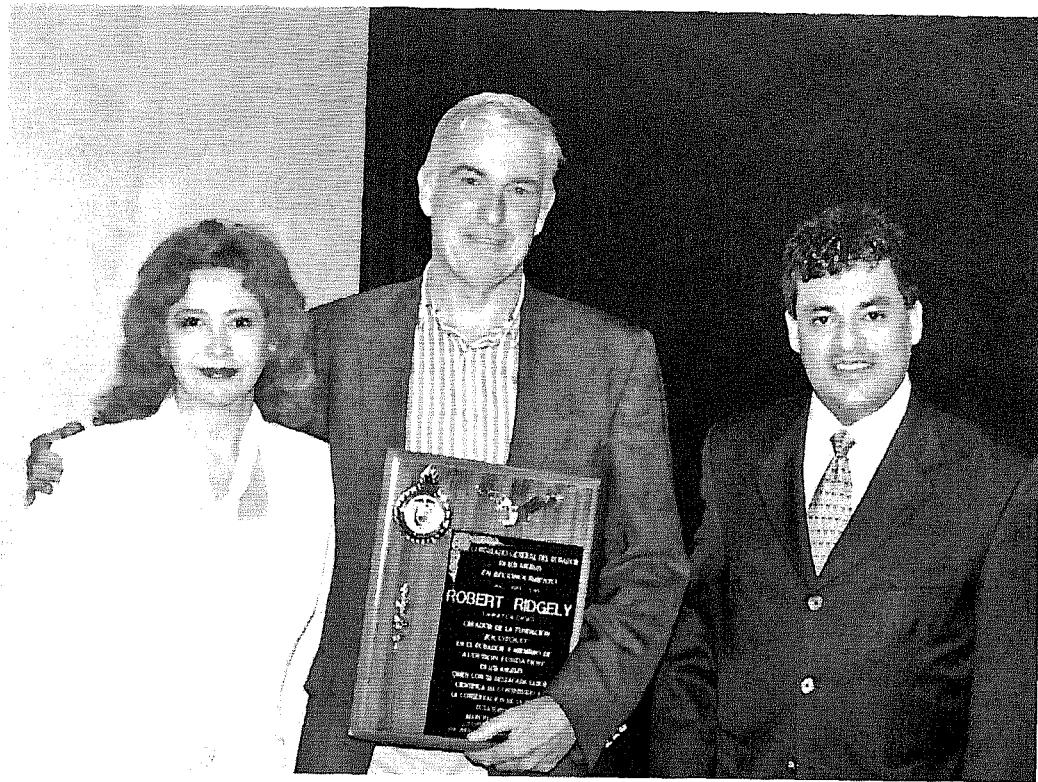
*LA Audubon Board and Committee members join Robert Ridgely at the reception following his presentation at the LA County Museum of Natural History on March 19, 2005. Top from left to right: Field Trip Chair Nick Freeman, President Dexter Kelly, Ridgely, Recording Secretary Johanna Dawes, 1st Vice President Garry George. Seated from left to right: Program Chair Mary Freeman, International Travel Director Olga Clarke, and Treasurer Pat Heirs.*



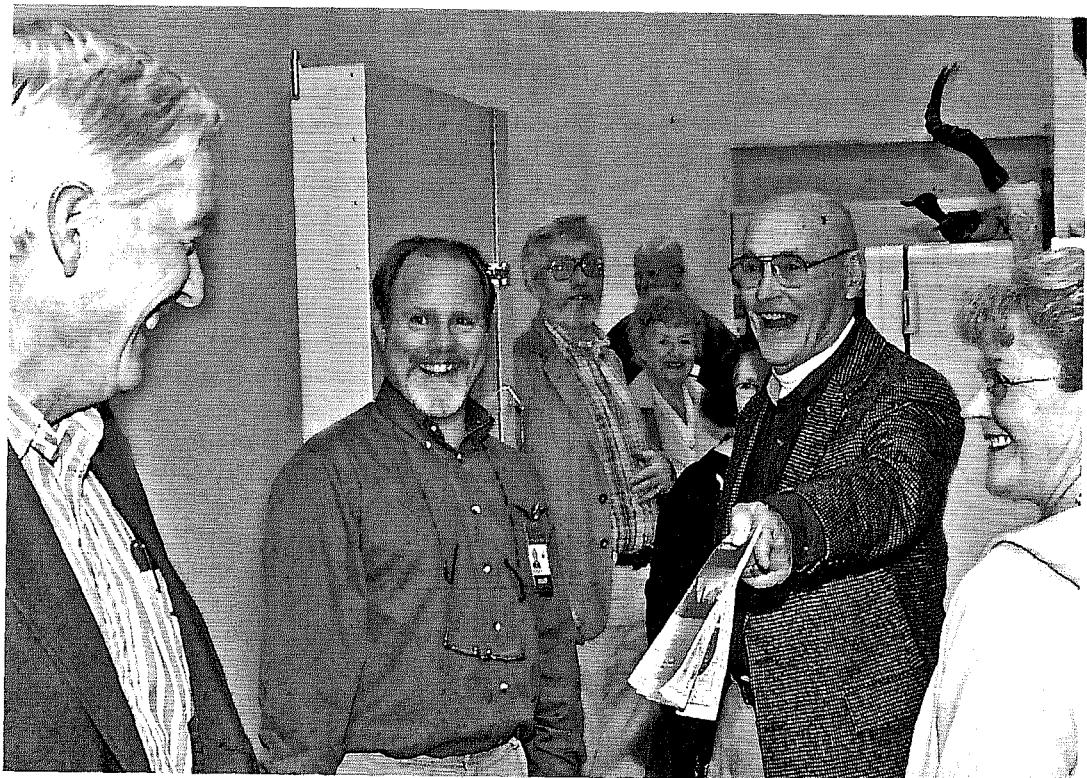
Author Herb Clarke and LAAS International Travel Director Olga Clarke join artist Guy Tudor (Birds of South America Volumes I and II, Birds of Panama) and LA County Museum of Natural History Ornithology Collections Manager Kimball Garrett at the reception after the presentation. Garrett introduced Ridgely at the program.



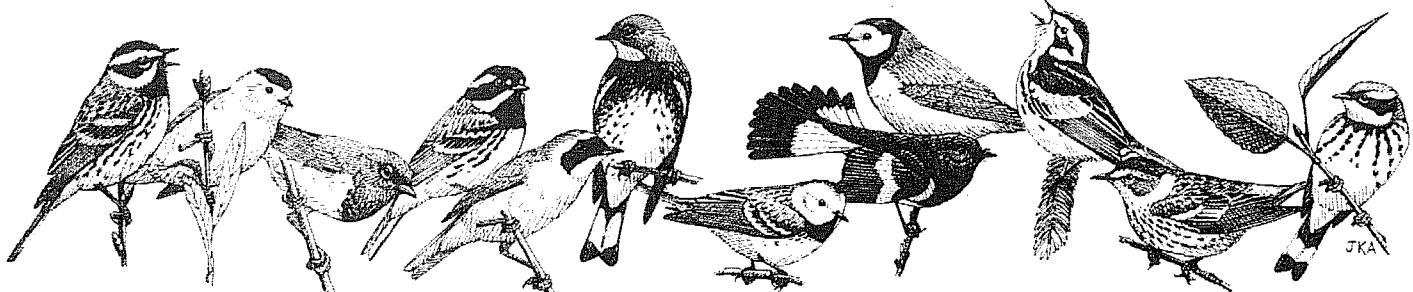
Former LAAS President, ornithologist, and author Arnold Small was honored posthumously with a Conservation of Birds Award in his name. The first award for \$25,000 was given to Robert Ridgely for the Jocotoco Foundation to buy land or easements in Ecuador. Joining Ridgely are Arnold Small's family who attended the event. From left to right, son Brian Small, grandson Tyler Small, daughter Donalee Small, Ridgely, LA Audubon President Dexter Kelly, and 1st Vice President and Conservation Chair Garry George.



*Robert Ridgely receives an acknowledgement of his efforts from Sra. Maria Escobar and Sr. Ivan Maldonaldo of the Consul General of Ecuador in Los Angeles.*



*Ridgely pays a pre-presentation visit to the collections of the LA County Museum of Natural History. He is joined by (left to right) Collections Manager Kimball Garrett, Guy Tudor, Olga Clarke, Robert Waters, Cat Waters (partially visible), Herb Clarke, and Ridgely's wife Peg.*



## BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Jon Feenstra

**B**y many accounts, fall migration last year was rather sub-par for migrants and rarities here in LA County. The expected unexpecteds showed up, but much of what was around could have been determined by book and calendar without even going outside. Following that lead winter, too, was relatively anti-climactic. We made it through, though, and it wasn't entirely without some interesting properties. For instance, we nearly broke a record of seasonal rainfall set in 1884. It's even possible that the record was broken while this article was somewhere between my computer and your mailbox. Anyone who's been out to the desert knows how amazingly green everything is compared with previous years. The hills along the 14 freeway just south of Palmdale look like they're on fire from the wash of poppies blooming along their slopes. Accompanying this peculiar precipitation was an influx of montane species which bombarded bird feeders and pine trees from Long Beach to Lancaster. These invaders, mainly Red-breasted Nuthatches, Mountain Chickadees, and Pine Siskins, remained locally numerous up to the writing of this article. Other similar invasive species made smaller inroads but were still a treat. A few wintering oddities that were found last fall remained throughout the winter season and a few more great things surfaced just recently, having avoided the birder net for months. The place to be this season was certainly El Dorado Park in Long Beach. It would have received a high Rare Bird Probability Index (RBPI), if such a statistical measure existed. But anyway, here's what was seen:

Three Cackling Geese were reported wintering in the LA Basin with one at Bonelli Park on January 29 [TM], one at Earvin Magic Johnson Recreation Area (EMJRA) through February 24 [RB], and a returning bird at Santa Fe Dam last seen on March 7 [JB]. These little things are regular so keep an eye on your goose flocks. As expected, several **Eurasian Wigeon** remained through the winter in a smattering of ponds. A pair present at El Dorado Park in early February [KGa] provided a good comparison between female Eurasian and the accompanying Americans. (*Insert your own inappropriate joke here.*) Generating articles in both the LA Times and on the front page of the Pasadena Star News was a **Tundra Swan** at the Brookside Golf Course near the Rose Bowl first detected January 25 [ES]. This bird produced quality debate and hopefully we all walked away from the experience having learned something. In the weeks subsequent to its discovery it was seen in the flood control basins at Hahamonga, Eaton Canyon, and Santa Fe Dam. Interestingly enough, the investigation done by the Pasadena Star News for their article turned up a photo by a Brookside Golf Course employee showing that the Tundra Swan was accompanied by a Trumpeter Swan earlier in the season. The Trumpeter Swan was identified by its collar as the same individual seen at Hansen Dam on December 23 and 24. Amazing. The Tundra Swan was last seen swimming in a flooded parking lot at Santa Fe Dam on February 24 [CAK, JSt]. The only **Black Scoter** remaining into this season was a female seen off Santa Monica Beach January 18 [RB, CAL]. **Long-tailed Ducks** continued with

a female at Santa Monica Beach on January 18 [RB] and an immature male in the inlet of Marina del Rey last seen February 26.

A single **Red-necked Grebe** was found in the county this winter, an individual scoped on the horizon south of Pt. Dume on February 13 [KGa]. Also out there in the ocean, a possible **Manx Shearwater** was seen in the Catalina Channel on January 28 [GP]. And then, one was seen and photographed in a massive flock of Black-vents over Redondo Canyon on February 26 [WW] a few hundred yards from a boat-load of birders on a LAAS pelagic who were not so lucky. A real shame. Another excellent rarity that proved just as elusive was an adult **Little Gull** seen in the channel at Marina del Rey with the flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls on January 29 [TW] – and never again. Speaking of excellent rarities, a clear-cut winner in the "Bird of the Season" contest surely goes to the first-year **Lesser Black-backed Gull** found March 13 at the Zuma Creek mouth in Malibu [KGa]. This discovery was made at the eleventh hour for insertion in this issue of the *Tanager* and caused a near rewrite of this article. Great bird! Although seemingly blown out of our area by the mid-February storms, alcids made a good showing along the immediate coast earlier in the season: 3 **Common Murres** were seen from Leo Carrillo State Beach on January 16 [JF], a **Pigeon Guillemot** was seen from Pt. Dume on February 13 [KGa], a remarkable 159 **Rhinoceros Auklets** were flying south by Pt. Vincente on February 5, and an **Ancient Murrelet** went by on January 29 [KL].

On to landbirds! One noteworthy thing about this season was that, including the usuals, twelve species of flycatcher were present in LA County – five of them empids: A **Least Flycatcher** was discovered in El Dorado Park February 14 [MJS] and seen off and on for two weeks. Two **Hammond's Flycatchers** were found in February with one each at Ed Vincent Park in Inglewood and at the Village Green Condominiums in LA [RB]. A **Dusky Flycatcher** was at Rolling Hills the Palos Verdes peninsula on January 23 [KL]. The continuing **Gray Flycatcher** was last seen at Peck Pit on February 27 [MS, JS]. A “Western”-type **Flycatcher** was at the South Coast Botanic Gardens on January 30 [KL]. The **Eastern Phoebe**, present now for several winters at Sepulveda Basin, remained at least to February 24 [JM]. An immature female **Vermillion Flycatcher** spent the season at EMJRA [RB] and a second was seen at Columbia Park on January 29 [LC]. An adult male was found near the California Poppy Preserve on March 5 [KGa]. Two **Tropical Kingbirds** wintered on the West LA College campus in Culver City [DS] and a third was seen intermittently at El Dorado Park into early February [KGi, KGa]. The winter-fixture **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** at Santa Fe Dam lingered on into early March [JB].

As a notorious denizen of the highest elevations in southern California, a **Clark's Nutcracker** was a mighty surprise in West Hills in the western San Fernando Valley on February 2 [AL]. Quite typical in small numbers in winter on the coastal slope were the two **Cassin's Vireos** and five **Plumbeous Vireos** found at various parks. Less expected was a wintering **Bell's Vireo** at DeForest Park [KL]. Two **Winter Wrens** showed up in different corners of the county – the Palos Verdes Peninsula and Westlake Village both discovered by [MSM].

With all the grumbling about last year/this year being on the dull side for vagrants we did have some quality warblers wintering around here, especially for the people who actually saw them. At the top of the list was a drab immature **Cape May Warbler** seen briefly on February 13 at El Dorado Park [JF, MSM] likely the same bird that had been around for a few days three and half

months earlier. Also of high caliber was a **Lucy's Warbler** found at the PV Landfill on the same day [KL]. This species is barely casual in winter in southern California. A **Hermit Warbler** kicked around at El Dorado Park [KGi, DN, JA] and another was found at Pan Pacific Park [RB]. The El Dorado Park **Pine Warbler**, this year a bright male, was seen off and on this winter, last on February 25 [DN, JA]. If it weren't for the exotic plantings of Canary Island Pines, this species would probably not show up in California at all. A single **Palm Warbler** wintered along Ballona Creek, reported December 9 [JC] and February 12 [KL]. **Black-and-white Warblers** made a winter showing at the Village Green condominium complex [RB, DS], El Segundo Library Park [RB], and Bonsall Canyon [KGa].

A **Green-tailed Towhee** that spent the winter in the Sepulveda Basin was last seen on March 12 [BP]. The **Large-billed Savannah Sparrow** that finds its way to the Marina del Rey jetty every winter departed for home in Mexico sometime around January 20 [RB]. An adult male **Orchard Oriole** was found at West LA College in Culver City on January 20 [KGa]. The bird was seen occasionally and heard singing and calling at least until March 10 [DS]. Unlike the previous several years, **Baltimore Orioles** were around this season. An immature male and female were on the Cal State Dominguez Hills campus on January 30 [KL] and the male remained for another few weeks [MSM, JF]. Another immature female found at West LA College on March 5 [MSM, JF] stayed for about a week [DS]. And ending with finches, we have the **Red Crossbills** at Apollo Park which have been entertaining birders for several months. About a dozen still remained as of March 13; males were singing while females were gathering nesting material. The pine cones are numerous and will hopefully well support the next generation.

Now it's spring, the beginning of the year. Time to reset our birding watches, get outside, and find out what's coming though. What should we expect this spring? The rain we've had will certainly shake things up a bit. It seems reasonable to believe that all the water out in

the desert will make for a pretty diffuse migration. The desert oases that typically concentrate migrant birds will just blend in as nondescript green spots in the lush surroundings. A warbler flying over the Mojave will have a lot lower likelihood of dropping down in a golf course when there's food and cover in so many other places. The real benefit here will depend on whether you're a birder or a bird. 

[JA] = Jim Abernathy

[CAk] = Chris Akiyoshi

[CAI] = Chuck Almdale

[RB] = Richard Barth

[JB] = Jean Brandt

[LC] = Lori Conrad

[JF] = Jon Feenstra

[KGa] = Kimball Garrett

[KGi] = Karen Gilbert

[AL] = Art Langton

[KL] = Kevin Larson

[TM] = Tom Miko

[JM] = Jim Moore

[DN] = Dick Norton

[BP] = Bob Pann

[GP] = Gary Peebles

[MJS] = Michael J. San Miguel Jr.

[MSM] = Mike San Miguel

[JS] = Janet Scheel

[MS] = Mark Scheel

[DS] = Don Sterba

[ES] = Ellen Strauss

[JSt] = Jane Strong

[WW] = Walter Wetje

[TW] = Tom Wurster

**R**ecords 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.

To report birds, send observations with as many details as possible to:

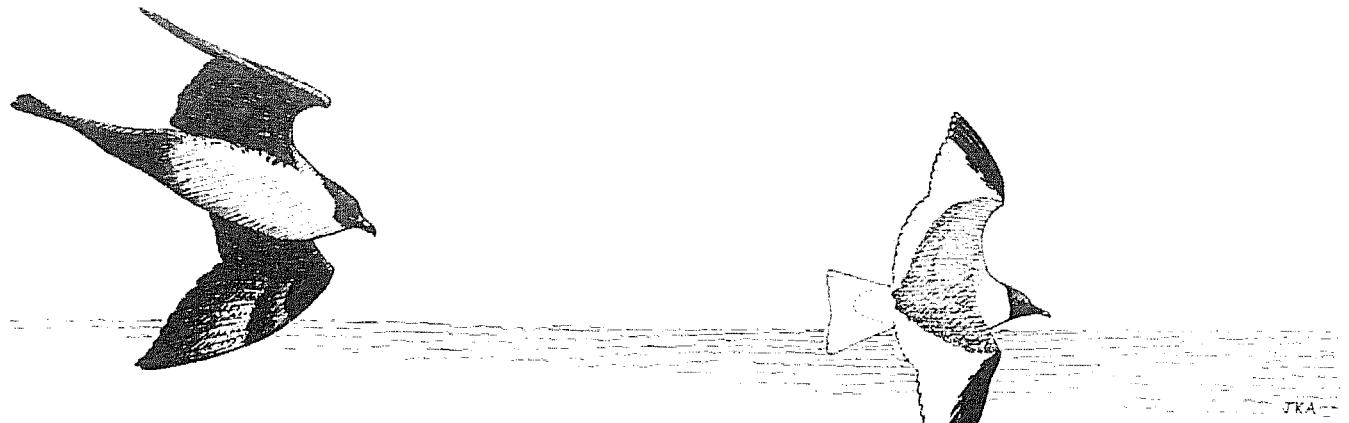
*Birds of the Season*,  
Jon Feenstra at feenstra@its.caltech.edu

*North American Birds, L.A. 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:

Jon Fisher: (818) 544-5009 (work)  
e-mail: JonF60@hotmail.com



# PELAGIC TRIPS

## Saturday, May 7 –

**Oxnard Harbor to Santa Barbara Island and the Osborne Banks.** This nine-hour trip departs the Island Packer's dock at 8:00 AM in the Oxnard Harbor on the M/V Vanguard. Birds seen in prior years: Northern Fulmar; Black-vented, Sooty, and Pink-footed shearwaters; Pomarine Jaeger; Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to 5); Common Murre; Pigeon Guillemot; Xantus's Murrelet; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Rarities: puffins (twice in 25 years). Leaders: **Todd McGrath, David Pereksta and Jon Feenstra.** \$85 – Snack type galley; bring food, or order a box lunch from a nearby deli.

## Sunday, June 5 –

**Santa Cruz Island** landing for the **Island Scrub-Jay.** This nine-hour trip departs from Island Packer's dock in Oxnard at 8:00 AM. on the M/V Vanguard. We will land on Santa Cruz Island where the endemic Island Scrub-Jay is easily seen, then out to sea for pelagic birding, with a return by Anacapa Island. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar; Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters; Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers; Sabine's Gull, rocky shorebirds (up to 5); Pigeon Guillemot; Xantus's Murrelet. Rarities: Flesh-footed Shearwater; South Polar Skua. Tufted Puffin seen in 2002.

Leaders: **Kimball Garrett, Todd McGrath, and Jon Feenstra.**

\$85 – Limited Galley – box lunches may be ordered from a nearby deli.

## Saturday, September 10 –

A deep water trip toward Cherry, Tanner, and Cortez banks. This 12-hour trip departs from Sea Landing in Santa Barbara Harbor at 7:00 AM on the fast catamaran the Condor Express. It returns approximately at 7:00 PM. This is the Red-billed Tropicbird trip. We will be far offshore in three counties, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Los Angeles. Birds to be expected: Black, Least, Ashy, and Leach's storm-petrels; Pomarine and Long-tailed jaegers; South Polar Skua; Sabine's Gull; Arctic Tern. Rarities: Black-footed Albatross; Buller's Shearwater; Craveri's Murrelet. Blue, Fin, and Minke whales as well as several species of dolphins are usually seen on this trip.

Leaders: **Kimball Garrett, Todd McGrath, Jon Feenstra, and David Pereksta.**

\$185 – There is a full galley which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. A full bar is available.

## Sunday, October 16 –

**Northern Channel Islands Monument.** This 10-hour trip departs from the Island Packer's dock in the Oxnard Harbor at 7:30 AM on the M/V Vanguard. We will take the Anacapa passage to Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands, cruise along the Santa Rosa Flats to the deep Santa Cruz Basin and return by Arch Rock at Anacapa Island. Birds seen in prior years: Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Sooty, and Black-vented shearwaters; Leach's, Least, and Ashy storm-petrels; cormorants (3); Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; Sabine's Gull; rocky shorebirds (up to 5); Common Murre; Craveri's and Xantus's murrelets; Cassin's Auklet. Rarities: Buller's and Flesh-footed shearwaters; South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger. In 2002, a Streaked Shearwater and in 2003, a Brown Booby and two Manx Shearwaters were seen.

Leaders: **Todd McGrath, David Pereksta, and Jon Feenstra.**

\$95 – Limited galley. Box lunches may be ordered from a nearby deli.

## Saturday, November 19 –

**Ventura Harbor toward San Miguel Island.** This nine-hour trip departs from the Island Packer's dock in the Ventura Harbor at 8:00 AM on the fast catamaran Island Adventure, and will return around 4:30 PM. After dropping off campers on Santa Cruz Island we will have the boat to ourselves and head along the Santa Rosa Flats toward the 1000 fathom water about 10 miles from San Miguel Island. Birds seen this time of year: Northern Fulmar; Black-vented, Pink-footed, and



Short-tailed Shearwater

Photo by David W. Nelson

Sooty shearwaters; Leach's Storm-Petrel; South Polar Skua; Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers; rocky shorebirds (up to 5); Common Murre; Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets. Occasionally: Craveri's Murrelet. Rarities: Buller's Shearwaters; Black-footed Albatross. In 2004 we saw five Flesh-footed Shearwaters, two Short-tailed Shearwaters, a pod of Orcas, and four species of dolphins.

Leaders: **Kimball Garrett, Todd McGrath, David Pereksta, and Jon Feenstra.**

\$95 – Snack type galley with drinks available.

## SAVE \$5 – SIGN-UP 60 DAYS PRIOR TO ANY TRIP

*Note: Destinations may be changed in order to maximize bird sightings, or minimize rough seas. In order to meet unexpected increases in fuel costs, there can be a \$3 to \$10 energy surcharge per person.*

### 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

*San Diego County Bird Atlas* – San Diego County boasts the largest number of bird species of any county in the United States. This ambitious volume is the most comprehensive bird atlas every produced, representing the field efforts of over 400 volunteers and 55,000 hours of intensive study. Almost 500 species are covered with detailed accounts and maps of distribution, habitat, nesting, movements, taxonomy (including subspecies), status, historical changes, and conservation outlook. This remarkable work will prove an invaluable tool for anyone with an interest in birds.

Philip Unitt \$60.00

*Massachusetts Birding Bird Atlas* – Begun in 1974, Massachusetts Audubon Society and Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife launched a state-wide survey to map the distribution of breeding birds in the Commonwealth. Countless hours were spent in the field by hundreds of volunteers, ultimately confirming 198 breeding species. This Atlas is the record of that survey. Every full species account is accompanied by a beautiful watercolor portrait. It contains distribution maps on a grid of 989 blocks, with eight transparent overlay maps. Opposite each map is a summary giving history, abundance, habitat, seasonality, song, nest and egg descriptions, clutch size, number of broods, and other pertinent details.

Wayne R. Peterson and W. Roger Meserve, Editors \$60.00

### FOR THE BUDDING ORNITHOLOGIST

*Bird* – Encyclopedic in scope if not in size, this beautifully illustrated book offers an “eyewitness” view of the natural history, behavior, and life cycle of birds. Learn how birds bodies are designed for flight, why wings are different shapes and sizes, how birds evolved, how nests are made, why eggs are different colors, and much more. Suitable for ages 8 and up.

David Byrne \$15.99

### GREATLY REDUCED

*The Birds Of The Western Palearctic: Concise Edition, Volumes 1 and 2* – The definitive works covering the birds of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Updated with 230 magnificent color plates, color maps, more than eighty added species accounts. Indexes of English and scientific names plus seven European languages. This reference is essential for either amateur or professional with an interest in birds of Europe. Two volumes in slipcase.

D. W. Snow and C. M. Perrins. Was \$280.00, reduced to \$150.00

### COMING ATTRACTIONS

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Ken Kaufman \$18.95.

### THE BOOKSTORE WILL BE CLOSED THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2005 FOR INVENTORY

# FIELD TRIPS

*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 1 –

**Topanga State Park.** Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin will lead participants through this beautiful and 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 AM.

## Sunday, May 8 –

**Butterbreyt Springs and Galileo Hills.** Leader: Nick Freeman. These are some of the best migrant traps in the state. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. \*This is a May Birdathon event! Show your support for LA Audubon by drumming up patronage of 25 cents or more per bird seen for the day, as we try to crack the magical 100 mark. Take Hwy 14 past Mojave, continue N on Hwy 14 about 15 miles, then turn left on Jawbone Canyon Road. Meet at the ranger station by the highway. After Galileo, we will try Piute or Sewage Ponds. Allow over 2 hours driving time from LA, or stay in Mojave at Motel 6 or elsewhere. LAAS phone sign-up mandatory. 12 max. Bring lunch, sun block. Meet at 7:30 AM, Birdathon officially finishes at 4:00 PM. Contact LAAS for Birdathon promotional information.

## Saturday, May 14 –

**Lompoc Vicinity.** Leader: Eleanor Osgood. Varied habitats. Target birds include Purple Martin and Yellow-billed Magpie. Due to construction, we will meet at 8:00 AM in the Split Pea Anderson's restaurant parking lot in Buellton. Exit the 101 Fwy just past the Santa Ynez River, onto Hwy 246 heading west, and make a right turn into the restaurant lot.

Two hour drive from LA. \*This is a May Birdathon event! Show your support for LA Audubon by drumming up patronage of 25 cents or more per bird seen by the group for the day. Eleanor is hoping for 70 species, as she plans to bird at a relaxed pace. We will also bird Santa Inez River mouth, River Park, and elsewhere. Bring lunch and bird until around 3:00 PM. Carpooling encouraged.

be a good day for migrating songbirds. This trip covers landscaped parkland and natural coastal scrub habitats, and is paced for beginning birders and members of the Baldwin Hills community. The park entrance is off of La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. After passing the entrance kiosk (\$4 parking fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces. Meet at 8:00 AM.

## MAY IS BIRDATHON MONTH FOR LAAS

All Los Angeles Audubon Society field trips during May, including Dexter Kelly's Morongo Valley trip, will be Birdathons. We hope each participant will donate a chosen amount (may we suggest a dollar per species?).

Proceeds will go to the programs of the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

## Sunday, May 15 –

**Ballona Wetlands.** Bob Shanman will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland and adjacent rocky jetty. Good spot for late migrating 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. 'scopes helpful. Meet at 8:00 AM.

## Saturday, May 21 –

**Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.** Leaders: Ann and Eric Brooks. Should

## Sunday, May 22 –

### **Big Morongo Wildlife Preserve.**

Leader: Dexter Kelly. Breeding desert and oasis birds such as Brown-crested and Vermilion flycatchers, Summer Tanager, Scott's and Hooded orioles, Yellow-breasted Chat and migrating Empidonax flycatchers. \*This is a May Birdathon event! Show your support for LA Audubon by drumming up patronage of 25 cents or more per bird seen for the day. Dexter is hoping for 70 species, but with your help, who knows! Meet at 8:00 AM. in the parking lot. 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 National Park. No sign up. Birdathon officially finishes at 3:00 PM.

## Saturday, May 28 –

**Whittier Narrows.** Leader: Ray Jillson. (Note: now on Saturday). View colorful resident and breeding 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 suggested donation. Meet at 8:15 AM.

## Sunday, June 5 –

**Topanga State Park.** Leaders: Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin. Meet at 8:00 AM. See May 1 listing for details.

### **Sunday, June 12 –**

**Night Owling Trip.** Leader: **Raymond Schep.** Start at 5:00 PM to search for targeted day birds such as Green-tailed Towhee, White-headed Woodpecker, Purple Finch, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Williamson's Sapsucker, Western Tanager, and Northern Pygmy Owl. Meet at 4:45 PM, and leave promptly at 5:00 PM from where the 210 Fwy and Angeles Crest Highway intersect in La Cañada. Exit the 210 at Angeles Crest Highway heading north. About one block up is a frontage road on the right, where we will park and carpool. Target night birds include, Flammulated Owl, (good luck in past years), Western Screech (easier) and Northern Saw-whet owls, and Common Poorwill (easy). We will take a gentle hike down into a canyon in an attempt to hear and see Spotted Owl. They're all up there, but no promises! Finish around midnight. Bring a warm jacket, a full stomach, snacks, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass. Send \$5, phone number, e-mail address (if you have it) and a SASE to Audubon House to sign up. Limit 10.

**Friday through Monday, June 17-20 – 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: Goshawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Pileated Woodpecker, and owls. 150 species likely in 4 days. Participation limited. For information flyer, reserve with SASE. Fee: \$15 for each day attended (\$60 for 4 days). Dawn to dusk (and more) birding ideal for enthusiastic beginning to advanced birders. Reserve rooms in Kernville early (listed in flyer).

### **Saturday, June 18 –**

**Mt. Pinos area.** Undisclosed location. Leader: **Jean Brandt.** We are going to start the morning with a "seep sit". Bring a chair, snax, thermos of hot drinks, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass, and be prepared for possible cold. 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 at the obvious Y-shaped dirt clearing formed by the junction of Cuddy

Valley Rd. and Mil Potrero Hwy. Depart from the "Y" at 8:00 AM After we have exhausted the birds and mammals (a gray fox was seen here in 2004) that come to the seep, we will bird our way back to Iris Meadow at the end of the paved road on Mt. Pinos. Picnic lunch somewhere on Mt. Pinos. Rain cancels. Anticipate the elements, and bring a lunch.

### **Saturday, June 18 –**

**Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.** Leader: **Richard Barth.** Meet at 8:00 AM \$4 entry fee. See May 21 listing for details.

### **Saturday, June 25 –**

**Hopper Mountain NWR and Condor Sanctuary, Fillmore.** **Jesse Grantham,** Senior Wildlife Biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, formerly a 24 year veteran as a biologist with the National Audubon Society, will be leading this trip to view the reintroduction program on the California Condor. This program is administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, but has multiple agency and private partners, including the Los Angeles and San Diego zoos.

We should get good looks at California Condors, possibly Golden Eagles, and many other species. The primary focus however will be on condors. Biologists will give us an overview of the program, show us how the latest technological equipment (radio telemetry and GPS units) is helping to save the bird, and future concerns. Take Interstate 5 North to the #126 (in Castaic Junction), and then the #126 west to Fillmore. Meet in the front parking lot of the Super A Grocery Food store which will be on the right, immediately after the light at "A" Street, at 8:00 AM. There is a 5 car limit. High clearance vehicles are needed; bring one if you have one. We will carpool from the meeting site. The roads have washed out completely two times this year, and are being repaired now. These roads are not for the faint of heart! We will contact people with alternative viewing plans if the roads are inaccessible or the US Fish and Wildlife Service deems our presence a detriment to the birds on this day. Reserve your place with LAAS by phone, stating phone number and email address, whether you have a high

clearance vehicle that can accommodate at least four people total (priority) or you plan to ride with someone else. No fee, but donations accepted to the Condor Survival Fund.

### **Saturday, June 25 –**

**Whittier Narrows.** Leader: **Ray Jillson.** Note new day. Meet at 8:15 AM. See May 28 listing for details.

### **Sunday, July 3 –**

**Topanga State Park.** Leaders: **Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin.** Meet at 8:00 AM. See May 1 listing for details.

### **Saturday, July 9 –**

**LA Audubon Annual Picnic.** Sodas, bird and butterfly walks and camaraderie provided. A Forest Service Adventure Pass is necessary. The first bird walk will be at 8:00 AM, and another will follow at 10:00 AM for late-comers. There will also be a butterfly walk after the birds start thinning out. Lunch noonish, there may be birding options elsewhere on the Angeles Crest later. Charleton Flats will probably be the location, but please check this in the next newsletter or on the web site as the date approaches for updated information.

### **Sunday, July 17 –**

**Big Bear Lake Vicinity.** Leaders: **Nick and Mary Freeman.** Meet in the Aspen Glen Picnic Area parking lot in Big Bear at 7:30 AM. 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 Rufous hummingbirds, mountain finches and White-headed Woodpecker. We may go to Arrastré Creek. It should be warm and there may be bugs, so come prepared. Bring lunch for a full day, and a Forest Service Adventure Pass.

\*Participants in **LA Audubon May Birdathon** events may contact Audubon House for Birdathon promotional information and sponsor forms; or bring names, phone numbers, addresses and level of support information to the event.

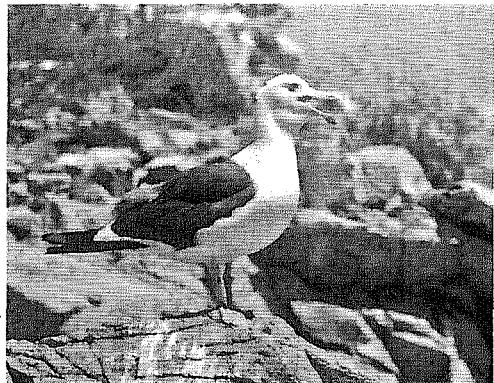
# EVENING MEETINGS

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

**Tuesday, May 10, 2005**

**Kathie Satterfield**

**The Salton Sea Ecosystem: It's Worth Saving!**



*Photo by Brian E. Small*

*Yellow-footed Gull  
Salton Sea 1993*

**Tuesday, June 14, 2005**

**Jesse Grantham**

**A Review of a Quarter Century of Condor Recovery Efforts**



*Photo by Larry Sansone*

*California Condor  
Mt. Pinos, Kern Co. 1 June 1997*

Plans are underway to reduce the size of the Salton Sea by approximately half. This reduction has many ramifications, not only for the birds using the Sea itself, but also for those using the numerous other habitats that make up the Salton Sea ecosystem. These habitats include agricultural lands—both flooded and dry fields, canals, drains, riparian areas, and fresh water marshes. How this reduction is accomplished and how much water is transferred out of Imperial Valley will significantly affect literally millions of birds and hundreds of bird species.

Please join Kathie Satterfield to learn more about what is at stake at the Salton Sea and how you can participate in Audubon's campaign to save and restore California's "Crown Jewel of Avian Biodiversity".

Jesse Grantham will present an update on the California Condor Recovery Program. He is a senior wildlife biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Condor Recovery Program. Jesse started with the condor program in 1980. By 1982, field biologists were able to document only 22 condors left in the wild. A full scale rescue effort was instituted to save the remaining birds. By 1986, only three birds remained in the wild, with 24 birds being held at the Los Angeles and San Diego Zoos.

Learn about the threats to the condor's recovery as well as some of the positive signs that suggest recovery is possible. Jesse will review the first 25 years of this highly visible and at times controversial program.

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

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