

WESTERN TANAGER



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Los Angeles Audubon Society

Exploring the World Through Binoculars 40 Years Traveling the Continents

by Olga Clarke, Tour Director

In August 1965, I was asked to set up and lead a birding excursion to Panama and Guatemala. With several close friends and acquaintances, we birded these areas, seeing such incredible species as quetzals, trogons, colorful tanagers and hummingbirds. This was so exciting that I decided to continue to share these wonders with like minded participants.

Planning to visit far away places with strange sounding names with groups was not as easy as I had hoped. In those years there were no field guides to the birds at exotic destinations like the Peterson bird books we were accustomed to here. If there were any available at all, they merely had descriptions, with perhaps a few black and white line drawings, and most were quite technical. Actually, it was my search for such books to various parts of the world that led me to setting up the Los Angeles Audubon Society's famous bookstore 35 years ago. Now field guides to anywhere you might be considering journeying, whether it be for birding or other phases of wildlife you are interested in seeing, are featured at this unique little Nature Shop and Bookstore.

Meanwhile, my husband Herb and I traveled wherever and whenever possible, checking out suitable travel destinations. From Mexico throughout Central America,



South Africa, India (including Kashmir) to Nepal, Malaysia, and Borneo, the Indonesian Islands, and Australasia, including Papua New Guinea, were some of our destinations.

I led tours on my own to Costa Rica for almost 20 years, initially handicapped by limited local information, and lack of infrastructure in good birding areas. Eventually, as overseas birding became more and more popular, many useful bird books and knowledge about places to stay, along with the locations of excellent birding spots, gradually became available.

About ten years ago, I was offered an opportunity to lead a bird tour in Kenya, sponsored by the Los Angeles Audubon Society. After much discussion with the Executive Board, it was decided that I would begin a travel program for the Society and any income from this project would go toward their Conservation Program. I volunteered to run this program without a salary, and continue to do so today. We work with several travel agents to have the advantage of insurance coverage and land operator contacts. I personally supervise the itineraries for each tour, which requires a lot of day to day follow-up work, both here in this country and with overseas land operators as well as local expert birder guides who always accompany our tours.

May Elections of Officers of the Board

Nominations:

- President - Dexter Kelly
- 1st Vice President - Pat Heirs
- 2nd Vice President - Jason Stuck
- Treasurer - Lisa Fimiani
- Executive Secretary - Robin Gose
- Recording Secretary - Eleanor Osgood
- Executive Past President - Raymond Schep



LAAS tour group at the Mala Mala Reserve in South Africa, October, 2000.

Today, we offer excellent birding and nature adventures to many parts of the world, at prices that include international airfare, internal flights, and many other amenities, more than competitive with other tour companies. I accompany the LAAS tours, as escort, to make certain that all goes well, and to see to the participant's comfort and well being. I thoroughly enjoy sharing the wonders of each special place with our groups. We look at everything along the way, not only at birds, but whatever other wildlife that can be found on our journeys.

Thus far, our travels as Society sponsored tours have taken us to unique places like Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda (where we were within 15 feet of a huge male gorilla), South Africa, Namibia,

Botswana, Zambia, Australia, New Zealand, the Amazon River in Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands, Machu Picchu in Peru, and Brazil's Pantanal (with sightings of jaguars), along with magnificent Iguaçu Falls, and the Atlantic Rainforest.

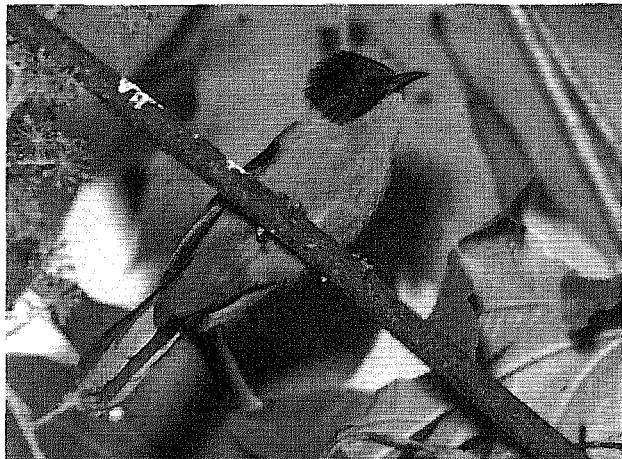
As this is written, we are birding in Thailand, a land of fabulous oriental birds,

friendly people, a variety of excellent food, and spectacular scenery that takes your breath away. Over 900 species of birds have been recorded there, allowing a chance to see well over 400 in Thailand's fabulous National Parks, but who's counting! Species such as pheasants, sunbirds, pittas, babblers, laughingthrushes, mesias, minlas, minivets, and cutias, along with Great Hornbills, White-handed Gibbons, and elephants are expected. Enough to get your adrenaline going at every stop.

In 2007, watch for announcements of more Brazil, Thailand/Cambodia, Morocco, and other fascinating places.

Traveling with the Los Angeles Audubon Society is often with people you know, and always accompanied by expert local birder/guides from within each country. Our groups are small for flexibility. No matter if you are a beginner or someone with much field experience, you will enjoy excellent destinations and itineraries, good food and accommodations, while staying at lodges and local facilities that support ecotourism and conservation.

I sincerely hope that you will join us soon for lifelong memories.



Rufous Sibia, Nepal, 1987

Herb Clarke at the Getty!

Friday, July 7, 2006

4:30 PM and 6:00 PM, Museum Galleries, Getty Center

Point-of-View Gallery Talk – Herbert Clarke, a Los Angeles-based bird and nature photographer and LAAS past president, shares his perspective on the seminal work and influence of Eliot Porter and the challenges of photographing nature. Herb's program complements the exhibition "Eliot Porter: In the Realm of Nature."

Eliot Porter (American, 1901–1990) was the first photographer to promote the use of color in landscape photographs. From the 1940s until the mid-1970s, when artistic color photography gained acceptance, Porter struggled against the notion that color was unsuitable for artist photographers. He explored new ways of presenting the natural world and sometimes paired his work with the inspirational writings of authors such as Henry David Thoreau. Porter's ability to balance pure form and color in his images redirected the history of landscape photography. This exhibition includes a selection of Porter's early black-and-white landscape photographs, later color landscapes, and bird photographs made over the course of his career.

"Eliot Porter: In the Realm of Nature." runs from June 13–September 17, 2006 at the Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California 90049. For further information, check the Getty website at: www.getty.edu/

Sign up at the Museum Information Desk beginning at 3:00 PM the day of the program.

Avian Influenza Monitoring Project

Most of you are familiar with the Avian Influenza (AI) and the potential threat of a human pandemic. As of this writing, the global bird flu death has hit 100. I will not deal with the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) or its 143 other sub-types. You can read more about that on the websites I provide at the end of this piece.

A bit of good news is that unlike some of our government's previous efforts, it appears that we are trying to stay on top of this emerging problem and stay vigilant. We know it will arrive; the question is when. In a multi-departmental effort of the departments of Defense, Interior, and Agriculture, as well as state Fish and Wildlife agencies, an effort will be made to begin to test 75,000 to 100,000 wild birds for AI.

The Pacific Flyway is of the greatest interest because it is the most likely route for AI to enter the US. As most of you birders know, birds migrate on the Asian Flyway from Asia to Alaska, while "our" birds migrate from Alaska to the Americas on the Pacific Flyway. Alaska is then the contact point where the two populations meet.

The majority of concern about AI has centered on waterbirds, such as ducks, and thus far most of the testing (<1000/year) has been done on birds shot by hunters. There is now evidence to suggest that monitoring this disease in other species is warranted. Since this virus can jump from species to species, it is possible that the virus may jump from a duck to a sandpiper to a sparrow. Infected passerines and near-passernines are then those birds that are more likely encountered by the public at large.

It happens that the bird banding community are sentinels, in the unique position to field sample birds as a means of surveillance as AI enters the Americas, which it will. In order to test so many birds and a great diversity of birds, bird banders have been enlisted. Two such networks of bird banders are the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) of the Institute of Bird Population (IBP)

and Landbird Migration Monitoring Network of the Americas (LaMMNA). IBP also has two other networks that will participate. The 80+ stations of the MoSi (Monitoreo de Sobrevivencia Invernal) network will sample in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, and the 40 stations for the MAWS (Monitoring Avian Winter Survival) network will sample across the southern United States. The final count is estimated at close to 900 bird banding stations.

Since I have a MAPS station and my other banding stations are part of LaMMNA, I have agreed to participate in this effort. Los Angeles Audubon Society is helping with this nation-wide effort in supporting the MAPS station I operate in Solstice Canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains. When I told my students that I threw my hat in the ring, all of my banders enthusiastically agreed to join in this effort as we will be in the forefront of AI monitoring in the US.

This project will begin April, 2006, and plans are to continue this project for at least four years. All of the networks will collaborate with UCLA's Center for Tropical Research. The effort will be year round to monitor the migrants as well as the resident bird populations. The 2006 goal for the West is to collect over 30,000 samples. Samples will be analyzed for the presence/absence of AI at the high-throughput infectious disease sequencing facilities developed by Los Alamos National lab (LANL) in collaboration with partner UCLA (the High-throughput Lab Network (HTLN) funded by the Department of Defense). If there is a positive for H5N1, confirmatory testing will be done at the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa.

We will also continue to collect one or two outer tail feathers for genetic and stable isotope analyses. This information has proven useful in tracking the connectivity between breeding and wintering populations of these species, i.e. if we find an infected bird during the winter, we might be able to determine where it overwintered or bred based on its genetics.

How do we sample? We will be taking cloacal swabs by inserting a small soft dacron swab into the cloaca, which does not hurt the bird. AI viruses are present in the intestinal and cloacal wall cells and are shed with the feces. It is estimated that it will take about a minute to process each bird. The kits contain 2-ml sample vials with 70% ethanol, scissors to snip the swab tips into the vials, gloves, anti-bacterial cleanser, and other tools.

Which birds will be sampled? For the present, we will sample each and every single bird we capture, including recaptures.

What is the health risk of handling wild birds? To date there have been no humans diagnosed with avian flu from contact with wild birds, and the highly pathogenic H5N1 variant of the AI has not been detected in the Western Hemisphere.

I am on a learning curve on this effort, but if you have any questions or wish to help, feel free to contact me at (310) 434-4702.

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Other Sources of Information on Avian Influenza:

World Health Organization -
www.who.int/topics/avian_influenza/en

Centers for Disease Control -
www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service -
www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/AvianFlu/WBAvianFlu.htm

University of California -
www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/2006/jan05.html

NEW AT THE BOOKSTORE

Open: Monday through Thursday 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM or by appointment.

Closed: Saturdays

If you are planning to attend the Wednesday, May 17, 2006 meeting at Audubon Center at Debs Park, you don't have to miss shopping at the Bookstore. Any orders placed that day by 3:00 PM, will be delivered to you at Debs Park.

The Birds of Eastern Ecuador, Vol. 1: The Foothills and Lower Subtropics

Audio CD presents 814 recordings of 217 species. This is a 5 CD set.

John Moore 2005

\$25.95

Shorebirds of North America, Europe, and Asia: A Guide to Field Identification

77 color plates show full range of plumage types of all species covered, concise text treats appearance, voice, and behavior, color distribution maps.

Stephen Message and Don Taylor 2005

\$35.00

Butterflies of Northeastern Mexico: A Photographic Checklist

2nd edition, covers the states of Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, and San Luis Potosi, 192 pages spiral bound.

Kim Garwood and Richard Lehman 2005

\$30.00

Princeton Field Guides: Raptors of the World

118 color plates showing 338 species in flight and perched, text summarizes size, confusion species, habitat, behavioral, and plumage differences, color distribution maps. Paperback.

James Ferguson-Lees and David A. Christie 2005

\$29.95

Parrots of the World: An Identification Guide

Covers 350 species, illustrated with 120 color plates, color distribution maps, includes ecological, and behavioral information.

Joseph M. Forshaw 2006

\$65.00

With spring upon us, check out the Bookstore for books on California's Wildflowers.

LAAS ANNUAL PICNIC

Saturday, May 6 – Kenneth Hahn Park

All LAAS members are invited!

We will meet at Kenneth Hahn Park this year to coincide with the Native Plant & Wildlife Garden opening.

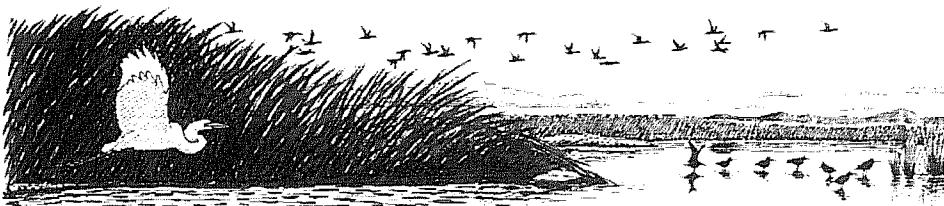
LAAS birdwalk at 8 AM. California Native Plant Society will lead plant walk in the Garden at 10 AM.

Opening ceremony at 11 AM and *free* barbecue at noon.

To meet for the birdwalk: after passing the entrance kiosk (\$4 parking fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces.

To park closest for the 10 AM garden walk or the 11 AM Garden opening, drive past the kiosk, past the lake, past the Community Center and go up the hill and park at the top and walk down to the Garden. If full, park at the Community Center or on the hill between the community center and the picnic area on the top, but only on the right side. The noon barbecue will be at the picnic area on the hilltop.

The park entrance is at 4100 S. La Cienega Boulevard between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. LAAS will be joined by garden volunteers and interns from the community, California Native Plant Society, Friends of Baldwin Hills, and others involved in the Garden Project. Come out and see what LAAS money and involvement has helped create in our inner city! RSVP gardenparty@laaudubon.org or call Audubon House (323) 876-0202 so we can get a count for food and drinks.



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

by Garry George

Endangered Species Act Endangered

Efforts to remove key provisions from the Endangered Species Act continue as HR3824 passes the House and is as of this writing on March 20, 2006 in the Senate. The biggest revision to the Act is the removal of the "critical habitat" designation provision. This provision is important for all the listed species such as California Gnatcatcher which is obligated to coastal sage scrub, Marbled Murrelet which depends on old growth forest for nesting sites, and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl ("Cactus" subspecies) which is obligated to Sonoran desert scrub near Phoenix. Efforts to remove this important provision from the ESA has been led by the building industry, especially Building Industry Association of Southern California, and the logging industry in cooperation with Rep. Richard Pombo, (R-Tracy), the Chair of the Resources Committee of the House. Pombo is currently under investigation in the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal.

Of all the species and subspecies of birds listed since enactment of the ESA in 1973, 44% of the species have increased, 19% have stabilized, and 23% have decreased. This is a remarkable success story and includes flagship species such as Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Whooping Crane, Brown Pelican, California Condor, Snail Kite, Piping Plover, Least Tern, Wood Stork, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Least Bell's Vireo, Loggerhead Shrike, and Kirtland's Warbler, among others. Without the management provided by the ESA and the critical habitat designation these species would surely be extinct by now.

Please let Senator Boxer and Senator Feinstein know that you are opposed to the current legislation passed by the House on Endangered Species Act.

Wind Policy Ok'd by Cal Audubon

In the March 3 meeting, the Audubon California Board unanimously approved the following policy on wind energy recommended by the Conservation Committee. The policy states "Audubon California supports the role of wind power as an alternative source of energy if it is sited, operated, and mitigation steps are taken, to minimize its impacts on birds and other wildlife." Audubon California is one of the few states that have adopted policies on wind energy, and National Audubon still wrestles with the idea of even endorsing a policy on wind. This policy, the wind conference on Jan 10-11, and the resulting commitment by the California Energy Commission to direct \$25 million in research funding over the next five years to solving the problems of wind farms and birds is a direct result of L.A. and other California chapters bringing litigation against the wind industry.

LAAS and the Eastern Sierra

Since 2001, The Wildlands Conservancy (www.wildlandsconservancy.org/) has continued to be the lead advocate for establishing permanent conservation of approximately 320,000 acres of land owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) in the Owens Valley.

Conservation legend Eldon Hughes visited the March LAAS Board of Directors meeting, and asked that Los Angeles Audubon Society lend its name to a renewed effort to achieve a permanent conservation easement on DWP property. After a conference call with Owens Valley conservationist Mike Prather, the Board voted to lend our name to this important effort, especially when finding that the easement includes habitat for Sage Grouse and many other species. 

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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 memberships do not include *Audubon* magazine and are \$25, \$35, \$50, \$100, and \$250. Donations and memberships can be made online at www.laadubon.org

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

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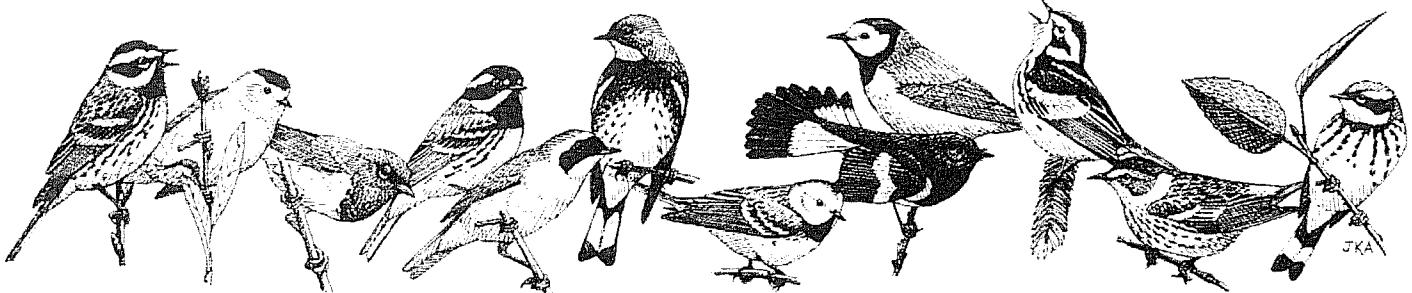
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JKA

BIRDS OF THE SEASON

by Todd McGrath and Jon Feenstra

T.S. Eliot asserted that "April is the cruellest month", proving that T.S. Eliot was not a southern California birder. For us, February wears that mantle. After a January of re-finding various goodies left over from fall migration and Christmas counts, many birders take some time off and wait for April. Some birders put this time to good use learning to tell their children apart again, and more importantly building up those brownie points for the inevitable absences that will characterize April, May, and early June. But here in L.A. County, even the cruellest months are pretty nice, so those birders who did venture out were rewarded with some continuing rarities, as well as a few gems that somehow slipped through the earlier seasons undiscovered.

By early February the first trickle of migrants were on the move, with the first Cliff Swallows moving through, and an impressive movement of Sage Thrashers in the Antelope Valley. By early March the first Warbling Vireos were headed north and at least five species of swallows were recorded in numbers. Spring is here, almost!

After last winter's Ark-building rainy season, this year was a bit on the dry side, but some late-February early-March storms added much needed rainfall. While it's still too early to predict the totals for the year, it is now very likely that this will be a drier than normal season. We will have to wait and see what impact that will have on the coming migration. But that is a topic for the next report, for now – on to the sightings.

Birders sorting through the Frankengeese and Schwarzenmallards at various parks were rewarded with some unusual waterfowl. Single Greater

White-fronted Geese continued at Santa Fe Dam and Del Rey Lagoon (TMcG) throughout the period, and observers noted others at Porter Valley Country Club in Northridge on 2/18 and at Apollo Park in the Antelope Valley 2/12-3/11 (TMcG, JFe). Single Cackling Geese were at Malibu Lagoon on 1/18 (RB) and Bonelli Park throughout the period. Two continued at Santa Fe Dam (AL), and three were mixed in with Canada Geese on a private alfalfa farm in the Antelope Valley on 2/12 (TMcG, JFe). Eurasian Wigeons were at Malibu Lagoon on 1/16 (DB) and a continuing bird was reported at Sepulveda Basin on 3/9 (BP). Two Long-tailed Ducks were reported from the Playa del Rey area; a male was at Dockweiler State Beach 2/14 (RB) and a second bird found in Ballona Creek 2/21-25 (DSu, RN) this species has been reported annually from this area the last several years. Black Scoters have been scarce in L.A. County this winter; the only report for the period was a male at Malibu Lagoon 2/15 (MSM).

A Red-necked Grebe at Pt. Dume 3/12 (MS, JS) was a nice find and the only one reported during the period.

American Bitterns were well represented this winter with continuing birds present at Sepulveda Basin (JB) and Ballona Freshwater Marsh (RB) both on 2/10, and one at Piute Ponds on 3/5 (JFe MSM).

Interesting shorebird reports were lacking this season but Mountain Plovers in the Antelope Valley on 80th Street East and Avenue D 2/1 (AM) were noteworthy as this species has been somewhat scarce in our area this season. A Lesser Yellowlegs at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh 2/24 (KL) likely wintered locally.

Winter is generally a time for unusual Gulls, but a single first cycle Glaucous Gull spotted 4.5 miles west of Marina del Rey 2/25 on the LAAS winter pelagic and an adult Black-legged Kittiwake seen during a dolphin survey in the same area on 2/23 (TMcG) were the only reports of note. Four Ancient Murrelets on the same LAAS pelagic 2/25 were a treat, especially for the out of state participants. This species has been recorded three of the last four years on this winter pelagic.

Burrowing Owls in L.A. County away from the Antelope valley are always noteworthy, and one at El Dorado Park on 1/29 (TMi) was the only such report this period. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker first found by KL last November continued on 1/21, but this bird spends considerable time outside the park and can be quite difficult to locate. A "Yellow-shafted" Northern Flicker was at Loyola Marymount U. on 1/21 (RS).

This was an excellent season for flycatchers. The continuing Least Flycatcher in Area III of El Dorado Park was seen on 2/7 (KGi) and likely is still present. A continuing Hammond's Flycatcher was also noted at El Dorado 2/7, while another was found in Elysian Park on 3/11 (DB). The Gray Flycatcher invasion continued with at least four birds reported. Continuing birds were at Santa Fe Dam 1/31 (AL) and El Dorado Park 2/9 (KGi), while birds at Inglewood park Cemetery 2/7 (DB) and Elysian Park 2/27-3/11 (DB) were new finds. Several additional birds reported in earlier periods are likely still present, so the total number of Gray Flycatchers wintering in L.A. County is likely higher. An Eastern Phoebe found at Eaton Canyon on 3/12 (JFe) may have wintered locally,

and was the only one reported this season in L.A. Two **Vermilion Flycatchers** were reported; one at Rio Hondo near Rosemead on 2/20 (JW) and another on the San Gabriel River at El Dorado Park on 3/2 (KGi, JBo). Two of the three **Dusky-capped Flycatchers** from the last report continued. The one found by MSMj at Heritage Park in La Verne was last reported by him on 1/31. The bird at Rynerson Park in Long Beach was present until at least 3/1, but there were several negative reports towards the middle of March. Long Beach is apparently **Tropical Kingbird** headquarters for L.A. County, with continuing birds at El Dorado park on 2/7 and at Colorado Lagoon on 3/1 (both KGi). The **Thick-billed Kingbird** found at Banning Park last November by KL continued through mid-March, but this bird spends long periods in the surrounding neighborhoods and can often be frustratingly difficult to locate. Perhaps this bird will return next fall, as some records of this species have spanned a number of years. **Western Kingbirds** at El Dorado Park on 1/30 (KGi) likely wintered nearby, as late January is earlier than would be expected for migrants. Our area's two **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** continued at both Santa Fe Dam on 1/31 (Andrew Lee) and Almansor Park on 2/15 (JG). Perhaps the Santa Fe Dam bird will return again next fall as it has for the past several years.

Cassin's Vireos are far outnumbered in winter by Plumbeous Vireos in our area during winter, and this year was no exception. The only **Cassin's Vireo** reported was from Peck Pit on 1/31, while seven **Plumbeous Vireo** reports (the most interesting, a bird at Apollo Park on 3/5, furnishing a rare winter Antelope Valley record) were received. Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** reported from Loyola Marymont U. on 2/19 (KL) were unusual finds along the coast. The **Winter Wren** at Deforest Park previously reported on 12/3 evaded rediscovery, despite numerous attempts, until 3/11 (KL). **Varied Thrush** has been difficult to find in L.A. County the last several seasons, so one at Loyola Marymount U. on 2/22 (RB) was noteworthy. **Sage Thrashers** are rare migrants along the coast, so one at White Point in San Pedro on 1/31 (DM) is worth mentioning. This species is an

early migrant, and is regular in the Antelope Valley. At least 31 were recorded here on 2/12 (JFe, TMcG) and several other observers noted double-digit numbers in the desert through early March (JFe MSM). The **Brown Thrasher** wintering in the nature center area at El Dorado Park was seen sporadically throughout the period through 3/8 (KGi). One of the great things about winter in southern California is the wintering warblers. In addition to the regular western species, it seems a few goodies from the east or south always brighten our winters, and this season was no exception. A **Northern Parula** at Charles Wilson Park in Torrance 2/5 (KL) was a good find. A continuing **Palm Warbler** was noted at El Dorado Park 3/2 (KGi). Five **Black-and-white Warblers** were reported.

With the exception of the continuing bird at Bonelli Regional Park reported on 2/27 (RH), all were in the coastal plain.

American Redstarts were the second-most abundant redstart in the county with two reports; a continuing bird at El Dorado Park on 2/23 (KGi) with another at Bonelli Regional Park on 2/17 (AL). One of the most intriguing reports of the season was a **Mourning Warbler** at Sepulveda Basin 1/28-1/31 (JFi). If accepted by the CBRC, this would constitute one of very few winter records for California. The four **Painted Redstarts** from the last report all continued, and I wonder how many inaccessible areas in the foothills may have also harbored this species.

Four wintering **Clay-colored Sparrows** is a better than average total for the County. One continued at Madrona Marsh (DM) while another was located at Bonelli Regional Park 2/14. Observers looking for one located at Rynerson Park on 3/8 (RB, KGi) found two birds on 3/11 (TW, LA). A **Swamp Sparrow** was at El Dorado Park 1/19-2/27 (KGi). **White-throated Sparrows** were reported from Village Green 1/21-2/24, from a feeder in Mt. Washington 2/22 (JD) and a continuing bird at Eaton Canyon through 3/12 (EM).

Baltimore Oriole reports included an adult male, 1/25-3/1 at El Dorado Park 1/25-3/1 (RB, KG) and a continuing bird at West L.A. College 2/24 (DS).

The spring migration will be in full swing by the time this is published, and legions of birders will be out in the

deserts and local parks to enjoy the spectacle of spring. Whether you are looking at common birds in your backyard or scouring the vagrant traps for that next county record, take time to appreciate the beauty of all of Los Angeles County's birds, and remember to do what you can to help preserve the wonderful diversity of birdlife that calls Los Angeles County home. If you are fortunate enough to find an interesting vagrant, please use the L.A. County listserv — groups.yahoo.com/group/LACoBirds — , and the L.A. Birdbox (818) 952-5502 to allow other interested birders to share in your good fortune. 

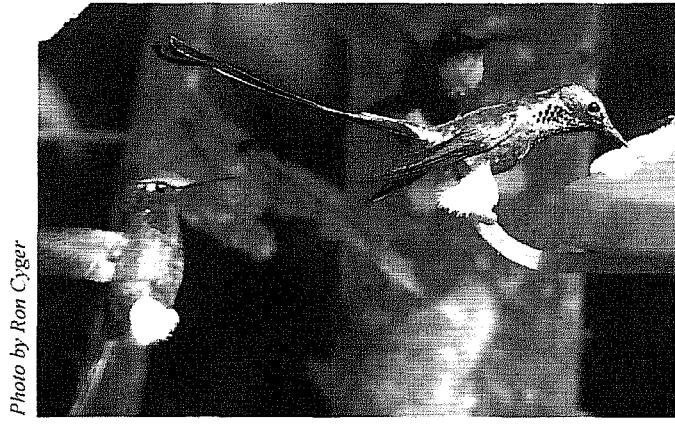
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| AM | Al Moreno |
| BP | Bob Pann |
| BW | Bobby Walsh |
| DB | Donna Bray |
| DM | Dave Moody |
| DS | Don Sterba |
| DSu | Dave Surtees |
| EM | Elaine MacPherson |
| JB | Jean Brandt |
| JBo | Jeff Boyd |
| JD | Julian Donahue |
| JFe | Jon Feenstra |
| JFi | Jon Fisher |
| JG | Jim Garrett |
| JS | Janet Scheel |
| JW | Jeff Webster |
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| MSMj | Mike San Miguel Jr |
| RB | Richard Barth |
| RH | Rod Higbie |
| RN | Richard Norton |
| RS | Russel Stone |
| SH | Sue Horton |
| TMcG | Todd McGrath |
| TMj | Tom Miko |
| TW | Tom Wurster |

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

Jewels of Ecuador will be the program presented at Audubon Center in Debs Park for the May general membership meeting. This combined meeting of Los Angeles Audubon Society and Pasadena Audubon Society will begin at 7:00 PM, Wednesday, May 17, 2006. Details on page 12.



Bicolored Antpitta



Booted Racket-tail

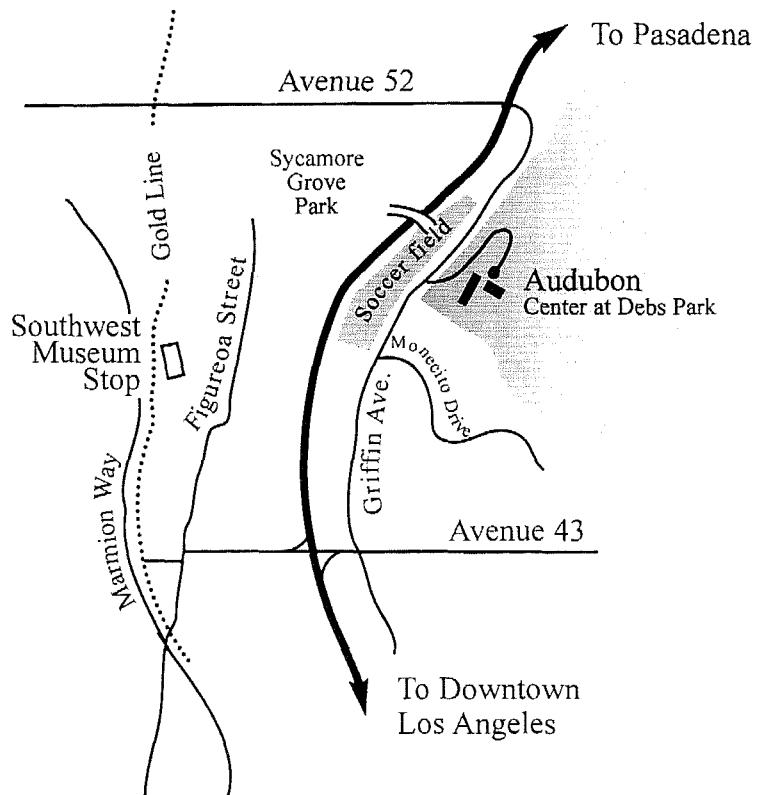
Debs Park Map

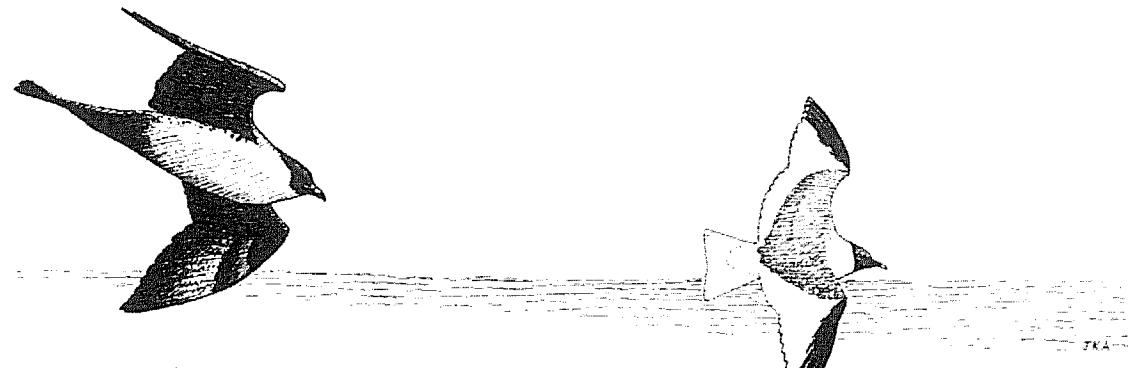
From Pasadena:
110 Freeway south
Exit Avenue 52
Make a left onto Avenue 52
Avenue 52 turns into Griffin Ave.

From Downtown LA:
110 Freeway north
Exit Avenue 43
Make a right onto Avenue 43
Make a left onto Griffin Avenue

Easily accessible from the Southwest Museum Gold Line stop. Cross Sycamore Grove Park and foot bridge And you'll be at the gates of the Audubon Center.

The park entrance is across from The Montecito Heights soccer fields.





PELAGIC TRIPS

Sunday, June 4 –

Landing on **Santa Cruz Island** for the **Island Scrub-Jay**, then out to sea. This 9-hour trip departs from Island Packer's Oxnard dock in the Oxnard Harbor at 8:00 AM on the M/V Vanguard. We will land on Santa Cruz Island (for about an hour) at Prisoners Cove where the endemic Island Scrub-Jay is easily seen. Then we will go out to sea for pelagic birding, returning by Anacapa Island. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar, Sooty and Pink-footed shearwaters, South Polar Skua, Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers, Sabine's Gull, rocky shorebirds (up to 5), Pigeon Guillemot, and Xantus's Murrelet. Rarities – Flesh-footed Shearwater. A Tufted Puffin was seen in 2002.

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

\$85 – A box lunch can be ordered from the adjoining dock-side deli, or bring a picnic lunch and drinks.

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

Saturday, September 9 –

Deep water trip toward **Cherry, Tanner, and Cortez Banks**.

This trip departs from Sea Landing in the Santa Barbara Harbor at 7:00 AM on the Condor Express and returns approximately at 8:00 PM. This is the **Red-billed Tropicbird** trip. We will be offshore in three counties, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Los Angeles. Birds expected: Black, Least, Ashy, and Leach's storm-petrels, South Polar Skua, Parasitic, Pomarine, and Long-tailed jaegers, Sabine's Gull, and Arctic Tern. Rarities: Black-footed

Albatross, Buller's Shearwater, Craveri's Murrelet. Blue, Fin, and Minke whales as well as several species of dolphin can be seen.

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

\$198 – There is a complete galley that serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner.



Pink-footed Shearwater

Saturday, October 14 –

Northern Channel Islands Monument.

This 9 hour trip departs from the Island Packer's dock in the Ventura Harbor at 8:00 AM on the fast catamaran Islander. After dropping off campers on Santa Cruz Island, we will have the boat to ourselves and cruise around Santa Cruz Island to the Santa Cruz Passage by Santa Rosa Island and along the Santa Rosa Flats to the deeper water near San Nicolas Island. Then we will return by Arch Rock at

Anacapa Island. Birds seen on prior trips: Northern Fulmar, Pink-footed, Sooty, and Black-vented shearwaters, Leach's, Least, and Ashy storm-petrels, cormorants (3), Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers, Sabine's Gull, rocky shorebirds (up to 5), Common Murre, Craveri's and Xantus's murrelets, and Cassin's Auklet. Rarities: Buller's and Flesh-footed shearwaters, South Polar Skua, and Long-tailed Jaeger. Blue, Fin, and Humpback whales have been seen on this trip. In 2002 a Streaked Shearwater was seen and in 2003 a Brown Booby and two Manx Shearwaters were seen. Leaders: **Todd McGrath and David Pereksta.**

\$110 – There is a snack type galley with beverages.

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.*

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 \$5 to \$10 energy surcharge per person.

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.

Saturday, May 6 –

L.A. Audubon Society Annual Picnic. We will meet at Kenneth Hahn Park this year to coincide with the Native Plant & Wildlife Garden opening. All LAAS members are invited! LAAS birdwalk at 8:00 AM. California Native Plant Society led plant walk in the Garden at 10:00 AM, opening ceremony at 11 AM and *free* barbecue at 12 noon. To meet for the birdwalk, after passing the entrance kiosk (\$4 parking fee), turn left (leading to the "Olympic Forest") and park in the first available spaces. To park closest for the 10 AM garden walk or the 11 AM Garden opening, drive past the kiosk, past the lake, past the Community Center and go up the hill and park at the top and walk down to the Garden. If full, park at the Community Center or on the hill between the community center and the picnic area on the top, but only on the right side. The 12 noon barbecue will be at the picnic area on the hilltop. The park entrance is at 4100 S. La Cienega Blvd. between Rodeo Rd. and Stocker St. LAAS will be joined by garden volunteers and interns from the community, California Native Plant Society, Friends of Baldwin Hills, and others involved in the Garden Project. Come out and see what LAAS money and involvement has helped create in our inner city! RSVP gardenparty@laaudubon.org or call Audubon House (323) 876-0202 so we can get a count for food and drinks.

Sunday, May 7 –

Box Canyon Herps. Leader: **Harvey Fischer.** We will poke around this beautiful canyon east of Indio in search of lizards of the southern deserts such as Zebra-tailed, Leopard, Desert Horned lizards, Desert Iguana and possible Chuckwalla and Collared Lizard. And, yes, we will also look at any birds that we encounter! Meet at Thousand Palms

Canyon Preserve at 8:30 AM. Allow at least 2 hours driving time from L.A. No limit, but reserve with L.A. Audubon with SASE for meeting information, directions, etc. Provide name, phone number, e-mail. Your contact information will be released for carpooling, unless you request it not be.

Bring food and water for a whole day. May be over 100 degrees.

Sunday, May 7 –

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 Canyon. Blvd. 5 miles to Entrada Rd. Parking \$2. Meet at 8:00 AM.

Saturday, May 13 –

Galileo Hills and Butterbredit Springs. Leader: **Nick Freeman.** These are two of the best spring migrant traps in the state. Western warblers and flycatchers should headline. Reptiles may be encountered! Take Hwy 14 about 4 miles past Mojave, then turn right on California City Blvd. Drive through town about a mile past the shops, turn left past the golf course on Randsburg-Mojave Rd., and veer right on 20 Mule Team Rd. Turn left at the Galileo Hills sign before the hill, take your first paved right, your first right again, into the Silver Saddle Country Club, followed by two paved lefts into the lot. Park by the first pond. About 2 hours driving time from L.A. LAAS phone sign-up mandatory. 12 max. Bring lunch, sun block. Meet at 7:30 AM, finish up around 4:00 PM.

Saturday, May 20 –

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Leader: **Karen Johnson.** 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.

Sunday, May 21 –

Ballona Wetlands. **Bob Shanman** will be leading this trip to our nearest wetland and adjacent rocky jetty. 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 27 –

Whittier Narrows. Leader: **Ray Jillson.** View colorful resident and migrating birds, possibly 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 4 –

Topanga State Park. Leaders: **Ken Wheeland** and **Chris Tosdevin.** Meet at 8:00 AM. See May 7 listing for details.

Saturday, June 10 –

Night Owling Trip. Leader: **Raymond Schep.** Target birds include Northern Pygmy-Owl, Flammulated Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Western Screech-Owl (easier), and Common Poorwill (easy to hear). Until dark we will bird for mountain specialties such as Cassin's Finch and White-headed Woodpecker. 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! Arrive early to leave promptly at 5:30 PM from where the 210 Fwy and Angeles Crest Highway (Hwy 2) 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. 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 16-19 – Southern Sierras. Leader: **Bob Barnes.** High deserts to High Sierra. The most diverse, species-rich region in the state. Likely: Goshawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Pileated Woodpecker and owls. 150 species likely in four 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 17 – Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Leaders: **Ann and Eric Brooks.** Meet at 8:00 AM. \$4 entry fee. See May 20 listing for details.

Saturday, June 24 – Whittier Narrows. Leader: **Ray Jillson.** Meet at 8:15 AM. See May 27 listing for details.

Sunday, July 2 – Topanga State Park. Leaders: **Ken Wheeland and Chris Tosdevin.** Meet at 8:00 AM. See May 7 listing for details.

July 1 through 4 – Quaking Aspen Camping Trip for Owls. Leaders: **Mary & Nick Freeman.** Campground is between Springville and Ponderosa in the southwest Sierras. A group campsite is reserved. Owling by night, bird walks by day! Hopeful birds: Flammulated, Northern Saw-whet, Spotted owls, and others; Pileated Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Hammond's Flycatcher, and more. Some meals will be potluck, others provided or eat out. Meet Saturday 8:00 AM or noon. More details in flyer. Send SASE, phone, e-mail, and \$45 to reserve. 10 sign-ups max., no children or pets, please.

Sunday, July 23 –

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, bird all day. More details next newsletter. No sign-up.

Saturday, August 12 –

Shorebird Workshop (lecture). Our speaker will be the amiable yet authoritative **Jon Dunn**, who leads field trips to far-flung locations including Alaska, Thailand, and California. He presently sits on the California Bird Records Committee, is the primary consultant for the National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, and has co-written two top-notch books on bird ID and distribution with our own Kimball Garrett. As such, he is extraordinarily qualified to speak on aspects of shorebirds and many other North American bird families. Jon will cover species routinely encountered in California, as well as west coast rarities, emphasizing aging, distribution and timing of occurrence by species and age, as well as how to approach shorebird identification.

Binoculars are always a good idea for slide programs. Cookies and coffee. Meet at Eaton Canyon Nature Center, Pasadena, from 1:00 to 5:00 PM. Limit: 80 signups. Send \$25 and a SASE with phone number to Audubon House to reserve, and for directions. See listing for Jon's shorebird field trip below.

Sunday, August 13 –

Shorebird Workshop (field trip). **Jon Dunn** will provide direction on shorebird identification in the field, applying information from the lecture. Some collateral identification of other families may also occur. Limited to pre-paid lecture participants. Send \$20 (\$45 total) in your SASE to LAAS to sign-up. The field trip location will be semi-spontaneous depending upon reports and conditions; directions will be handed out at the lecture. The site where we can view shorebirds (hopefully up close) will be 75 minutes or closer from L.A., and may involve a fair amount of walking. Finish up around 1:00 PM. Limit: 17. Bring 'scopes if you can, sun block, a snack, and your favorite field guide.

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

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

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
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057

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 PM to answer questions about field trips. Our office staff is also available Tuesday through Saturday for most reservation services.

MAY MEETING NOTICE

The May meeting will be a combined meeting of Los Angeles and Pasadena Audubon Societies.

NOTE DATE!

Wednesday, May 17, 2006
7:00 PM – Social
7:30 PM – Meeting

NOTE LOCATION!

Audubon Center at Debs Park
4700 North Griffin Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90031
(323) 221-2255
(see directions on page 8)

Jewels of Ecuador

No bigger than the state of Colorado, Ecuador's altitudinal habitats range from the Pacific coast up the western slope to the highest Andes, down the eastern slope to Amazon rainforest, and from northern humid forest to dry scrub in the south. Its position on the equator means there isn't the traditional cool and hot seasons one might expect but wet and dry seasons instead. All this helps to generate an astounding list of 1537 species of birds, with 12 endemics, that have been seen in the country. Ron Cyger, Bill Principe, Herb Clarke, and Garry George share photos and videos of some of the "Jewels of Ecuador" from their recent trips to Ecuador.

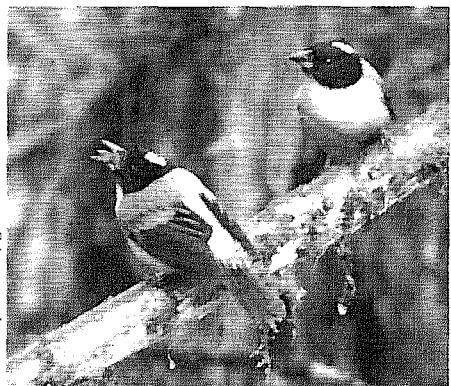


Photo by Ron Cyger

JUNE MEETING NOTICE

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

Tuesday, June 13

Hartmut S. Walter
Saving the Island Shrike: Tackling a Channel Islands Problem

A petition has been drafted to list the Island Loggerhead Shrike as an endangered taxon. Hear the latest news and accomplishments of UCLA's SHRIKE FORCE that has monitored the dwindling population of this endemic island resident with the assistance of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Professor Hartmut Walter and some of his students will discuss the serious conservation problems on the Channel Islands and the difficulties of maintaining and restoring imperiled species such as the shrike, the island fox as well as habitats free of exotic weeds.

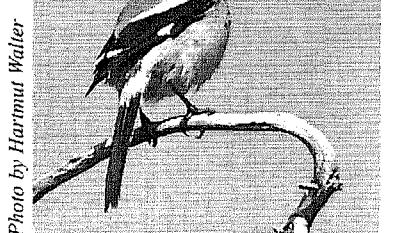


Photo by Hartmut Walter

Los Angeles Audubon Society
P.O. Box 931057
Los Angeles, CA 90093-1057

*DATED MATERIAL
Please Expedite*

***Election
of Officers***

***Wednesday
May 17th
General Meeting***