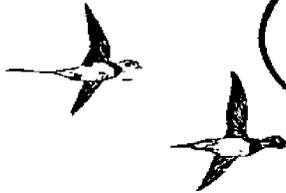


CHRISTMAS



SPECIAL REPORT

COUNTDOWN --- 1962



LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
PLUMMER PARK
7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.
LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

By HUGH KINGERY

The final totals for the 1962 Christmas Bird Census were: 135 species, 27,060 individuals. This is three fewer species than last year (the same number as 1960), but twice the number of individuals. It is, in fact, the largest number of individual birds recorded since 1958. The reason for this is simply--more observers; we had 107 participants this year, 45 last year.

Among the more striking observations were: 505 Anna's Hummingbirds--180 more than we have ever recorded (perhaps due to more feeders plus the mild winter), a Bald Eagle over Echo Park, a Swainson's Thrush in Elysian Park, one Hooded Oriole and four Western Tanagers attending feeders, and a Black-headed Grosbeak in Griffith Park.

A surprising aspect of the Christmas Census is its revelation of the large number of birds which can be seen a short distance from our homes. We can go out any morning and find a good variety of species within five miles. The count indicated the following as the best places in the city to bird:

Table with 3 columns: Location, Species count, and Individual count. Locations include Playa del Rey, Stone Canyon, Franklin Canyon, Downtown Area, and Griffith Park.

The downtown parks, Echo and MacArthur Parks, present excellent places to observe waterfowl, and Elysian Park has a surprising variety of land birds. Twenty observers were counting in Griffith Park and their diligence shows in the large numbers recorded from there. One phenomenal total which came out of the Census was the huge number of birds tallied by observers at home watching their feeders, yards or neighborhood. These watchers counted 38 species, 2167 individuals, including three species not found otherwise in the city.

We noted these trends from the Census: scarcity of Robins and Thrushes so far this year; no Bluebirds (all this despite a bumper crop of berries in the chaparral); Herons and Egrets disappearing along with their habitat; Coots and Shorebirds, Western Gulls and Savannah Sparrows decreasing for the same reason; the Sparrow Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and Wren-Tit seem to be declining as the chaparral makes way for housing developments; also decreasing are the Oregon Junco, Fox Sparrow and Audubon's Warbler.

We missed seven species which we had recorded without exception for the previous six years. These were the Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Semi-palmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitcher, Western Bluebird and Hutton's Vireo. Spotted Doves, English Sparrows and Scrub Jays, however, seem to be increasing. We had higher counts on many species due to better coverage--gulls (except

(Continued on page 55)

# NEW MEMBERS

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5255 Glasgow Way, L. A. 45

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956 Lucile Ave., L. A. 26

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117 N. Ave. 55, L. A. 42

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5217 Highland View Ave., L. A. 41

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5825 Harold Way, Apt. 8, Hollywood 28

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114 1/2 S. Kenmore Ave., LA 4

Miss Barbara Ann Fisher  
1414 Silver Lake Blvd., LA 26

Mr. & Mrs. W. R. Hubbard  
2071 Balmer Dr., LA 39

Mrs. Harold Swanton  
17232 Nordhoff St., Northridge

## Welcome!



## THE WESTERN Tanager

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
**LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY**

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD, LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA  
HOLLYWOOD 7-9495

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Editor . . . . . Robert E. Blackstone  
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Art Editor . . . . . Bob Sandmeyer

Audubon Activities . . . Elizabeth Rose

Conservation . . . . . Frank Little

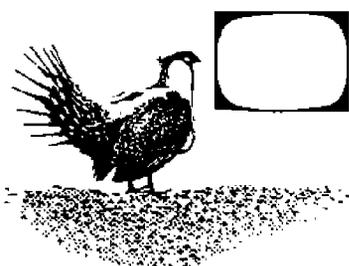
Field Notes . . . . . Arnold Small

Typing . . . . . Helen Sandmeyer  
Caroline Adams

Folding & Mailing . . . Marion Wilson  
Bill Watson



December, calendar-wise, looked like a quiet month for birders, but future reports will reveal that many members were taking advantage of vacation opportunities for birding in Mexico (a trip list of 247 birds in ten days!), Arizona and the Sacramento Valley. Some members aided other societies in their Christmas Census.



On the home front, Wayne Thomas, who sparks his widely viewed Million Dollar Matinee on Channel 9 with interviews of the great and the near great, learned about the Audubon Society in an exchange with our President, Arnold Small. He cleverly opened the fifteen minute session with the destruction of the usual image of the "bird-watcher" by presenting non-bespectacled, virile Arnold smoking a cigarette. Arnold then showed various tools of the birder, such as the Field Guide and binoculars. He told of projects such as bird banding and demonstrated how this is done. He displayed several feeders and spoke of methods for attracting birds to the yard. The national scope of the Audubon organization was illustrated through the Audubon Magazine. A large audience

(Continued on page 50)



HEADQUARTERS, NATURE MUSEUM AND LIBRARY LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE,  
 PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 46, HO-7-9495

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1963 FEB. 1968							1963 MAR. 1968						
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							31						

# February

Feb. 2 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS 9:45-11:15 A.M. Meet at Griffith Park Zoo.  
 "Kelkies, Training and Obedience" For further information call John Peebles:  
 HO 7-1661.

Leader: George Ray

Feb. 7 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.

Feb. 9 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP 8:00 A.M. Harbor Park (Bixby Slough). Drive south  
 on Vermont Ave. to Pacific Coast Highway, cross the highway and go about one block,  
 turn left into the parking lot. Ducks, shorebirds, rails, herons, etc. Bring lunch  
 and binoculars.

Leader: Frank Little GL 4-4875

Feb. 12 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. Great Hall, Plummer Park. Dr.  
 Thomas R. Howell of the Department of Zoology of U.C.L.A., who has just returned  
 from seven months of field work in Nicaragua, will show slides and speak on "Animal  
 Life in Nicaragua". Dr. Howell's work was directed primarily toward birds, and  
 his special interest is in the systematics, distribution and ecology of the birds of this  
 region.

Program Chairman: Russ Wilson PO 1-7635

Feb. 24 SUNDAY FIELD TRIP - 8:00 A.M. Meet at the corner of Reseda Blvd. and  
 Roscoe Blvd. Birding will be at Chatsworth Reservoir in the San Fernando Valley.  
 Ducks, Geese, possibly Whistling Swans, Mergansers, Lewis' Woodpeckers. Bring  
 lunch and binoculars.

Leader: Reg Julian CR 4-3685

Feb. 28 THURSDAY MORNING MEETING - 10:00 A.M. Long Hall, Plummer Park. Walt  
 Disney Nature Film will be shown by Norman McGary and Bill Lorenz.

Chairman: Catherine Freeman CL 7-7038

Mar. 2 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP 8:30 A.M. Headquarters of Audubon Center of South-  
 ern California, 1000 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte. Take San Bernardino Freeway to  
 Rosemead Blvd., south on Rosemead to San Gabriel Blvd., left to N. Durfee, left to  
 Audubon Center. Soup will be served. Bring lunch and binoculars.

Host: Paul Howard, Director

# CALENDAR *Continued...*

- Mar. 2 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS 9:45-11:15 A.M. Meet at Plummer Park to tour Audubon House, Headquarters of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. For further information call John Peebles: HO 7-1661.
- Leader: Staff of Los Angeles Audubon Society
- Mar. 7 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.
- Mar. 9 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP To be announced in March Tanager.
- Mar. 12 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. Great Hall, Plummer Park. Program to be announced in March Tanager.

## Audubon Activities



was enlightened on the subject of "birdwatching" through this effort of Mr. Thomas and Arnold.



The change of date and place for the January evening meeting was evidently carefully noted by a large number of members, who were rewarded with a skillfully prepared picture-lecture by Herb Clarke and Company.

Prior to the presentation of the program, President Arnold Small conducted a brief business meeting. Hugh Kingery reported on the Christmas Census. One hundred and seven participants reported 135 species. The largest number of birds were reported by the group covering the downtown Los Angeles area! The commonest bird according to the number count was the House Finch.

Etta L. Ross of the Los Angeles Geographic Society announced a proposed Alaskan yachting trip and gave telephone numbers TR 79929 and PO 91128 as sources for further information.

Dennis M. Power asked for help in obtaining information for a Biology Master's thesis on the subject of the Ringed Turtle Dove and the Chinese Spotted Dove.

The selection of the annual nominating committee was completed when Mrs. Betty Jenner was unanimously chosen from the membership at large.

At the conclusion of these reports and announcements, Program Chairman Russ Wilson presented the Society's own photographer-lecturer Herb Clarke and his wife, Olga. As Russ pointed out, Olga "caddies" for her husband, and

(Continued on page 56)

The article beginning on the opposite page, **SO YOU DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT BIRDS**, is being reprinted by permission of the author, Dr. Robert C. Miller, from **PACIFIC DISCOVERY**, the excellent magazine of the California Academy of Sciences of which Dr. Miller is director. It is the first of a series of monthly articles on birds to be published in this magazine. We felt that it was the best introduction to the study of birds that we had ever seen. Those of our readers who have progressed beyond the stage represented by Dr. Miller's young friend, can surely see its possibilities as a means of introducing some of their friends to "birdwatching"

We unreservedly recommend **PACIFIC DISCOVERY** to those of our readers who are not yet acquainted with it. Associate membership in the California Academy of Sciences (which includes subscription to **PACIFIC DISCOVERY**) is available at \$4.00 per year. Address the California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco 18, California.

## AUDUBON CENTER FIELD TRIP MARCH 2nd

Paul M. Howard, Director of the Audubon Center of Southern California, has invited members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society and their friends to attend a special "Spring" Field Trip at Audubon Center on March 2, 1963. The trip will begin at the Headquarters building at 8:30 A.M. and conclude about noon. Hot tomato soup will be furnished; each person should bring a sack lunch. Consult the calendar page for further details.

# SO YOU DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT BIRDS!



by Robert C. Miller

PEOPLE WHO KNOW that I am a bird watcher in my spare time, often say to me—usually by way of making conversation at social functions—“I just love birds, but I don’t know a thing about them.” Generally my reply is formally polite, such as, “I’m sure you would find much pleasure in the study of birds if you really got into it,” or “Why don’t you get a book and start identifying the birds in your own garden?”

As a rule it is useless to say more than this, because the people who make the statement I have quoted have no serious interest or they *would* know something about birds. The late Joseph Grinnell, famed ornithologist of the University of California, once told me that his colleagues around the Faculty Club were constantly expressing a desire to know more about birds, until he offered to take them on a bird walk around the Berkeley campus at 5:00 a.m. He made the offer seriously, but there were no takers.

Nevertheless, there *are* people who say, “I wish I knew more about birds,” who mean it, and who really don’t know how to start. To them this brief article is addressed.

A few years back a girl about twenty years old made the statement to me which I have quoted in the first paragraph. She was an intelligent girl, and the circumstances were in my favor. We were both guests in the home of her aunt. We had nothing in particular to do at the moment. I was more than twice as old as she and in a position to bully her, so I decided to do something about this ancient figment of conversation.

“So you don’t know a thing about birds!” I said. “The fact is that you know a great deal about them, and are in a fair way of becoming an ornithologist.”

“Oh, no,” she said. “I don’t know one bird from another.”

“You do, too,” I said. “You have a great deal of basic ornithological information, and I can prove it. Now take this piece of paper and write down the names of all the birds you know.”

“But I don’t know any,” she said, feeling suddenly trapped.

“Oh, yes you do,” I replied. “You know chicken, a duck, and a turkey.”

She admitted this, and I said, “All right, put down on the paper CHICKEN, DUCK, TURKEY. Then go on from there.”

She began to get interested, and wrote down, “OWL, CROW, SEA GULL.”

“Keep it up,” I told her. “You’re doing fine.”

Presently she came to SPARROW. She said, “I know there are a lot of different kinds of sparrows, but I don’t know one from another.”

“Just write down SPARROW,” I said. “That’s all we need for the present.”

From there she went on, and presently came up with the following list:

CHICKEN  
DUCK  
TURKEY  
GOOSE  
OWL  
CROW  
SEA GULL  
HAWK  
EAGLE  
ROBIN  
SPARROW  
MEADOWLARK  
JAY  
HUMMINGBIRD  
PIGEON  
WOODPECKER  
SWALLOW

Here she bogged down, so—like the master of ceremonies on a quiz program—I gave her a little help.

“You wouldn’t by any chance know a pelican if you saw it?”

“Of course,” she said. “One couldn’t mistake a pelican. I just didn’t happen to think of it.”

“Then how about a parrot?” I inquired. “Sometime you must have seen one.”

“But that’s not a native bird,” she objected.

“It used to be,” I replied. “The Carolina parakeet, now extinct, was formerly abundant over much of the eastern United States, and into the middle west. And the thick-billed parrot of Mexico is sometimes seen in Arizona.”

# SO YOU DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT BIRDS!

(Continued from page 51)

"You play golf, I believe," I continued. "Have you ever seen any large, black, somewhat dumpy-looking birds hunting for worms on a golf course?"

"Oh, yes," she said. "Mudhens."

"Coot," I replied, "is a somewhat more acceptable name. Though sometimes used as a term of derision, Tennyson thought it a poetic word."

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern  
To bicker down a valley.

"Since we have for the moment disposed of coots," I said, "how about herons? Have you ever seen a heron?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, "I see them often when I am fishing—or swimming."

"Well, then," I said, "Since you fish and swim, maybe you just possibly know a kingfisher when you see it."

"Why, that's right," she answered. "I not only know a kingfisher when I see it, but even when I hear it."

"Now," I said, "you have named twenty-two birds. Can you really tell these birds apart?"

"Of course I can," she replied. "I don't know them by the names that you would call them, but I certainly know an owl from turkey and sea gull from a duck."

"Very well," I said. "You have named twenty-two birds which you say you can tell apart, and can recognize on sight. Students of classification have divided the birds of North America into twenty major groups, called *orders*. The list of twenty-two birds you have written out includes representatives of FIFTEEN of those orders."

"This proves two things. One is that—as I told you at the beginning—you know a good deal more about birds than you think you do. The other is that the system of classification that we use is a natural system, since even an untrained person can tell most of the major groups apart."

"Now I am going to take your list of twenty-two birds, rearrange it according to the system of classification, fill in the gaps, and give you a list of the orders of North American birds, three-fourths of which you are at least partly acquainted with already."

"The names of the orders all end in *formes*, which I am going to freely translate as *built like*. Thus *Pelecaniformes* means *built like a pelican*,

*Falconiformes* means *built like a falcon*, and so on. Most of the names you will find unfamiliar unless you have a better than average knowledge of Latin and Greek, but the idea is the same throughout. For example, *gallus* is the Latin word for chicken, and members of the order *Galliformes* are all built in recognizable degree like chickens.

"*Passer* is the Latin word for sparrow. *Passeriformes*, commonly known as *perching birds*, constitutes the largest and most widespread order. Without knowing it, you have recognized this as the largest order by putting in your list more birds of the order *Passeriformes* than of any other group."

"Perching should not be taken too literally as a definitive characteristic. The term is easily understood in contradistinction to diving birds, wading birds, etc. But it should be noted that a number of non-passeriform birds *do* perch. For example, falcons perch, owl perch, kingfishers perch. But taking them by and large, perching is the characteristic which all passeriform birds have in common, and they share skeletal characteristics that adapt them to the perching habit."

"So on to our list. And don't be afraid of scientific names. They won't hurt you, and they all mean something. If you familiarize yourself with this list, using the knowledge you already have and adding a little more, you will have a good knowledge of the major groups of North American birds and of their place in the accepted system of classification."

"You will find some surprises, such as that swifts and hummingbirds are in the same order. But this will call your attention to the *reasons* for classification, which you will have a long and I trust happy time finding out. Here is where we start."

Since the name of the young lady whom I thus shanghaied into being an ornithologist was Charlotte, we shall refer to her list as "Charlotte's list," and place it—duly rearranged—on the adjacent page. Then we shall list the scientific names of the orders, next the common names, and then shall present some thumbnail sketches to try to make these orders "come alive." Classification serves an important purpose, and even the beginner will be well advised to learn something about the major groups. But let us think primarily of birds as living organisms, with an extraordinary variety of interesting habits. 232

Drawings of birds by Elizabeth L. Curris

**CHARLOTTE'S LIST**

**ORDERS**

**EXAMPLES**

1. *Gaviformes* Loons



2. *Podicipediformes* Grebes



3. *Procellariiformes* Albatrosses, Shearwaters, Petrels



Pelican 4. *Pelecaniformes* Pelicans, Cormorants, etc.



Heron 5. *Ciconiiformes* Herons, Bitterns, Ibises, etc.



Duck, Goose 6. *Anseriformes* Swans, Geese, and Ducks



Hawk, Eagle 7. *Falconiformes* Vultures, Hawks, and Eagles



Chicken, Turkey 8. *Galliformes* Quail, Pheasants, Turkeys, etc.



Coot 9. *Gruiformes* Cranes, Rails, Coots, etc.



Sea Gull 10. *Charadriiformes* Shore Birds (Gulls, Sandpipers, Auks, etc.)



Pigeon 11. *Columbiformes* Pigeons and Doves



Parrot 12. *Psittaciformes* Parrots



13. *Cuculiformes* Cuckoos, Roadrunners, etc.



Owl 14. *Strigiformes* Owls



15. *Caprimulgiformes* Whippoorwills, Nighthawks, etc.



Hummingbird 16. *Apodiformes* Swifts, Hummingbirds



17. *Trogoniformes* Trogons



Kingfisher 18. *Coraciiformes* Kingfishers

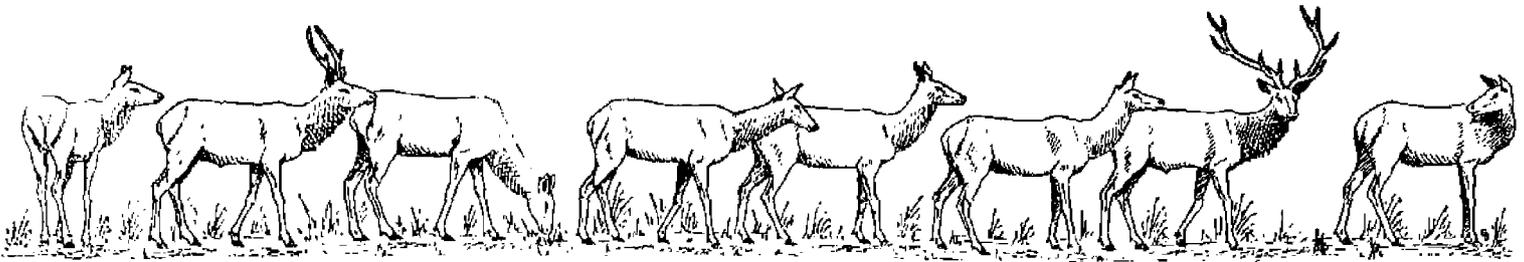


Woodpecker 19. *Piciformes* Woodpeckers



Crow, Swallow, Sparrow, Jay, Meadowlark, Robin 20. *Passeriformes* Perching birds





# COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE TULE ELK

## Help Save This Beautiful Animal From Extinction

5502 MARKLAND DRIVE      LOS ANGELES 22, CALIFORNIA      RAYMOND 3-2924

Dear Fellow Conservationist, *A. L. Audubon*

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

RODNEY ELLSWORTH  
Chairman

Beula Edmiston  
Secretary

G. WALTER DOW  
Treasurer

The Tule Elk teeters at the danger-point of extinction while annual hunts in special exception to the law keep the number of the wild, free herd in the Owens Valley between 250 and 300. Ironically, due to conflict of interests in its present range, California's Tule Elk (Dwarf Elk—*Cervus nannodes*) is denied the full protection California gave its elk in 1873. Until this Committee was formed in 1960, few people knew or cared about the plight of the Tule Elk, hence the present situation.

### ADVISORY BOARD

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The late Aldo Leopold wrote of a threatened mammal, "It will be a sorry answer to say he went under while conservationists weren't looking."

### REGARDING THE TULE ELK, CONSERVATIONISTS ARE NOW LOOKING!

This Committee now numbers more than 1000 individuals and over 50 organizations dedicated to the preservation of the Tule Elk by securing a permanently protected habitat, or NATURE RESERVE, embracing some 240 square miles in the south half of the Owens Valley (the chosen range of the major part of the herd) on lands owned by the City of Los Angeles for the purpose of water rights or on adjacent public lands withdrawn for watershed protection.

This NATURE RESERVE will afford maximum chance of survival for the Tule Elk and other resident wildlife and will afford a great garden of the wild with wide variety of native plants, in a setting of matchless beauty and great historic and geological significance.

Observation, study, and aesthetic enjoyment will not deplete, but rather will promote life, for it will foster knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and reverence for it.

Will you do two things now to help?

1. Join the Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk? \$2.00 or more for 2 years. *Thank you!*
2. Write us a letter in behalf this proposal which we may use to show widespread support for the NATURE RESERVE? *Alan*

Generations yet to come may well be grateful for your caring.

Sincerely,

*Beula Edmiston, Sec.*

*A non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of one of the world's rarest mammals.*

# CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN-1962

CONTINUED...

Western), doves, towhees, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows for example.

With so many participants we can't give credit to them all individually in this report. However, we should like to compliment four who have participated in the Census each year since 1946-- may they continue to do so for many more years: Caroline Daugherty, Merritt Dunlap, George Hastings, and Bess Hoffman.

It's an exciting affair, whether you count one year or fifteen years. We can conclude that even though the numbers have diminished considerably and the variety somewhat, our Los Angeles area still boasts a very large and varied population of birds.

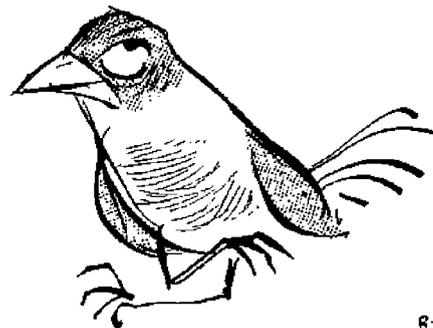
## About the Author...

Hugh Kingery came to Los Angeles from his native Colorado a little over a year ago, and has taken part in many of the Society's activities. A graduate of Cornell University, he is now employed in an administrative capacity at International Business Machines Corporation. Hugh has been interested in birds since he was thirteen years old (thanks once again to the Boy Scouts). He has participated in about a dozen Christmas Censuses in Colorado, where large numbers of birds (and observers) are not a problem at that time of the year. Last summer he conducted a Breeding Bird Census in Griffith Park which was published in the December 1962 issue of Audubon Field Notes. Hugh deserves our whole-hearted thanks and congratulations for the excellent job he has done conducting the 1962 Christmas Census.

## CHRISTMAS COUNT SUMMARY

Horned Grebe	3
Eared Grebe	16
Western Grebe	231
Pied-billed Grebe	5
Brown Pelican	12
Double-crested Cormorant	11
Brandt's Cormorant	6
Pelagic Cormorant	1
Great Blue Heron	8
Canada Goose	3
White-fronted Goose	1
Mallard	208
Pintail	19
Green-winged Teal	12
Shoveller	1
Redhead	1
Ring-necked Duck	20
Canvas-back	2
Lesser Scaup Duck	794
Common Golden-eye	5
Buffle-head	2
Old-squaw	1

(Continued on page 57)



## A TRIBUTE TO THE COMMON BIRD

(with my respects to Mr. Kingery's thorough instructions)

Were you wakened from your slumber  
By the homely mockingbird?  
Then count him in the number  
Of the species that you heard.

Yes, count him in the list you make,  
Though the species that you crave is  
The one that some would even take:  
The lovely rara avis.

Have you a little time to spare  
While working on this census?  
Then you can check the urban air,  
The roof tops and the fences.

Yes, check the urban neighborhood  
And other dismal places.  
List all the birds, some bad, some good,  
Not just the rara avis.

Were you up, into the mountains  
Before light, to find the owl?  
Then also check at fountains  
For the common waterfowl.

Check trees, however hoary  
And in need of work by Davey's  
Do not leave your territory  
Though it lacks the rara aves.

Check bog; check wash; check beach and bay  
For birds of every station,  
And do not let the others say  
You showed discrimination.

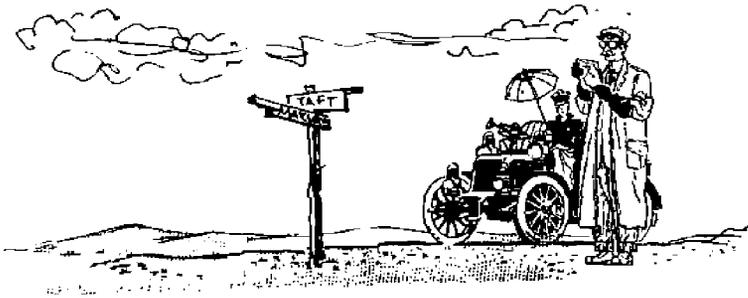
For if your choice was narrow  
With none that will amaze us,  
Think, His eye is on the sparrow  
Not just the rara avis.

Christopher Adams



this evening she was operating the projector.

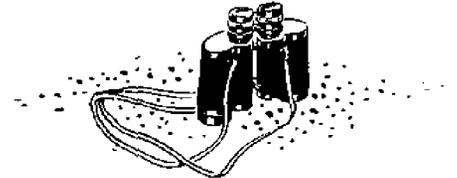
The springtime trip, now titled by Herb "Holiday in Mexico", is the same one reported in a different vein in the September Tanager by Jim Clements under the heading "Fiasco in Pecos" The humor in many of the situations remained unchanged but the beauty of the colored slides added an incomparable dimension. San Jorge Island, where one literally walks among the birds, was pictured. There were close-ups of Boobies, showing the distinguishing white head of the males, and comical young Boobies as large as the parents. The photographs were arranged in a sequence which began in Arizona's Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, proceeded across the border into Mexico and back past Quitobaquito, Madera Canyon, Tucson, Yuma, the California State Line and finally ended at Glendale's city limits. In addition to bird pictures, there were excellent shots of cactus, shells and starfish, lush green areas, and the Yuma Territorial Prison. The program reflected the many hours of preparation, editing and rehearsing required of the Clarkes. An added attraction was a picture taken in Malibu of what Herb originally took to be - Whimbrel but which is now believed to have been a Bristle-thighed Curlew! Such are the rewards of photographic collecting.



Forty-six members and friends of the Los Angeles Audubon Society braved below freezing cold to assemble in Maricopa at 8:00 A.M. on January 12 for the Saturday Field Trip. These hardy souls, led by Arnold Small, headed out in a caravan of eighteen cars to seek the Leconte's Thrasher at a point a few miles southwest of Maricopa where it has been seen many times before. The bird was seen perched on a barbed wire fence near the highway. Then the party tramped into the field and Larry Sansone herded the bird up the arroyo toward the waiting group so that nearly everyone had a good look at it as it approached and flew directly over them.

After this auspicious beginning, the caravan drove to the summit of Mt. Abel (8312 feet!). Here it was bitterly cold and few birds were to be seen. In spite of this, however, nearly everyone enjoyed it because of the scenery and the good company as they birded and had lunch.

After lunch the party headed for the Carrizo, approaching it this time from the southern end. On the way down the mountain a Lewis' Woodpecker and a Clarke's Nutcracker were seen by some of the group. The Carrizo Plain was, as usual, the winter home of thousands of Horned Larks, among which rarities such as the Lapland Longspur were sought in vain. It was while looking at one of these flocks that a Short-eared Owl was sighted; no less than twelve more of these were shortly flushed from the fields adjacent to the highway. Two Ferruginous Hawks were seen well by most of the group; somewhat less satisfactory views were had of the two Prairie Falcons seen.



It was nearly dark when the caravan arrived at the north end of Soda Lake to wait for the Sandhill Cranes. However, only a distant view of some twenty-five of them, silhouetted against the evening sky, was had as they came in to roost.

## OXY STUDENT SEEKS INFORMATION ON DOVES

Mr. Dennis M. Power, a graduate student at Occidental College, is beginning research on the biology of two species of oriental doves which have been introduced in the Los Angeles area, the (Chinese) Spotted Dove and the Ringed Turtle Dove. Mr. Power writes: "... My studies will involve the present and historical distribution and density of these two doves, their habitat, the amount and nature of competition with other members of the family Columbidae (for roosting and nesting sites, food, etc.), and their behavior in the wild. ... I am therefore trying to contact as many people as possible who have watched these doves in the wild and may have kept accurate field notes (or mental impressions) of their observations. If you have made such observations, or know of anyone who has, it would be of great value for me to talk or correspond with you."

Mr. Power anticipates that his finding will be the basis of a Master's thesis and will be published in an ornithological journal. What information he receives and uses will be credited to the contributor. He may be contacted at the MOORE LABORATORY OF ZOOLOGY, OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE, LOS ANGELES 41.

# Christmas Countdown

(Continued from page 55)

White-winged Scoter	45
Surf Scoter	977
Common Scoter	7
Ruddy Duck	44
Hooded Merganser	1
Red-breasted Merganser	9
Turkey Vulture	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6
Cooper's Hawk	6
Red-tailed Hawk	12
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Bald Eagle	1
Sparrow Hawk	33
California Quail	383
Sora	1
American Coot	444
Snowy Plover	70
Killdeer	256
Black-bellied Plover	473
Surf Bird	30
Black Turnstone	42
Common Snipe	2
Long-billed Curlew	2
Whimbrel	12
Spotted Sandpiper	8
Willet	587
Least Sandpiper	90
Dunlin	30
Western Sandpiper	188
Marbled Godwit	169
Sanderling	210
American Avocet	2
Glaucous-winged Gull	57
Western Gull	71
Herring Gull	66
California Gull	783
Ring-billed Gull	1629
Mew Gull	4
Bonaparte's Gull	269
Heermann's Gull	148
Forster's Tern	54
Caspian Tern	1
Band-tailed Pigeon	2
Mourning Dove	650
Spotted Dove	259
Ringed Turtle Dove	68
Roadrunner	4
Screech Owl	1
Horned Owl	10
Burrowing Owl	1
White-throated Swift	99
Black-chinned Hummingbird	2
Anna's Hummingbird	505
Belted Kingfisher	4
Red-shafted Flicker	82
Acorn Woodpecker	1
Hairy Woodpecker	2
Downy Woodpecker	19
Nuttall's Woodpecker	7
Black Phoebe	54
Say's Phoebe	11
Horned Lark	15
Scrub Jay	863
Common Raven	3

(Continued on page 58)

## CONSERVATION NEWS

from FRANK LITTLE

Although conservation is not currently making the news nationally, it certainly is locally. The national picture is quiet not due to any lack of issues (wilderness protection, pesticide control, protection of Rainbow Natural Bridge to name just a few), but because the new Congress has not yet really got down to business. On the local scene there are three major hot-spots.

One, the plan to develop a portion of Buena Vista Lagoon, seems to be even closer to reality. Not only did Oceanside rezone some land in favor of the development (as reported here last month), but at a preliminary hearing, the City Council of Carlsbad seems to have indicated that it will follow suit. The Nature Conservancy has been doggedly fighting this plan at every turn, and there is still a remote chance that even at this late hour the plan may yet be defeated. Win or lose, all of us interested in conservation owe a large thanks to the Conservancy and particularly to John Tyler who has, at the expense of considerable personal inconvenience, donated a tremendous amount of time and effort in this matter.

Another sore point, one which has been nagging us for years, is the Big Tujunga Wash. The gravel interests would like to make the area a quarry; the conservationists, under the joint leadership of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy would like to preserve the area as a natural park. The City of Los Angeles originally zoned the Wash against the gravel interests only to have the ruling reversed by a district court. This reversal was then reversed, however, by the State Supreme Court, and this action was just recently upheld by the National Supreme Court. Thus the area is now zoned against the gravel quarry. However, the erstwhile belligerent gravel interests, realizing that force would get them nowhere, have recently become all sweetness and honey; they will, at their own expense, provide a public park on the exhausted portion of the quarry in return for a zoning change in their favor. The conservationists immediately saw through the smoke screen, and so the melee rages anew. We of the Los Angeles Audubon Society once more sent a resolution to the City Council protesting any change of zoning in favor of the quarry. Things are never quiet for long!

The third trouble arises over a proposed plan to fill in the Playa Del Rey Lagoon to create a park. This lagoon, although nowhere near as large as most of our other lagoons, is nevertheless a valuable resting spot of migrating water birds. While we, of course, favor parks in general, we feel that the public would best be served by leaving the lagoon in a natural state. Consequently, we sent protests to the Recreation and Park Commission, Mayor Yorty, and Councilman Rundberg. Most of the property holders in the area did likewise.

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



# BIRDS

BY ARNOLD SMALL

Southern California is experiencing one of its driest winters on record. Between July 1 and Dec. 31 only 0.12 inches of precipitation had been recorded in Los Angeles. There was some light snow in the higher mountain reaches but the depth was very shallow. In the high Tehachapis, only small patches of snow were evident. By early January, winter had arrived in name only, but a severe cold snap in mid-January brought frost to the Los Angeles basin and well-below freezing weather to the outlying areas.

Winter birding reflected the mild season. Along the coast, and out at sea, there were not the usual winter species expected almost each year. Very few alcids were noted--only 3 Ancient Murrelets off Huntington Beach Dec. 27, for example. Similarly, no Fulmars or Black-legged Kittiwakes were there. Last year we recorded dozens of the former and hundreds of the latter. Loons and grebes were down, and sea ducks were generally scarce.

Waterfowl, away from the Imperial Valley, also were scarce. The number of ducks at Upper Newport Bay was about 50% of the usual 25,000 expected there during this season. Land-

birds also seemed to reflect this condition. The numbers of Robins and Cedar Waxwings reported on the various Christmas censuses was but a fraction of their usual numbers. Hermit Thrushes, and even Audubon's Warblers were scarce as well. White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows could not be called abundant in some areas where formerly they were. A few species of special interest were found, however, to add some interest to the season.

By far the most interesting report was the CATTLE EGRET reputed to have been seen in Orange County in late December. It was seen by only one person, but his description was accurate, and he had seen the species in Texas. Certainly, this must be the first observation from the west, and it will behoove all of us to watch the small white herons very carefully now. Another special bird--the RUFF was found on the same day near Huntington Beach, in the Santa Ana River flood control channel. This is the fifth record of this species for California--and all came within a calendar year! Another good bird, the RUSTY BLACKBIRD was located by McCaskie and others in that same area while they were searching in vain for the Ruff. A few Red Crossbills were found by Dave Pearson on the summit of Mt. Pinos in late December while he was scanning for Condors from there (he found them also). Olga Clarke reported a HARRIS SPARROW at her feeder in Glendale early in January, but it remained only for one day. On the Los Angeles Christmas Census, the best birds were the BALD EAGLE over Elysian Park and the HOODED MERGANSER at Stone Canyon reservoir. Let us see if the cold wave of mid-January doesn't start some birds moving south.

## CHRISTMAS COUNT SUMMARY

CONTINUED

Common Crow	3
Mountain Chickadee	3
Plain Titmouse	75
Common Bush-Tit	575
Wren-Tit	259
House Wren	8
Bewick's Wren	19
Canyon Wren	3
Rock Wren	6
Mockingbird	576
California Thrasher	91
American Robin	136
Varied Thrush	1
Hermit Thrush	6
Swainson's Thrush	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	17
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	7
Water Pipit	238
Cedar Waxwing	183
Loggerhead Shrike	43
Starling	16
Orange-crowned Warbler	2
Audubon's Warbler	1806
House Sparrow	2092
Western Meadowlark	148
Red-winged Blackbird	145
Hooded Oriole	1
Brewer's Blackbird	1784

Cowbird	28
Western Tanager	4
Black-headed Grosbeak	1
Purple Finch	4
House Finch	4342
American Goldfinch	252
Lesser Goldfinch	89
Lawrence's Goldfinch	1
Rufous-sided; Towhee	105
Brown Towhee	738
Savannah Sparrow	32
Lark Sparrow	52
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	1
Slate-colored Junco	1
Oregon Junco	111
Chipping Sparrow	58
White-crowned Sparrow	1102
Golden-crowned Sparrow	193
Fox Sparrow	45
Lincoln's Sparrow	4
Song Sparrow	86
Unidentified Ducks	24
Hawks	3
Yellowlegs	1
Cormorants	8
Gulls	263
Owls	2

Total Species.....135 Individuals..27,060