

The Western Tanager

Sawyer Camp Road

By Dorothy F. Lilly

Exploration of the haunts of native birds has obviously become an important chapter in the study of the science of recreation. Since even in one state alone there is never time enough for a student to cover a fraction of the territory, I find there is some satisfaction in reading about any one of the trails followed by others. With that in mind I offer herein a description of a field trip,

taken at least once each year by members of the Sequoia Audubon Society in San Mateo County, south of San Francisco.

Draw a line from San Jose westward to the Pacific ocean. From that line northward fifty miles to the Golden Gate is a strip of land sandwiched between San Francisco Bay and the ocean locally called "The Peninsula." San Mateo county is the central portion of this peninsula.

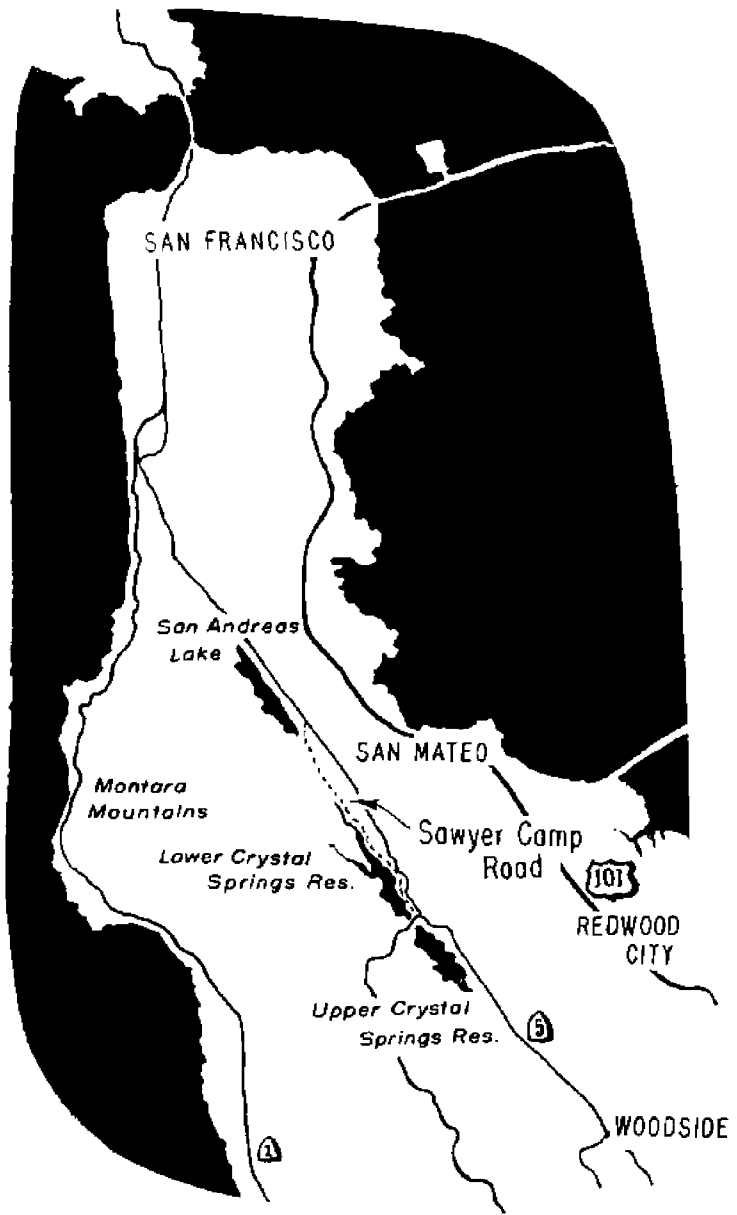
A topographical map would show the geological formation of this and adjacent land to be a series of lengthwise folds beginning at the western edge of the Central Valley of California and ending at the coast where the windrows of surf appear as a miniature continuation of these monumental ridges and cuts. Every rise or fall of the landscape creates a variation in plant life and a kaleidoscopic change in the avifaunal picture. The annual bird count is high compared to most of the United States.

A narrow valley down the middle of the Peninsula, when white men first came, was drained by a series of creeks which found their way to the Bay through two openings, one at what is now the Crystal Springs Dam above the present city of San Mateo and the other toward the southeast in the direction of Palo Alto.

The San Francisco Water Department over the years built a series of dams and thus created a continuous string of lakes down this valley. These constitute a reservoir for water supplying most of the entire peninsula. It is well fenced and guarded so one can always observe a pure and sparkling mountain lake, well worth a drive along its border any day of the year.

As you see it, backed by heavily forested mountains, opened to clear view over grassy meadow, you know you just have to find a place to pull off the road and get out your binoculars. In midwinter

(Continued on page 75)





# CONSERVATION ★ ★ ★ News FROM FRANK LITTLE

At times, in the game of conservation, things seem dark and discouraging. Area after area is relegated to the bulldozer; the rain of poison threatens to become a deluge; wildlife is on the decline everywhere. We wonder: Are our efforts worthwhile? Do our letters, contributions, and testimonies do any good? Often, just at the time we most need encouragement, our doubts are eased by some favorable outcome. Such was the case last month.

One incident, by way of illustration, occurred in connection with the San Geronio issue. The proponents of developing San Geronio Wilderness somehow or other persuaded the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to pass a resolution favoring the ski-lift. Actually, the area is not even in Los Angeles County and so technically the matter is none of the L. A. County Board's business. Even so, one finds it discomfoting to have the board of supervisors of the world's most populous county against one. Consequently, upon hearing of this resolution, the "Defenders of San Geronio Wilderness" sent out an urgent plea to all conservation organizations in this region to flood the Board with phone calls and telegrams requesting it to reverse its position. Many of our members were contacted and responded by calling the Board (they reported back that the telephone switchboard there was swamped with similar calls). The Executive Board of the Los Angeles Audubon Society sent a resolution by telegram urging the Board to reconsider. All in all, the County Board received a deluge of communications. Result: the Board rescinded its resolution (for purposes of publication, the Board is now neutral, but in fact, it reversed itself).

This is a clear cut demonstration that letters and calls do help.



Another demonstration of this fact is the matter of Playa Del Rey Lagoon. When news leaked out that the Recreation and Parks Commission planned to fill the lagoon, the Commission was swamped by letters protesting the action. The lagoon is not large, but on the other hand there is no good reason for filling it. Consequently we of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, along with many other conservation organizations, wrote letters of protest. Result: the Commission now states that it never seriously planned to fill the lagoon and furthermore is considering plans to beautify the area (not too much, we hope!).



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# Announcing

Los Angeles

*Audubon Society*

# ANNUAL DINNER



TUESDAY, MAY 28, 1963

NIKABOB RESTAURANT

A third example is the matter of Big Tujunga Wash. This problem is not completely resolved at present, but at the last hearing the gravel interests were denied a zoning variance--largely as the result of the efforts of many conservation organizations backed up by a stream of letters.

Thus we see that the pen may indeed be as mighty as the bulldozer. Once more we are encouraged to take action in behalf of conservation. When we are inclined not to write that letter to our representative feeling that only one letter can do no good, we are reminded that "many" letters is just the sum of many "one's" and that "many" letters can be of great influence.



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april 1963

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# April

- April 4 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.
- April 6 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS 9:45-11:15 A.M. Griffith Park Zoo Com-  
missary. For information call Ed Anacker: HO 7-1661.  
  
Leader: Earl Aubert
- April 9 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. Great Hall, Plummer Park. Mr.  
Norman McGary, artist and illustrator, will present the Disney film, "White Wilder-  
ness". This is one of the best Disney documentaries, and if you missed seeing it,  
you will be wise to see it now; if you saw it previously, you will surely agree it is  
worth seeing again.  
  
Program Chairman: Russ Wilson PO 1-7635
- April 13 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP 8:00 A.M. Tujunga Wash, Arroyo Seco. Cactus  
Wrens and other desert species as well as early spring migrants. Meet on the north  
side of the Foothill Blvd. bridge over Tujunga Wash in Sunland. Bring lunch and  
binoculars.  
  
Leader: Dave Robison PO 1-0217
- April 20 SATURDAY ECOLOGY FIELD TRIP - Botany Trip to Tapia Park. 8:00 A.M.  
in the parking lot left from entrance to Tapia Park. Park is reached via Malibu  
Canyon Road either from Coast Highway or Ventura Freeway. Bring picnic lunch.  
  
Leader: Jack Clark
- April 25 THURSDAY - MORNING MEETING 10:00 A.M. Long Hall, Plummer Park.  
"Rambles in Alberta", an illustrated talk featuring some of the wildlife and lesser  
known attractions in the mountains and prairies of western Canada. Speaker: Bob  
Blackstone.  
  
Chairman: Mrs. Catherine Freeman CL 7-7038
- April 27 SATURDAY, SUNDAY WEEKEND FIELD TRIP TO THE DESERT 7:00 A.M.  
28 Meet in Covington Park, Morongo Valley (about 10 miles north of U. S. 60-70-99 on  
the Twentynine Palms highway). From here to Thousand Palms Oasis, Mecca and  
north end of Salton Sea. Group will camp Saturday night at Finney Lake (about 3  
miles south of Calipatria on Calif. 111; turn left into State Refuge). Dry camp; bring  
insect repellent. Desert birding should be excellent with migration in full swing.  
  
Leader: Arnold Small VE 7-2272
- May 2 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.
- May 4 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS 9:45-11:15 A.M. Brand Park Mission  
Trail.  
  
Leader: Ed Anacker HO 7-1661



# CALENDAR

CONTINUED

May 11 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP 7:15 A.M. Tapia Park. Meet in parking lot left of entrance. Birds of oak and riparian woodland, with emphasis particularly on late migrants, warblers, vireos and finches. Identification by song and call.

Leader: Warren Blazer BR 2-8598

May 14 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. Great Hall, Plummer Park. Dr. Kenneth Stager will speak on the subject "The Role of Olfaction in Food Finding in Vultures" Dr. Stager is Senior Curator of Ornithology at the Los Angeles County Museum.

Program Chairman: Russ Wilson PO 1-7635

## ★ Audubon Activities

.. by ELIZABETH ROSE

Debussy would have been inspired had he seen the reflections in the water of the Chatsworth reservoir as the caravan of thirty cars drove up in the early morning of the Sunday, February 24th Field Trip. Moreover, a flock of about 200 Canadian Geese were flushed and flew in formation over to the bank on the other side honking loudly as they went. Reg Julian, traditional leader of this trip, was busy. There were about 45 people loaded with scopes, cameras, and lunch. Seventy-four species of birds were listed and Reg, in addition, estimated the numbers of the various species. A pair of white pelicans was most noteworthy.



All members of the Audubon Society who attended the Thursday Morning Meeting, Feb. 28, 1963, in Plummer Park enjoyed a real treat in Walt Disney's charming film called "Water Birds". The beauty of the great spoonbills, flamingos, and egrets was exquisitely portrayed, while the antics of the mating ducks made everyone laugh. The picture was most comprehensive both as to species and their many curious habits. Everyone felt well rewarded with this lovely picture.

Afterwards Catherine Freeman showed some of the slides she and her husband took last summer on their trip through Spain and Portugal.

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In this busy month, El Monte was revisited, March 2nd. In addition to a large group from our own society, there were many there from the Valley and Sea and Sage Societies. The cardinals had been well "staked out" and everyone had good views of them. An added bonus was a pair of Gadwalls in picture-taking plumage.

Outstanding event-of-the-month vote must go to the Arbor Day ceremonies initiated by indefatigable Marion Wilson. The Sunday afternoon, March 11, program not only brought together nearly 100 members for a social time in historical Audubon House but gave them a chance to observe the beginning of a long range program of planting around the house. Otto Widmann, who obtained the Catalina Cherry for the tree planting, is superintending this work. A series of pleasant episodes comprised the sunny afternoon. The Camp Fire Girls in red, white, and blue performed in such a charming fashion, singing, showing, reciting. They were the backbone of the program. Mrs. Alice Lewis spoke warmly and well on her subject, Mr. George Hastings, to whom the Audubon tree was dedicated. Mr. Hastings replied to the honor by eloquently declaiming several poems. Vice-president Frank Little emphasized the conservation theme in his remarks at both tree plantings. Mrs. Mary Salmon, President Emeritus, was so pleased to see all the new changes. Spring flower arrangements added to the attractiveness of the House rooms and homemade cookies and hot coffee caused a pleasant traffic jam. The faithful social committee under Olive Alvey was responsible for all this.

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The day before, March 11, was the Malibu Lagoon to Point Dume Field Trip. While observing the spouting of the gray whales northward bound another migrant, the loon, was spotted. The trip, lead by Dave Robison, was extremely well planned as advance care had been taken to provide access to shore and dune areas which are closed to the public. The E. H. Coughrans extended this hospitality. Three species of swallows, Mew gulls and an Avocet in breeding plumage were most notable in the lagoon itself. All three cormorants and the Glaucous-winged Gull were also counted.

# BANDING OF WATERFOWL

By GEORGE T. HASTINGS

*Editor Emeritus, The Western Tanager*

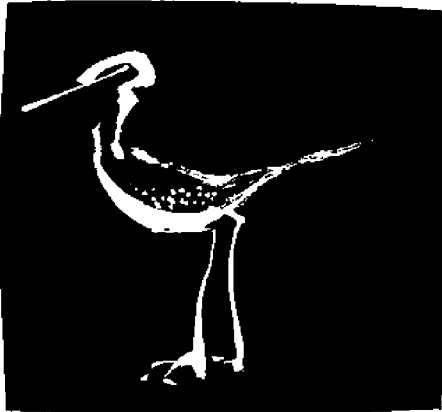
An article in the September-October number of *Outdoor California*, published by the State Department of Fish and Game, begins "As a means of conducting investigations of the migration and mortality of waterfowl, banding stands supreme." The Department has banded several hundred thousand ducks and geese since an intensive banding operation was begun in 1948.

Several methods are used in capturing birds for banding. The principal one has been the use of wire netting traps, 10 by 20 feet, with funnel like entrances, baited, usually with barley, inside and out. A method especially useful in capturing

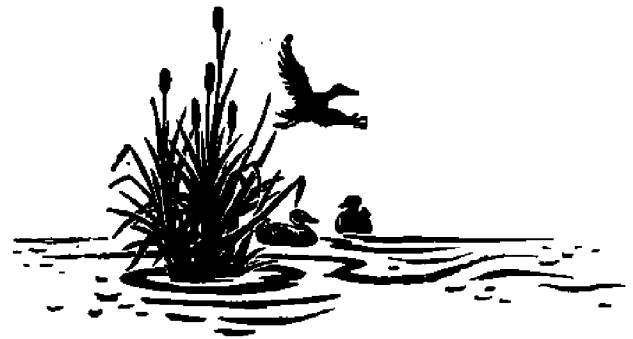
geese is the use of nets shot out by cannon. Nets 100 by 30 feet are fastened down along one long side. To the other side four projectiles are fastened by ropes. These are shot out by small cannon controlled electrically from a distance, sometimes as much as a mile. As many as 450 geese have been caught and banded as the result of one shot. Still another method, used especially to catch young birds or birds that are moulting, is the use of wire corrals 30 by 50 feet with wire mesh wings several hundred yards long forming funnels leading into the corrals. By means of motor boats or airplanes the ducks and geese are herded into the traps.

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All these activities did not detract but only whetted the need of members for Jim Huffman's Tuesday, March 12, evening meeting talk on the identifying of gulls and terns. Recent enjoyment of the several field trips made the opening conservation reports, called for by President Arnold Small, seem all the more real and pressing. It was a meeting at which many took notes.



Mr. Huffman's talk confined itself to ten gulls and eight terns of the southern California coast. He emphasized that a mark of the expert is in knowing when you cannot make a "safe" identification. He then pointed out some of the distinguishing features with the aid of a "skin" collection he had brought to exhibit. The specimens were used skillfully to augment his own field observations. In answer to the question, "What should we look for", he said, specifically, the terminal points: the bill, feet, wing tips and head markings. He warned that size is deceptive. In several troublesome areas, such as immature plumage, he gave helpful hints. When the plumage doesn't help, he said to look at the bill and the feet. From our jumble came bases for discrimination whether it be Caspian or Royal, Common or Forster's. And, at the last, Mr. Huffman quipped, "We have the Least, the Least Tern, that is!"



Much has been learned from a study of recovered banded birds. The pintail duck seems to be the greatest traveller, recoveries having been made in Siberia, Hawaii and Cook Island in the South Pacific. It has been found that the Siberian coast is a breeding ground for some of the black brant, snow geese and pintails that winter along the Pacific Flyway. In 1960 Russian biologists began banding snow geese along the coast of Siberia and some of the birds they banded have been recovered in California wintering grounds.

In an article on Quail in the November number of the magazine it is stated that an average of about a million and a half quail are shot each year in California. The numbers ranging from a million in lean years to about twice that in good years. Studies by the Department indicate that hunting has little effect in controlling populations of valley quail, the amount of winter and spring rain being the most important factor in determining the abundance of quail.



## NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Stephen Braitman  
7615 Norton Avenue, L. A. 46  
Mrs. Donald R. Lilly, c/o Mrs. E. A. Fortmann  
8349 51st Ave., Kenosha, Wis.  
Miss Winona Schlihs  
24402 Malibu Rd. Malibu

# BIRDING IN THE SOUTHWEST

## A GUIDE TO

# OASES

BY ROBERT BLACKSTONE



Large numbers of small birds do migrate each year through southern California, but this movement is generally unspectacular compared with that in the east. Here on the west coast the birds trickle through rather than coming in the "waves" spoken of so nostalgically by birders who have moved out here from the east. These desert oases of which we write are especially good places to bird during migration since the birds are concentrated in these small areas of greenery surrounded by miles of relatively barren desert. Those birds that migrate through the desert are forced, by their need of water, to move from one to another of these oases in their migration.

An astonishing variety of small birds has been seen in these oases, including finches, grosbeaks, buntings, etc. and virtually all of the western warblers, indeed, almost a cross-section of the small birds of southern California. In addition birds of more easterly distribution or migration, rarer aves otherwise in California, turn up at these oases with surprising frequency. Brown Thrasher, Black and White Warbler, Northern Water Thrush and American Redstart might be mentioned in this respect. There is too perhaps a greater likelihood of turning up accidentals such as the Indigo Bunting or the Painted Redstart than elsewhere in southern California. Frequently in the fall one sees mountain birds such as Townsend's Solitaires, Green-tailed Towhees, Lincoln's Sparrows and even Red-breasted Nuthatches, strangely out of place among the palms of an oasis.

Occasionally too we experience something akin to the eastern "waves" here when strong northerly winds bottle up the migrants in sheltered oases and canyons. Arnold Small in his column, "Southern California Birds", a few months ago wrote of experiencing this during the 1961 migration. The extraordinary number and variety of birds seen last spring on the field trip to the Morongo Valley was probably due to this.

Cottonwood Spring, in Joshua Tree National Monument, is one of the best. This is a palm oasis with a few cottonwood trees. It has been used as a campground for many years and has been very popular since it boasted a water supply. It has suffered much vandalism, and the cottonwood trees were dying due to the compacting of the ground at their roots. Last summer, however, a new campground was being constructed nearby, supplied with water from a well in Cottonwood Pass. The oasis itself, we were told, is to be a sanctuary. Cottonwood Spring is

reached by turning north off U. S. 60-70 some twenty miles east of Indio and entering Joshua Tree National Monument by the south entrance via Cottonwood Pass. Cottonwood Spring is seven miles from this entrance.

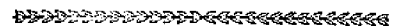
Thousand Palms Oasis is another exceptional locality. This too, as the name implies, is a palm oasis, somewhat more extensive than Cottonwood Spring. There is a little stream that runs through it. It should be emphasized here that this is private property, and that permission to bird here should be obtained from the owner, Paul Wilhelm, who resides here. To reach Thousand Palm Oasis, one turns off U.S. 60-70-99 on Ramon Road, ten miles east of Palm Springs, and proceeds through the town of Thousand Palms and five or six miles beyond to the Oasis.

Twentynine Palms Oasis is adjacent to the Headquarters of Joshua Tree National Monument and is located at the eastern end of the town of Twentynine Palms. There is "nature trail" here with a good representation of native desert plants and trees in addition to the palms. There is plenty of cover here, and the list of birds seen here is impressive.

We shall do no more than mention Yaqui Well and other locations in Anza-Borrego State Park since these were so well covered in Russ Wilson's excellent article in the January issue of the Tanager.

Other localities in the desert which have much promise for the birder, but which cannot be described as oases are: Morongo Valley, some ten miles north of U.S. 60-70-99 along the Twentynine Palms Highway, where we had an extremely successful field trip last spring. Vicinity of Mecca, along irrigation canals and in groves of trees. Mecca is located on California 111, a few miles southeast of Indio. Box Canyon, reached by following California 195 east out of Mecca. There is no surface water in this canyon, but there are plenty of trees and bushes and it is evidently a migration route.

So head for the desert in April, and good luck in your prospecting for birds!



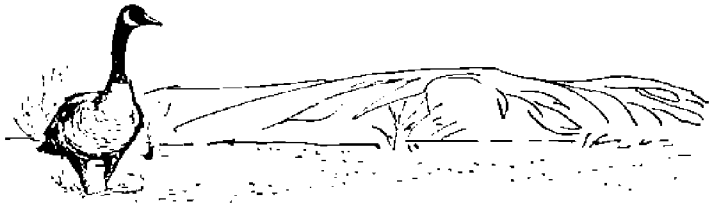
### About the AUTHOR

Mrs. Dorothy Lilly says that she has been interested in birds and nature since her girlhood on a Washington farm. She was educated in that state also, being a graduate of the University of Washington. The Lillys moved to Los Angeles some four years ago from the San Francisco Bay area. Mrs. Lilly says she was a resident of the Bay Area for some twenty-five years where she was a member of the Sequoia Audubon Society. She has compiled a checklist of "Birds of the Bay Region: Birds of Forest, Garden and Chaparral". (This is included in the National Audubon Society's listing of regional checklists.) Her articles have appeared in PACIFIC DISCOVERY as well as previous issues of the Tanager ("Allen Hummingbirds, Nesting and Rearing of Young", September 1960 and subsequent issues).

# SAWYER CAMP ROAD →

(CONTINUED)

there will be thousands upon thousands of wild ducks along with a few, sometimes hundreds of Canadian honkers swimming, flying or standing in grass at the side looking very much like a flock of



sheep. And this is only the spectacular part of the show.

Audubon groups, grateful for the protection of wildlife in this preserve, nevertheless have an impulse to seek a closer look. Members of the Sequoia Audubon Society have found that they see more variety when they take the comparatively unimproved Sawyer Camp Road directly north of the bridge on top of the Crystal Springs Dam, Highway 5. Left turn when headed north.

The watershed on both sides is fenced and parking spaces limited. The road follows the contour of the lake but up from it a way so there can be a clear view in the tranquil waters below of waterfowl, in great numbers during winter months. On a good day one sees Grebes (Horned, Eared, Western, Pied-billed, and Red-necked), Loons (Pacific, Common), Ducks (Mallard, Scaup, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Shoveller, Ruddy, Bufflehead, to name a few), Canada Geese (December and January only), Coots, Blue Herons, a variety of gulls and perhaps Sandhill Crane or an Egret.

For two miles one skirts the easterly side of Lower Springs Lake, slowly, keeping one eye on the chaparral-covered slopes where may be seen California Quail, Red-shafted Flicker, Scrub Jay, Brown and Rufous-sided Towhees, Oregon Junco, Mourning Dove, chickadees and sparrows in variety perching, after their short flights, on one of several interesting native shrubs or trees.



Easily identified shrubs include chamise (greasewood), coffee berry, toyon, wild lilac (ceanothus), smooth and creek dogwood, poison oak, and many more. The trees are unique, each with an interesting history: madrone, California laurel, buckeye, live oak, elderberry, holly leaf cherry, Arroyo willow and others.

The cars move along and the birds appear to all change places. A reticent Wrenit exposes himself after seeming to sound off from several different directions, a deep-blue crested Steller's Jay cuts across an open space. Somebody spots an Audubon's Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a Hutton's Vireo, or another small thing called a Bewick's Wren. Likely there are a number of Meadowlarks in the grass and a flock of Linnets or Pine Siskins feeding on weed seeds. It is hard to be sure the California Thrasher over yonder is not a Mockingbird.

Close to the water's edge will be Red-winged Blackbirds, Brewer's Blackbirds, and a Black Phoebe



incessantly calling for its next meal. Overhead several Red-tailed Hawks and a Sparrow Hawk or two are about their business and, quite possibly, a Bald Eagle. The large black ones are probably Turkey Vultures.

The lake dwindles to nothing where the inconspicuous San Andreas Creek enters it. Crossing this creek we simultaneously cross the great San Andreas fault which slices through the center of the whole valley. Nobody ever knows any more just exactly where it is, but down at the bottom of that narrow defile one has an eerie feeling. Nothing happens and the road goes on up the westerly side of the rift canyon. Up in the top of a very tall tree a Purple Finch is singing a fine little song to accompany the trill of the trickling stream below it. A frog croaks in his sleep.

Toward evening, we are told, Screech Owls, Short-eared or even Great-horned Owls come out to hunt and call to each other. Day or evening the sight or yap of a fox or coyote is possible. Maybe a bob cat.

(Continued on page 76)

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



BY ARNOLD SMALL

## Birds

Unusually dry weather was characteristic of late February and early March, thus prolonging the drought into the early phases of the spring migration. Although it is too early to assess this effect upon migrants and nesting species, indications are that production of insects, seeds, acorns, and other bird foods might well be dangerously low during the coming months. The most pronounced effects should be felt during late May and June when most of the local species are engaged in feeding young. Streams will not be expected to continue to flow during these normally dry times, and it is suggested that excellent birding will be found near almost any pool of water or slowly flowing trickle in the mountains, canyons, and the desert. In fact, the latter areas should provide the richest birding during the spring migration. Desert springs and waterholes during any normal year are excellent bird traps, and may prove even better this year.

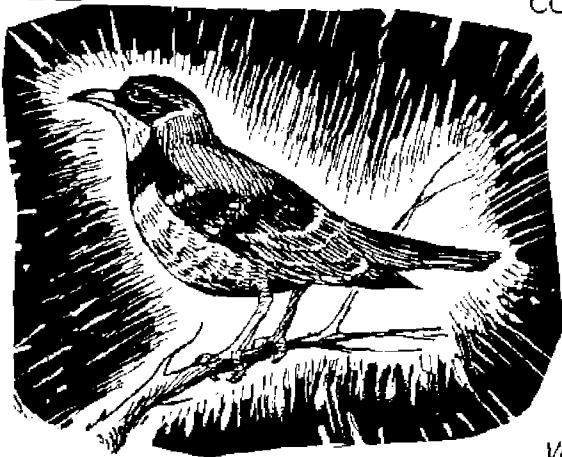
Some very good springs can be found at such oases as Yaqui Well (whose waters have recently been freed and allowed to flow into standing pool), Borrego Palm Canyon, Thousand Palms Oasis, Mecca, Cottonwood Spring in Joshua Tree National Monument, Palm Springs Palm Canyon, and Whitewater Canyon. Similarly, the tamarisks

at Finney Lake near Calipatria should produce excellent birding. Remember that most migrants enter the California deserts somewhat earlier than they appear in coastal and mountain areas. The little park (Covington Park) in Morongo Valley proved to be excellent last year and should be visited about the third week of April onwards. For those interested in venturing further afield, the natural watercourse of the Colorado River from Yuma to Needles provides a perfect highway for migrants, and West Pond near Imperial Dam is a very choice place for birds, as are almost any of the irrigated fields north of Yuma. While coastal and mountain canyons are good, they produce much better birding in the fall. Shorebirds should begin to move through in larger numbers during late April and early May, and that is the time to look for Baird's Sandpipers and other less well-known shorebirds.

The offshore flight of loons improved (as it almost invariably does) during February and waterfowl began to depart for the mild northern areas at this same time also. The Hooded Mergansers were still at Upper Newport Bay during late February and the male Harlequin Duck at Glorietta Bay, San Diego seemed to be regular at his raft only during high tides, much to the distress of those of us who weren't aware of this at the time. The only really large flock of Western Grebes was located off Venice Beach during late February, and dozens of Surfbirds and Black Turnstones were seen clinging to the boats off Santa Monica Pier. A pair of Wood Ducks was seen on a small pond in Reseda Park. During the upcoming spring migration, pay close attention to the numbers of migrants and carefully look over all flocks of warblers. Those rare beauties which came south through our area last fall may well return again.

## SAWYER CAMP ROAD

CONTINUED



*Varied Thrush*

The woods by the roadside grow deeper. This is where the 'watchers always expect, in February or March, to add "Varied Thrush" to the list. Some of these mysterious and beautiful tawny-orange robin-like birds migrate from the north to hide in this particular place every winter. It is for this reason too, that the annual field trip is made then.

Many rare shrubs and plants dear to a botanist's heart choose this damp and protected area to perpetuate their species. Noteworthy in February is the yellow blossoming of leatherwood and the sprays of creamy silk tassel. A little known perennial herb of the pea family, the *Thermopsis*, likes this location. Its leaves resemble deep green clover while the late blooming flower racemes look like yellow lupine.

Sawyer Camp has long since vanished and left only a clearing where once upon a time a Mr. Sawyer trained circus animals.

The roadbed turns right again to cross atop the old San Andreas dam, built in 1870; then a short steep pull and the car is back on the Skyline Highway above Millbrae. We can go northward to San Francisco or southward toward Woodside.

On Sawyer Camp Road, due to the limited space, there is never any official picnic lunching for the group. And never, never is it permissible to leave papers or rubbish by the roadside or the terrible "Genie of the Rift" might swallow you up. What is worse, the San Francisco Water Department might find the means to close this road to the public.