

Birding in the West Indies

PART ONE

By R. Dudley Ross

If we exclude Trinidad and Tobago and the Dutch Antilles (Curacao, Bonaire and Aruba), all of which islands are situated but a few miles from the northern coast of South America, the West Indian avifauna is primarily of North and Central American origin. Ornithologically, the islands mentioned above are considered a part of South America and a large proportion of their birds have a close affinity with mainland species. Nevertheless, these islands are, politically, a part of the West Indies. Thus, it can be rightly said that the West Indies have two distinct avifaunas, each of a different origin.

There are two families of birds and quite a number of species which can be found in the West Indies and nowhere else, and certain species are found on but one island. Consider the tody family (Todidae); it comprises five species, the family is confined to the West Indies and it is not generally distributed even there. Jamaica, Cuba and Puerto Rico can claim one species each, while two species are found on Hispaniola. The Palmchat family (Dulidae) consists of but a single species, occurring only on Hispaniola and Gonave.

As for endemic species, Jamaica has several, including the Ring-tailed Pigeon, Crested Quail-Dove, Yellow-billed and Black-billed Parrots, Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo, Jamaican Owl, Jamaican Mango and the Streamer-tail. This last-named, spectacular hummingbird is not only the commonest bird in Jamaica but may be found in almost any kind of habitat, yet it does not occur on any of the other islands. In addition,

this beautiful island claims exclusive rights to the Jamaican Woodpecker, Jamaican Becard, Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, Jamaican Yellow-crowned Elaenia, White-eyed Thrush, White-chinned Thrush, Blue Mountain Vireo, Arrow-headed Warbler, Orangequit and the Jamaican Euphonia. Grenada has a proprietary interest in the Grenada Dove; the Blue-headed Quail-Dove is known only from Cuba. Dominica, Cuba, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Puerto Rico each have one or more endemic species of parrot. Hispaniola and Cuba each have a monopoly on a hummingbird, while Puerto Rico has two members of this family confined to its shores. Hispaniola and Grand Cayman each have an endemic species of thrush. The Whistling Warbler can be seen only on St. Lucia. The Green-tailed and White-winged Ground Warblers inhabit Hispaniola only. An extreme example of isolation is that of a rail, a wren and a sparrow, all three of which are to be found only in a swamp on the well-known Zapata Peninsula, on Cuba's southern coast.

With the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica possesses the only cotinga in the West Indies, while Hispaniola and Cuba each have one species of trogon, these two species being the only members of that family in the region, again excepting Trinidad and Tobago.

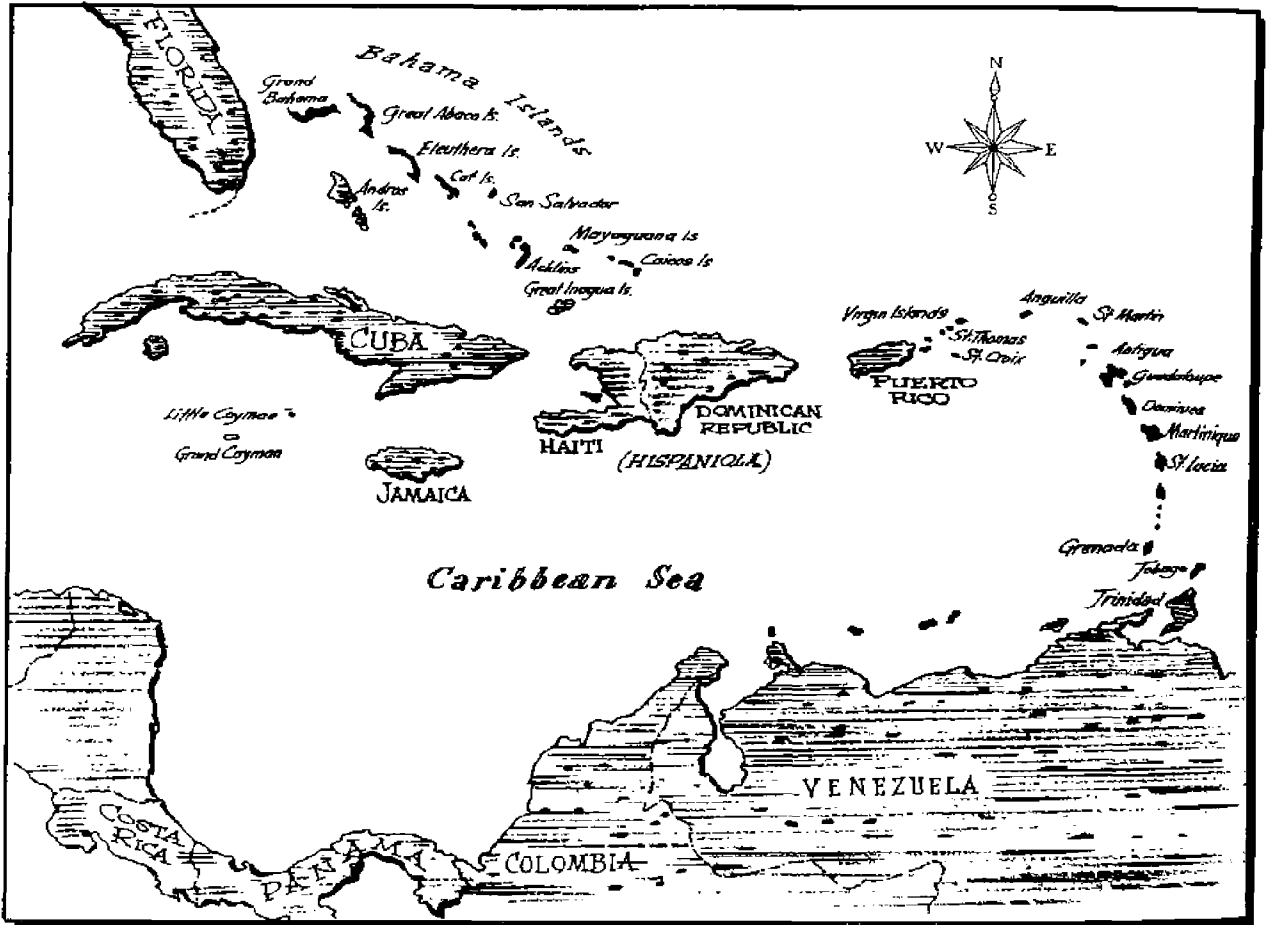
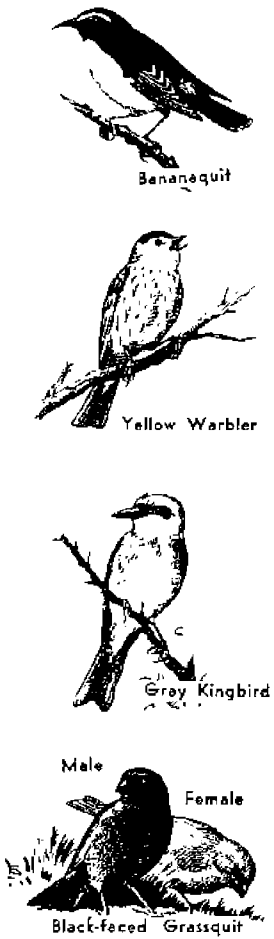
From the foregoing it can readily be seen that West Indian birding possesses a flavor of its own. If islands fascinate you, as they do me, you can easily imagine the enjoyment of hopping by plane

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BIRDING IN THE WEST INDIES Continued...

from one island to another, to look for each locality's special attractions. My own field of work in the West Indies, until 1964, had been limited to two short visits to the Bahamas. During the past spring my wife and I, accompanied by Ruth Emery of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, went to Trinidad and Tobago and thence to Jamaica. It was like visiting two distinctly different avian worlds.

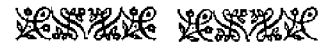
Only a short distance south of the southernmost of the Lesser Antilles lie the islands of Trinidad and Tobago, which are administered as a single political unit. To make this short plane-hop from Grenada or Barbados is a revelation. Suddenly, one is in the land of tinamous, guans, sungrebes, oil-birds, manakins, jacamars, toucans, woodcreepers, ovenbirds, antbirds, motmots and pepper-shrikes. The change is sudden and drastic and one finds in this restricted area almost as many species of birds



as in all other West Indies islands together. Flycatchers, hawks and hummingbirds become a problem and a challenge. The tinamous and most of the antbirds try one's patience as they whistle or call, while skulking about in the dense undergrowth, often quite nearby but almost never showing themselves. Many of the families are new to one who has not before birded in the tropics and the exotic form and coloration of many species is a vivid reminder you are no longer in the temperate zone. For the birder, no excitement surpasses that of being plunged into a new and completely different area, knowing that a high percentage of the birds will be new and that at any moment another unfamiliar species will appear.

Again excepting Trinidad, the birdlife of the individual islands is relatively uncomplicated; even the flycatchers are not too numerous and do not constitute a major problem. On Jamaica, one of the largest islands, there is but one woodpecker, one oriole, two honeycreepers and three hummingbirds. Such a situation greatly simplifies the matter of identification. The pigeons, doves and swifts do require more study but are far from overwhelming.

Many of our North American species occur in the West Indies as migrants or winter visitors. This is particularly true of the warblers, 29 species of which occur as transients or winter visitants, with an additional 6 species best described as va-



grants. The ultra-rare Bachman's Warbler is known to winter only in Cuba, while the less rare Kirtland's passes the winter season in the Bahama Islands. Our ducks and shorebirds are especially well represented during the winter months. In addition, a goodly number of North American species are native also to the West Indies, so that slightly more than half of the birds to be found there will be familiar to a visitor from the United States. Obviously, if the visiting ornithologist wishes to concentrate on the native species, the best time to visit this region is in May, when most of the migrants have left, or in June or July, when they are not present at all. One advantage of a visit at this time of year is that rates are as much as 40% lower than during the regular tourist season. There is even a substantial reduction in airline fares from about April 15th through the summer.

Upon arriving in Trinidad we went immediately to Spring Hill Estate, a working cocoa plantation operated by Mrs. A. N. Wright. It is well and favorably known to many birders and professional ornithologists. Situated in the mountains of the Northern Range, where the temperature is always more comfortable, Spring Hill commands a lovely view of the beautiful Arima Valley. As if this were not enough, it is fairly bursting with birds! The noisy, yet pleasant, call of the Kiskadee is heard almost constantly and the tiny Ferruginous Owl sounds his whistled call both by day and by night. One of the typical sounds is the clang of the Black-winged Bellbird, two or three of which are often calling simultaneously. As this large member of the cotinga family usually perches in the open when calling, it is not difficult to see.

Swifts of three species (Gray-rumped, Band-rumped and Short-tailed) are always overhead and the Black Hawk was seen almost daily. Palm and Blue-gray Tanagers were very common as was also the startlingly beautiful Silverbeak. Other common birds at Spring Hill were the Smooth-billed Ani, Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, Barred Antshrike, Yellow-bellied and Lesser Elaenias, Green and Yellow-legged Honeycreepers, Bananaquit, Crested Oropendola, Bay-headed Tanager, Grayish Saltator, Yellow-bellied Seedeater and Blue-black Grassquit.

Situated also on this plantation is a small colony of about 25 or 30 Guacharos or oilbirds, one of only two known colonies in Trinidad. This bird belongs to the family Caprimulgiformes, together with the frogmouths, potoos and nightjars. It resembles a nighthawk in appearance but is strictly nocturnal.

They nest colonially in coastal or mountain caves. They never perch but squat on the nesting ledges or cling to walls like swifts. The oilbird lives on fruits, generally those of palm trees, and is thus unique among the goatsuckers in being a vegetarian. It plucks the fruit while hovering, being similar in this respect to the trogons. The oilbirds' sonar or echo-location system operates on a frequency of approximately 7,000 cycles per second and so is audible to the human ear, unlike that of bats. We visited this colony and, by wading through waist-deep water, were able to enter the cave. Some birds left the nesting ledges and we could immediately hear the fairly loud clicking of their sonar device, together with a weird assortment of croaks, grunts and wails. This "believe-it-or-not" bird, by the way, occurs only on Trinidad and northern South America, and it owes its name to the fact that the Indians obtained oil for cooking from the fat young birds.

A short trip down the Arima Valley brings one to flat, grassy savannahs and here the birdlife is very different, as might be expected. Here we found, among other things, the Pale-vented Pigeon, Plain-breasted Ground-Dove, Striped Cuckoo, Fork-tailed Palm-swift, Blue-chinned Sapphire, the glittering Ruby Topaz, Black-throated Mango, Piratic Flycatcher and Red-breasted Blackbird.

On Trinidad, a visit to the famous Caroni Swamp is a must. It is here that the spectacular Scarlet Ibis nests in numbers. The thing to do is to be at the swamp late in the afternoon so as to witness the birds' return to roost for the night. In they came, in groups of six, or twenty, or seventy-five, the late afternoon sun lighting up the unbelievably brilliant red and black plumage. This great spectacle would, in itself, warrant a trip to the swamp but there is a wealth of birdlife in the area quite apart from the ibises. Some of the more interesting species we saw there were Striated Heron, Variegated Bittern (quite similar to our Least Bittern and surprisingly easy to see), Wattled Jacana, Greater Ani, Striped Cuckoo, Green-throated Mango, Yellow-throated Spinetail (common), Black-crested Antshrike, Pied Water-Tyrant, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Yellow Oriole and Yellow-headed Marsh-Blackbird.

There are good roads on the island. Visits to other areas produced such species as Little Tinamou (actually seen), Red-footed Booby, Plumbeous Kite, White Hawk, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Common Amazon Parrot, ten species of hummingbird, three species of trogon, Ringed, Green and Pygmy Kingfishers,

Continued on page 29

DR. EDMUND JAEGER PRESENTS EVENING PROGRAM NOVEMBER 10

Our speaker for the Evening Meeting on November 10 is the distinguished author of several books on the desert: "Desert Wild Flowers", "The California Deserts", "Denizens of the Desert" and "The North American Deserts". However, he is probably more famous as the discoverer of the hibernating Poorwill, one of the most important ornithological discoveries of recent years. The account of this event appeared first in the CONDOR, January-February 1948, with a fuller account in the issue of May-June 1949. Dr. Jaeger wrote a popular account which appeared in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE of February 1953. His talk, under the rather formidable sounding title of "Diapause, Estivation and Hibernation", deals with this same fascinating subject of torpidity, but in a more general way.

Seek Support for Tule Elk Preservation

A recent communication from Beula Edmiston, secretary of the Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk, tells a pathetic story of the killing of a young bull elk which was apparently regarded almost as a pet of one of the Owens Valley ranchers. The Committee is working for the establishment of an adequate nature reserve in the Owens Valley which would ensure the protection of this species. The Tule Elk heads the list of threatened species of mammals recently published by the Department of the Interior.

To join the crusade, contact:

Committee For The Preservation
Of The Tule Elk
5502 Markland Drive
Los Angeles, California 90022

Bill Watson Reminds... Christmas Bird Count Coming December 27 th.

I absolutely hate to mention the word Christmas before Christmas evening, but since I became the Christmas Bird Count Compiler, I must inform you that it is time to start thinking about the Christmas Bird Count again.

Once more, it will be our most enjoyable sport, in fulfillment of one of our Society's greatest traditions, to conduct the Annual Christmas Bird Count. This will take place on Sunday, December 27, 1964.

Audubon Summer Camp Schedules 1965 Season

With the completion of new Camper Cabins, a new Dining Hall, the expansion of Lounge and Writing Room facilities and a Longer Season, the Camp can now more nearly meet requests for reservations. As everyone knows, many had to be disappointed in both 1963 and 1964, but Bill Goodall is happy to announce that with the new developments he will not have to write many "so sorry" letters. Nevertheless, he recommends early inquiries and requests for reservations if you are considering a Camp experience for next summer. The dates of the four Sessions are: Session I--June 27-July 9; Session II--July 11-July 23; Session III--July 25-August 6; Session IV--August 8-August 20. For full information write: Audubon Camp, P.O. Box 3666, El Monte, California 91733.

Check Your Membership Renewal

PLEASE read your membership renewal form carefully. See that the line or space for branch designation is filled in. If it has not been typed in by the Membership Department in New York, be sure to write it in yourself. Otherwise, we may not receive your name as our member or our share of your membership dues. Your cooperation will help both the local and national membership departments.

● *Do you know someone
who would be interested
in belonging to the
Audubon Society?*

Full information will be
sent to them if you'll give
us names and addresses
we'll do the rest...

● *Send them to*
**LOS ANGELES
AUDUBON SOCIETY
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles 46, Calif.
Attn: Marion Wilson**



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 PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 46. 876-0202
 HEADQUARTERS CHAIRMAN: MRS. MARTHA EDENS
 REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS: MRS. RUSSELL WILSON

ARNOLD SMALL, *President*
 MRS. DONALD L. ADAMS, *Executive Secretary*

NOVEMBER 1964

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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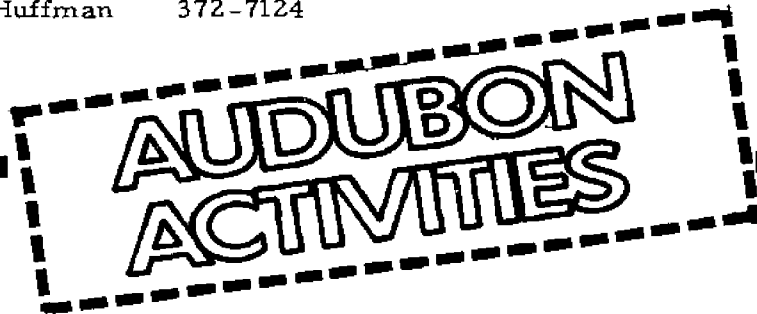
NOVEMBER

- Nov. 5 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:45 P.M., Audubon House.
- Nov. 10 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. in Great Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Dr. Edmund C. Jaeger, distinguished author, teacher and authority on desert wildlife and plants, will speak on "Diapause, Estivation and Hibernation" or how certain organisms spend parts of their lives in a state of torpor to escape the effects of heat and dessication, cold and/or periods of food scarcity.
 Program Chairman: Don Adams 372-5536
- Nov. 14 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP 8:30 A.M. Santa Barbara, Goleta Slough, campus of the University of California at Santa Barbara. As you enter Santa Barbara, turn off Highway 101 at Cabrillo Blvd., and meet at the Bird Refuge. Bring lunch.
 Leader: Bill Watson
- Nov. 19 THURSDAY CONSERVATION MEETING 7:30 P.M., Audubon House, Plummer Park. Evening will be devoted to the discussion of conservation problems. See Bill Watson's column, "Conservation Notes", in this issue.
 Chairman: Bill Watson
- Nov. 22 SUNDAY FIELD TRIP Big Bear Lake and high mountain area. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the dam at the west end of Big Bear Lake where the road forks. Wear warm clothing, bring lunch, binoculars and scope. Do your homework on Red Crossbills, Evening Grosbeaks, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Piñon Jays, Clark's Nutcrackers, Lewis' Woodpeckers, Bald Eagles, Williamson's Sapsuckers, etc. If you can spend two days, meet Saturday morning at 8:00 in Covington Park in Morongo Valley. Come prepared to camp overnight at lower altitude or to take lodging at Fawnskin or Big Bear.
 Leader: George Venatta FR 8-7421
- Nov. 25 WEDNESDAY - WILDLIFE FILM "Wildlife of the Eastern Woodlands", by Earl L. Hilfiker of Rochester, N. Y. - 7:45 P.M., John Burroughs Junior High School, 600 S. McCadden Pl., Los Angeles. Highlighted in a production marked by striking close-up photography, is the beaver, aptly depicted as an engineer in a fur coat, along with migrating waterfowl and many varieties of amphibians and mammals attracted to the beaver pond.
 Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner 748-7510
- Dec. 3 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:45 P.M., Audubon House.
- Dec. 8 TUESDAY .. EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M., Great Hall, Plummer Park. "Follow the Crested Crane", by Arnold Small. This is the second part of Arnold Small's African adventure of 1963, and it takes place solely in Uganda. During their circuit of the country, Bob Smart, Jim Huffman and Arnold Small listed more than 600 species of birds in 28 days as well as numerous herds of great game animals, climaxed by a climb into the Virunga Volcanoes to encounter the Mountain Gorilla. Mr. Small's picture will include numerous east African birds as well as many of the strikingly beautiful country of Uganda.
 Program Chairman: Don Adams 372-5536

----- CALENDAR CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE -----

Dec. 12 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP Carrizo Plain. Meet at 8:30 A.M. in Maricopa at the junction of State Highway 166 and U.S. 399 (Take U.S. 99 north from Los Angeles to junction with State Highway 166 about eight miles beyond Grapevine, go west on 166 about twenty-five miles to Maricopa.). Last year we saw LeConte's Thrashers, Vesper Sparrows, Short-eared Owls, Prairie Falcons, Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagles, but no Sandhill Cranes. The trip is one month earlier this year in the hope of better success with cranes. Bring lunch, drinking water and wear warm clothing. Those who wish may have dinner with the group and stay Saturday night at the California Valley Lodge, in order to bird again early Sunday morning on the Carrizo Plain. Rates at the Lodge: \$8.00 to \$10.00 for singles and \$10.00 to \$12.00 for two. Firm reservations should be made by Dec. 1. Address: California Valley Lodge, California Valley, California.

Leader: Jim Huffman 372-7124



BY OTTO WIDMAN

Sept. 12

Malibu Lagoon has never failed to produce birds of every description. A group of swallows passed dizzily overhead, and when we finished counting we noted the Bank, Barn, Cliff and Rough-winged, and amongst them a Vaux's Swift. In the tobacco bushes were Anna's, Rufous and Allen's Hummers. On the extreme east side of the lagoon the warblers gathered: Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow, Wilson's, the Yellow-throat and possibly a Tennessee, and with them a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. An Osprey perched on a phone post, then flew directly over us. All 42 of us had a chance to study his beautiful feather pattern. The Belted Kingfisher, an habitue, was busy as usual.

Between the lagoon and the backwater of the Santa Clara River wash we counted Forster's, Elegant, Caspian and the Common Tern. In amongst the plovers we noted a Black Turnstone; there were Semipalmated, Snowy, Killdeer and Black-bellied Plovers. The group enjoyed the sandpipers, especially to study the differences of four of them: Spotted, Pectoral, Least and Western. Here in their natural habitat they showed no fear and fed and bathed while the group had them in good focus.

At the Santa Clara River there were many pelicans and terns; in the marsh were grebes and ducks (Mallard, Shoveler, Ruddy, and the Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal). We were kept busy with wrens, goldfinch, and sparrows. Of special note was the Long-billed Marsh Wren. Gene and Liz Rose showed us the 87 species for a nice day's outing. Later a wind came up, making the ocean choppy, but behind the sand dunes it was comfortable and warm. We welcome Bob Knox, Miss Barbara Bent (Santa Barbara) and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Meyers.

Sept. 17

As far as I was concerned, the two most important documents Bill Watson had for the first Conservation Meeting were: Blue Print for Conservation Problems, put out by the Audubon Society, and the Roster of Public Officials published by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce for fifty cents. This includes city, county, state and federal officials and their addresses. With these two documents any society, especially those dealing in conservation, is ready to function. The actual work that is to be done lies heavily on the individual and his willingness to write to key personnel in our various governmental agencies, stating conservation problems and the desire for effective changes. Bill Watson's job will be to point out these problems.

Sept. 26-27

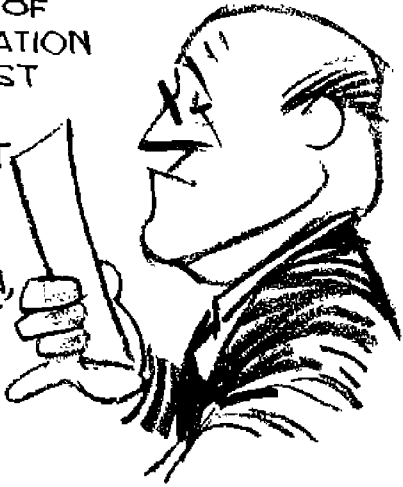
Fifty-four members took advantage of the special offer of San Diego County birding under the guidance of Guy McCaskie. A block from the meeting place a Tropical Kingbird was added as a "life bird" for the majority of the group. This was the beginning for many more. On Monument Road the Prairie Warbler came next, then the Virginia's, Tennessee and Blue-winged Warblers followed unbelievably in order. Several members saw the Clay-colored Sparrow and the Eastern Kingbird was near Solano Beach. When you have 148 specie sightings to choose from these are the outstanding examples. A plain tobacco bush near some anise and some zucchini squash became a museum piece because of harboring 8 different warblers besides the Warbling Vireo, kinglets, Chat, wrens, nuthatches and sparrows.

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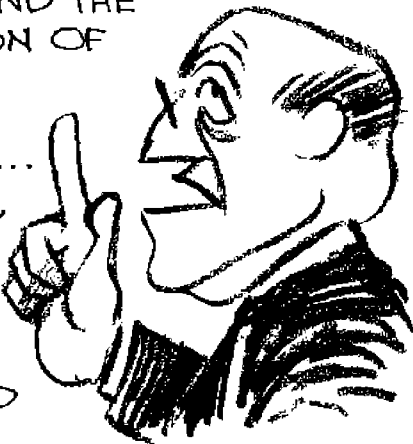
**CONSERVATIVELY
SPEAKING.**

HERE'S A LETTER
FROM ANOTHER OF
THOSE CONSERVATION
NUTS - AT LEAST
MY NAME IS
SPELLED RIGHT

BUT THEN I'M
REALLY FOR
CONSERVATION,
I ALWAYS SAY
SO IN EVERY
CAMPAIGN
AND YOU
MAY QUOTE
ME!



FOR I BELIEVE IN OUR
GREAT AMERICAN
HERITAGE... AND THE
PRESERVATION OF
OUR GREAT
NATURAL
RESOURCES...
OIL, TIMBER,
AND - OH -
OH YES
MOUNTAINS,
VALLEYS
RIVERS AND
LAKES...



UH LAKES?
...AND OH YES...
MARINAS!
..AND WATER
SKIING!
...MOTELS...
MAYBE A
BOWLING
ALLEY...
YES!
YES!



RS



COMING SOON

**AUDUBON
WILDLIFE
FILMS**



Earl L. Hilfiker

**"WILDLIFE IN
EASTERN WOODLANDS"**



**Wednesday,
November 25th**

JOHN BURROUGHS JR. HIGH SCHOOL
600 S. McCADDEN PL., LOS ANGELES

THE WESTERN TANGER

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CONSERVATION

By
**BILL
WATSON**

NOTES



Our new Conservation meetings are beginning to attract attention. We had fourteen people in attendance at our first meeting, including two Board members. At this meeting there were a lot of new faces and we spent the evening discussing the need for such meetings and a number of conservation problems.

There were eighteen people present at our second meeting. More new faces, but no Board members this time. It was held on the evening of October 15, 1964, and in our deliberations we studied the Interim Report on a newly proposed Redwoods National Park. We enthusiastically endorsed Plan One of the splendid report.

This is a professional report prepared by a study team of the National Park Service under a grant of the National Geographical Society. President Johnson is looking for the final report at the beginning of 1965. Secretary Udall will base his report to President Johnson on this report.

The Interim Report has been released to any organizations or private individuals who might like to make comments on it. Consequently, I am looking forward to an official statement from our Society being sent in shortly.

I hope that everyone will write to endorse the proposals put forth in this report, the first significant advance made for a Redwoods National Park in years. All comments should be addressed to:

Regional Director
National Park Service
Federal Office Building
450 Golden Gate Avenue
Box 36063
San Francisco, Calif. 94102

Briefly, Plan One of this report includes the Federal Acquisition of Redwood Creek, Lost Man Creek, and May Creek Watersheds, and also the completion of Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Furthermore, it proposes that there be Federal Aid to California to extend the Avenue of the Giants; and to help acquire for Jedediah Smith and Del Norte Redwoods State Parks high priority inholdings and additions, corridor joining the two parks, and wild ocean frontage. The other two plans contemplate something less than this.

Gerhard Bakker of Los Angeles City College, Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk, and Nature Conservancy, stopped in at our meeting to announce that the Nature Conservancy has acquired from public domain the land to create and preserve the Edmund C. Jaeger Nature Sanctuary. It was Dr. Jaeger's own generosity that made this possible. This is the very area in the Chuckawalla Mountains where he made his historical discovery of a hibernating poorwill. The dedication will be held on Sunday, November 15, 1964, at 11:00 A.M. However, on Saturday, November 14, at 1:00 P.M., Dr. Jaeger will conduct a field trip, clean-up, evening campfire, and campout for anyone wishing to join in such pre-dedication activities.

Adequate signs, reading Nature Conservancy, on U.S. 60-70 in the vicinity of Desert Center will be placed at the turn-off road directing guests to the spot for both the Saturday and Sunday events, November 14-15. Bring your own supplies, water, firewood, camping gear, and gunnysacks in which to carry out any non-combustible litter if you go on Saturday.

At our Conservation Meeting we also discussed safe detergents for home use, and the mounting impatience to get something done at Harbor Park.

Our next Conservation Meeting will be held on November 19, 1964, at 7:30 P.M. at Audubon House. We will meet at Audubon House and probably move over to one of the Halls in the Park. Remember, it is at these meetings that the conservationists of our Society are standing up to be counted.

Some of you have been showing me the letters you are receiving from the Department of Fish and Game in Sacramento. These replies to your letters are disturbing to say the least.

Let me quote to you one of the facts that Carl Buchheister, President of the National Audubon Society, used in his protest to the opening of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge to hunting:

The Sacramento Refuge (10,776 acres) was established in 1937 on lands acquired by the government with funds from a "New Deal" ERA grant, not with Duck Stamp funds, and the concept under which it was established was clearly that this area should remain a sanctuary where migratory birds would be protected from hunting.

If this is true, and there is no reason to doubt it, then the Fish and Wildlife Service is clearly not living up to its responsibility to this Wildlife Refuge.

West Indies Continued...

Sulphur-breasted Toucan, three ovenbirds, five antbirds, two manakins, ten tanagers and a variety of grassquits, seedfinches and seedeaters. Our big find in Trinidad, however, was a lone Swallow-Tanager, which has a family all to itself. It has been recorded in Trinidad but a few times and was, for us, an unexpected "bonus." We watched the azure-blue creature for about fifteen minutes before it flew off.

A short air-hop of 25 minutes took us to the neighboring island of Tobago which is more rural and much smaller than Trinidad. Here we stayed at the Arnos Vale Beach Hotel, near the southern end of the island. Here the accommodations, food, service, scenery and the birds were superb. Our cottage was 300 feet or more above the Caribbean and we had a very small grass plot at the rear, with a chain fence to prevent the unwary from falling all the way down to the beach. The birds didn't wait very long to inform us we were expected to feed them. Our first customer was a Blue-crowned Motmot, followed by Lesser Antillean Grackles, Shiny Cowbirds, Bananaquits, Black-faced Grassquits, Tropical Mockingbird, White-lined and Blue-gray Tanagers, Barred Antshrike, Bare-eyed Thrush, Violet-eared Dove and Yellow-bellied Seedeater. Over the water Frigate-birds were usually present and Brown Pelicans and Noddy Terns flew by at frequent intervals. Other birds seen from our "back-yard" were Rufous-tailed Chachalaca, Smooth-billed Ani, Short-tailed Swift, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, Crested Oropendola and Ruddy-breasted Seedeater. We also heard the trilling call of the Rufous-tailed Jacamar on several occasions.

Tobago is a beautiful and fascinating island. In spite of its close proximity to the much larger island of Trinidad, there are some rather surprising differences in the birdlife. Birds which occur on Tobago or off its shores and which do not occur on Trinidad include the following: Red-billed Tropicbird, Rufous-tailed Chachalaca, Striped Owl, Blue-throated Sabre-wing, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Black-breasted Antwren, Blue-backed Manakin, Black Thrush, Scrub Greenlet, Black-faced Grassquit and Larger Black-and-white Seedfinch. The Greater Bird-of-Paradise, which is found only on Little Tobago, is, of course, an introduced species having been taken there early in the present century from its native haunts in the southwest Pacific.

Hérons, ducks and wading birds are less common on Tobago but this is probably due to the scarcity of suitable habitat. Strangely enough, however, there are several species which occur on both islands but which are much commoner on Tobago than on Trinidad, e.g., Violet-eared Dove, White-tailed Nightjar,

Blue-crowned Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar. These last two species are very common on Tobago and are amazingly tame.

A half-hour boat ride from Speyside, near the northern end of Tobago, brings one to Little Tobago, the only place where the Greater Bird-of-Paradise may be seen in the wild, outside of the south Pacific. Whereas there were formerly three or four dozen of these birds, the island sanctuary's warden, Jeremiah George, believes there are now no more than eight birds left due to the ravages of the 1963 hurricane. Led by the warden, and after quite a wait, we were fortunate enough to see one male bird and to hear two others calling. A fairly short walk across the island to the nesting cliffs of the Red-billed Tropicbirds, brought us face to face (almost) with about 30 of these graceful birds. Some scaled along below us, others flew by at eye level and still more floated effortlessly overhead. Noddy and Sooty Terns were present in fairly good numbers and there were also a few Brown Boobies to complete the picture. The boat for this worthwhile trip belongs to Bird-of-Paradise Inn at Speyside, where arrangements must be made for its use. This beautiful inn, in its tropical setting, is an excellent place to stay. It is well known to birders and informality is the keynote.

The 1963 hurricane wreaked havoc throughout the northern half of Tobago. Many trees were blown down and the gale-force winds literally blew the foliage off many more. There was visible evidence of the devastation when we were there and some of the best-known birding places were somewhat disappointing. In spite of this, we enjoyed every minute and no one should go to Trinidad without spending at least a few days on its smaller sister island. After four busy days on Tobago, we flew back to Trinidad, arriving late on a Sunday evening. We stayed at the Bel-Air Motel, close to Trinidad's Piarco Airport, as we were leaving first thing the next morning for Jamaica. Also, we had learned that on Sunday evenings the Bel-Air had calypso singers, steel bands and limbo dancing, all of which we enjoyed to the utmost, especially as we could do so without encroaching upon valuable birding time.

The second, and final, installment of this article will tell something of our birding experiences in Jamaica, followed by considerable information concerning transportation, places to stay, currency and books to study or take with you.

About the Author

R. Dudley Ross, readers will recall, is the man who has done his best to make the fine art of bird finding into an exact science. Dudley and his wife, Vivian, at last count had a "life list" which stood at 635 species for the 48 states.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



BY ARNOLD SMALL

Birds

True to expectations, this fall migration brought with it some interesting and unusual birds. Again, coastal areas from the Tijuana River Valley in San Diego County to Goleta Slough in Santa Barbara County swarmed with feverish birders in pursuit of the unusual, and too often, the evasive, species. During the latter part of September and early October, the Tijuana River Valley produced large flights of migrants from which Guy McCaskie and others extracted such choice items as a dozen Bobolinks, Bendire's Thrasher, several Blackpoll Warblers, several each of Tennessee, Black and White, American Redstart, and Virginia's Warblers, an American Golden Plover, several Tropical Kingbirds, and small numbers of Baird's Sandpipers. Eleanor Pugh, working out of Doheny Beach State Park near San Clemente added to her own laurels by finding an Eastern Kingbird, Orchard Oriole, and a Yellow-green Vireo. While seeking these birds, Guy McCaskie found a prairie Warbler as well.

At Malibu, an Eastern Phoebe was seen, and all along the coast, Elegant Terns were present in good numbers. From Santa Barbara came word of another rarity. Hans Meinhardt of Goleta reported a single Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Subsequently, Meinhardt and McCaskie found two of the birds on the Santa Barbara Airport at Goleta. The birds were last noted there on Sept. 26, and although numerous attempts were

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The two day Pelagic Trip planned for October 10 and 11 had to be cancelled. Instead, a one day trip was run from Oxnard out to the vicinity of the Channel Islands. Birders were treated to a smooth sea and beautiful views of the islands, but saw few birds. Migrating Red and Northern Phalaropes were seen and but one Sooty Shearwater. Several Black Oyster-catchers and a Wandering Tattler were seen on the island shores.

Ed.

made to find them again, all failed. At the Goleta Sewage Plant nearby, good shorebirding yielded seven Pectoral and three Baird's Sandpipers. On Sept. 26, a great flight of Vaux Swifts was noted along the coast, and thousands of the birds were wheeling over the lagoon at Malibu.

The pelagic trip out of Monterey on Oct. 3 proved to be well worthwhile although patchy fog sometimes made viewing difficult. All three jaegers were seen, plus at least six Skuas--some affording excellent views. Among the tube-noses were found one Black-footed Albatross, small numbers of Gray-backed (New Zealand) Shearwaters, many Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters, and one Slender-billed Shearwater which flew quite close to the boat and gave everyone an opportunity for close inspection of this rarely-seen species. Black, Ashy, and Fork-tailed Petrels were identified, and among the alcids were Common Murre, numerous Cassin's Auklets, and a single Rhinoceros Auklet. Small groups of superbly plumaged Sabine's Gulls were found throughout the day.

During November, look for incoming flights of waterfowl, loons and grebes, Short-eared Owls and Ferruginous Hawks, while the newly arrived Zonotrichias should be singing at your door.

 Audubon
Activities

CONTINUED

The group stood for two hours watching this endless parade.

Jay Sheppard (S. D. Aud. Soc.) pointed out the Clay-colored Sparrow, a first sighting for the west coast. Mr. and Mrs. W. Scott Lewis and Conrad and Dorothy Bryant came in from Palm Springs. We had guests too: Theodore Chase (S. D.); Grenville Hatch (La Jolla); Joseph King (Wash. D. C.). The many faithful members who never fail to make these field trips were rewarded with White-faced Ibis, Brant Geese, White-tailed Kites, Osprey, Ruddy and Black Turnstones, 5 different terns, 4 hummers. The list covers the tanagers, buntings, grosbeaks, goldfinch, towhees. A Franklin's Gull was among hundreds of shore birds. A Prairie Falcon sparred with a Marsh Hawk. My check list has 46 different shore birds including Dunlin, Knot, Snipe and Brandt's Cormorant.

Perhaps a score of Los Angeles Audubon Society members were present October 3 for the Pelagic Trip out of Monterey sponsored jointly by the Golden Gate and Los Angeles Audubon Societies. Three boatloads of birders went out and thoroughly enjoyed the trip, even those unfortunates who were afflicted with 'mal de mer'. An account of the birds seen will be found in Arnold Small's column, "Southern California Birds", in this issue.

Ed.