

# *No Nightingale in Berkeley Square*



A VERY BRIEF GUIDE  
TO BIRD WATCHING  
IN LONDON

by BARRY WHITE

"BY JOVE, WATSON, IT'S NOT  
LUSCINIA MEGARHYNCHOS!"

**P**erhaps several of my readers will be familiar with the song from a popular revue of yesteryear. The revue I think was called "New Faces" and the song of course was entitled "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square." Berkeley Square, London, W.1., the heart of elegant Mayfair, one of the wealthiest districts in town! To hear or see a Nightingale there today - or indeed at any time during the last half century - would be quite an event in the life of an ornithologist. The last record of a Nightingale in Inner London is of one singing near Winfield House, Regent's Park, on April 26, 1950. In 1950, the nearest breeding place to Central London, was Wimbledon Common, in the south-western suburbs. London spreads its tentacles a little farther to the south than to the north, so it is perhaps easier to find Nightingales, close in, in Essex and Hertfordshire, than in the counties to the south of town. (Surrey and Kent.)

A recent article in the "Western Tanager" had the sub-title "Birds are where you find them, but it doesn't hurt to be in the right place at the right time." This title would have been very apt for this article too. Birds can sometimes turn up in the most unexpected places in this city, if you're in the right place at the right time. I would like to quote you some examples from my own experience. You may like to take a look in the European field guide, so that you know to which bird I'm referring.

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# **No Nightingale in Berkeley Square**

I work in the Westminster Reference Library which is in St. Martin's Street, a turning out of Leicester Square, in London's "West End." It's just on the edge of Soho, a centre of show business and consequently very near the heart-beat of the Metropolis. Walking through Leicester Square last June, I took a short cut through the small garden in the middle of the square. Children were feeding the pigeons and House Sparrows, watched with undisguised interest by a villainous black cat that belongs to the porter of the Pastoria Hotel. My eye caught a flash of bottle green to one side. Mallard! Two drakes and one duck, fast asleep in a geranium bed, enjoying the shade of the handsome Plane trees that crowd the centre of the Square. A few feet away, the hurrying feet of office workers, enjoying (for once) a sunny lunch hour; only a few yards away, the roaring traffic of the West End. Mallards are as at home in London today as ever. They can be seen in all the parks, on the Thames at most times of the year and, as we've seen, even in the most unorthodox places. They nest in window boxes (for flowers) on the window ledges of city office blocks, on flat roof tops, in hollow trees or almost anywhere else you care to think of. In the spring, one or other of the London newspapers is bound to publish a picture of a proud mother Mallard, marching her newly hatched brood across the Mall, into St. James's Park, a policeman holding back the traffic, the while.

Another example: Imagine you are standing with me at Oxford Circus, looking northwards up Regent Street. Straight ahead of us we can see the spire of "All Souls" Church, in Langham Place. Behind that, the B.B.C., and on the left - a Kestrel's nest! This is the big shopping area of the fashionable West End. Oxford Street, running east and west through the Circus, and Regent Street running north and south are the streets where an enormous number of London women, be they suburban housewife, office girl or gentlewoman, buy their clothes. The industrious comings and goings of these urban Kestrels during the breeding season are a source of considerable interest to the occupants of the office whose ventilation shaft they have chosen as a nest site.

The Kestrel is our commonest diurnal predator here. A few miles east of Oxford Circus, in the City - i.e. the square mile of the original city of London, now the financial district - Kestrels have recently come in for less favourable comment from the London public. A distressed secretary in a merchant banker's office near the Royal Exchange, described in the "Evening News," how she had been feeding the Sparrows on her office window sill during the morning tea break, when a "Sparrowhawk" (Sic.) descended like a bolt from the blue, and made off with one of her Sparrows. I have no doubt that the "Sparrowhawk" was in fact a Kestrel. To see a genuine Sparrowhawk in the financial heart of the British Commonwealth would be extremely unusual, to say the least! Even in the suburbs they are something of a rarity, and only twice have we encountered them in Friern Barnet, the district in which I live, on the northern outskirts of London. Both occasions were rather dramatic, as we had the luck to see the bird hunting.

The first time was in 1960. It was a beautiful Saturday morning in May, and I was leaning from my bedroom window admiring the courtly "carryings on" of a pair of Woodpigeons, on our rose arch. The garden and those of our neighbours, were full of assorted Passerines as usual in the spring, and all was peace and contentment, or so it seemed. Then everything disintegrated in pandemonium. The Woodpigeons took off in opposite directions like a pair of grey-blue rockets, Robins darted under plants and shrubs making their "Tic, Tic" alarm call, Hedge Sparrows melted discreetly away without a sound, Blackbirds dashed hither and yon yelling their heads off in complete hysteria. Not a bird to be seen! A few seconds later, a Song Thrush streaked into view - they're capable of quite a turn of speed - banked sharply round an apple tree, hurtled across the garden and shot straight into my bedroom, through the open window. A dull thud behind me indicated that it had made a crash landing somewhere in the room. I didn't look around to see just where, because at that minute a Sparrowhawk had flashed across my line of vision only seconds behind the Song Thrush that had obviously been its intended victim. The hawk didn't linger, once it had decided that the thrush was nowhere to be found, but made off in search of new prey. The thrush later emerged from under a bookcase and left by the same window that it had used to enter.

I didn't witness the second Sparrowhawk episode in our garden, but it was described to me by my sister, who had not enjoyed it. At the bottom of our garden, and at the bottom of the gardens of six of our neighbours, there stands a line of jungly old Hawthorn trees. These make a hedge, some 25 feet high and about 50 yards long. (The length of the hedge is the width of seven gardens.) It was November, and there were no leaves, so movements on the far side of the hedge could be clearly seen. Elizabeth, my sister, saw the Sparrowhawk using this hedge to employ its well known technique of surprise attack. It came belting up the length of

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## Continued

the hedge, on the far side from our garden, at a tremendous speed and with checking its speed, just flipped over the top of the hedge into our garden on the off chance of surprising some suitable prey. As luck would have it, there was a Blackbird turning over dead leaves on the lawn, and the hawk was on him before he knew what had hit him. The part that my sister had not enjoyed came next. The Sparrowhawk did not bother to kill its luckless victim. The Blackbird was plucked alive and torn to pieces and eaten alive, right there on our lawn!

I've had no less than three examples of being in the right place at the right time in the last six months. The first example was last January. I was standing at the bus stop, some 4 or 5 minutes walk from my home, enroute for work. The time was 7:20 a.m. It was about half an hour before daylight. I like to be at that bus stop at such a time, because it is just across the road from the churchyard - our parish church, St. James the Great - which is well provided with trees. The trees attract all sorts of birds, and this is particularly true of a number of enormous old Elms, Tawny O's, which are very common here in London, make good use of them, and I often see 2 or 3 of these handsome birds flitting silently about among the branches or perched on a grave stone, as I wait for my bus on winter mornings. This particular morning I took my eyes off the owl I had just been watching, and glanced up the road to see if there was any sign of my bus. There wasn't, but I saw something much better than a bus! A magnificent Red Fox emerged cautiously from the front drive of a large, old house about 30 yards away from me, looked left and right before trotting nonchalantly across the road and vanishing into the churchyard. (He didn't even glance at me as he went!)

My next piece of opportune timing came in May. This time it was evening, 8:30 p.m. to be exact. Again I was waiting for a bus, this time in the Upper Holloway area of North London. This area is what the French would call "un bourg populaire" - a dirty, shabby, overcrowded area packed with lively, noisy people. No gardens, very few trees and a spectacular rate of petty crime. Two of London's most heavily used traffic arteries run through this district, choking the air with diesel fumes. I had just completed an 11 hour period of duty at the library and was half way home feeling somewhat weary. I was leaning on the bus stop and staring vacantly ahead of me when some inner instinct made me glance upwards. What a happy surprise! At roof top level, and flying fast down Junction Road, were no less than seven Teal. I expect they'd been visiting the lake in Waterlow Park which is about 1 1/2 miles away in Highgate. As far as I know, this is a most unusual occurrence

even in the more rural suburbs! And only three days after the teal episode, I just chanced to look up from the same bus stop, this time at 5:30 p.m., and saw a Heron flap lazily eastward across the roof tops. Herons are really quite common around London, and there is a well known Heronry on a small island in one of the reservoirs at Walthamstow, one of our eastern suburbs. Nevertheless, I was pleased to see a Heron in such a dreary and unsuitable place, as one normally wouldn't expect to see anything so interesting in N.19.

At this point, perhaps I should add a note of explanation to anyone who is wondering "which Heron" or "which Teal"? In our small country we have only the one Heron and one Teal. The Heron (*Ardea Cinerea*) corresponds to your "Great Blue Heron." The Teal (*Anas Crecca*) corresponds to your "Green-Winged Teal." The Garganey is sometimes called by country folk "Cricket Teal" or "Summer Teal," but any British ornithologist mentioning Teal will be speaking of "*Anas Crecca*." Anyway, you are unlikely to encounter Garganey very often in London, although small numbers are recorded every year, mainly in the autumn. There were even three on the Serpentine in Hyde Park in 1952, though no other records before or since for Central London.

It is not easy to decide what time of the year is the best time to come to London so far as birding is concerned. A lot depends of course on whether you have been to London -or elsewhere in Europe - before. For some birds, the gulls and ducks notably, winter is the best season. For Passerines, the spring or early autumn is best. (I would also say that spring or early autumn is best for tourists too. That depends to some extent on our weather which is totally unpredictable anyway!) There are usually a few non-breeding Black-Headed Gulls to be seen on the river and around the docks during the summer, but autumn and winter produce them in great swirling clouds all over town, together with Common Gulls, Lesser Black-Backed Gulls, Herring Gulls and Greater Black-Backed Gulls. During the summer, all these gulls leave London. For the visitor to London, anywhere along the Thames Embankment is a good place for gull spotting. Take some bread with and you'll have them within feet of you. (However, if you have delicate ear drums, I should forget the bread. Black-Headed Gulls must be England's noisiest birds!) Another excellent place for gulls during the winter is the historic Billingsgate fish market. Enormous numbers of gulls congregate there daily to scramble for fish offal. If your particular interest is ducks, London is an excellent place to visit in the winter. The central parks and the suburban reservoirs and flooded gravel pits can be as rich a hunting ground for your tally list of British ducks as almost anywhere else in the country. We have Mallard, Tufted Duck and Pochard all the year round, but winter adds many more to the list. I'm happy to say that

# Audubon Activities

By Otto Widman

Sept. 24 & 25

TIJUANA RIVER BOTTOM

The promises were fulfilled! The American Redstarts were at two different locations, and the Prairie and Virginia's Warblers were mist-netted on Monument Road, where we all saw them in hand. At 19th and Palm, a pair of Tropical Kingbirds were with a pair of Cassin's, giving a nice study pattern. The 30 of us convoyed down 19th St., stopping long enough to see White-tailed Kites, Cooper's, and Marsh Hawks. At one stop, in the midst of lowing cows, we were treated to Common Gallinule, Killdeer, Whimbrel, Long-billed Marsh Wren, and Yellowthroats, with the above-mentioned hawks circling above. I imagine all 89 species on our list for the 2-day outing would have crossed this point some time during the day.

We had four guests from the San Bernardino Audubon Society: Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Hess, and Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Perkins, from Illinois, Mr. & Mrs. Al Campbell joined us for the outing. And on Sunday, Judge Ivo Lazzaroni came as the guest of Lewis & Kimball Garrett. We were happy to see Mr. & Mrs. T. L. Taylor - two of our newer members. The 35 of us moved about the valley, lunching at Windover Ranch both days. We were most graciously welcomed. Here we saw the Redstarts, a female Black & White Warbler, the Black-throated Gray, and the Townsend's Warblers. A Swainson's Thrush was fly-catching beneath the avocados. Earlier, a Blackburnian Warbler was reported, but none of us saw it. On Sunday, three Bobolinks flew back and forth across an alfalfa field obligingly. Mr. & Mrs. Frank Phillips reported the White-faced Glossy Ibis at Buena Vista Lagoon.

Our list was remarkable for the variety: shorebirds, 21 species; Hummers, 4; Flycatchers, 4, plus a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; warblers, 11; Warbling Vireos; and for the fourth year, the Flamingo on the Bay. I had my first good look at a Ground Dove (mist-netted), while Golden Eagles soared above. The river bottom is fine birding country. Now -- there is talk of damming the river and channelling it to the ocean.

## OCTOBER 1 - MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC TRIP

It was overcast and calm as about forty of our Southern California birders assembled at Sam's Wharf in Monterey for the annual pelagic trip with the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Although three boats had been chartered, numerous persons making late inquiries had to be turned away, which is an accurate reflection of the popularity of this field trip. There was some apprehension that the lack of wind would work against us, that the birds would not be up, however, with the sea perfectly calm and with a

steady boat under our feet, it is doubtful that we have ever seen the birds so well, particularly the alcid.

Our list was both long and good. Five shearwaters: Sooty, Pink-footed, Manx, New Zealand and Pale-footed. The last, a life bird for most of us and a rare bird in these waters, was approached twice to within sixty feet, giving all a perfect opportunity to see all identifying characteristics. Black and Ashy Petrels, all three Jaegers, one Skua, close and seen very well resting on the water and in flight. Many Sabine's Gulls, fully a quarter of which were in summer plumage. Arctic and Elegant Terns, Pigeon Guillemots, Common Murres, Xantus' Murrelets, Cassin's Auklets, White-winged Scoters.

There is always an opportunity for some birding Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning along the rugged shore of Pacific Grove, at Carmel River bottom, at Moss Landing, or in the bay. Those who did the former found the usual Black Oystercatchers, Wandering Tattlers, Ruddy and Black Turnstones, but also the unusual Bobolink, Black and White Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler and Blackburnian Warbler.

Ellen Stephenson had found a Thick-billed Murre in summer plumage on the bay Friday afternoon and many of us were out to see if it could be located again on Sunday morning. We were not long in spotting a Murre in summer plumage, but it was at considerable distance and, although what we could see was quite convincing, we were beset with some uncertainty. Finally Herb and Olga Clarke and Arnold Small hired an outboard motor boat and, with considerable guidance signalled to them with frantic arm-wavings by those of us on the breakwater, approached to within fifteen feet, while the bird remained on the surface. Here they could make a firm identification and took numerous pictures. It is to be hoped that we can see these soon at some Tuesday evening meeting. (reported by Russell Wilson)

## Oct. 8 CABRILLO BEACH & HARBOR PARK

Mr. Edward Anacker led the Audubon group on the breakwater, then to Pt. Fermin Park and Harbor Park. During the course of the day they saw 66 species of shore and land birds. Heading the list was an Arctic Loon, a not-too-common visitor to these waters. Several Parasitic Jaegers (sighted by David Brown) were bedeviling the Common, Royal, and Elegant Terns and several species of gulls. Edith Eppler tells me she saw them very close, quite different from their usual "stay-offshoreishness". Again, the group got to see both Ruddy and Black Turnstones. For a Get-out-your-Peterson-if-you-are-not-acquainted-with-them, -- there were Least Sandpipers, Snowy Plovers, Dunlin, Western Sandpipers, and Sanderlings. If they are all running together, you really have a field day.

Then, in sharp contrast to the shorebirds, there is always the pleasure of spotting a Belted Kingfisher. There were Wood Peewees, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and both Bewick's and

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HEADQUARTERS, LIBRARY & NATURE MUSEUM LOCATED AT  
 PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 90046 876-9202

HEADQUARTERS CHAIRMAN: MRS J GORDON WELLS  
 REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS: LÉONIE FERGUSON

WILLIAM T WATSON, PRESIDENT  
 1249 N EDGEWORTH AVE., APT. 12  
 LOS ANGELES 90028 661-8570

MRS. DONALD ADAMS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
 705 26TH STREET  
 MANHATTAN BEACH 90288 372-5536

## 1966 NOVEMBER 1966

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- Nov. 2 WEDNESDAY - WILDLIFE FILM - "These Things Are Ours", by Mary Jane Dockeray. 8:00 p. m., Daniel Webster Junior High School, 11330 W. Graham Place (Intersection of National Blvd., and Sawtelle Blvd.) A film which combines beauty, humor, and adventure in a brand new dimension.
- Nov. 3 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING-7:30 p. m., Audubon House
- Nov. 8 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p. m., Great Hall, Plummer Park. Dick Wilson and "More Birds." Those of you who remember Dick's beautiful bird pictures of last April will want to see these. Included in this program are many fine pictures of owls, woodpeckers; photographs from the recent pelagic trip at Monterey; and, most exciting of all, Condor photos.
- Program Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner - 748-7510
- Nov. 12 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - 8:30 a. m. - SANTA BARBARA, Goleta Slough, and the campus of the Univ. of Calif. at Santa Barbara. As you enter Santa Barbara, turn off Highway 101 at Cabrillo Blvd. This is a left-hand off ramp. Meet at the Bird Refuge to the right, just under the bridge. Last year we saw the Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon, and Wood Duck; a Wood Ibis was reported at Carpenteria. Bring lunch and binoculars.
- Call: Otto Widmann - 211-8973
- Nov. 27 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - 8:00 a. m., EATON CANYON. We will be looking for winter residents and migrants. Take Pasadena Freeway to Colorado Blvd. Turn right and continue to Altadena Drive. Turn left on Altadena Drive and continue until you come to the Eaton Canyon sign. Last year we saw five species of wrens.
- Leader: Pauline Cole - 793-4351
- Nov. 30 WEDNESDAY - WILDLIFE FILM - ALLAN D. CRUICKSHANK with "The Bear River." 8:00 p. m., Daniel Webster Junior High School. Allan Cruickshank, of Rockledge, Florida, leads a breath-taking trip across Utah, Wyoming and Idaho. We meet moose, bear, antelope, and elk; forty species of birds -- a gallery of natural wonders.
- Dec. 1 THURSDAY-EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING-7:30 p. m., Audubon House
- Dec. 10 SATURDAY AND SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - CARRIZO PLAINS. Hear the bugling of thousands of Sandhill Cranes. See Mountain Plovers, Horned Larks, and perhaps Longspurs. Those planning to stay at the California Valley Lodge should write to the Lodge for reservations.  
 11
- Leader: Arnold Small - 837-9687

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Dec. 13

**TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p. m.,** Great Hall, Plummer Park. Gerhard Bakker with "The Fantastic World of the Alpine-Arctic Tundra. A comparison of the tundra in Lapland, Alaska, and the Western Rockies. The slides will include many close-ups of the vegetation.

Always bring lunch and binoculars on field trips.

Please, no pets and no collecting.

*Visitors always welcome!*

## CHAUCER: On Birds 14th. Century Bird Observations in England

By Betty Jenner

Geoffrey Chaucer: this remarkable man was secret agent for kings; traveller to foreign lands; keen scientific amateur; and spokesman for the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. He not only was an observer of all shadings of human character from the phony to the sublime, but he probably was a bird observer as well.

In those days - in fact until quite recently - most Nature observations were required to have moral or anthropomorphic excuses for being. All literature was supposed to interpret Nature either in the light of classic mythology, or religion, or superstition.

Thus when Chaucer wanted to give an account of a lovely spring day in a superlatively beautiful garden, he of necessity created an allegory: The Parlement of Foules, a poem for St. Valentine's Day, in which Nature listens to a debate between the birds regarding the choosing of their mates.

Few people at the royal court could read; so poems such as this, probably with many allusions to current intrigues - perhaps read aloud by Chaucer himself - took the place of TV and movies of Modern Civilization.

In this lovely garden the birds were placed according to their social stations: the birds of prey highest, the worm-eating birds next, the waterfowl lowest; there were so many seed-eaters that they were everywhere.

How interesting to modern birders is his list of birds; in the 14th century these names must already have been in use a long time. Most are Anglo-Saxon, some are Old German in derivation, some, Old French:

The royal eagle, who can look at the sun; the

goshawk; the falcon; sparrowhawk, the quail's foe; the merlin, who seeks the lark; the meek-eyed dove; the jealous swan; the owl, that forebodes Death; the giant crane, with his trumpet sound; the chough, a thief; the magpie; the jay; the heron, foe of eels; the lapwing; the starling; the ruddok (the robin); the sparrow; the nightingale; the swallow; the turtledove; the peacock, with feathers as bright as an angel's; the pheasant; the watchful goose; the unkind cuckoo; the drake and duck; the stork; the gluttonous cormorant; the wise raven; the crow with voice of care; the throstle (song thrush); the fieldfare.

Here we have quite a good list; and we can be sure that Mr. Chaucer and his companions must have accurately observed these "fowles," even without benefit of binoculars!

We can imagine Chaucer at the end of a long dark winter:

"April . . .  
When little birds are busy with their song  
. . . On pilgrimages people long to go . . ."

General Prologue,  
Canterbury Tales

. . . hardly a game I know  
Can ever tempt me from my books to go,  
Unless it is either on some holiday  
Or else within the jolly\* month of May;  
Such time as when I hear the small birds sing  
And when the flowers again begin to spring,  
Farewell, my book, until that season's past!"

Prologue,  
The Legend of Good Women

\* (A better interpretation of the Norman word "joli" would be "delightful" -- less hearty than "jolly.")

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# This is Sanctuary?

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES BILL was passed; but one feature of it is regrettable: the Secretary of the Interior is empowered to open 100% of any National Wildlife Refuge to the hunting of resident game birds, instead of the present 40% of the area of the "Refuge".

"Refuges?? An estimated fifty tons of shotgun pellets are deposited on the bottom of the shooting areas at Tule Lake Refuge alone, each year; for waterfowl that feed on the bottom of the ponds this is pretty near fatal - 4 pellets will make any duck sick when swallowed, 5 will sterilize it, and 6 will kill it! X-ray studies of a large number of waterfowl have shown that 65% of all waterfowl have an average of 9 pellets in their bodies; these pellets are poison and little if any research is being continued to determine the long-term bad effects! Are the people being unconsciously deceived by an official program to acquire "Wildlife Sanctuaries" which are such in name only? The fact that 40% and more of these areas is open to shooting is shocking to those interested in the true conservation of wildlife."

The above is included in a communication from Henry M. Weber, M.D., Comdr., Med. Corps, U.S.N. Ret., the conservation chairman of California Garden Clubs, Inc. In a forthcoming issue we shall use more of the material which he sent us.

If our brethren of the hunting fraternity have facts and figures to refute the above statistics, we will be glad to publish them.



Members and subscribers: will you please check the zip code number on the name label of your "Tanager" envelope; if it is incorrect, please send the face of the envelope, with the correct zip code number on it, to Audubon House.

## CHAUCER ON BIRDS...

And Chaucer surely speaks for all birders in his poem "Sothfastnesse." This word can be interpreted as "Ultimate and Undeniable Truth." This is what we are always seeking in our birding adventures; the basic Truth of science, clothed in the exciting and unpredictable Truth of individual behavior.

"Flee fro the prees, and dwelle with Sothfastnesse."

Or: "Get away from the crowd, and live with Truth; ...Forth, pilgrim, forth! Come, beast, out of your stall! Know your country; look up, thank God for it; let your spirit guide you; have no fear, the truth shall set you free."

Chaucer: Sothfastnesse

# TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Ralph E. Sperry, C.P.A., has examined the financial records of the Society through June, 1966, and finds them properly maintained and all monies fully accounted for.

Income.....\$11,203.91  
Expenses.....\$8,020.93  
Net Income.....\$3,182.98

Main source of income: dues, subscriptions, Wildlife Films, sales. Main expenditures: Condor Fund, educational materials, scholarships, "Tanager".

Net worth, June, 1966...\$28,777.88

The books are open for the inspection of any member at Audubon House.



CONTINUED

Long-billed Marsh Wrens. The first observation on a field trip this season of Ruby-Crowned Kinglets was made here. Also, Audubon's and Yellow Warblers are back in great numbers. Both here and at San Diego, Barn Swallows were observed.

Eva Millsap has kindly given me the above information to bring my field-trip notes up to date. I was not on the trip, since I was being briefed for the up-coming Condor Watch. Our thanks to Mr. Anacker for his cooperation in leading the group for the day.

### Oct. 11 - TUESDAY EVENING MEETING

Pres. Bill Watson reminded us of the National Audubon Convention to be held in November, - the first to be held in California. He also told of a semi-victory that the Citizen's Committee to Save Elysian Park has won in getting a stay of action on freeway road construction through the park. The Monterey pelagic trip was reported extensively by Irwin Woldman, starting with the idyllic weather to the fabulous variety of birds. The list will be discussed elsewhere in this Tanager. --A Ruff at Doheny Sewage Disposal Plant is a rare find for California; still there, if you want to look it up.

New Guinea and Australia were the subjects of Jim Huffman's talk for the evening. He reminded us that he went to see and not to photograph the birds, but somewhere along the line he forgot his purpose, and came home with some excellent slides of the two countries. He concentrated heavily on the Goroka Show, a bi-annual native get-together and fair in New Guinea. The head-dresses, lavishly displaying Bird of Paradise feathers, contrasted greatly with the black shoe polish smeared over the natives' bodies. Birdwise, we were introduced to the Bower Bird's bower, the Mound Builder's mound, the walking haystack Emu, the tame Kukuburoo, the Honey-eaters, and others. Jim has given us a fine cross-section of the land -down-under.

# Conservation Notes

By James W. Huffman

Buena Vista Lagoon. - A group of citizens has organized to preserve an irreplaceable habitat of migrant and resident birds, --one of the most pleasurable birding areas available to members of the Audubon Society. This area is the fresh water lagoon at Buena Vista Lagoon in Oceanside, Calif., plus some adjoining bottomland and eucalyptus groves. The wide variety and the large numbers of birds to be seen here are well known to all who attend the Society's regular field trips to the Lagoon.

It has long been strongly felt that allowing the Buena Vista Lagoon and adjoining grove to remain in their present state (principally that of private ownership) will result in their early loss to the bulldozing development interests.

Recommendations for the lagoon portion of the park will call for its development as a passive recreation area. Bird islands would be built on the lagoon, with shore peninsulas added for convenience of observation. A small periphery road and parking area would be constructed.

In order for the park to be established, it must be proved to the State Park Department that the area is of interest to the entire State of California. In other words, widespread support from all who are interested in saving this bit of natural California is needed now. This support may take the form of a brief letter or postcard indicating your support of the park to:

Mr. Charles DeTurk  
Sec'y, State Park Commission  
Division of Beaches and Parks  
Sacramento, Calif. 95811

or

Mr. Alfred J. Stern  
Chairman, State Park Commission  
Division of Beaches and Parks  
Sacramento, Calif. 95811

To promote interest in the proposed State Park, the citizen committee sponsoring it has made arrangements for birding and other natural history experts, and conservationists, to be at the lagoon to interpret the area, - on Saturday, Nov. 5th, between 1p.m. and 6 p.m., and Sunday, Nov. 6th, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Everyone who is concerned about saving this natural resource is invited to visit the lagoon during these periods.



Grand Canyon Dam. - Conservationists' continued protests have just about stymied further action in this session of Congress on the bill that would authorize dams in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Not many Congressmen, it appears, except a few from northwestern states, would wish to explain to their constituents why they voted to mar the grandeur of the world's greatest scenic wonder.

Continued, outspoken alertness from the American people on this issue will be necessary, however, since the scheme is far from dead. The Bureau of Reclamation and its Western States' lobbies will not give up easily. The battle will be continued in the next Congress.



Redwoods National Park. - Prospects for the Park brightened greatly last month when five lumber companies agreed to cease logging in the area covered in proposals before Congress. Passage of Redwood National Park legislation early in the next session of Congress is expected.

## PROPOSITION 3

It is urged that members read with special care, Prop. #3 on the November ballot. It concerns a California constitutional amendment introduced by Senator Fred Farr; its aim is to allow the legislature more control over assessment practices designed to conserve open space land for purposes of "food and fiber and also for the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty".

Wednesday, November 30 -  
ALLAN D. CRUICKSHANK

SEE CALENDAR FOR DETAILS

## New Members

Miss Elizabeth A. McCarthy  
1520 S. Westmoreland Ave.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90049

Mr. Daniel Silver  
12257 Sky Lane  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90049

**AUDUBON  
WILDLIFE FILMS** 



**Society extends welcome  
to Convention visitors**

The Los Angeles Audubon Society extends warm greetings to all visitors from other states who are in California to attend the National Convention. If we can help you to get any life birds, please call on us!



By David Gaines

A spectacular assemblage of vagrant birds appeared in the southland in September. After the past several years, this has become an accepted phenomenon. Ducks, shorebirds, and landbirds were much in evidence. Thousands of sprig, and lesser numbers of Mallards and other ducks returned to the coast and the Imperial Valley. Scattered sightings of Baird's Sandpipers were reported. Pectorals were surprisingly scarce this fall. The only ones observed were two at Zuma Beach and one at Capistrano. Landbird migrants trickled south in usual numbers. Occasional flocks were encountered near the coast. A high count at Pt. Fermin Park was approximately seventy. Orange-crowned and Yellow Warblers, Warbling Vireos, and Empidonax Flycatchers were the most common, but most western migrants were seen. Small flocks of Vaux's Swifts appeared early in the month. By Oct. 1st, Audubon's Warblers were chipping in the treetops, and White-crowned Sparrows were singing in parks and gardens.

Vagrant species were recorded from several different areas this fall. The best localities were (of course) San Diego, Morro Bay State Park, Los Angeles coast, and Deep Springs.

Several birders made the trek to Deep Springs in September. The Wilsons found two Eastern Kingbirds and a Philadelphia Vireo. Curiously enough, Art Wang and Marianne Shepherd had banded a Northern Waterthrush and a Red-eyed Vireo but two days before. Unfortunately, Dr. Childs, the head of the college, is becoming peeved at so many visitors. Birders he considers the "least obnoxious". Let's hope he has no cause to change his opinion.

As in the past, Guy McCaskie led the field of rare-bird finders by locating twenty-three species of warblers in San Diego. Let it suffice to list the vagrant species followed by the numbers observed: Ruff (1), Tropical Kingbird (1), Eastern Kingbird (1), Virginia's Warbler (as many as 10), Black-and-White Warbler (2), Tennessee Warbler (2), Chestnut-sided Warbler (1), Blackpoll Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler (1), Prairie Warbler (3), Blackburnian Warbler (1), American Redstart, Painted Redstart (1), Bobolink, (as many as 13), Dickcissel (4), Clay-colored Sparrow (1).

The Blackburnian Warbler was found by Bruce Broadbooks; the Painted Redstart by a member of the Salk Institute in La Jolla (who first saw the bird while eating lunch). A Tropical Kingbird and a Palm Warbler were discovered near Doheny Beach State Park.

Intensive field work in the Los Angeles area showed that fall vagrants do, indeed, pass through. So much for the myth that San Diego is the only place for fall exotics (though it is probably the best). Best localities were Pt. Fermin

## Tujunga Wash nature walks to be held regularly

Nature walks to observe the unique wildlife of Big Tujunga Wash will be conducted regularly, the first Saturday of each month, beginning Nov. 5, 1966, according to the San Fernando Audubon Society, sponsor of the walks.

Experienced naturalists, under direction of Allen Ryan, author of "The Park Potential of Big Tujunga Wash", will explain the main features of several biotic communities, populations, food chains, seasonal changes, and migration patterns as manifested in the flood plain of the Wash. Students, teachers, youth leaders, and others planning trips to this, or similar life communities, will receive assistance to make such trips meaningful.

The walks will begin at 8:30 A.M., at Orcan Picnic Area of Hansen Dam Park. This is just south of Foothill Blvd., between Wentworth and Osbourne Streets, west of Sunland. Group leaders may arrange special trips for their groups by calling Allen Ryan, 899-4801.

## FROM THE LIBRARY...

Our librarian, Bess Hoffman, needs all of the 1940 issues of "Bird Lore", in order to complete the binding of this publication. Please bring to Audubon House; or telephone 876-0202 if you are unable to bring them in person.

You are invited to see the handsome bound volumes now completed of "Western Tanager". It is so easy now to check on past field trips or bird observations. Our library is a valuable resource and we hope our members will use it to an even greater extent.

Park and the coastal areas north of Pt. Dume. Among the vagrants were Winter Wren (south of normal range), Tropical Kingbird, American Redstart, Lucy's Warbler (Shirley Wells - Zuma Beach), Blackpoll Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, and Hepatic Tanager (Shum Suffel -- Pt. Fermin).

On his return from Monterey, Bruce Broadbooks found an adult Prothonotary Warbler in Morro Bay State Park. The bird was subsequently observed in company with a Blackpoll Warbler and a Tennessee Warbler.

During November, watch for late migrants, vagrants, and wintering birds. Waterfowl and shorebird populations should stabilize for the winter. Look for Harris' Sparrow, White-throated Sparrows, Bohemian Waxwings, and Myrtle Warblers. Another group to watch for are the longspurs. These have occurred for the last several years in vast flocks of Horned Larks. In 1965, three species were observed in one day. San Diego is the best area, though Pt. Fermin, Doheny Beach, and Morongo Valley are well worth checking.