

Asa Wright Nature Center Planned

BY ELNA BAKKER

For years the name, "Spring Hill," has had a very special meaning for birders interested in tropical avifauna. We have envied the rich experiences of those fortunate enough to have been there, and have sighed wistfully for the opportunity to do likewise. Articles in the Audubon Magazine lovingly describing this wonder spot in the Arima Valley deep in the Northern Range of Trinidad have only increased our frustration. Advertisements in the same publication have driven some of us to counting the pennies in the sugar bowl in the hope there would be enough to send us off on our own holiday to this idyllic corner of the neo-tropical world.

Spring Hill is more than a guest house, and certainly more than a hotel. It is a 191-acre plantation just off one of the most beautiful tropical drives in the world, the road from Arima to Trinidad's magnificent north coast. Though it is a "working" plantation in that coffee, cacao and nutmeg are grown commercially, one has the feeling of being in the heart of the great South American rainforest. The immortelles, shade trees for the easily sun-damaged cacao plants, and various natives crowd up from the undisturbed forest fencing in the plantation groves. Citrus, bananas, mangoes, and a few ornamentals (the gorgeous Pride-of-Burma tree, for one) have also been planted. In spring, there is a procession of color as the immortelles flower out in orange and coral, followed by the pink and yellow of the poui trees, native to this part of tropical America.

The house itself is typically colonial, with large high-ceilinged rooms. About a dozen guest rooms are available, many with their own bathrooms. Full board in the past has been amazingly inexpensive, and it is hoped that future management will continue with the same policy. A viewing gallery in the front of the house looks out into the garden with its pink arums, bougainvillea, and red ginger plants. Scattered about are trees where Kiskadees and Silver-beak Tanagers sun themselves; blue and violet "semps" (a colloquialism for very small tanagers), and other small tanagers and honey creepers come and go. Then the valley moves down with its great green walls of tropical growth to widen out on the coastal plain.

Bird experiences do not stop here. Spring Hill has the only readily accessible colony of Oilbirds

Continued on page 62

Condors & Guns

BY DICK SMITH

(Reprinted by permission of Defenders of Wildlife News. Copyrighted 1966 by Defenders of Wildlife. All rights reserved.)

An estimated fifty-one*remaining California condors soar over a vast area of south-central California during the annual deer hunting season. Each year at the beginning of the fall hunt, condors move about in small bands to check on the leavings of the big shoot.

Sounds like the hunter is the condor's ally, doesn't it? Yet this is far from true. This last deer season I watched many hunters in the range of the condor. I saw them shoot with careless abandon at trees, pine cones and rocks. I saw men on the edge of a deep ravine shoot at birds flying below - all this while out in search of deer.

Today's veteran hunter is outnumbered by thousands of novice shooting enthusiasts who have little or no background in the rules or ethics of

Continued on page 63

Give to the Condor Fund... now!

Asa Wright Nature Center Planned

Continued

in a "cave" at the foot of the plantation house hill. Lawrence and other driver-guides are available to take visitors to the savannahs and "traces" to see Manakins and Pepper-shrikes. It is simple to arrange a day in the Caroni Swamp to see thousands of Scarlet Ibis return in memorable flight to their roosting sites in the heart of the swamp.

For the flower lovers, wildflowers are plentiful in the forest, such as the spectacular Pride-of-Trinidad with its scarlet bracts, the magenta "black" stick, and orange-red milkweed. The list of Trinidad's attractions is unending: a fascinating countryside where Hindu, Moslem, Chinese, European and Negro cultures mingle or move side-by-side in a plural complex; side trips to famed Pitch Lake and the neighboring island of Tobago; explorations of its indigenous music and dance, now considered typical of the Caribbean world but whose roots are in Trinidad; and the excitement of discovering the ecological facets of a tropical environment, the richest in the West Indies due to its position so close to the South American mainland. Many of the birds seen here do not occur elsewhere in the West Indies.

Spring Hill is unique, surely, in its situation. Though for some years now it has flourished in the capable hands of Mrs. Asa Wright, its owner, her health precludes carrying on in her former capacity of hostess-manager. To insure Spring Hill's continuation as a visitor facility, it is being reconstructed as a Nature Center, and besides catering to guests, will be primarily run for its unique conservation and educational features. At present, an international committee has been organized through the efforts of Don Eckelberry, well-known ornithological artist and a frequent guest at Spring Hill. C. Russell Mason of the Florida Audubon Society is chairing the committee. Plans are to purchase the estate from Mrs. Wright who is offering it at a very nominal sum, and to continue operation under the management of Fred Whitehead, a native Trinidadian. Over one half of the total sum has been pledged, and the project appears to be well on its way. However, it still needs the help of anyone interested in participating in the establishment of such an exciting center.

Plans are going ahead to enlarge the scope of Spring Hill so that it will truly become a nature center. Research possibilities are endless in the fields of Ornithology, Ecology, Biology, Zoology, Botany, and so on. Conceivably, arrangements could be worked out with educational institutions so that projects could be undertaken and a more formalized

orientation into tropical biology could be offered with the help of nearby research stations and schools. At this point it seems appropriate to continue the agricultural activities of the estate for the income so gained and for maintenance of a stable habitat.

Habitat seems a cold word for such a place as Spring Hill with Bell-birds clanging their anvils from the matchwood trees down valley, and gold dusted hummingbirds hovering over the flames of immortelle blossoms over in the cacao grove. All I can think of are the old trite words, "Paradise," and "Wonderland," and wish I could think of new ways to describe this unforgettable place. And new ways of urging that we see to it that it is not lost to us - this glorious heart of an incomparable tropical valley!

Editor's Remarks: Destruction of tropical rain forests is in the planning stage; within the last few weeks, a top level International Conference was held in South America in order to map plans to bulldoze the rain forests for agricultural purposes. Inasmuch as many of our North American species of migrants winter in these forests, and countless colorful tropical species have made their homes there from time immemorial, there is presented to us a challenge - can we keep these forests and keep the people from hunger too? Also, there is an almost untouched field of research as to the curative properties of the berries, bark, roots, etc., of rain forest plants - some of which may be lost forever through indiscriminate bulldozing. The soil of such areas does not produce enough corn, beans, etc. to solve the problem of feeding the exploding populations of Latin America.

The proposed Spring Hill Sanctuary obviously is of great importance as a pioneer effort to save an endangered habitat; this is the first of what is hoped will be many more tropical Nature Preserves.

For a colorful description by artist Don Eckelberry of Spring Hill Estate, see the Sept.-Oct., 1964, issue of National Audubon Magazine. And the forthcoming March-April issue of the same magazine will carry another article by this gifted artist, with several pages of portraits of the birds he has painted there. Fellow Auduboners: we are presented with yet another opportunity to take part in practical conservation. Help preserve the color - the motion - the music - of our sadly scarred Earth!

Mr. Eckelberry states: If Spring Hill can be reconstituted as THE ASA WRIGHT NATURE CENTER, its conservation and educational features will be the first matters of concern. We are fortunate to have the cooperation of Mr. Fred Whitehead, a native Trinidadian and long-time friend of Mrs. Wright, who would be willing to undertake the

Continued on page 63

CONDORS & GUNS

Continued

sportsmanship. Hunting has become a form of idle recreation and with this trend increasing the danger to non-game wildlife has increased accordingly.

A few facts and figures might illustrate this growing problem: In the condor country of Mt. Pinos, only a short distance northward from sprawling Los Angeles, the weekend of August 7-8 brought more than 17,000 hunters. This is the count from the U.S. Forest Service check stations manned during that weekend. The deer taken from the Mt. Pinos area numbered less than 100 by Monday, August 9. This figure comes from the tags that were validated by authorized persons.

During the following week more than 20 condors were seen soaring over Mt. Pinos summit at various times. Observers noted that the birds circled over different areas for miles around. Obviously, most of the entire population of this rare species had converged on the area of this 9,000 foot peak at the start of the deer season.

John Borneman, Audubon Society condor warden, was there during that week. He walked along the ridges and down into the canyons near the heavily hunted summit. He found carcasses that had been

ASA WRIGHT NATURE CENTER PLANNED

continued

management of the Center. We are convinced that once established, the Center would be self-supporting and that over a period of time improvements can be made. We also feel that it should continue to be run agriculturally as well as guest-wise, as this too is income-producing, of interest to visitors, and stabilizes habitats which attract more wildlife species than does forest alone.

Committees have been set up in America, England, and Trinidad, under Trinidad Law. Trustees will be Trinidad residents but all American gifts will come through Florida Audubon Society for purposes of tax deduction. Money and pledges to date total \$35,000, of which \$28,000 has already been paid to the sponsoring organization, FAS. Direct any questions or contributions to:

The Florida Audubon Society
P.O. Drawer 7
Maitland, Florida 32751

picked clean by the condors. He talked to observers who had seen condors circling above the areas where the dead deer were found. Several were does, illegal kills. Another was a spike buck, also protected.

This could be a main reason for the condors' interest. Condors are strictly scavengers and the supply of carrion was heavy as a result of wounded animals that got away and died and illegal deer kills that hunters were afraid to bring out.

In this situation one might consider that the hunting was of benefit to the condor. But the thoughtless and irresponsible shooting that grows more typical with each new hunting season, more than nullifies any benefit in the way of increased food.

Observations made during this year's deer hunting season on Mt. Pinos have made me realize that the hunter of yesterday - the man who would not think of wasting a shell, who would not think of shooting to sight in his rifle near where he was planning to hunt - is extremely in the minority.

Furthermore, in casually interviewing hunters on the trails near the top of the mountain, I found that few of them were in earnest about getting their deer. The majority of them - and I talked to at least twenty hunters - wanted to try out their rifles or give their youngsters the thrill of the hunt.

I saw grown men shoot at hawks and unidentified birds with pistols. I saw men and their sons use trees for targets after finding the search for deer too arduous a task. I saw hunters sit on the edge of a canyon and pop shots in rapid succession at a snag in direct line with an occupied public camp less than a mile down the mountain.

I found dead birds, shot up trail signs, piles of cartridges. I never saw or talked to a hunter who had tagged his deer. Yet I heard shots around me all day long every day I was on the mountain. Certainly these were not hunters shooting at deer. Most of the deer, having heard the sounds of an advancing war, were making themselves scarce in inaccessible, hidden canyons.

This is the picture of the future of the California condor! Only 51*birds left. Even with a vast region of mountain and meadow over which to range, the species will last but a few more years if shooting of the present custom is continued.

And I've left these observations until last. I saw a condor dodge a bullet shot by an irresponsible hunter. It happened on Saturday, August 20th. The

Continued on page 64

CONDORS & GUNS

continued

condor escaped, it was not hit. But it could easily have been knocked out of the sky to fall and remain unnoticed on the mountainside.

Who shot at the bird? I never found out for certain as there were several hunters in the area. I talked to some of them, but not one of the hunters I talked to knew a condor. Two of them identified a condor soaring overhead as an eagle. These two indicated that it would be no loss to shoot an eagle, but the condor, they knew, would bring a \$1,000 fine to the one apprehended for causing its death.

Shortly after the condor dodged a bullet, I saw two young birds in the black stage soar past the face of a cliff. They dropped into a canyon and out of sight for a moment. I heard a shot. One condor rose up from the canyon and into sight. The other bird did not appear in view. I ran and looked down over the edge. No bird, no hunter was in view. Oddly enough, I did not see two young black stage birds together that day or the next. If one was shot, I'll never know - a search of the canyon uncovered no dead bird.

Condors have been shot recently. No fines have been levied because no one has witnessed an actual shooting. But a dead condor, assumed to have been shot during the 1965 deer season, was found just four miles west of Mt. Pinos in December

The Western Tanager

Official Publication of the
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif.
90046
Free to Members - - Others \$2.50 Annually

EDITOR... Betty Jenner, 639 W. 32nd St.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

Art & Production Editor... Bob Sandmeyer
Field Notes..... David Gaines
Activities..... Otto Widmann
Conservation..... Jim Huffman
Typing... Caroline Adams, Margery Green,
L. Jenner, B. Jenner
Folding & Mailing Coordinator--Florence Myers

Feature Article to be submitted by 1st of month
Announcements, etc., by 10th of month
Regular columns before 15th of month

of 1965. Other stories of shooting have been reported but no more dead birds have been found.

Just last year, the California State Fish and Game Department upped the fine for shooting a condor from \$500 to \$1,000. This is a step in the right direction but education of the hunter is still sadly lacking.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Department has an ornithologist on the job. His task is to gather information on this critically endangered species. He seeks to determine the extent of man's influence on the habits of the California condor. By the time he is finished with his careful and badly needed study, the condor may be gone.

My observations and conversations during this year's hunting season have made me feel that there are perhaps one or two hunting seasons left for the condor. The loss of just one or two birds could be the deciding factor in the ability of the condor to re-establish its numbers.

Man is the key. The condor will travel to wherever man is hunting. No amount of protection can keep the bird alive unless the hunting public is made aware of the problem. The hunter should want to save this bird from extinction. If this educational battle is not won, the condor will soon be but a memory - a memory preserved in the legends of all California Indian tribes, a memory preserved in pictographs left on the walls of caves in Southern California, a memory in the minds of men and women who have thrilled at the sight of these magnificent soaring giants circling overhead.

Only a change in the nature of man will keep this bird from following the thousands of species of birds and animals that have been pushed into extinction since man came on the scene.

Let's make the condor a symbol of a change in man's understanding of the world around us. If we cannot save the condor and what he stands for, do we have the intelligence to save ourselves?

*Editor's Note: The last condor count listed 51 condors.

An important line was inadvertently omitted from the announcement of a series of lectures on the effect of man on his environment.

UCLA COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LECTURES--
FACULTY LECTURE SERIES --
SPRING, 1967

Mondays, 8:00 P.M., Social Welfare Bldg.,
Room 147, -- No admission charge
April 10, 17, 24, - May 1, 8, 15, 22

The public is cordially invited.

Los Angeles Audubon Society

CALENDAR

WILLIAM T. WATSON, *President*
1249 N. EDMONT AVE., APT. 12
LOS ANGELES 90029 661-8570



MRS. DONALD ADAMS, *Executive Secretary*
705 26 STREET
MANHATTAN BEACH 90266 372-5536

HEADQUARTERS, LIBRARY & NATURE MUSEUM LOCATED AT
PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 90048 876-0202

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

MARCH 1967

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Now's the time to give to the
CONDOR FUND

MARCH

Mar. 1 WEDNESDAY - WILDLIFE FILM - Webster Junior High School
11330 West Graham Place, West Los Angeles, Auditorium

Howard L. Orians - "The Land the Glaciers Forgot"

In their native habitat and in action: deer, beaver, bear, 'possum,
porcupine, otter, fox, raccoon; many species of birds.

Mar. 2 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 7:30 p. m., Audubon House

Mar. 11 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Tujunga Wash-Hansen Dam. Meet at 8:00 a. m.
on the north side of Foothill Blvd. by the bridge, about 2 miles west
of Sunland. Look for Cactus Wrens and Costa's Hummingbirds.

Leader: Warren Blazer - BR2-8598

Mar. 14 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p. m., Great Hall, Plummer Park.
"Galapagos" presented by Don A Schroeder. This interesting program will
feature the fascinating fauna of the Galapagos Islands as observed by
Mr. Schroeder during a U. C. L. A. expedition there last year. Included in
the program are shots of the unique reptiles and seabirds of the islands.

Program Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner - 748-7510

Mar. 26 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Irvine Park-O'Neill Park. Meet at 8:00 a. m.
at the entrance to Irvine Park. Take the Santa Ana Freeway to Chapman
Avenue turnoff - go east through Orange to the park, about 50 miles
from Los Angeles City Hall.

Information: Otto Widmann - 221-8973

Mar. 29 WEDNESDAY - WILDLIFE FILM - Webster Junior High School
11330 West Graham Place, West Los Angeles, Auditorium

Harry Pederson - "Village Beneath the Sea"

The flying gurnard, who uses his fins like the wings of a plane, the neon
gobies who operate a scale-cleaning service station, the barking jawfish,
and other odd creatures, in a most unusual and colorful undersea adventure.

Apr. 6 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 7:30 p. m., Audubon House

Apr. 8 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Chantry Flats

Leader: Harold Baxter

Apr. 11 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p. m., Great Hall, Plummer Park.
"Adventures in Birding" with Herb Clarke.

Everyone, member or not, is cordially invited to all activities.

Always bring lunch and binoculars on field trips. Please, no pets;
no collecting of any kind.

Make your reservations now
Audubon Camp of the West

The Audubon Camp of the West, at Dubois, in the Wind River Range of Western Wyoming will again offer four 2-week sessions in 1967.

- Session I - June 25 - July 7
- Session II - July 9 - July 21
- Session III - July 23 - August 4
- Session IV - August 6 - August 18

Located on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, the Camp is only 60 miles from the Grand Teton National Park. "The program offers a greater understanding of the need for con-


servation of our natural resources, together with a broader knowledge of life in a variety of habitats," says Paul M. Howard, the Director. He further states, "this Camp is a Nature-knowledge experience of participating and learning - purposeful education under the leadership of well-qualified teacher naturalists. The Textbook is the out-of-doors. The only prerequisite is interest and participation."

For those who wish, two units of University graduate or undergraduate credits are available. Enrollment for each session is limited to fifty campers. The Camp fee of \$125.00 includes board, lodging and instruction and all field trip transportation.

Further information and applications may be secured by writing:

Director, Audubon Camp of the West
 P.O. Box 3666
 El Monte, Calif. 91733

*** Wednesday, March 1st.**
 Howard Orians
 "The Land the Glaciers Forgot"



*** Wednesday, March 29th.**
 Harry Pederson
 "Village Beneath the Sea"

**Welcome!
 NEW MEMBERS**

- Mr. David Connell
 1207 Buena Vista Street
 Ventura, Calif. 93003
- Edna Lee Hansen
 P. O. Box 38
 Cedarpines, Calif. 92322
- Mr. & Mrs. H. B. Hartman
 204 Washington Ave.
 Santa Monica, Calif. 90403
- Mrs. Rita Nolan
 2477 Sawtelle Blvd.
 Los Angeles, Calif. 90064
- Miss Virginia Runyon
 1734 North Kingsley Drive
 Hollywood, Calif. 90027
- Mrs. H. J. Shelton
 6202 Kauffman Ave.
 Temple City, Calif. 91780
- Mr. Larry Steinberg
 10335 Cheviot Drive
 Los Angeles, Calif. 90064

WEBSTER JR. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
 11330 W. GRAHAM PLACE (at corner of Sawtelle Blvd.)

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE FOR REMAINDER OF THIS SEASON

Apr. 22 23	SATURDAY & SUNDAY - Morongo Valley - Jim Huffman
Apr. 29 30	SATURDAY & SUNDAY - Morongo Valley - George Venatta
May 13	SATURDAY - Santa Clara River & Elizabeth Lake Road
May 28	SUNDAY - To be announced
June 10	SATURDAY - Buckhorn Flats
June 24 25	SATURDAY & SUNDAY - Greenhorn Mt. - Frances Kohn
July 8	SATURDAY - Mt. Pinos
July 22	SATURDAY - Potluck Dinner
Aug. 12	SATURDAY - Switzer's Camp
Aug. 26	SATURDAY - Buena Vista Lagoon

AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch, on Bolinas Lagoon, was acquired and is maintained by joint sponsorship of Golden Gate and Marin Audubon Societies to protect a major rookery of Common Egrets and Great Blue Herons. The following is an excerpt from the December report to the membership:

As you know, the original 507 acres of the ranch have now been paid for. At the meeting, we learned that a generous contribution will, in all probably, be made the first of the year which will pay for the strip of 62 acres on the north slope of the Garden Club of America Canyon, which we call the Galloway land.

Earlier, at our annual meeting in October, we had decided that since we were progressing so well in paying for the ranch ahead of schedule, we should now concern ourselves with planning an extended nature education program -- one of the uses originally planned for the ranch -- and a simple headquarters and nature education building at the ranch for a naturalist.

Recent plans of the Bolinas Harbor District, however, have brought home to us sharply the importance of safeguarding the rookery at the

ranch, and our whole wildlife sanctuary, from the threats posed by the proposed commercial development of Bolinas Lagoon. At the December ACR board meeting, it was therefore agreed that we should purchase as much of the critical tidelands in the lagoon as possible and should encourage other conservation agencies to purchase lagoon lands also. Negotiations are now under way and as soon as we have definite money and acreage figures, we will pass them on to you.

You will be pleased to hear that feeling was strong at the board meeting that we can go ahead and make good progress on both programs -- the tidelands purchasing program and the nature education and building program.



Golden Gate Audubon Society has received a splendid gift of \$40,000 from the M. H. Lewis Trust of Los Angeles to be used to make the final payments on the 569 acres of Audubon Canyon Ranch. Thus, a little over five years after the start of the project, not only the original 507 but also the most recent purchase of 62 acres have been paid for.

AUDUBON BY OTTO WIDMAN ACTIVITIES

Jan. 14 - LAKE NORCO - In spite of confusing freeway signs, 47 of us managed to meet at the proper place. In beautiful weather, Don and Caroline Adams led us in easy stages around the lake where we picked out 57 species. The senior Lohr family could not make the trip, but they were represented by Lewis Lohr & family. Tom and Camilla Sternberg (San Fernando Aud. Soc.) were guests for the day, and representing the Pasadena branch was Hilda Clay. Our first timers were Eunice Hammond and Ira & Irene Robinson.

In our leisurely stroll we were able to study 12 members of the duck family; two different grebes; Common Gallinules, Cormorants, Green, and Black-crowned Night Herons; Snipe, Killdeer, - Bewick's and Long-billed Marsh Wrens; Yellowthroats, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Lesser & American Goldfinches. Audubon's Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows were abundant, and there were at least a dozen Lark Sparrows. It was a very good day.

Jan. 25 - WILDLIFE FILM - As I sat before the film watching the winter scenes and the magnificent parade of animals and birds of the Alberta plains and mountains, the thought occurred to me, "why conservation?" Edgar T. Jones answered this very well in his *Alberta Outdoors*. After eons of development, suddenly there is no way

for these many forms or genera to combat the late arrival - man - no weapon but man himself. How can we convey this message to Man, - that we must conserve what we have in Nature?

Jan. 28 & 29 - IMPERIAL VALLEY - RAMER LAKE - Thousands of Snow Geese and hundreds of Canadas were on the fields at the Wister junction. In the distance, strings of Pintails and Shovelers wedged busily from field to field. We conveyed to many locations, and saw 100 species. Several were rare: at one spot, longspurs were pointed out - McCown's, among hundreds of Horned Larks. Thanks to Shirley Wells' instructions, we found 35 Cattle Egrets east of Calipatria, on Hiway 115. Further south, at least 100 White-faced Glossy Ibis were observed by Ginny & Johnny Johnson.

It was a day of discovery for our friends and members: Phil Lukie represented the San Bernardino Audubon Society; from San Diego, Bill & Gloria Tyndall came with Fred Haerich. Our own new members were Ginny and Johnny Johnson, who had several life birds.

Birdwise, the surprise was that we saw so few terns. One Caspian Tern was all! There were 13 species in the duck group, including American Goldeneye and Bufflehead.

Friday as I drove into Brawley at sunset, hundreds of California and Ring-billed Gulls in wedge formation were flying toward the Salton Sea. It looked like a grand invasion.

Jan. 29 - ALTERNATE FIELD TRIP - CITY PARKS. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, - Bill

Continued on page 68

CONSERVATION OF THE HUMAN POTENTIAL

OUTWARD BOUND ADVENTURES is planning another trip, during Easter vacation, for teenagers from the "poverty" areas of Los Angeles County to study the natural science of Baja California. They need help with transportation -- people who can drive their 4-wheel-drive cars or other vehicles, suitable for back country. If they furnish transportation for some of our teenagers they of course can bring some members of their own family. Anyone interested in the plants, animals, and geological history of the Baja California desert country should find it an interesting and exciting vacation trip.

Twenty-three made the trip during the Christmas vacation. The trip was filled with variety. They camped for two nights at a ranch at the foot of a valley near Ojos Negros, east of Ensenada. There they swam in the hot springs, and in the midst of the desert, hiked up a fern-clad canyon, complete with sparkling stream.

The teenagers were particularly impressed with the warm hospitality extended to all of us by the people of the back country of Baja California. The Mexicans invited us into their adobe ranchos, shared a cup of coffee, and rode with us for many kilometers or used up precious gasoline in their pickups to show us the correct route, or a good camping site. At our last campfire when we followed our usual practise of asking the 'teens to point out the highlights of the trip they kept saying,

"Many of us come from what are called poverty areas in the U.S., but a good number of the homes we've seen have lots less than we have. Yet the people seem so happy! Maybe it is living a simple life close to Nature!"

New Year's Eve was spent at the Mission Catarina at a Pai Pai Indian village. The village elder invited us to camp in the abandoned one-room schoolhouse which still had a large wood-burning stove. (The settlement has been without a teacher for almost a year.) At midnight we popped corn. However, the highlight of the evening was listening to Semu Huahte, an intertribal medicine man who was visiting the Pai Pai, talk about Indian philosophy and their interdependence with Nature. The next morning the chief took us to the mission ruins.

Any interested persons can call Outward Bound Adventures, 850 S. Fair Oaks, Pasadena, Calif. 91105, -- Phone 681-4068. They have an answering service that will take messages and you will be called back later.

THE WREN-TIT, Feb. 1967
Pasadena Audubon Society
Mrs. Helen Mary Williams,
Youth Chairman

■■■■■■■■ FIELD TRIP LIST OF THE OTTO WIDMANN

I have before me Dietert's Birder's Life List & Diary, but it isn't mine. It is the life-list for the Los Angeles Audubon Society Field Trips. Such place names as Imperial Dam, Pixley, Chantry Flats, Tia Juana River Wash, and Malibu appear throughout its pages. Such birds as Fulmar, Ashy Petrel, Blue-footed Booby, Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane, Elf Owl, Golden-crowned Kinglet, & Palm Warbler, are the uncommon entries; yet on p. 122, the House Finch is given as our first recorded entry, dated 10/17/57, at Sespe! Opposite, on p. 123, the European Goldfinch was seen at Tapia in 1960. The rare and the common in juxtaposition - but seen by this group of birders. Of these there are many; some members' names appear often on our lists, some once; the number, appearing on each list, is fluid as the weather. These participants are the hard core of our Society - about 100 of us - who want the bird to be more than a printed page. There are many lists that will indicate where a species can be found at a given time of the year; our lists now show the numbers that have been found. We know now that our October trips to Bolsa Chica & Newport Bay have discovered 133 species, that the Carrizo Plains in December will show us at least 74 species, and that the trip to Chatsworth Reservoir has given us 78 species. The lists are never the same. I have discovered that since our records started in 1960, that we have 351 species seen by us, from Monterey Bay pelagic trips to our Tia Juana River Wash junkets. The most satisfying have been our April trips to Morongo Valley and the Salton Sea. Imagine seeing 125 species in one day!

True, the sighting of a Parula Warbler at Morongo Valley is exciting and rewarding, but it is not the end of bird-watching. A rare bird has been added to the life list, but Morongo Valley has been added as well. It is not a large valley, nor is it verdant, but it does hold one commodity that brings bird and animal life together

AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

continued

Watson was conducting a tour of our city parks for 18 members who stayed in the city. Snow & Canada Geese were on the lakes (I put in 450 miles looking for them in Imperial Valley!) and Glaucous-winged Gulls were perched for close inspection. Richard Bradley brought his family along. We also had some of our newer members: Bob & Shannon Van Kirk; and Grace Fink and Liss Picaro, making their initial trip.

At Echo Park there was a female Ring-necked Duck; at Ferndell, Red-shafted Flicker, and Downy & Nuttall's Woodpeckers. At Elysian Park, at least 30 Sparrow Hawks were seen. For color there were Rufous-sided Towhee and Scrub Jays. On the water were Lesser Scaup and Ring-billed Gulls. Bill reported 33 species; Why not plan a similar trip some weekend?

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

as in few spots in our desert - surface water. Here the migrants congregate. In our Southern California semi-desert, wherever food and water abound, that is where we will go to see the birds. And the same holds true for ocean birds; where the fish are, there we will find them. We are constantly looking for better birding areas.

In a sense, wherever we go we count birds: at Christmas, by the number; the rest of the year by species. Why? I remember once at Finney Lake around a campfire we argued by the hour. No relevant answers ensued, but such words as "Aesthetic satisfaction", "accomplishment", emerged; intangibles, yes, almost as if dangling modifiers were completing the whole with no conjunction tying it to the whole of living. Yet birds are part of our living and to ignore them is like ignoring your right thumb. Try getting along without them!

So the purpose of our Field Trips is to get us out into our wonderful Southern California to see it not as a vista from a car, but as a microcosm - a 3-inch bird in a wash as part of an ecological whole. And look at our choice - from ocean to 8000-ft. tundras, from swamp to desert floor to forests of Jeffrey and Ponderosa pines. Few places in the world offer this magnificent variety. In Missouri, my grandfather spent a

lifetime bird-watching, and saw only 235 species. Here the list has reached 351 and is still growing. For the amateur and the enthusiast we have the opportunity of a lifetime by having expert birders along on these trips. Most are willing to take the beginner under their surveillance for partial assistance in the field, but needless to say, the necessary homework must be done, before and after. We have excellent guides in Peterson, and Robbins & Zim, whose manuals provide all answers except the experience of seeing the bird alive. I am sorry that some birders feel that they must "take", (that is to say, "kill") the bird in order to study it. Our museums and colleges abound with hundreds of specimens where the bird may be studied before the field trip is undertaken.

For me, the purpose of the Audubon Society is to keep the bird alive. The purpose of our program is to preserve as much of our wildlife area as possible. I know people want to get out and see our land, because the Angeles National Forest is the most heavily travelled National Forest in the United States. Our campgrounds and beaches are overwhelmed by people. We are not a shut-in race. I invite you all to enjoy and preserve our heritage, as a group. Have you been on a Field Trip lately?

Gray Lodge Waterfowl Management Area and the Sacramento Refuge

By JULIA DEMBROWSKY

It was a cloudy day with a threat of rain, as we set forth at 7:30 a.m. in four large busses, for two of the largest waterfowl refuges in the nation. This was a field trip in conjunction with the National Audubon Society convention in Sacramento, in November of 1966. John Borneman, our Condor Warden, was one of the trip leaders, and was his usual humorous self; to him, the bus door was the "Nut Hatch."

The 6,800 acres comprising Gray Lodge forms one of the most intensively developed waterfowl marshlands owned and administered by the California Dept. of Fish & Game and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, for waterfowl conservation, - it is located in the Sacramento Valley north of Sacramento, about eight miles southwest of the town of Gridley. Average daily population at the time we were there was 600,000 waterfowl. Pintail were the most numerous, making up about 40% of the duck population; next were mallard, American Widgeon, shoveller, green-winged teal and gadwall. Of the geese, Snow were the most numerous, then White Fronts and Cacklers. Ross' Geese make the Gray Lodge area their main wintering quarters. This is a most significant migratory waterfowl winter concentration area, as well as a key-stopover point for waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway. At peak periods, as many as

two million waterfowl have been observed on the area. Nearly 200 species of birds have been recorded at Gray Lodge, and up to 60 species are known to nest. It has become an important center in California for wildlife research, and is one of the most important banding stations of the Pacific Flyway. Since 1948, 85,000 waterfowl have been banded.

When we arrived, the bus pulled up in front of a special pen where sick and injured birds are kept. Among an assorted variety of ducks, were several pink and blue Ross' Geese. -- pastel, no less, -- really, now! It was no joke; these birds were dyed for research work. Mr. John B. Cowan, manager of Gray Lodge, said if an Eskimo sees a pink or a blue Ross' Goose up in the Arctic, they are going to hear about it down at Gray Lodge, through the Fish & Wildlife Service, no doubt. --As we drove around, we saw many of our common California birds; but the most spectacular sight of the trip was seeing the Sandhill Cranes in flight - and hearing them; we estimated that there were between 600 and 1000 cranes. At least 50 American Bittern were flushed and seen in flight during the day at both refuges.

On our way to Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, near Williams, we sighted a Burrowing Owl and a Golden Eagle; thousands of Blackbirds were seen - two fields were almost black with them.

This refuge of 10,776 acres (6 miles by 3 miles) is in the heart of the wintering grounds

Continued on page 70

BY DAVID GAINES

Preservation of Tule Elk Banquet March 4, 1967

Please note the change of location of the banquet on March 4, under the auspices of the Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk. The place will be: the new Los Angeles Breakfast Club, 3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles, Calif. The speaker, Sigurd Olson, has been called the Thoreau or Muir of our time; he will talk on the urgent need for a Nature Reserve in Owens Valley for our beautiful native Elk which is in grave danger of extinction. Tickets, \$4.50; send checks to: Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk, 5502 Markland Dr., Los Angeles, Calif. 90022.

With rain totals well above normal, and several feet of snow in the mountains, one may expect a colorful spring. Meanwhile, wintering birds in the lowlands have increased to astounding numbers. In suburban areas of Los Angeles, roosts of "thousands" of robins were not uncommon. Similarly, Cedar Waxwings were seen in huge flocks almost everywhere. Such montane species as Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin, and Red Crossbill were widespread. Among these a variety of less common species were found, to be commented on below.

Along the coast, Common and Arctic Loons were abundant, Red-throated scarce. Rafts of Western Grebes were scattered here and there. No alcids were reported. At Pt. Mugu, two White-fronted Geese, five Cattle Egrets, a dozen Black Brant, Vermilion Flycatcher, a Prairie Falcon, and six species of warbler were present. These included Wilson's, Hermit, and quite a few Myrtle. Further north, at Cambria, Rock Sandpiper and Ruff were found. A Kittiwake was at Santa Monica Pier, almost the only one of the season.

Shirley Wells, working on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, managed to find two nests of Allen's Hummingbirds, with full-fledged young by mid-January. As noted in a previous column, five species of hummers have been found to winter on the peninsula. Yet the Allen's are not known to nest south of Ventura County! And in December! Likely, these hummingbirds are resident. Could they be the same sub-species as are resident on the channel islands? Among the other birds on the peninsula were some hundred Red Crossbills.

In Rancho Park, the Hepatic Tanager remained through the month. Present with it was a Baltimore Oriole in full spring plumage. Most interesting was a Bohemian Waxwing, which perched in a tree directly in front of my house for almost an hour, kindly allowing itself to be photographed. Conclusion: one never knows where to expect rare birds.

At the Salton Sea, Snow, Canadian, and Ross' Geese made an impressive sight for the L. A. Audubon field trip. A Blue Goose was with the Snows. Perhaps a hundred longspurs were also present, of which the majority were (!) McCown's. Longspurs are certainly more than casual in the Imperial Valley. Perhaps the largest flock of Cattle Egrets observed thus far in California, 35, was seen on this field trip,

I will quote from a recent "Outdoors" column in the Herald-Examiner by Jim Brezina: "Perhaps the most flagrant hunting violation this year so far was the illegal killing of two rare Tule Elk in the Owens Valley by three men of Riverside, Colton, and March Air Force Base. The trio was arrested by Warden Burandt of Lone Pine when he found them at an Owens River camp with the butchered animals hidden in a truck. The poachers were fined \$1500 in Independence Justice Court."

(My own comment: not all the money in the world will bring back a species once it is extirpated.)

Sacramento Wildlife Refuge

Continued

of the Pacific Flyway, and is one of the most intensively used of the Wildlife Refuges. It was estimated by Mr. Johnson, the foreman, that there were 160,000 birds on the refuge the day we were there, and he expected 300,000 in about two weeks.

Of the four busses that visited Sacramento Refuge that day, three became stuck in the mud on the dikes. Fortunately the one I was on did not, but we waited for the other one travelling with us while John H. Baker, President Emeritus of the National Audubon Society, went to find a tractor to pull them out. --63 species were sighted for the day, and 80 species were seen on the trip the previous Sunday. The Fall and Winter months are the best times to visit these refuges; it is a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

in a field of grazing cattle, three miles east of Calipatria, on #115.

During March, the first migrants will be evident. Swallows, hummingbirds, kingbirds, Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers will be pushing north. On the other hand, geese will have left and waterfowl numbers will be dwindling. Shorebirds will be on the move, and birds should be on the move too, for to see birds, one must go to look for them.