

# NEW GUINEA



*Bird of Paradise*

## ADVENTURE

By JAMES W. HUFFMAN

As the son of the New Guinea governor plied me on one side with conversation about birds and the hostess plied me on the other with sandwiches and beer, I slowly began to topple out of my chair. No, not inebriated; I was a willing victim of New Guinea hospitality.

The adventure really began back in the Los Angeles Airport, three days, more or less, earlier. There on a Saturday evening of May 7, 1966 a group of Audubon friends saw me off for Australia on a Pan American jetliner. I had a rendezvous with Arnie Small in Brisbane. We had plans to fly from there to Port Moresby, New Guinea, for a week of sightseeing and birding in that last of the primitive frontiers.

The flying time from Los Angeles to Sydney, my Australian port of entry, was about fifteen hours. This occurred in three approximately equal legs with touchdowns at Honolulu and at Samoa. Adding three hours on the ground the total elapsed passage time is then about eighteen hours. Translating Australian Time into U. S. Pacific Coast Time involves time zone changes plus the added complication of allowance for passage across the International Date Line. Time zone change subtracts six hours from the clock time between Los Angeles and Sydney. Without the Date Line complication, I would, therefore, have arrived in Sydney about twelve (18 minus 6) hours later by the clock, or Sunday morning. However, when crossing the Date Line traveling westward, you advance your calendar one day. It was, then, Monday morning in Sydney when I arrived.

Anyone who has traveled knows that your physiological clock reacts adversely to all this time-shifting. I felt, confusedly somehow, that I had been traveling a day and a half across the Pacific. My nervous system was to suffer further indignities.

An hour layover in Sydney for the connecting flight to Brisbane gave me a little time to assess the Sydney airport. Whether it does an adequate job or not, I do not know. The airport buildings appear to be haphazardly placed and of low cost construction. There is very little evidence of planning, which, indeed, characterizes other parts of Sydney that I saw later.

Barry Morgan met me at the Brisbane Airport. I must say a word here about the hospitality of the Australian birders, or "birdos," as they call themselves. Although Barry and his wife, Joanna, are Americans now working in Australia, their overwhelming solicitude, in my experience, is typical of that which native Australia

(continued on next page)

# New Guinea Adventure

Continued...

lians give visitors from the U. S. A. To a man (or a woman) they seem to want to make sure that you see every species their own bailiwick has to offer. What more can a birder ask for!

Arnie Small was at the dentist's for some minor repair, so Barry rushed me over to the hotel where we were registered, for a change of clothes, and then drove me to some birding spots in and near Brisbane. I immediately got acquainted with representatives of some new (to me) bird families, the Pewee, an ubiquitous member of the mudlarks (Grallinidae) of which there are only four species in the world, several honeyeaters (Meliphagidae), and a bell-magpie (Cracticidae), a well-represented family in Australia of somewhat Crow-like birds.

After picking Arnie up at about 3 p.m. we rushed back out in the field for more birding, during which we saw among many other things some of Australia's famous Rosella parrots and a pardalote flower-pecker (Dicaeidae) another new family for me.

About dusk I was beginning to feel the strain of sitting up for twenty-four hours. Barry, though, had plans for visiting a friend's bachelor "pad" for dinner and since he (Barry) had been so helpful and, furthermore, was such a really nice guy, what could we do but go along. So picking up some steaks (incidentally, Australia has those old-fashioned butcher shops that went out a generation ago in the States) we drove out to see Peter, an amiable Dane.

We ate and listened to some bird sound recordings of Barry's. Available sack-time was really running out now, so about 9 o'clock we felt we could leave politely. Barry drove us back to our hotel. Our plane to Port Moresby, New Guinea, was to leave the Brisbane Airport at 2 o'clock the next morning and we had to be there one hour before departure. So into bed at 10 and up at 12.

Australian hospitality held up well at Port Moresby - too well. Roy Mackay, the director of the Port Moresby Museum, with whom we had corresponded, met us at the Port Moresby Airport on our early morning arrival.

Roy was prepared to take us out in the field immediately. We checked in the very modern Boroko Hotel and picked up lunch sandwiches at some kind of emporium in the town. The sandwiches were pot-luck types. One sort, for example, had a filling of spaghetti.

Roy took us to several wonderful places. A complete account of the birds would take up much space. In general the avifauna of Papua is similar to that of north eastern Australia. Well represented families include the honeyeaters, the pigeons, the parrots, the old world flycatchers

(Muscicapidae), and the cuckoo-shrikes (Campephagidae). The Papuan Bee-Eater, the only representative of its family (Meropidae) here, was ubiquitous. On mainland Australia it is called the Rainbow Bird for its iridescent mixture of red, blue, and bronze-green.

One evening in Papua as we were driving back to our hotel we heard a multitude of high piping voices, like myriads of tree frogs. But they came from the sky! Over the treetops appeared a horde of thousands of Bee-Eaters. We watched, entranced with their beautiful forms and colors, as they flocked to a night's roost.

Among places we birded near Port Moresby I remember, particularly, a small lake where we saw about twenty-five Whistling Eagles soaring together. The Brown River forest area which has been written up in Australian bird journals, was one of those fantastic birding spots one experiences only rarely. Most heavy rain forests are difficult birding, the canopy hides the majority of species. The section of Brown River forest we visited, however, had a narrow corridor that had been lumbered, and we could use our spotting scope for identifying the treetop birds. Roy said he had been going there for years and each trip produced at least one new life bird.

We had read that birds of paradise had been shot out and were difficult to find anywhere near roads or populated districts. Roy and our experience confirmed this. We saw only the Red Bird of Paradise at the Brown River forest, one of several races of the species *Paradisaea Apoda*, which are characterized by long flowing flank plumes. Bright parrots and green-backed fruit pigeons were abundant. Arnie and I subsequently returned to this spot several times and each time the bird scene changed and we saw a number of new species.

It was now late Tuesday afternoon, and I was beginning to look forward to the first sound sleep since leaving California Saturday, a-number-of-confused-by-time-changes-days ago. Arnie was not looking too fresh either. We were about to say thanks and good evening when Roy dropped a little bomb. The local bird club, it seemed, was anxious to meet the Yanks.

Mrs. Mackay had put herself to a lot of trouble and the club members were interesting and interested. The son of the New Guinea governor was there, a good contact as was later demonstrated, and also an army officer, who was really the authority among the group on what birds could be found where in Australian New Guinea. There was good cold beer and lots of sandwiches and home-made goodies. Unfortunately we had eaten dinner at the hotel, not really expecting anything very lavish.

It was really a shame, the person on my left was probably giving me some vital data, but the days without sleep and the food and drink shut him out. Several times I started to fall from my arm-

less chair, lapsing briefly into complete unconsciousness. In a moment I was going to slump down to the floor. Anxious not to embarrass myself and the hostess, I signaled to Arnie and we returned to the hotel and a much needed rest.

Our next stop was Wau, a small town nestled between mountain ranges at the eastern end of the Australian Trust Territory. In general, the New Guinea roads do not connect the towns, and the only inter-city transportation is provided by the old reliable DC 3's. Air schedules are uncertain since passage from one town to another is usually through mountains and subject to the whims of the cloud formations which often obscure the mountain passes.

The smaller New Guinea airports operate on a flexible schedule, matching the one or two daily air arrivals and departures. When advised by radio that a plane has cleared a mountain pass, the airport manager drives out in a bus, opens the airport, checks in departing passengers, helps unload and load the plane when it arrives, closes the airport and drives the arriving passengers into town.

The cabin arrangements in the DC 3's have a makeshift aspect. Usually there are six to eight conventional seats on one side in the rear. On the other side is a canvas bottom "bench" with seating spaces marked off with white lines and seat belts. The spaces between white lines are somewhat less wide than that portion of the human anatomy for which they were designed. The effect is very intimate, and the end party on the bench usually is left only one-half of a seat.

The front of the DC 3 cabin is reserved for freight, more or less casually secured. I recall one very large piece, a boxed upright piano, apparently, lashed with obviously inadequate ropes to the plane's internal structure, that lurched threateningly toward us whenever the plane ascended or banked.

Chester Mayfield the young local "birdo" met us in Wau. A more helpful and agreeable companion than Chester could not be desired. Chester, however, had to an exaggerated degree a habit of speech that distinguishes some Australians, of articulating only parts of many key words, the balance being rendered behind closed lips and presumably swallowed. To our unaccustomed ears Chester, was, frankly, unintelligible. Fortunately, through superior intelligence and possibly some degree of clairvoyance, Chester seemed to savvy our brand of English and a one-way line of communication was established.

Chester took us up in a jeep to what Roy Mackay had told us was a mountain moss forest. The moss draped the trees somewhat like our Spanish moss. It was a ghostly forest. Many of the trees had scant foliage, and misty clouds hung around their armlike limbs. Even the birds had weird names, like the Blue -Wreathed Ifrit we saw. In-

termittent rain interfered some with our birding. We did, however, see several specimens of the Princess Stephanie Bird of Paradise, a glossy black species with a very long tail.

Chester took us to several other good birding spots and we took Chester and his father to dinner. His father had an interesting history. A former Californian, he came to New Guinea during its gold-rush period and married into a large plantation. He entertained us with his experiences during the exodus of Australians from Wau when the Japanese invaded it in World War II.

Our plane from Wau to Goroka was about three hours late. Chester, faithful to the end, did not leave us until we boarded. We were on our way to the Goroka Show.

We had first heard of the Goroka Show in a letter from Ray Mackay. He mentioned that since the dates of the show fell during our visit we would probably want to attend. We had not heard of it, but a little research revealed that it had received world wide publicity. \* Featuring a large gathering of many native tribes from a broad region of the New Guinea highlands, it offered a unique opportunity to see these primitive people in their festive and ceremonial dress. We asked Roy to make the necessary arrangements for us to attend.

(To be continued)

\* National Geographic, Vol 121, No. 51 May 1962



## Welcome! \_\_\_\_\_

### NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. G. L. Ellsworth  
3320 Cardiff Ave.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90034


Dr. Lorraine W. Funke  
3226 Federal Ave.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90066

Mrs. Priscilla H. Perkins  
257 Avenue Atezada  
Redondo Beach, Calif. 90277

Mr. Christopher Holabird  
2244 N. Beverly Glen Place  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90006

Joy F. Pruitt  
17921 Curt Place  
Gardena, Calif. 90247

Mr. George S. Tuttle  
2051 El Arbolita Drive  
Glendale, Calif. 91208



By Otto Widmann

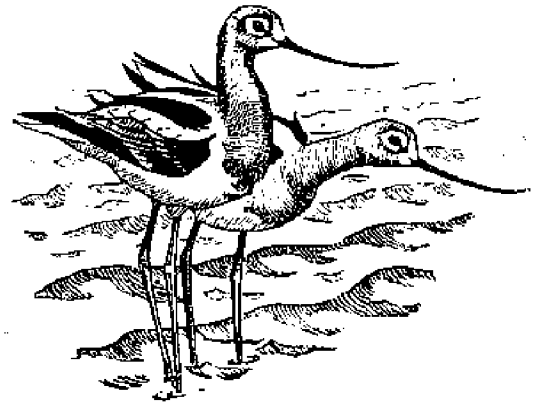
Oct. 14 - CABRILLO BEACH - HARBOR PARK. It was a nice day for birding, and it was nice to know that someone like Ed Anacker, who has worked in and around Harbor Park these many years, was going to lead us for the day. We met at the museum; I was particularly interested in the new egg collection. In our group were some first-timers: Lillian Bender, Sonia Appell, and Adele Rockwood. In the harbor area we had a fine look at Grebes: Eared, Pied-billed, and Western. Terns were especially active, with Forster's, Common, Elegant, & Caspian over-head. Western, Ring-billed, and Heerman's Gulls made the day interesting. On the sand were many Snowy & Black-bellied Plovers, in with some Black Turnstones - a good chance for study for the beginners. We had 23 shorebirds but missed the excitement of seeing Jaegers & Murres. Point Fermin was disappointing; we half expected to see the Ovenbird seen a few days earlier by Shirley Wells. At Harbor Park, at the south side we saw Black-necked Stilts and Avocets; in the tules were Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Orange-crowned & Audubon's Warblers, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. There were at least eight Sora Rails. Many blackbirds were about, with Brewer's, Red-winged, Yellow-headed, and some Tri-colored. White-crowned & Song Sparrows were everywhere. Among those on the trip were Rebecca McLean, Ellen Stephenson, and Pat Weimar; and whatever would we do without Pauline Cole & Eva Millsap on a field trip? Also Cliff Pollard and Earl Dore are becoming regulars; it is nice to have them along. On the final count I was happy to present our leader for the day, - Edward Anacker, with a list of fifty-three species seen.

Oct. 22 - BOLSA CHICA LAGOON & NEWPORT BAY. A Louisiana Heron flapped slowly across the water, rewarding the early birders gathered on a pleasant Sunday morning on the lagoon side of Pacific Coast Highway. Snowy and Common Egrets were also there and a smattering of shore birds and ducks. The off-shore birds were not plentiful - only a few Brown Pelicans and gulls, the best of which were Bonaparte's. The ponds on Golden West inland from Huntington Beach produced an American Bittern posing in the reeds while Eared Grebes and Ruddy Ducks floated lazily by and terns cruised overhead. At Newport Bay we met the Jenners and Jim Lane who had been there in time to see Clapper, Virginia and Sora Rails before the tide rose, and a White-faced Glossy Ibis. The congregation of ducks on Upper Bay were sorted into the usual common ones, but five Blue-winged Teal, their white crescents proclaiming their identity, were the greatest number of this species most of us had seen at one time. A group of Knots were standing with the Black-bellied Plover and Godwits, and Avocets

and Stilts crowded the sand bars near the salt works.

In the late afternoon the group, dwindled now to those few reluctant to leave, drove to the U. C. Irvine campus overlooking the marsh. Here we counted 15 White-tailed Kites and saw many egrets and Great Blue Herons. A Marsh Hawk flew low over the field and a pair of Red Tails soared. A deer came into brief view before disappearing in the brush. The low golden sun brightened the landscape and a Ring-necked Pheasant strutted through the stubble. As we were about to say goodbye, a male Vermilion Flycatcher caught our attention and added a brilliant finale to the day, bringing our total species to 85.

Nov. 11 - SANTA BARBARA - GOLETA - From the Andree Clark Bird Refuge, with its ducks, geese, grebes, etc., to the ocean beach for gulls, and to the Botanic Garden for foothill birds, and finally to the Goleta Slough for egrets & herons, we saw no birds that were new or unusual, but the fine day & pleasant company made it all worthwhile. First visitors and members included Gary & Susan Goss from Rolling Hills; their guests were Dennis & Marty Renault from



Santa Paula. Mr. & Mrs. Noji brought their family along; their son Eric, one of our new members, discovered a life bird, a Townsend's Warbler. Thirty-seven members & friends were present; we had 89 species.

Nov. 14 - EVENING MEETING - Hans Hjorth regretfully reported that the Brazilian Cardinal he has had under observation has been shot. Fran Kohn reported that the "baby owl" found in Plummer Park turned out to be a Poorwill, and that the Axelsons are caring for it. The first film of the evening, colorful indeed, was produced by the Canadian National Park Service - "The Enduring Wilderness." The second film was photographed & produced by the Sierra Club; "The Grand Canyon." By pack train and boat the camera explored cave, rivulet, spring, flower, rapid, sandbank - of the Grand Canyon, both above and below the National Park. IF YOU AGREE THIS BEAUTY SHOULD BE SAVED - WRITE LETTERS!(IF YOU DON'T AGREE, WRITE)

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# DECEMBER 1967

# calendar

Headquarters, Nature Museum & Library  
 located at Audubon House Plummer Park  
 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 90046  
 Telephone 876-0202

DECEMBER 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
<sup>24</sup> / <sub>31</sub>	25	26	27	28	29	30



**NOTICE CHANGE IN DATE:**

Dec. 2 3 **SATURDAY-SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Carrizo Plains.** Sandhill Cranes by the thousands, Ferruginous Hawks, Short-eared Owls, Mountain Plovers, Le Contes' Thrashers are here - none seen in the L. A. basin. Meet at 8:30 a. m. in Maricopa at the junction of State Highway 166 & U.S. 399. Take Interstate 5 north from Los Angeles to junction with State 166, about 25 miles to Maricopa. Bring warm wraps. Those planning to stay at the California Valley Lodge (the only one in the valley) should write for reservations, California Valley, Calif. 93453. Phone via Paso Robles - Carrizo Plains ~~614~~ Sunday we meet at Calif. Valley Lodge at 8:30 a. m.  
 805  
 Leader: Arnold Small 837-9687

Dec. 7 **THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8:00 p. m., Audubon House**

Dec. 12 **TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p. m., Great Hall, Plummer Park.** "Up North - Down East". Olga and Herb Clarke will present a program on their birding trip, with Don and Caroline Adams, to New England and the Gaspé Peninsula. Close-ups of Gannets on Bonaventure Island and Puffins on Machias Seal Island, as well as many other birds, will be included. Refreshments will be served.  
 Program Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner 748-7510

Dec. 31 **SUNDAY - CHRISTMAS COUNT**  
 Call Audubon House for information 876 - 0202

JAN. 1 **HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL !**

Jan. 4 **THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8:00 pm. m, Audubon House**

Jan. 9 **TUESDAY - ANNUAL DINNER MEETING. 7:00 p. m., Fox & Hounds Restaurant, Santa Monica.** The meeting features a new natural sound, color film of Africa "Return to Eden" by Arnold Small. See the enclosed **DINNER ANNOUNCEMENT** for details and reservation blank.  
 Program Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner 748 - 7510

**ALWAYS BRING lunch and binoculars on field trips**

**PLEASE - no pets and no collecting!**

**EVERYONE WELCOME AT ALL ACTIVITIES**



# National Convention Field Trips

BY HELEN BAYNE

This fall I attended the National Audubon Convention in Atlantic City and took in the two field trips that were offered.

For the full-day trip to Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge, I elected to leave on the boat which went down the Intracoastal Waterway to the Holgate Peninsula, making the return trip by bus. There were 110 of us on the boat when we left the dock before 8 o'clock on a bright, rather cold Sunday morning. For a while it was delightful watching the birds on the marshlands all around us, and flying overhead. We saw Herring Gulls, Laughing Gulls, Great Black-backed Gulls, Greater Yellowlegs, Snow Geese, Canada Geese, Mute Swans, Great Blue Herons, Double-crested Cormorants, and Common Egrets.

Then the clouds came over, - it became very cold and started to rain. One by one we left the upper deck to seek the shelter of the inside cabin. Nothing daunted by the weather, the captain headed out for the open sea where it was indeed stormy. The result was a very rough ride - some very unhappy passengers for a while - and no pelagic birds seen.

We were all glad when we finally headed back for the inland waterway again. Thoroughly chilled, we docked at Beach Haven on the Holgate Peninsula, where we had a half hour's wait for the bus. We flocked into a cafe there, and really upset the place with 100 people all wanting hot coffee at the same time!

The weather began to clear again by the time our bus came. We were taken over to the ocean side of the peninsula, issued huge box lunches and coffee, and told we would eat on the beach. We did, amid much flying of sand into the coffee and food as the wind was high; we had some good laughs hearing everyone crunching sand as we ate!

In the afternoon we were taken to more inland marshes, where we saw many waterfowl, among them Wood Ducks, Ruddy Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Mallards, and Common Egrets.

I took the half-day Pine Barrens trip on the following Tuesday morning which turned out bright and sunny. This was not really a birding trip, and we saw practically no birds. First we were taken to an historical section of the area, the Batsto area, and given a tour of the various interesting buildings. They are restoring the village, which was the site of an important Revolutionary War ironworks.

Then we were driven to another section of the Barrens to take a nature walk through the forest of stunted pitch pines where we saw pure

## THE AUDUBON SCENE

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

The many attractions of Ramsey Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains, hummingbird capitol of the United States, thrilled us during our recent field trip Oct. 14.

Probably the most exciting part of the trip was the journey up the Canyon to The Box, a six-foot wide gorge which has been cut about sixty feet into a rock bed. A cold mountain stream plummets down through the gorge, tumbling over boulder piles to form small waterfalls and pools. On some of the sheltered rock faces we found hibernating daddy-long-legs (or harvestmen), their long legs pointing the outside from the mass of crowded bodies. Apparently this position offers protection, and at first we thought they were a form of moss growth.

We were warmly received by Mr. and Mrs. Peabody, Mrs. Hon, and Mrs. Brown. All of these people maintain hummingbird feeders, and all of them are very familiar with Arizona (and Mexican) hummingbird species. This summer these people entertained at their feeders the first Amethyst-throated and Berylline Hummingbirds that the U.S. has ever known. (Actually this was the third consecutive summer for the Amethyst-throated, which is presumed to be the same individual coming back to a favorite spot).

Mr. Peabody reported that the bulk of the hummingbirds left this year about a month earlier than last year. However, we were fortunate enough to find Anna's, Rufous, Rivoli's, Blue-throated, and Violet-crowned Hummingbirds. During the peak of the hummer season in July, more than a gallon of sugar water is consumed daily. At that time birdwatching in the canyon is a frantic business, for only a fraction of the great numbers of hummingbirds swirling around the feeders can be studied.

THE VERMILION FLYCATCHER  
Tucson Audubon Society  
November, 1967



streams and many swamps and bogs. The tiny, beautiful curly-grass fern was pointed out to us. We saw a Carpenter or Sphagnum Frog in one of the swamps. We were told that the Barrens are a naturalist's paradise, since plants grow here that grow nowhere else. The air was crystal clear and fresh, but as noon approached, the sun became very hot.

When we reached the clearing where our buses were waiting, we were very grateful for the hospitality that we found there. On a long table were paper cups filled with cold cranberry juice, which we drank and found very delicious and refreshing.

Both field trips were indeed rewarding, both for the new sights seen and new friendships formed.

# Library Report

By Bess Hoffman

Books, books, books! but never enough for the library. So many fascinating bird books are being published each year. Some are important enough to own outright. Some are delightful to read but are not vital and a person might hesitate to give them permanent house room. Some are good for ready reference. Of the current crop of fall books the following have been selected for the library and have been approved by the Board.

First of all, there is "North American Shore Birds" by Peter Matthiesson, probably the most outstanding bird book of the year and perhaps the most definitive on the subject. It has fine illustrations which give the mood of shore and wet meadows skillfully done by Robert Verity Clem. (\$19.95)

Then there are two books of delightful readability. The first, "Hill Country Harvest," by Hal Borland - the man who called the white-rumped Flicker the "bunny of the bird world." This book is in the tradition of Edwin Way Teale. (\$5.95). The second, "A Glimpse of Eden," by Evelyn Ames describes East Africa with charm and depth of feeling. (\$5.00).

"Animal Navigation," by Ronald M. Lockley explains some of the phenomenal journeys of migration. (\$5.00)

Finally, there is "The Species of Birds of South America," by Rodolphe de Schauensee, which is a checklist strictly for the student and traveler, giving distribution of each species. (\$10.00)

These books would be of permanent value to our library. This is the season to be generous. (Is there a closed season?)

WOULD SOME MEMBER LIKE TO FINANCE THE PURCHASE OF ANY OF THESE TITLES AND DONATE THEM TO THE SOCIETY? There is a 10% discount on books purchased through the Sales Dept., and of course such gifts are tax deductible.

**URGENT!!**

**ATTENTION**  
**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

December 31

VOLUNTEER NOW  
Your Help is Needed  
Call Audubon House  
876-0202

# ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



Expert and novice, young and old, - all of you who are reading this are needed to assist in this year's Christmas count of the birds of Los Angeles, - all points within a 15-mile diameter circle, center at intersection of La Cienega Ave. and Pico Blvd. Counts also will be held at Palos Verdes and in the Malibu Lagoon area. You can be part of a team, and do the tabulating while the experts do the identifying, if you are not an advanced birder.

THE COUNT WILL BE ON DEC. 31.  
CALL AUDUBON HOUSE FOR INFORMATION.

Other Societies are holding Counts on various dates; for information, call Tanager editor at RI8-7510.



THE SALES DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING NEW BOOKS:

THE BIRDS OF TIKAL - SMITHE & TRIMM

THE BIRDS OF ARIZONA - PHILLIPS, MARSHALL, & MONSON - an excellent book with many color plates, photographs, and maps. The text includes detailed descriptions of the birds as well as records of sightings, and areas and times when species are likely to be seen.

THE BIRDS OF AMERICA - JOHN JAMES AUDUBON - This classic is now available in paperback in seven volumes.

ALSO RECOMMENDED:

THE SHOREBIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA - MATTHIESSEN & CLEM

THE BIRDS OF MEXICO - BLAKE

LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS  
---BENT - Another classic

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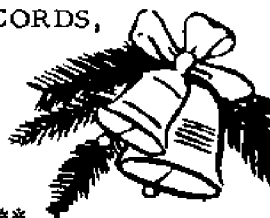
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"A DAY IN ALGONQUIN PARK"

"AFRICAN BIRD SONGS"

\*\*\*\*\*

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ON MOST BOOKS



# BIRDS

By G. SHUMWAY SUFFEL

December is the month for Christmas Counts, and a good time to sharpen up on identification. The best way to do this is to get out in the field, find the birds, study them, and if you're not certain, write notes. This is better than alternating between your binoculars and your field guide. Many winter birds and immatures are not at all like the pictures in the book. By the time you find this out, the bird may be gone, - but your notes are permanent, - there to read that evening or next year when you may be more familiar with that particular problem bird. Let's take Audubon and Myrtle Warblers as examples: throat color is not necessarily distinctive in winter immatures. If the throat is yellow - it's an Audubon; snowy white - a Myrtle. But what of the birds with buffy or intermediate colored throats? They can be identified, but not easily: Myrtles tend to have a whitish line over the eye, - Audubons do not; Myrtles have white on the outer 2 or 3 tail feathers only— Audubons on 4 or 5; the most distinctive difference, difficult to see, is the light "whisker" marks, up from the throat and behind the cheeks or "ear patch" on the Myrtle— Audubon's is straight across. The "chips" are different; you'll have to study this for yourself, but as a guide, Ralph Hoffman says Myrtle has "a softer call note, 'tsip' instead of (the sharp metallic) 'chip' of the Audubon." Pough says the opposite; I like Hoffman in this respect. But remember, not every bird has to be identified! Don't perpetuate your uncertainty!

Late October and early November continued the parade of rare birds previously reported. Gilbert & Abigail King found an adult White-throated Sparrow on Catalina Island. This always noteworthy bird was particularly early, on Oct. 21st. Shirley Wells had several good finds: a Blackpoll Warbler at Harbor Park; an immature Prairie Warbler at the same place; and a Lewis' Woodpecker at Averill Park in San Pedro. This last sighting may be a portent of a winter invasion of the lowlands by this black and red northern bird. The "Condor counters" found them on Mt. Pinos, and 4 or 5 were seen by Eva Mil-sap at Chiloa recently. Cold weather may bring them down. Jay Shepard saw several Ferruginous Hawks in the area north & west of Lancaster on Nov. 2nd, although he missed the Roughlegs he was searching for.

We have a belated report from Audubon House, from a new, young member in Palm Springs, George McKinnon. He observed a possible Tropicbird on Sept. 1st near the south end of the Salton Sea. He gave a pretty specific description in the course of three letters and three well-documented pen-and-ink illustrations. Also at the south end of the Sea, on Oct. 26th, were 6000 to 8000 Long-billed Curlews, and fifteen Laughing Gulls in various plumages from brown immatures to white adults with slate-colored

mantle and wings. The ducks and geese are late this year with only a dozen or so each of Snows and White-fronts.

San Diego again had many rarities. On Pt. Loma the lone fig tree in the cemetery detained an adult Scarlet Tanager (green with black wings) for over a week, while the eucalyptus in the residential area hosted a Thick-billed Kingbird for two weeks. Both of these are third records for California. The Alan Craigs, on the Point, netted or saw Blackpoll, Prairie, Black-throated Blue, and Black-and-white Warblers. On the other side of the hill, Ginger Coughran recorded a male Baltimore Oriole.

Late October saw the arrival of Cedar Waxwings (Oct. 27th in Pasadena) and of Bonaparte and Mew Gulls in large numbers at Cabrillo Beach. Shirley Wells reports a late warbler migration, about Nov. 1st, and the apparent "defense of territory" by male Allen's Hummingbirds at Palos Verdes. This early date is not too surprising, since she found nestlings there last January, for the first nesting record south of Ventura County.

We are anxious to get observations from other birders in the Los Angeles area, which are of general interest. Please write or phone Audubon House on week days, or call me in the evening at 797-2965.

Late Notes - Two second-year Franklin's Gulls have been at Harbor Park for several weeks; look for them in shallow water, in the grass or reeds.

An immature Reddish Egret (blue phase) may still be in the gun club area of Bolsa Chica Lagoon; can be seen from the highway.

A Golden Plover has been in the south central or southeast area of Inglewood Park Cemetery; it is a loner, - doesn't mingle with the Black-bellieds. It is usually in the vicinity of an apparent water tank.

A Black-throated Green Warbler was recently netted at Pt. Loma.

An immature Little Blue Heron has been with Egrets at the channel between Camp Pendleton and Oceanside. Although white, of course, an inch of blue can be seen on the ends of the primaries in flight. The legs are yellow-green and the beak is thicker than the Egrets'.

The Western  
Tanager

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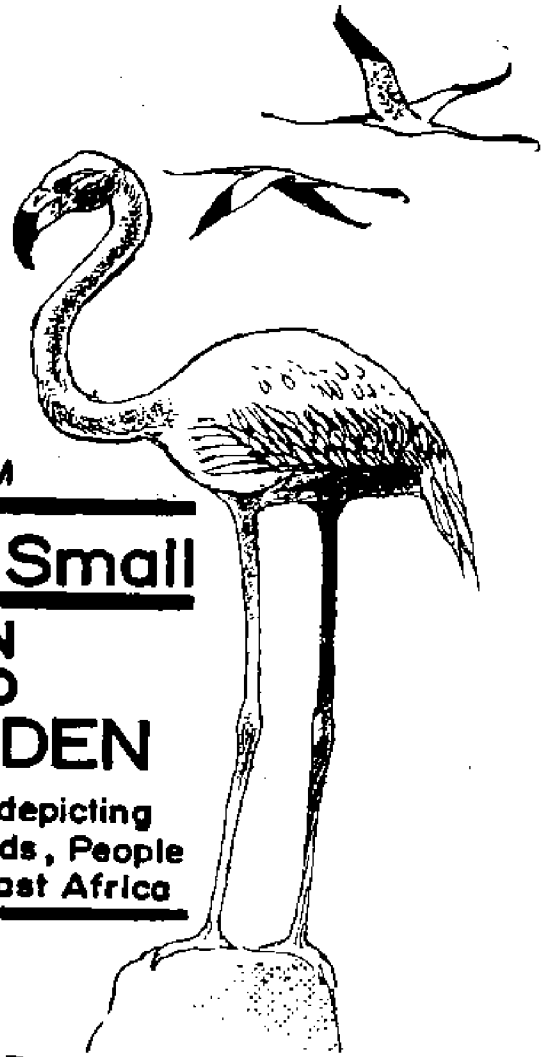
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Los Angeles Audubon Society

# ANNUAL DINNER...

Tuesday, January 9, 1968



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**Arnold Small**

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Sound Film depicting  
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of Central East Africa

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