



GATEWAY ARCH

On the riverfront. Focal point of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, the arch rises 630 feet into the air and is as high as a 62 story building. It was designed by Eero Saarinen. A transportation system carrying visitors to an observation deck at the top . . .

NATIONAL AUDUBON CONVENTION 1969

REPORT FROM ST. LOUIS By Laura Jenner

By the time Gene Setzer, Chairman of the Board, called the convention to order registration was numbered at 1175. This gives an indication of the interest and enthusiasm which had been generated by the convention program. Registrants attending all sessions of the four day convention were not disappointed.

The first speaker, following the welcoming speeches, was Carl Noren, Director of the Missouri State Conservation Department. He spoke of the many activities carried on by his department, including: working with the elementary and secondary departments of education; issuing a monthly bulletin; distributing films on wildlife conservation; and land purchases for the preservation of habitat and wildlife protection.

A problem exists in Missouri which was brought up many times during the convention as existing in conservation, or Fish and Game, departments throughout the country. This is the matter of funding. Currently the department is financed through the licensing of fishing and hunting. Naturally, these people expect the major part of their money to be spent enhancing these activities. How, then, does the department meet its responsibilities for conservation education and the preservation of non-game species? What is needed is a broader, more stable funding base which will enable them to develop an ecological approach to land and wildlife management.

The Honorable Henry M. Jackson, Chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the U.S. Senate, brought us up to date on some activities in Congress on conservation. Senator Jackson first of all praised the Society for the role it has played in the enactment of legislation and park additions, and warnings against DDT. The Society has never been boastful, but effective, he said, in influencing the outcome of critical conservation issues.

These have been isolated victories. Now our job is to make environmental quality become a basic goal and consideration of all government activity. The establishment of a national environmental policy would provide federal officials with a legislative mandate to consider the consequences of their actions on the environment: for instance, the placement of nuclear power plants by the AEC or the advisability of the FAA's approval of a proposed jet airport near the boundary of the Everglades National Park.

Senator Jackson has introduced legislation that would establish such a policy. It would authorize expanded research and understanding of our natural resources, the environment, and human ecology. It would establish, in the Office of the President, a Council of Environmental Quality Advisors. This would be a full time,

independent council to provide the President with impartial, objective advice.

Such a policy would establish priorities in our goals as a nation. A reordering of national priorities will require citizen support and involvement. Senator Jackson believes our organization has the opportunity and obligation to educate the public on the nature of the issues involved.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Barry Commoner of Washington University, St. Louis. Dr. Commoner superbly demonstrated the function of a keynote speaker. He left no doubt about the basic idea to be explored during the convention, or what course should be followed afterwards.

Dr. Commoner began with the question -- what good are wild birds and why protect them? They serve no purpose in our purposeful society. We live in the age of technology and, supposedly, the age of leisure where wild birds could be a source of recreation. Instead, we are beset with calamitous problems such as pollution and urban sprawl.

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NATIONAL CONVENTION

CONTINUED 

Technology is an illusion. It has been achieved at the expense of the living environment, our biological capital. Some people say our problems are only minor errors. Dr. Commoner states the problem to be the success of technology -- these things produce what they were designed to do: the automobile pollutes because it works; insecticides kill because they are successful. The fault lies in our understanding of technological power.

On the other hand, the natural world is a balanced system. This is a concept which has been ridiculed as being sentimental and unscientific. Scientists have proven it to be true. Within a cell's molecular process there is a balance of nature, a web of chemical reactions. If we substitute the environment, we get the conservationists' theory of the balance of nature. If the need to save a species is unscientific so, then, is molecular biology.

The affects of insecticides on the environment have passed the test required by scientists-- the scientific method of experimentation and predictability. The multi-million dollar chemical industry was built to prove we could have total eradication of insect diseases. Rachel Carson was the first to question this and she was ridiculed. She stated that DDT kills all insects- friend and foe alike. She predicted that the great experiment would fail. The result would be a lowering of environmental resistance as the number and variety of insecticides grew and that we could expect greater outbreaks of insects.

Dr. Commoner went on to cite case after case, from all parts of the world, where excessive use of DDT caused new pests to appear. DDT had also killed insects that are predators of insect pests. Crop yields did not increase until natural controls, in the form of predatory insects, were re-established and spraying was done occasionally. Dr. Commoner also noted that malaria is back. The insects have developed resistance.

To ensure the survival of the living environment, says Dr. Commoner, there must be a great alliance among scientists, conservationists, and the public at large. Conservationists have concern and a sense of need for the balance of nature. The scientists have the facts to back this up. Together they must turn to the general public for action in passing legislation. We know the benefits of technology -- we are just beginning to perceive the threats.

Environmental education in urban America provided the basis for one session. Mrs. Joan Rosner explained the development of an urban ecology project in New York City. The schools are working closely with National Audubon in preparing this program which includes training teachers in ecology, neighborhood nature walks,

and a new urban ecology booklet which will be published by NAS for sale. Let's hope more large, urban school districts will make use of this resource material.

Miss Phyllis Lindley, Golden Gate Audubon Society, demonstrated some techniques used in their nature training program for teachers and youth leaders. The emphasis is on the use of your senses to perceive the natural world. These concepts are familiar to anyone who has attended the Wyoming Camp, where Miss Lindley has served as an instructor.

Dr. William Stapp, University of Michigan, showed how the total environment of a community, past and present, can be used to instruct and involve youth in searching for solutions to environmental problems.

During an evening session Sandy Sprunt IV gave an illustrated report on the status of the Bald Eagle. It is easily summed up -- pretty grim. The main reasons for decline are the loss of suitable nesting areas, shooting, and "hard" pesticides such as DDT. It was interesting to note that during the past eight years, of those eagles found dead, 75% were shot and 90% carried shot in them.

However, rapid decline of the species has been caused by hard pesticides which have an affect on the thickness of the eggshell. Just two weeks before the convention, a nest found near Lake Superior contained an egg WITH NO SHELL. In Sandy Sprunt's opinion, if hard pesticides could be removed, the Bald Eagle could come back.

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) science advisor, Dr. Charles F. Wurster, Jr., provided us with clear, scientific facts to be used in the fight against DDT. His findings supported the research carried out by Sandy Sprunt on the Bald Eagle. Carnivorous birds at the end of long food chains, especially fish eaters, have taken a sharp decline. The Peregrine Falcon is extinct east of the Rocky Mountains and is down from its previous population west of the Rockies. The Bermuda Petrel, which has no contact with agricultural areas, is down to 100 individuals due to ocean contamination. This decline is caused by an enzyme induction produced by DDT which causes estrogen breakdown and subsequent thinning of the eggshell.

Dr. Wurster showed charts comparing eggshell thickness throughout the years in British birds of prey. During the late 1940's there was a sharp decline in thickness. This coincides with the introduction of DDT. Similar research has been done in the U.S. with the same findings. Laboratory research has also produced a thinning of eggshells.

Most people are familiar with the court battles undertaken by EDF in Michigan and Wisconsin. Dr. Wurster hopes EDF efforts to have DDT banned in one state will lead to a total ban on the pesticides. In any case, it would be at least ten

years before we could begin to see any progress in the recovery of the environment. Don't miss the chance to hear Dr. Wurster if you know he will be speaking in your area.

Under Secretary of the Interior Russell E. Train also spoke of the need to develop a national policy of environmental goals. He feels the time has come when we must treat crimes against the environment on a par with crimes against society. This will necessitate a coordinated, overall program for management and protection of the environment requiring more money and new laws.

A convention highlight was meeting our new National President Dr. Elvis J. Stahr. The Society is fortunate to have such a distinguished leader to help guide our future policies. He is justly proud of the part he played in preserving the Red River Gorge in his home state of Kentucky. He described his new position as being the "most thoroughly fascinating and crucially important work in which any man could be engaged today."

At the Presidents' Breakfast Dr. Stahr spoke of the need to change our image. We certainly should not abandon the name of Audubon, or deny the fact that people interested in birds provide a broad membership base. Still, we must make it clear our organization stands for environmental quality. Dr. Stahr challenged us to change our image and become more active locally to present a broader image.

Dr. Stahr looks for a dramatic expansion of membership in the next five years. He predicts the Society will increase to 200,000 members in that time. The broadened organization would be a truly effective grass roots movement ready to make its voice heard in local, state and national conservation fights. A key to the success of this program is to include community leaders and more youth in the local branches.

Our aim, however, is not just more people and more money, but more active people who are committed to conservation.

CONVENTION FIELD TRIPS

By BETTY JENNER

The heartland of America, in the spring, - shown us by warm-hearted and hospitable people -- what could be more delightful? St. Louis is not only on the Mississippi Flyway; two additional migratory routes are nearby, the Missouri and Illinois Rivers. The area is the farthest south for several northern species, and the farthest north for some southern species. Similarly, it is the meeting place for several eastern and western species.

The pre-convention field trip took us clear across Missouri to see the Greater Prairie Chickens on their ancient stomping grounds. In mid-afternoon we arrived at an area where the prairies extend to the edge of the Ozarks. Some of us elected to see the afternoon dancing instead of the dawn performance. We entered blinds well ahead

of the appearance of the birds. The prairie wind sang in the crevices of the blind and sometimes shook it, but about five o'clock or so, first one, then several, and finally about fourteen males appeared from nowhere on the cleared area before us. After some preliminary strutting and peering around, there began an unforgettable performance: the "pinnae" or tufts of feathers on the side of the neck rose to give the appearance of horns, sacs of yellow skin swelled at the sides of throats; the birds leaped, and stamped the ground, and uttered peculiar calls as well as the booming notes produced by the inflated sacs. All females must have already been on nests, so the males' performance wasn't as fierce as though the charming ladies had been present.

This refuge is part of the 8,480-acre Schell-Osage Wildlife Area, which in addition to hunting and fishing is used for research and nature study. Space does not permit a full description of the fine work that the Missouri Conservation Department is doing here and in other wildlife areas. The men of the department are knowledgeable, dedicated outdoorsmen who have the interests of true conservation, both of game- and non-game animals, at heart.

This 1680 acres of native prairie near Taborville was purchased by the Missouri Conservation Commission, to insure survival of the Prairie Chicken in Missouri. This survival depends on good quality permanent grass. Modern-day agriculture has all but swept away native prairie. There is cause for alarm among those interested in the prairie plants and animals. From countless thousands in years gone by, the population of Greater Prairie Chickens in Missouri has dwindled to about 7,000 birds today. They require grass of 10 to 12 inches in height, sturdy enough to withstand strong winds and heavy precipitation, for roosting and nesting. Interested, concerned individuals have created a Prairie Foundation in order to raise funds to purchase more acreage. To contribute, write THE MISSOURI PRAIRIE FOUNDATION, P.O. Box 200, Columbia, Mo. 65201. If you are interested in books about the ecology of the prairie, call your editor at 748-7510 for information. All purchases will be of financial benefit to the Foundation.

The next day we left Southwest Missouri and travelled north and west to Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, on the Missouri River flood plain north of St. Joseph. Here, knowledgeable guides, and cars, were gathered to take us on an afternoon of birding on the Refuge. Of the many waterfowl and shorebirds, the most interesting to me were the great numbers of Blue Geese among the Snows, and the Hudsonian Godwits. My guide was that fine birder, John Hamilton, whom I had last seen in Madera Canyon, Arizona, in July, 1968. He had found us a Rufous-backed Robin there! Here we had a very different habitat, a true refuge for wintering waterfowl, where there is no hunting. John told me that last winter on the Christmas Count, he counted 105 Bald Eagles there. Many were immatures, who instead of eating fish are fond of the crippled ducks from nearby hunting clubs.

The following day we returned to Eastern

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Audubon Activities

April 26 - MORONGO VALLEY - Several inquiries the night before set an ominous note. "Would the trip be cancelled because of this terrible wind?" the callers repeated. "I'll be there regardless" was my only answer. Nearly thirty birders either didn't know how bad the wind was or didn't care. Of course, the earliest birders got the best worm -- whoops, we mean best bird-- Marge and Sandy Wohlgemuth found one Bohemian Waxwing in a small flock of Cedars.

In Covington Park we found few migrants, but the brilliance of two male Vermilion Flycatchers left little time for regrets as they decorated the fence lines. The modestly garbed female did her best to incubate her eggs, despite human disturbance, in the same fork of the same mesquite where she nested last year. Armed with a letter of permission from the San Bernardino County Parks Department, we entered the Levin Ranch, where our credentials were examined and passed. In the grove of huge cottonwoods, we heard the ringing song of the first Summer Tanager and later glimpsed this "glow red" beauty as he moved about the wind-swept trees. Both the Ladderbacked and Nuttall's Woodpeckers were seen (this is their blend zone), Swallow (both Rough-winged and Tree) and Swifts (several White-throated and one Vaux's) were working over the pond, and provided an opportunity for a study of field marks by our newer birders. We did see (or hear in the case of a Chat) five species of warblers and a Solitary Vireo, but mostly in unexpectedly small numbers. Noticeable by their absence were the nesting pairs of Great Horned Owls and Long-eared Owls which we found in previous years.

After lunch in the Park, some left for home via lower Whitewater Canyon, while others made up a caravan of six cars to follow the Adams to Barker Dam, a birdy small lake near Hidden Valley campground. Here we found a Solitary Sandpiper, more swallows and swifts, a few warblers and kingbirds and those confusing Empidonax flycatchers. We also found some relief from the wind, and those who camped overnight discovered that the high desert can be mighty cold in late April. -- Shum Suffel, Trip Leader

May 10 - BIG SYCAMORE CANYON - A perfect morning - warm sun and cool breeze - brought out some 60 expectant birders to our first field trip to Big Sycamore Canyon, part of the new Pt. Mugu State Recreation Area. Big Sycamore is well named. Not only are the trees big but the canyon stretches back into the hills for miles. There is a convenient service road along a rushing stream with thick brush and grassy meadows wherever you go. The hills are tall and covered with chaparral and flowers. In April the giant coreopsis blazes yellow in all directions. No automobiles, no motorbikes. Just insects, frogs and birdsong.

Our expectant birders were not disappointed. Although warblers were in short supply we were simply overrun with orioles; Bullock's and Hooded flashing their gorgeous orange and black against the lush green hillsides. Some of us were in luck

and had a fine view of a Yellow-breasted Chat - always a stimulating visual and aural experience, as well as being a heck of a lot of fun.

As if to compensate for the lack of any unusual or unexpected birds we were able to observe a lot of nesting taking place. There were nests of both orioles, several hummingbird nests, a Western Wood Pewee cup perfectly camouflaged, and, high in a sycamore, a Cassin's Kingbird sitting on its nest. Hole-nesters included the Red-shafted Flicker, Plain Titmouse, House Wren, Violet-green Swallow, and (ugh!) too many Starlings. High up the face of the canyon we noticed many White-throated Swifts darting in and out of a cleft in the rocks. Undoubtedly they were nesting.

After lunch we had an informal briefing on the future of Pt. Mugu State Recreation Area by Park Ranger Carl Chavez. An ambitious development will take place in a few years in La Jolla Valley, a couple of miles north of Big Sycamore, with many camping areas, a golf course, archery and rifle ranges, a shopping center, special camps for horsemen and motorcyclists, etc: a poor man's summertime Yosemite. But Big Sycamore will be left as primitive as possible with no vehicular traffic, miles of trails, and a nature center. We were much impressed with the plans for the area and very much impressed with Mr. Chavez, who was recently awarded a scholarship to the Audubon Camp of the West by the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

What made the trip memorable was not simply the birds (though surprisingly our total was 52) or the beautiful day, - but the discovery of a most attractive and accessible birding area - Big Sycamore Canyon. -- Sandy Wohlgemuth, Trip Leader

May 13 - TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - Executive Secretary Abigail King cast the unanimous ballot for our 1969-70 officers. President-Elect Herb Clarke introduced the new officers and many of the new chairmen. Herb urged the membership to support these people and be ready to help if called upon. Our program presented the channel islands as an area of unique flora and fauna with a rich historical background. Efforts are being made to turn several of these islands into a national park before they are developed by private interests. Brilliantly colored wildflowers and unique wildlife, shown in slides by Superintendent Donald M. Robinson, of the Channel Islands National Monument, left the audience wanting to see it all in person.

The Western Tanager



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FREE TO MEMBERS - ALL OTHERS \$2.50 yearly



calendar

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HEADQUARTERS, LIBRARY AND NATURE MUSEUM LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE
PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 90046 876-0202

June 1969

Mrs. Abigail King, *Executive Secretary*
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- June 5 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8:00 p. m., Audubon House
- June 10 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p. m., Great Hall, Plummer Park. Arnold Small will present a motion picture of New Zealand "MAORILAND", which includes such interesting birds as penguins, kiwis and albatrosses. Refreshments will be served after the program and the sales department is featuring a benefit sale for the purchase of Big Morongo Canyon.
- June 14 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Buckhorn Flats. Take Angeles Crest Highway, State #2, to Buckhorn Ranger Station. Meet at 8:00 a. m. at the parking area, about 30 miles from La Canada. We will walk into camp, about 1 1/2 miles round trip. We should see nesting woodpeckers, nuthatches and martins.

Leaders: Don and Kay Hardt 225 6424
- June 21 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP Greenhorn Mountain. This is an overnight camping trip and will involve about 350 miles of driving. Meet at Rancho Bakersfield at 8:00 a. m. Follow Interstate 5 to Bakersfield, take 24th Street off-ramp and go east about 15 blocks to H Street. Turn left to Rancho Bakersfield. Some of the group may plan to eat breakfast here and should be prepared to leave by 8:00 a. m. We will caravan to Greenhorn Mt., birding along the way, via Oildale and camp Saturday night at Tiger Flats campground. Bring warm clothing, nights may be cool. Motels are available in Kernville, about 15 miles east.

Leader: Frances Kohn 665 0171
- June 22
- July 12 SATURDAY - Tentative plans for Potluck Picnic at Ferndell in Griffith Park.

Always bring lunch & binoculars to field trips. Please, - no pets and no collecting of any kind. EVERYONE WELCOME AT ALL ACTIVITIES.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS - THE SOCIETY NEEDS YOUR HELP! Many of you are aware of the ever-increasing activity at Audubon House, both in the sales area and the regular Society office. As a result of this activity, the pressure on our regular staff is becoming severe. If you are good at lettering, if you can type, or if you think you might enjoy working in a "different" sort of office, won't you consider coming in and helping us a day each week or even a day each month? We are still in the growing stage and welcome ideas and suggestions for development and improvement. Call Abigail King at 476-5121.



Will anyone having, or knowing the whereabouts of the following book that can be purchased, please notify Grace Nixon, Sales Chairman, Los Angeles Audubon Society?

HANDBOOK OF BIRDS
OF THE WESTERN UNITED STATES
by Florence Merriam Bailey

First published in 1902 and later revised several times.

SPECIAL SALE -- TWICE ONLY . IN JUNE

YOUR LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY WILL HAVE TWO VERY SPECIAL SALES DAYS IN JUNE FOR THE PURPOSE OF RAISING FUNDS TO HELP WITH THE PURCHASE OF LAND AT MORONGO VALLEY AS DESCRIBED IN THE ENCLOSED BROCHURE, ALL MONIES MADE ON THESE DAYS WILL GO TOWARDS THIS CAUSE, WHETHER OR NOT YOU BUY SALES ITEMS OR JUST MAKE REGULAR PURCHASES,

SALES DAYS WILL BE:

TUESDAY, JUNE 10th - 7:30 p. m. to 8 p. m. , and after meeting.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14th - 10:00 a. m. till 4:00 p. m.

SOME OF THE ITEMS TO BE OFFERED FOR SALE ARE FIVE OF OUR MOST POPULAR BOOKS OF OUTSTANDING QUALITY,

BIRDS OF CANADA

THE AUDUBON ILLUSTRATED HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN BIRDS

SHOREBIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

BIRDS OF THE NORTHERN FOREST

BIRDS OF THE EASTERN FORESTS

AND MANY OTHER ITEMS, ALL PRICED AT 15% OFF, OR MORE.

ANY BOOKS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE FOR THIS SALE MAY BE BROUGHT TO THE HOUSE AHEAD OF TIME. MAY WE STRESS THE SALEABILITY OF EACH ITEM,THOUGH.

Morongo Valley has long been a favorite field trip area for our Los Angeles chapter of the Audubon Society. Your Executive Board has explored the possibility of obtaining acreage there as a sanctuary; but we did not have the financial or legal ability to make the purchase. Now, The Nature Conservancy has taken on the responsibility of financing this purchase, with the understanding that various Audubon Society chapters and other interested people will raise the money to pay them back. Your own Society will make a sizeable contribution from funds largely obtained through your payment of dues; but it is urgent that those individuals who are fortunate enough to be well off financially should make contributions above and beyond what the Society gives. Summer Tanagers, Vermilion Flycatchers, Lucy's Warblers, and other desert species may be observed here by our members if you will give this extra contribution toward buying this unique and irreplaceable acreage.

One of the projects dearest to the hearts of L. A. Audubon Society is the saving of Upper Newport Bay as a wildlife sanctuary and migratory bird refuge. The Friends of Upper Newport Bay have instituted an Upper Newport Bay Defense Fund, in order to test whether public tidelands, in the public domain, here and elsewhere in our state, may be kept for this, its highest use, or shall be traded away and demolished.

Having tried every other means, this group has turned to the courts to protect this last major estuary. PLEASE ACQUAINT YOURSELF WITH ARGUMENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ISSUE. Then if you wish to make your influence as a conservationist felt, write: UPPER NEWPORT BAY DEFENSE FUND, P.O. Box 4030, Irvine Station, Newport Beach, Calif. 92664.

It is with a deep sense of personal loss that we print the following:

On a small shelf just below the west face of Morro Rock, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Davey discovered the body of one of the pair of Peregrine Falcons, whose nesting activities they had been observing since early March. The date was April 6, - Easter Sunday.

Aware of the importance of recovery of the carcass for scientific examination, they spent the rest of the day on the long distance lines trying to locate members of the team of scientists who have been studying the problems involved in raptor extinction. By great good luck they reached Dr. Risebrough, who together with his colleague Dr. Herman, spent most of the night driving to Morro Bay.

Before 6:00 a.m. Monday morning the valuable specimen - it turned out to be the female - had been secured. The immediate cause of death seemed to be an everted cloaca, hanging under the tail like a tumor. The finding explained some of the puzzling behavior observed by the Daveys, the week preceding death, that had made them suspect that all was not well with this year's breeding cycle.

Thus three years of hope and effort by members of the MCAS seems to have come to naught. Those of us most involved are left with the feeling that we are witnesses of perhaps the final episode in the extinction of the Peregrine Falcon as a breeding species in the state of California.

To those puzzled by so much concern for what might seem to them to be no more than the "fall of a sparrow", let me explain that Dr. Risebrough and his colleagues suspect that the peregrines are only the first victims of a global contamination of the ecosystem by agricultural and industrial chlorinated hydrocarbons. As members of that ecosystem, I suspect we are among the victims.

An unpublished report from Dr. Risebrough received by the Daveys describes a March, 1969, visit to Anacapa Island to examine Brown Pelican nesting success. Evidence of the typical lesion produced by chlorinated hydrocarbons in birds, thinning of the eggshell causing breakage of the egg by the weight of the sitting bird, was discovered everywhere. The appalling conclusion was obvious -- there will be no young produced. The California Brown Pelican is following the California Peregrine.

I. Farfel
PACIFIC FLYWAY, May, 1969
Morro Coast Audubon Society

The pair of wild Mallards who chose the Ancil Hoffman frog pond as home base are gone.

Their trust in us was misplaced. Perhaps birds with such poor judgement just aren't fit to survive.

It is too bad, though, that hundreds of touring children will miss the thrill of watching these wild birds at close range. But then, of course, they can see tame baby ducks in the city parks.

So let us save our sorrow for the killers, for the shining, vitamin-enriched youth who stops his 10 speed bicycle on the way home from a golf lesson, long enough to stone a helpless duckling to death, and to help his friends corner its injured mother and beat her to death with sticks.

We haven't done right by these children. Blind ugliness has filled the space where wonder and compassion should be. Can we do anything more than feel sorry? ..

The Observer, May, 1969
Sacramento Audubon Society

OUR THANKS.....

To Gov. Reagan for postponing -- we hope forever -- the damming of the Eel River.

OUR CONGRATULATIONS.....

To the Long Beach Unified School District and the Long Beach Park Department. The Long Beach Nature Study Center has become a reality! El Dorado Park East, 7550 E. Spring St., is a complex of wooded hills, open fields, and small lakes and ponds, created with one purpose in mind; to have a habitat, a biotic community, where the children of the Long Beach schools could be taken on field trips with these objectives:

1. To introduce nature to the students and show the interdependence of all living things.
2. To create an awareness and an appreciation of the dynamic natural world around us.
3. To show the beauty of nature and its changes both natural and man-caused.
4. To lay the foundation upon which to build a "geo-biotic ethic" as the individual's study of natural science progresses.

The city bought acreage that might well have become "urban sprawl" and has created a small wilderness where already Cinnamon Teal & Mallards are nesting; where a White-tailed Kite lives; where small mammals live unmolested; where research and education will bring incalculable benefits from this investment.

We hope to have more details about this Nature Study Center in a forthcoming issue.



The Los Angeles Audubon Society is a member of the COUNCIL FOR PLANNING AND CONSERVATION. Our capable and energetic new Conservation Chairman, Joann Leonard, reminds us that the next meeting of CPC will be on June 26, 1969, in the Garden Room Cafeteria in the California Federal Savings & Loan Bldg., 5670 Wilshire Blvd., (corner of Hauser) Los Angeles. The guest speaker will be Chief Deputy Atty. General of the State of California, Mr. Charles O'Brien. The topic and discussion will center on "What the Atty. General's Office Can Do to Protect the California Environment." All interested members are invited to attend. Also, you may read Joann's fine reports regarding the Harbor Park situation, and the hearing on Water Pollution in Los Angeles Harbor; ask for them at Audubon House.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BIRDS By G. SHUMWAY SUFFEL

June, more than any other month, spans the whole cycle of the activities of a bird's year. A very few stragglers from the winter season, - Waxwings, Black Brant, and shorebirds, mostly non-breeders, - are still with us. We also have a few late migrants, and these include those fascinating vagrants - an Eastern warbler, thrush, or oriole - which can turn an otherwise routine day into a brilliant success. But most of all, June is for nesting. Our local birds have hatched their first brood, and many are starting their second family; but in the mountains, nests are still a-building, and eggs are being laid. And, surprisingly, hardly have the last of the Spring migrants left for the north before the first of the Fall migrants return to the local scene; male Rufous Hummers are back in our mountains by the end of the month.

Spring migration was apparently about two weeks late this year - the Morongo Valley field trips on April 19th & 26th, usually so productive, found few migrant species and those in small numbers. Yet, by early May, warblers of several species, Swainson's Thrushes, and Western Tanagers were common. Despite this, Mike San Miguel banded 42 Nashville and 12 Wilson's Warblers on April 13th at Fish Canyon near Duarte. In addition he saw many more warblers and found a concentration of TWO TO THREE HUNDRED Lazuli Buntings in the chaparral! It is probable that these early migrants hurried right through, and so went unnoticed by most birders.

Most of the reports in late March and early April had to do with first arrivals or late winter birds. Russ & Marion Wilson spent a week at Hidden Valley Campground, near 29 Palms, just before leaving for another extended eastern circuit. The last few days of March produced their earliest Scott's Oriole, Western Kingbird, and Warbling Vireos. April 2nd & 5th brought them a Wilson's Warbler (very appropriately) and a Western Flycatcher. If "Happiness is 600 Birds", Russ, as we know from your outstanding pictures, what happens now? Do you go for 700, or for a complete photographic record of all 600? Jean Muller had an early male Black-headed Grosbeak in Palos Verdes on March 24th and Jon Dunn reported three Gull-billed Terns at Ramer Lake on April 13th. Two Solitary Sandpipers, always noteworthy in the spring, turned up in West Los Angeles, of all places, on April 15th, according to Abigail King, who later joined with others in studying the single bird at Joshua Tree Monument on the 26th. Vaux's Swifts came through our area singly or in small numbers with the only large concentration being 7 to 800 at Encino Reservoir on May 4th (Jon Dunn). With them was at least one Black Swift (seldom seen here in migration). A Gray Vireo was found at Cottonwood Springs on April 13th by Don Sterba and Ralph Mancke, while two more were seen at Morongo Valley by Jerry Johnson and Larry Sansone on May 11th. It is probable that these are migrants since they are not known to nest in these localities. David

and Richard Bradley witnessed a "bloom" of copepods off Pt. Fermin on May 3rd on which an estimated 35,000 pelagic birds were feeding. While mostly gulls, there were also many dark and lightbellied shearwaters, dark petrels, jaegers, and phalaropes.

Eastern vagrants made the last few days of April and the first few days in May the most exciting week of the year to date. A Red-eyed Vireo at Descanso Gardens on April 29th was identified both visually and aurally by Lois Boylen, who will be remembered by the birders of the San Diego area. May 3rd & 4th at Morongo Valley and Whitewater Canyon were outstanding: the Brown Thrasher (found by Trudy Siptroth on April 27th, the very morning after our field trip), was still there; three to five Lucy's Warblers were found in the big mesquites along the stream; a Northern Waterthrush was banded by Mike San Miguel and another was seen near the pond at Whitewater (Ralph Mancke); both male and female Redstarts were seen, but not together; and a Black-and-white Warbler was found at Whitewater by Jerry & Larry. An earlier B-&-W was reported by Jean Brandt in Bouquet Canyon on April 13th. After leaving Morongo Valley on the 3rd, Guy McCaskie spent the night at Finney Lake, near Brawley, where he found a Tennessee Warbler, an adult Franklin's Gull, and a Black Swift. Last but not least was a singing male Parula Warbler in Placerita Canyon, heard and seen by Dr. J. W. Hardy and John Hopper. Quite a week! And this in the spring when vagrants are supposedly fewer than in the fall.

The books were closed on the winter invasion of Bohemian Waxwings by Don Wooley who reported a single bird in a large flock of Cedars at Antelope Valley Inn on the 13th; by Shirley Wells who saw a lone Bohemian outside her kitchen window in San Pedro on the 22nd; and, of course, by the Wohlgenuths at Morongo Valley on the 26th.

Jan Tarble gave us our only report this year of a Rusty Blackbird - at Wildrose Camp, Death Valley, on April 1st. The wintering Harris' Sparrow at the Arcadia Arboretum was last seen in late April, but Alice Fries had one in her San Clemente yard on May 3rd. Shirley Wells gave us our only 1969 report of Red Crossbills. She heard a few and identified one in the big sycamore in Averill Park, San Pedro, on May 3rd. Richard Bradley had a very late Hermit Thrush in Palos Verdes on May 10th.

We have had two extra-limital reports of California Condors this spring, the first from Harvey Payne of Lancaster on March 13th. For several mornings between 8 & 10 a.m. he observed this large bird perched on a rocky butte north of Ave. 0 at 210th St. E. He measured it with his transit and by comparison with a rock of known height. Both ways showed it to be 3 1/2 ft. tall, - truly a very large bird. In late April, Paul & Pat Hessler had a very large black bird fly over them near 29 Palms and, they report, were able to see the white linings on the forward edge of the wings. While there are no records of Condors from these localities in historic times, Condors are known to be great wanderers and such occurrences are possible. Formerly they travelled north to the mouth of the Columbia River, and eastward to Arizona; while, more re-

cently, they have been recorded at Lone Pine, on the east side of the Sierra, - which is no farther from their normal range than is 29 Palms.

Ed. Note: The May "Pacific Flyway" of Morro Coast Audubon Society carries an article about the sighting, at close range, of a Condor on a 1999' peak in the Santa Lucias near Cambria. Your Condor Fund contributions are getting results! ***** End of Note.

Some late reports may be of interest. Kim Garrett found a Wied's Flycatcher at Covington Park in Morongo Valley on May 10th (they had not yet arrived on May 4th), and two White-winged Doves were seen at Whitewater Canyon late the same day. Both of these birds are at the northwesterly edge of their range. The Wohlgemuths and the Hesslers found a Sabine's Gull and an Arctic Loon in Malibu Lagoon on the 11th. Both birds showed small traces of oil on their plumage and, we suspect, this, along with oil taken internally in feeding or in trying to clean their plumage, may have accounted for the on-shore occurrence of these normally pelagic birds. Many Kittiwakes have been found along the shore this spring in a sick or dying condition, - probably from the same cause. Shirley Wells netted a Virginia's Warbler in San Pedro on the 12th, - the only record this year. She also observed a Steller's Jay in Palos Verdes in late March, and another one was in Pasadena on May 13th. It is possible that these handsome birds are slowly adapting to life in the lowlands where habitat is similar to their mountain home. This happened in the case of our Western Robins and Band-tailed Pigeons in the thirties and forties.

A hike up to Santa Anita Falls, above Arcadia, in the late afternoon should prove worthwhile this June. Dippers are almost a certainty if you travel the stream, and Black Swifts are likely to be seen from the top of the falls. If you take a picnic supper, Spotted Owls are possible in the lower canyon, but take good flashlights as the road is badly washed out. The Salton Sea, the Colorado River, and Southeastern Arizona offer fabulous birding further afield.

**CONVENTION
FIELD
TRIPS**
continued.....



Missouri, driving to Hannibal, the birthplace of Mark Twain. There is a beautiful view of the great Mississippi River from the bluffs there. Deciduous trees and spring flowers made the perfect setting for migrant birds -- but the same sad fact held here which had plagued us the whole trip -- cold weather had delayed the arrival of warblers. There were plentiful Myrtle Warblers, as well as Cardinals, Blue Jays, Tufted Titmice, and Red-headed, Red-bellied, and Downy Woodpeckers.

The Sunday field trips were pretty well rain-soaked everywhere, but we were sure that Tuesday's fine weather would produce some great warbler waves. Not so! We saw some good individual birds, but the main concentrations were still delayed. The flowers were breathtakingly lovely: dogwood, redbud, lilac, and the dainty ones on the ground, - Spring Beauty, violets,

phlox, verbena, and many others.

The Missouri Botanical Garden Arboretum is about 30 miles south and west of St. Louis, and consists of 1600 acres of wooded river bottom, extensive open fields, a small lake, and many species of coniferous trees in large stands. On the same trip we visited the August A. Busch Wildlife Area, located about 25 miles west of St. Louis. This 7500-acre area, under the supervision of the Missouri Conservation Commission, contains 37 man-made lakes; woods, open fields, creek bottoms, and some cultivated land; it is a good all-round birding area.

The second field trip was planned to include the Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge, but on account of high water in Old Man River, that part of the trip was flooded out. We crossed the Mississippi at Alton, Ill., watching a riverboat pushing grain barges through the locks; then drove to the campus of Principia College, near the old river village of Elsah. About half the 3,500-acre campus is woodland, some of it with virgin timber in deep ravines, some in open meadows and fields. After a pleasant walk and satisfying lunch, we re-entered the busses and drove to Pere Marquette State Park, the largest Illinois state park. Over 15 miles of foot and bridle trails wind through the park's 5180 acres. The area is hilly with many limestone bluffs. Most of the park is covered with second growth timber varying from early brush stage to almost mature forest. In a few places the loess hills are covered with native prairie grasses. Here we had Scarlet Tanager and singing Prairie Warblers among other birds.

At each location, local birders were stationed to lead us to species that had been "tied down." Interpreters of botanical and geological features were available to tour members who were not particularly interested in seeing new birds. It would be difficult to say enough warm words regarding the thoughtful preparation that had been so thoroughly worked out beforehand by participating local Societies. That valued friend of many L. A. Society members, Bertha Massie, was responsible for much of the efficient organization. A field trip with Bertha is always rewarding.

The extent of activities of St. Louis area societies may be judged by the May schedule of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. Walks -- mostly bird walks, but including some botany and general nature walks, are scheduled for EIGHTEEN days of the month!

"A Guide to Finding Birds of the St. Louis Area" is published by W. G. N. S. S. I believe it can be ordered through the treasurer, who is one of the authors: Richard Anderson, 1147 Grenshaw Drive, St. Louis, Mo. 63137.

A park fairly close to the downtown area is Forest Park, location of the famous St. Louis Zoo, among other features. There is a wooded portion of the park where birds may be seen all year round, but where during the peak of migration more than 30 species of warblers may be seen. We birded this park several times, and observed a few life birds; but the full migration had not arrived yet due to the cold weather of this spring, which seems to have slowed migration everywhere. Yellow-throated Vireo; Palm,

..... continued on next page.....



Welcome!

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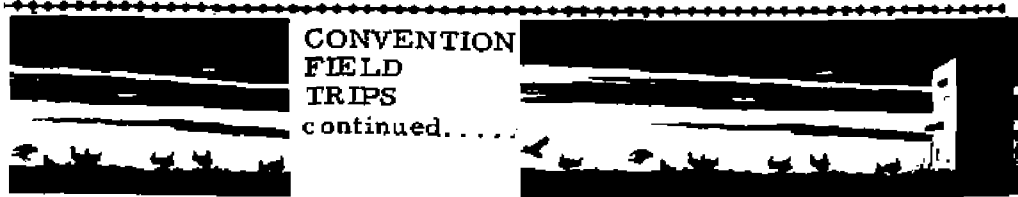
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CONVENTION
FIELD
TRIPS
continued.....



Black-throated Green, Black-and-white, and Golden-winged Warblers, and Indigo Bunting, were seen by us, and other people saw Cerulean and Worm-eating Warblers. A visit to the exotic birds of the zoo was most interesting; a dividend to be remembered with pleasure was a chat with Marlin Perkins, curator, whose TV program, "Wild Kingdom" is popular with all viewers.

We -- Laura & Betty Jenner -- would like to express our warmest appreciation to Eleanor Marcus of the St. Louis Society, who devoted most of an entire day to taking us to the choicest birding spots -- and even brought along that important feature, a tasty lunch! We hope to reciprocate when St. Louis people come a-visiting to Southern California.