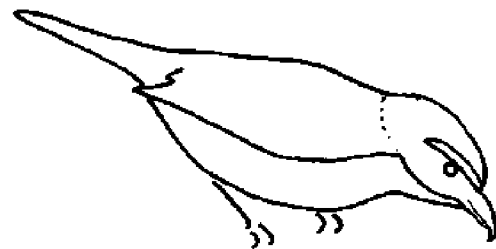


# The Western Tanager

VOLUME 36

FEBRUARY, 1970

NUMBER 6



## Vacation in Venezuela

### Part 1 By Don and Caroline Adams

As soon as school closed last summer, we left for Venezuela for three weeks of exciting birding in South America's most up-to-date country. We had planned the trip for months, pouring over the map and plotting our general course. There is only one road map available and, fortunately, it may be purchased in the Map Shop in Westwood. Our plan was to fly to Caracas, rent a car, and drive to three main areas: the Central Highlands, mountains bordering the coast, where we would bird at Colonia Tovar and Henri Pittier National Park; the llanos, high plains that stretch for miles south from the mountains to San Fernando de Apure on the Apure River; and finally west to the Andes, following the road from Barinas to Santo Domingo, Merida, and La Grita. We had made a reservation for the first night at the Hotel Avila in Caracas, had a car reserved with Hertz, and our round trip airline tickets. We had the required tourist permits, good for 30 days, our birth certificates and smallpox vaccination certificates.

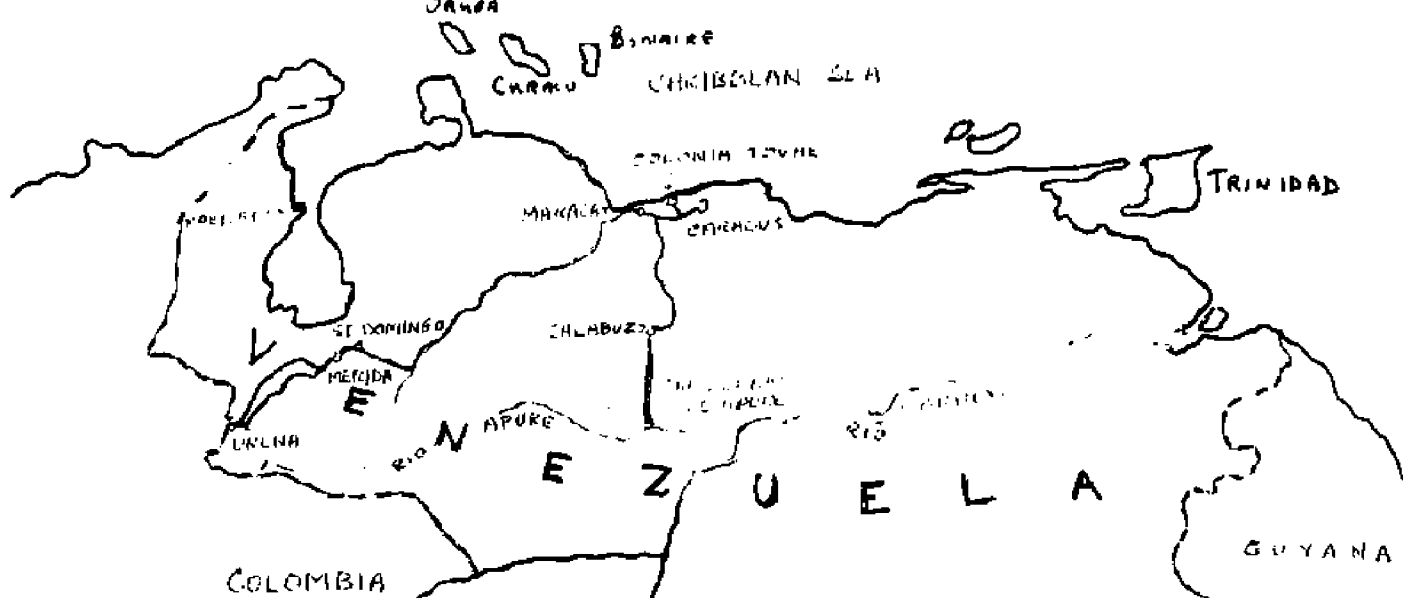
We took a minimum of clothes - boots, birding clothes (light weight for expected high temperature), rain gear (May to November is the rainy season), and windbreakers to wear in the mountains. Everything was wash and wear; we didn't want to waste time waiting for cleaning. Our "dressy" clothes were very simple. Some hotels required ties and jackets for men, but most of the time sportswear was acceptable.

Perhaps the heaviest part of our luggage consisted of binoculars, scope, cameras, tape recorder and books. The books included a Spanish dictionary and phrase book, *The Birds of Colombia* by deSchauensee and *Birds of Surinam* by Haverschmidt. We had a copy of Dr. Gochfeld's article "Birds of Venezuela" published in the *Linnaean News-Letter* in 1966, excerpts from Fodor's and Pan Am's travel guides to Venezu-

ela, and our own compilation of birds to be seen, with notes on their field marks.

A thermos bottle, an electric coil for heating water, knife, fork, spoon, can opener, and plastic cutting board for preparing snacks in the field completed our equipment. The local "Super Mercados" had all the items needed to provide tasty breakfasts, lunches and hors d'oeuvres. One reassuring note about Venezuela for the traveller, is its high standard of cleanliness, its pasteurized dairy products, its chlorinated water, and safe-to-eat salad greens. We all ate freely of the foods served - including milk, ice cream, and green salads - without any ill effects. The fresh tropical fruits are delicious and very cheap, beer is plentiful and good, and coffee is delicious.

Our flight from L. A. to Miami was uneventful - no hijackers aboard. Jim Huffman was with us and we were meeting Jan Tarble in Caracas. After a couple of hours wait in Miami, we took a dinner flight aboard a Varig jet, arrived at Maiquetia, Caracas's airport, before midnight, went through customs in record time, and caught a cab for the city. The Hotel Avila was delightfully quiet. The tree frogs had barely lulled us to sleep before the Greater Kiskadees awakened us to bird in the hotel's gardens before breakfast. In a short time we had seen Carib Grackle, Shiny Cowbirds, Blue-and-White Swallows, Bananaquits, Saffron Finches, Oriole Blackbirds, and Blue-Gray Tanagers. The grounds were bright with tropical flowers, the birds were new to us, but we were anxious to be out of the city. After getting our car we spent some time trying to find the right road out of Caracas. The autopista was great for fast driving, but its on and off ramps were as confusing as those of any strange freeway, and, even with a good city map to guide us, we made a couple of wrong turns before we found the road leading to Colonia Tovar.




It was a good paved road and was crowded with Sunday traffic. Many families were out for a drive and a picnic along the scenic mountain route. We stopped at a refreshment stand to purchase bread, cheese, fruit and wine to have our own picnic lunch on a red bandana on the car's trunk. This set the pattern for the following weeks, for we were usually on the road when lunch time arrived. The peak of the traffic was reached at Junquito, a mountain village with narrow streets lined with vendors. The crowd thinned after Junquito, however, and we were relieved to be in the clear, cool air and quiet atmosphere of Colonia Tovar, a German community. La Selva Negra, the hotel where we stayed for the next two days, was charming, typical Bavarian inn complete with Bavarian food.

Some of the common birds of the area were Rufous-collared Sparrow, Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush, and Yellow-legged Thrush. Rufous-browed Peppershrike called from the tall conifers above the hotel and Blue-and-White Swallows nested in the eaves. A Slaty Flower-piercer was feeding in a garden and a Shining-green Hummingbird hovered in the blooms of a fuchsia. Tropical Mockingbirds and Kingbirds were the counterparts of our own and Band-tailed Pigeons reminded us of home. Driving higher on the mountain we were in cool, misty forest. Here the trees were enhanced by bromeliads of all sizes. Some were incredibly large. Here we saw Yellow-bellied Siskin, three-striped Warbler and Streaked Tufted Cheek.

Taking a road that lead north, down toward El Limon and the coast, we were in drier, hotter habitat. At one stop we found many colorful tanagers, Beryl-spangled, Fulvous-headed, Palm, Common Bush Tanager, and a Black-faced Ant-thrush, all feeding together.

After leaving Colonia Tovar we had to back-track slightly to the west edge of Caracas, enter the autopista, and drive west 75 miles to Maracay. We spent the next five nights in the Hotel Maracay. It was very attractive, comfortable and quiet because of its location on the outskirts of the city and its separation from the main road by



an 18-hole golf course. On the opposite side, across from the parking area, were low hills and a dry wash where we found chachalacas, Scaled and Ruddy Gound Doves. Yellow-backed Orioles and Oriole Blackbirds flew across the golf course and Bare-eyed Robins ran along the lawn. After dark we were startled from our dinner by the sight of large bats circling the swimming pool and dipping into the water. We went outside the coffee shop to be sure, for their size made us think at first they were birds. At dawn the Kiskadees lined up along the pool's edge in conical fashion and Anis with their loose-jointed tails were grouped along the fence.

Each morning we left at six o'clock to drive to Henri Pittier National Park a half hour away. This 210,00 acre park is accessible by a two-lane paved road. Rancho Grande, the "Jungle Castle" which was under construction at the time of Gomez's death and never completed, is located at Portachuelo Pass at about 3500 feet elevation. It has been used as a museum which, at present, is not open to the public, although visiting birders are made welcome. Paul Schwartz, who has been studying, photographing, and recording Venezuelan birds for many years, has his quarters there and was most cordial. There is a fine collection of skins as well as excellent mounted specimens of birds and mammals. The skins were very helpful to us in untangling confusing species, and we spent almost all of one rainy day inside, talking, examining skins, and listening to some of Mr. Schwartz's tapes. His ability to recognize bird songs was fantastic and he could quickly identify calls we had taped.

Continued...

Here we also met Mike Wilson, a young zoologist, who was doing a study on the feeding habits of the tree ducks. There are three species of these, all sought by the hunters and considered a hazard by the farmers. Mike was greatly concerned about conservation and hoped that the results of his project might be beneficial in protecting the ducks, if it could be determined that they are not existing solely on the agricultural crops. We invited him to accompany us one day down to Ocumare de la Costa on the Caribbean. He was good company and very knowledgeable about the natural history of the park. He showed us a hidden waterfall where we had lunch, pointed out different kinds of fish, and identified unusual plants. We helped him with the birds.

We never tired of this beautiful park. Our first stop each morning was a picnic area by a stream in the seasonal forest. We were greeted there by Collared Trogon, Russet Oropendola and Green Jays. Parakeets were usually heard before seen, calling noisily as they flew across open patches. Howler Monkeys fed high in the trees shaking the branches noisily as they moved through. An open, gravelly area a few hundred yards above the picnic grounds became a favorite breakfast site for us. A huge leafless tree there provided an ever-changing bird scene. Swallow Tanagers, Piratic and Boat-billed Flycatchers, Red-billed Parrots, Green Honeycreepers, Black-crowned Tityra, Silver-beaked Tanagers and many more were seen to advantage. After struggling to see birds in the dense foliage of the forest, we particularly appreciated an open place!

(Concluded in next issue)



### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Caroline and Donald Adams are long-time members of our Society, and have travelled widely. Their major trips have been to Mexico, Panama, and other Central American countries. Their most recent trip has been to Venezuela, described in this issue. In the other direction, their trip to Alaska was presented to the Society at an evening meeting. And their trip to New England and Eastern Canada more or less jointly with Olga and Herbert Clarke was presented at an evening meeting last winter by the Clarkes. For local birding the Adams' are very active campers.

At the request of some of our readers we are initiating a Question & Answer column in "The Western Tanager," to which readers may submit questions of general interest and some difficulty. Hopefully, some other of our readers will know the answer, which would be published in a following issue. The various members of our Society have access to different sources of information, their own experience and acquaintances, their private libraries, or public libraries. It is hoped that this column will be a source of amusement if not education to our readers.

G W King

## CONSERVATION NEWS

**Something can be done** Thank-you notes are in order from all of us to Senator George Murphy and to Congressman Don Clausen for their success in getting congressional approval of funding for additional land purchase for the Pt. Reyes National Seashore. This treasured "island in time" narrowly missed falling to the developers, but has been saved for present and future nature-lovers by the concerted efforts of Murphy and Clausen.

### URGENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Several applications have been made to drill for oil in the Sespe Sanctuary for Condors. Everyone is urged to write *immediately* to

Mr. J. Russell Penny  
Bureau of Land Management  
Federal Building  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, California 95825

and if you wish to help the Condor preservation program urge him not to approve any drilling application in the SESPE SANCTUARY. This must be done by individuals, if they believe in it, not by the Society.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next Conservation Committee meeting will be at Audubon House, February 24, the fourth Tuesday of the month. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p. m. and adjourn at 10:00 p. m. All Audubon members and friends are most welcome.



# AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

Forty-one people in twenty-two cars gathered in Maricopa on Saturday, December 13, for the annual Carrizo Plains field trip under the leadership of Arnold Small. The weather was superb, and fell almost to freezing that night. To our surprise Soda Lake was filled with water and was a refuge for a number of waterfowl, but an immature MARSH HAWK attempting to capture a RUDDY DUCK in the lake was an unusual sight. Thousands (perhaps 2500) SANDHILL CRANES were located at the lake's edge on Saturday afternoon, and they were watched as they left the lake late in the day to feed in the surrounding wheat fields. This was a reversal of their usual behavior. Other birds seen included MOUNTAIN PLOVER, GOLDEN EAGLE, PRAIRIE FALCON, FERRUGINOUS HAWK, and an OSPREY.

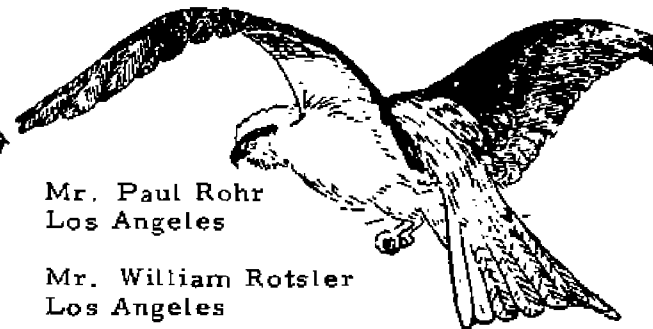


Guy McCaskie's program of October 14 on the appearance of "eastern" warblers in Southern California was one of the most informative and well prepared presentations we have heard. Guy has made an exhaustive study of the numerous observations of such out-of-range oddities as Black-throated Green, Parula, Yellow-throated, and Kentucky Warblers, to name but a few, and has attempted to correlate their appearance in Southern California with certain factors of their initial breeding grounds and season. His program was illustrated with graphs and slides of the birds in question. The active question period which followed indicated the high degree of interest he achieved.

John Borneman's plea at the Annual Dinner for letters to the Bureau of Land Management concerning proposed oil drilling leases in the Sespe Condor Sanctuary received prompt attention by our Conservation Committee. Mrs. Kathryn Brooks immediately prepared one hundred effective letters which were distributed at the Audubon Wildlife Film Showing the very next evening... cheers for Kathryn and others like her.

## News for Conservationists

In the March Issue of "The Western Tanager" we will have reports on important legislation... reports on the January 28 activities, on meetings of the Council for Planning and Conservation (CPC) and Planning and Conservation League (PCL). We will also give you some information on conservation activities that will take place during the month of March in and around Los Angeles. Our members who subscribe to Sunset Magazine will be particularly interested in the March issue.



## LATEST ARRIVALS

Mr. Thomas Aldinger  
Los Angeles

Mr. Charles A. Blake  
Los Angeles

Mrs. Betty Green Farmer  
Los Angeles

Mr. & Mrs. Peter H. Fowler  
Palos Verdes

Mr. Dale Freed  
Culver City

Miss Irene Gregoire  
West Los Angeles

Col. John R. Hood Jr. Ret.  
Palos Verdes

R. B. Kohlmeyer  
Los Angeles

Mr. Dean C. Logan  
Los Angeles

Mr. & Mrs. Charles H. Ludlum  
Palos Verdes

Mr. Carleton Mattes  
Los Angeles

Mr. Jack McKinney  
Lomita

Mr. Paul Rohr  
Los Angeles

Mr. William Rotsler  
Los Angeles

Marron A. Spinks  
Los Angeles

Miss Mildred Sprauer  
Sherman Oaks

Mrs. Eugene G. Woesner  
Glendale

# AUDUBON CALENDAR

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

Mrs. Abigail King, Executive Secretary  
 700 Halliday Avenue  
 Los Angeles, California 90049  
 476-5121



1970		February					1970
SUN.	MON.	TUES	WED	THUR	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

February 5 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 8:00 p. m.

February 10 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 p. m. Plummer Park. Shumway Suffer, longtime author of "Southern California Birds" for the Western Tanager and coordinator of the "Rare Bird Alert" will chair a symposium on "BIRD MIGRATION AS IT OCCURS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA." This promises to be a most timely and informative meeting timed to coincide with the thrust of 1970 spring migration.  
 Program Chairman: ARNOLD SMALL

February 14 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP. Morro Bay. Meet at 8:00 a. m.  
 February 15 SUNDAY at the foot of Morro Rock. This is one of our best areas for wintering coastal birds. Many people go up Friday night in order to have a full day Saturday and a half day Sunday. There is camping in Morro Bay State Park; many good motels are to be found in the vicinity of Morro Bay.  
 Leader: BOB BLACKSTONE, 277-0521

February 22 SUNDAY FIELD TRIP. Los Angeles County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia. Meet at 8:00 a. m. at the entrance. Take the San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd., then north on Rosemead to Huntington Dr. and east on Huntington to Baldwin. This trip is in lieu of the Chatsworth Reservoir trip\* and is planned especially for novice birders; come and learn field identification of birds. Experienced birders are by no means barred from this trip; we would like as many as possible to help the novices with identification.  
 Leader: GEORGE VENATTA

March 5 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p. m.

March 10 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 p. m. Plummer Park. Dr. Jay Savage, ecologist and herpetologist from the University of Southern California and the Organization for Tropical Studies will present an illustrated program on "TROPICAL ECOLOGY" as it relates especially to the American Tropics.

March 14 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP. Tujunga Wash. Meet at 8:30 a. m. on the north side of Foothill Blvd. by the bridge, about 2 miles west of Sunland. Take Golden State Freeway to Osborne St. and east on Osborne to Foothill. This is a desert area in Los Angeles, similar to the Mojave Desert, having many of the bird species to go with the vegetation.  
 Leader: WARREN BLAZER 272-8598

\*The Chatsworth reservoirs are dry, and it is understood that they will be faced with concrete, so this famous trip is cancelled forever—Ed.

# CHRISTMAS COUNT

The Fourth Annual Palos Verdes Peninsula Christmas Bird Count was conducted on 22 December with forty-four (an increase over 1968 of eight) hardy birders who had completed (?) their Christmas shopping.

Count center approximates the Palos Verdes Reservoir; however the center of activities and festivities was about three miles south at the Wells Count Command Post, and site of post-Count Dinner and Compiling activities.

The highlight of this successful day, including a cooperative weatherman, was provided by Rusty Scalf. To quote Rusty at the moment of truth, "...it was obviously a Little Gull." Rusty's breathless and excited report of his find into "Command Post" had many of the 44 observers over at Bluff Cove by lunch time. To everyone's dismay it was last seen headed south in company with Bonaparte's Gulls. Almost incredibly, another call indicated that Rusty had relocated the bird at King Harbor where it remained to be observed by a number of lucky birders until the day after Christmas.

On the other end of the scale, once again the elusive Roadrunner avoided persistent bird watchers covering the chaparral canyons and hillsides. The same applies to a number of other undetected species resulting in a reduction in the number of species from 151 (1968) to 147, and a decrease of total individuals from 64,500 to 36,500 (both approximations). Cancellation of the main pelagic owing to forecasts of continuing heavy seas contributed to the overall decrease in tally numbers.

To return to the positive aspects of the count, in addition to the Little Gull, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Common Murre were added to the "P.V.P.C.B.C. Life List," which now totals over two hundred species. A goal to shoot for in 1970! Shirley Wells

The highlights of the Orange County Coastal Count were 164 species, compared with last year's 161, and 80,074 individuals. This was the 23rd year of the count. Forty-seven people participated. The best birds were the Hermit and Black-throated Gray Warblers found by Dave and Rich Bradley and Rusty Scalf; and a Common Murre and Black Petrel found by Jim Lane and Shum Suffel. The Foothill Count was 127 species, versus 146 last year, with 22,426 individuals, and 20 counters. Some territory was lost because of wash-cuts. This count too is 23 years old. Perhaps the best bird was the Hepatic Tanager by Shirley Wells (to replace the missing one in the L.A. Count!). Also sighted were the Bateleur Eagle, Andean Condor and Yellow-headed Parrots!!!! Thomas Peinrell

The Malibu Canyon Count took place on Saturday, December 27. After days of extremely high winds, there was a slight hiatus, and early Saturday morning was clear, quiet, and cold - below freezing. Twelve participants (including one at her feeder who found the only Robin!) counted 117 species, about 4,799 individuals. Last year 22 observers found 122 species, about 6,528 individuals. Earle Greene instigated this Count (called the Topanga Canyon Count) about 15 years ago, and in 1964 asked me to be the compiler. Nine of us counted 91 birds that year. The next year Bill Watson was the compiler, and worked hard again in 1967 when he and David Brown organized 14 observers (including such experts as the Herb Clarkes, Gilbert Kings, and Arnold Small) and achieved the highest count so far - 132 species.

This year I joined Jean Brandt and Mary Clements to cover the 20th Century Fox lot in the Malibu mountains. This dramatically beautiful area was full of birds. The caretakers at the gate were helpful, too, and told us where to look for Great Blue Herons (known there as "cranes"). It all went according to the script: as the first rays of sunshine touched the tops of the cliffs, the great bird rose from the shadows and flew with huge deliberation to the tops of the rocks where he posed in solitary splendor. We crackled on along the edges of the frozen stream and wandered through Indian villages and ghost towns (and ate a sandwich on the set of "Planet of the Apes!") and found 50 species here before we left at noon. Meanwhile, the other chilly counters uncovered such fine birds as a Common Snipe, Red Phalaropes, a Mew Gull, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Pine Siskins, a Western Tanager, and even a Common Murre (which wasn't written down and I learned about it too late to include it in the Count form!) It was a good day, indeed - but perhaps next year it will be even better, or at least warmer - Joan Mills

The Los Angeles Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count was considerably handicapped by strong winds from the north with gusts of up to 40 miles per hour. Compared to last year's count of 140 species and 16,728 individuals, a total of only 115 species and about 11,107 individuals were counted on Sunday, December 28th.

Despite the cold and wind, 34 hardy participants did get into the field and find a few interesting species. Bob Blackstone and Richard Milne reported sighting near Venice the adult Oldsquaw Drake which has been spending the winter at Santa Monica pier. This was the most unusual species seen and is an example of the excellent coverage we had by our counters. The coast watchers, which included Eva Millsap and Robert Margolies, reported

Continued on page



Questions on bird life should be addressed: Queries Editor, *The Western Tanager*, 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, Calif. 90046, and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The editor will publish those of greatest interest.

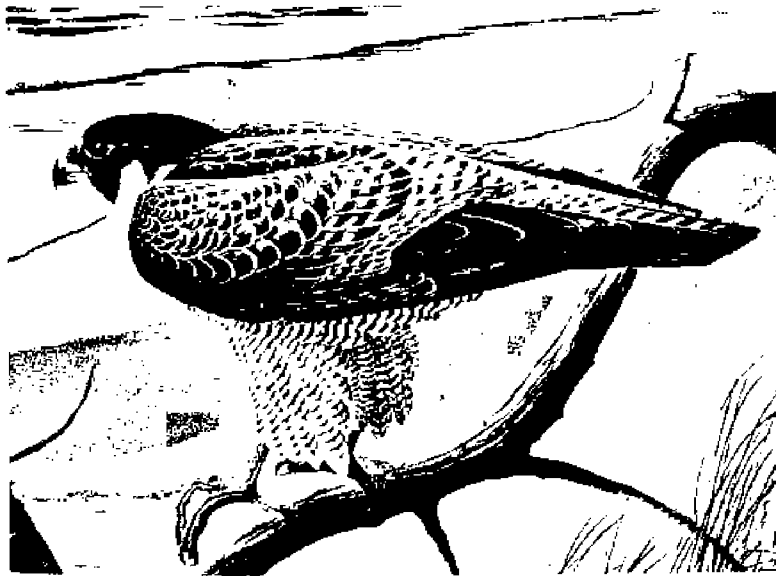
#### QUESTIONS

R.C. would like to know who is entitled to run a Christmas Count and how an area can be selected.

Why are more female Marsh Hawks seen in the field than males? N.B. The males are smaller, so don't give the standard answer that some of the "females" are immature males.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

Anyone wishing to receive *The Western Tanager* by First Class mail can do so by sending an additional one dollar for the year.



December 19, 1969, ITHACA, N. Y. -- A group of American and Canadian scientists has called on the governments of the United States, Canada and Mexico to take strong measures to preserve the Peregrine Falcon from extinction.

Tom J. Cade, professor of zoology and research director of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology, said the best way to preserve the falcon is to declare the entire North American Peregrine population to be endangered.

AUDUBON HOUSE

## Sales Department

To those of you heading for Mexico, we have Peter Alden's book in stock again.

Use the Society's Sales Department for books for people travelling.

We now have the record "*Dawn in a Duck-blind*," as well as old favorites such as "*Evening in Sapsucker Woods*," "*A Day in Algonquin Park*." Also of interest "*Mexican Birdsongs*" and "*Voices of African Birds*."

A new book this month is "*Exploring Our National Wildlife Refuges*," in hard and paper back.

We are pleased to report arrangements have been made to obtain Zeiss binoculars for members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Descriptive material available at Plummer Park.

#### BOOKS REVIEWED

Alden, Peter. *FINDING THE BIRDS IN WESTERN MEXICO*. The University of Arizona Press. 1969.

Reviewed by Roger Tory Peterson in "*Massachusetts Audubon*," Vol. LV, No. 2, December 1969, p. 40.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

A COMPLETE REPORT OF CHRISTMAS COUNTS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY IS PUBLISHED IN THE APRIL ISSUE OF "*AUDUBON FIELD NOTES*," AVAILABLE FOR \$3.00 FROM THE EDITORIAL OFFICES, 1130 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10028.

The new hours for the Audubon House at Plummer Park are 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

## The Western Tanager

Official Publication of the  
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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Los Angeles, Calif. 90046

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Field Notes - G. Shumway Suffer  
Typing - Hanna Stadler  
Mailing Supervision Hans Hjorth

FREE TO MEMBERS - ALL OTHERS \$2.50  
yearly

General Manager  
Radio Station KHJ  
Hollywood, California 90038

December 22, 1969

...Joann Leonard

Dear Sir:

An editorial entitled "ONE MAN'S DREAM" was aired on your station on November 20, 1969. I have just received a copy of this editorial. Your editorial is distressing as the point seems to be missed. May I paraphrase the first paragraph of the editorial: in part-

If the politicians don't muddle it up entirely, you and I might CONTINUE to have a new place to rest and enjoy with our families. By including the words, continue to, and omitting the word new, you would have a statement that would be essentially correct. Mineral King is not "new." For many years thousands of people have each season enjoyed visiting this area, which you most appropriately describe (in the present tense) as "a wonderland." We propose that it will be difficult to improve on "a wonderland." Moreover, it is a FREE "wonderland" providing rest and true recreation for the many, for the many who will not be able to afford the \$25 - \$35 which are the figures estimated as average per person, per day expenditures, as of last year by Disney Productions.

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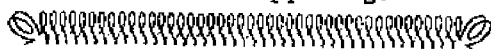
I thank you for your kind attention, and request the opportunity to express my view in opposition to your editorial on the air. Sincerely, Joann Leonard, Coservation Chairman, Los Angeles Audubon Society.

#### DDT

#### MORE ON MINERAL KING

BAN DDT bumper stickers are once more available at Audubon House. The style is similar to the bumper sticker sent with the July 1969 Audubon Magazine. The stickers will sell well (we hope) at the bargain price of 2 for 25¢. AND, as with all of the merchandise available for sale at Audubon House, mail and phone orders are graciously accepted.

Our supply of stickers arrived just in time for us to supply several student and civic groups who used them most effectively on JANUARY 17, DDT Moratorium Day. But now that January 17 is behind us what can we do? We urge all our members to support legislation to be re-introduced in Sacramento by Senators John Nejedly and Lewis Sherman. Letters to your state senators and assemblymen, with copies to Senators Nejedly and Sherman are indicated at this time. After this bill is introduced on the floor of the Senate, it will probably go to committee. We will keep you posted on the status of this most important piece of legislation. Last session a similar bill by Nejedly and Sherman was allowed to die in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.... this time our concerted and persistent efforts may prevent that from happening.



#### THE POISON-FREE GARDEN.... A Thoughtful Gardeners Guide

In keeping with and following through on the spirit of DDT Moratorium Day, we have stocked a supply of this very helpful pamphlet at Audubon House. Reprinted from the Summer 1969 issue of "Cry California," it is a clear and concise guide to "common garden insects and how to control them without wrecking the world ecosystem." Price?.... 10¢

On February 3, 1970, Disney Productions will hold their annual stockholders meeting. It will be held at the PANTAGES THEATRE on Hollywood Blvd. in Hollywood, and will start about 1:30 p.m. *Skiers for a Natural Mineral King*, a group organized to protect the ecological integrity of the Mineral King area against the poorly conceived Disney plan, will be conducting an educational display outside the Pantages Theatre during the stockholders meeting. Educational material is being prepared, and will be distributed to the stockholders attending the meeting. Anyone who is interested in assisting this group in their fine efforts, please contact: *SKIERS FOR A NATURAL MINERAL KING*, P. O. Box 1083, Studio City 91604. Just include your name, address, and phone number: they'll contact you and let you know how you can help!

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

Anne Kahle, our data-gatherer extraordinaire, has announced that the response to the Conservation Committee questionnaire has been excellent. Our thanks to all of you who have responded so quickly. Your heartening interest will result, I am sure, in your own effective participation and more effective action on the part of the Conservation Committee. We hope to get you all involved in our activities as quickly as possible, but why wait for an invitation? We feel that sometimes (often) the best way to get started is to BEGIN. Attending the Conservation Committee meetings will help you. If you can't attend, give us a call at 654-9594, and we will find an involvement to fit your interests.



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

red like a Mallard. It is interesting to note that most hybrids show a mixture of characteristics not a blending of them.

The Clarkes (Herb and Olga) and the Smalls (Arnold and Brian) finished 1969 and started 1970 right with a bird trip to Northern California. Probably their best find was four GREAT GRAY OWLS near the dump at Fort Klamath, Oregon (Jay Sheppard saw seven there in 1968). At Haney Lake they found LAPLAND LONGSPURS, several NORTHERN SHRIKE and three TREE SPARROWS. Even more interesting than these Arctic birds was their report of a probable solution to the RED-BREASTED GOOSE controversy. Rex van Warmer at the Tule Lake Refuge told them that the "Deer Park" near Bend, Oregon, had received about 25 Red-breasted Geese in late 1968. These birds were *not pinioned nor banded and all escaped*. With their instinctive urge to migrate south and their proximity to the main migration path of wild geese from north central Canada to California, it seems logical that two of them would end up with the Snow Geese at the Salton Sea. The surprising thing is that more of them were not reported. They also inquired about FALCATED TEAL (at Upper Newport Bay last winter) and RUDDY SHELDRAKE (at Malibu some years ago) but could get no information.

We have previously mentioned the non-migratory winter nesting ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRDS on the Palos Verdes Peninsula which are under the watchful eyes of Shirley Wells, and have speculated on their relationship to the Channel Island race of the Allen's Hummingbird "*Selasphorus Alleni (sedentarius)*." Now, thanks to Gary Stiles, graduate student at U. C. L. A. writing his doctor's thesis on hummingbirds, we have further evidence that the Palos Verdes birds probably do belong to the island race. Shirley and Gary netted and measured the wings and bill of several Palos Verdes hummers and in every case but one the measurements matched, without overlays, those of "*sedentarius*" not the migratory mainland race. They intend to measure the migratory birds, when they arrive in February or March, as a further check on their findings. A parallel situation exists in the case of Dusky Orange-crowned Warbler, which nests on the Channel Islands and on Palos Verdes Peninsula and

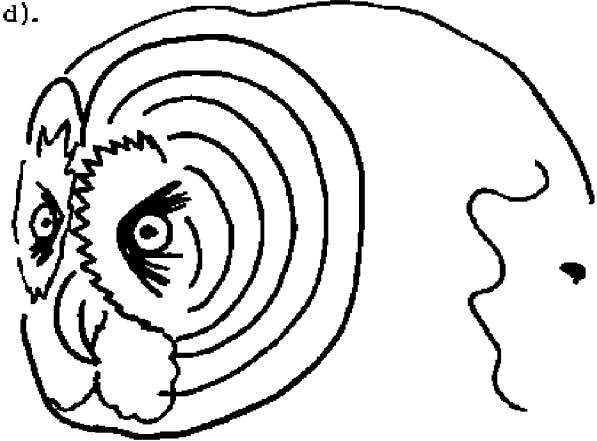
## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT Continued

an unusually high number of white-winged Scoters. Jan Tarble had a male Costa's Hummingbird at her backyard feeder and Kimball Garrett reported another in Brush Canyon. The Hepatic Tanager was searched for all day with no avail since the wind made it impossible for the bird to be seen let alone come out of the eucalyptus trees.

Larry Sansone

CONTINUED

other coastal promontories to the south. Since Palos Verdes is similar ecologically to the offshore islands, it is interesting to speculate that it might once actually have been an island and is now a peninsula by reliction (\$10 word meaning "subsidence of water from land" but, of course, you knew that without being told).



In the "Miscellany Department" we have several items. Jan Tarble found a HARRIS' HAWK on a telephone pole near the intersection of the San Diego Freeway and Sunset Blvd. — unlikely, of course, but less so if we assume, as she did, that it is an escapee. A female KING EIDER, apparently wintering at Monterey, lured several Southern Californians northward. It was still there on January 10th according to Bruce Broadbooks. Two BALD EAGLES were reported from Lake Mathews by Dick Robinson, and an immature was seen at Lake Arrowhead in late December (Jon Atwood). John Menke and Randy Sumner found a TOWNSEND'S SOLITARY near Encino, while Jon Dunn had a WESTERN TANAGER and a SOLITARY VIREO (several reports this winter) apparently wintering in the same area. Hal Baxter reports that the Los Angeles Audubon Society field trip to Lake Norco found a EUROPEAN WIDGEON among the thousands of ducks there, as promised. A few are found every winter but this is the first report we have received this year. A WHISTLING SWAN was found in a San Diego County lagoon but details are lacking.

Three very rare birds for our area are still present in early January and may well stay into February. These are the YELLOW-THROATED VIREO in Riverside, the LARK BUNTINGS near Hemet, and the PARULA WARBLER south of San Diego.

During this last month or so of winter, watch for northern birds and mountain birds in the lowlands: Varied Thrushes, Evening Grosbeaks, and Clark's Nutcrackers are unreported this year, Crossbill, Creepers and Steller's Jays are very scarce, and only Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins are present in above normal numbers. Remember, somebody short-changed February in the day department, so you'll just have to bird a little harder in the few days which are available.

# Southern California BIRDS Shumway Suffel

FEBRUARY is our last chance to see all of the wintering birds—geese, divers and some gulls—before they start their leisurely journey northward late in the month. And, this is the reason you should plan a trip to the south end of the Salton Sea soon, if you have not already done so. The sight and sound of tens of thousands of Snow Geese against the deep blue sky will stir the emotions of even the most calloused non-birder. Of course, for the birder there are other attractions—two dozen species of ducks, a like number of shorebird species, several kinds of gulls and always the chance for that one rare bird.

The coastal piers and bays are excellent for gulls, seaducks and divers at this time of year. The male OLDSQUAW is still near the Santa Monica pier and a female is near the Pavilion at Lower Newport Bay. The southeast shore of Terminal Island, particularly near the sewer outlet (reached from Ferry St. or Barracuda St.), is excellent for gulls including a probable new species, the THAYER'S GULL (see "Birds of Canada" for field marks). The rocky shore north of the outlet is good for rock birds and scoters.

The Christmas Counts, as expected, turned up several outstanding birds. San Diego with over 220 species will surely lead the nation again this year. Included in this total were twelve species of warblers (an exceptional number at any time of year but fantastic in winter) and a RED-NECKED GREBE found by Lee Jones on Sweetwater Reservoir for a new southernmost record. The Palos Verdes count started off with a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK and three ROYAL TERNS (increasingly rarer north of San Diego), but nearly fell apart when Rusty Scalf found a LITTLE GULL (second record west of the Rockies) at Bluff Cove on the Peninsula. It could not be found there again, but miraculously was refound at King Harbor (five miles to the north) the same afternoon. Here it was seen by many "Rare Birders" during Christmas week but disappointed those who searched for it over the next weekend, including a carload of birders from San Francisco.

The Orange County (coastal) count was also a great success (with some 165 species recorded) especially for seabirds including an OLDSQUAW, five GREATER SCAUP, and a COMMON SCOTER in Newport Harbor. Off-shore MANX and SOOTY SHEARWATERS were fairly common. Also recorded were one PINK-FOTTED SHEARWATER, two BLACK PETRELS, many FULMARS, and more than fifty COMMON MURRES (an extraordinary number for Southern California waters where

they are normally "uncommon Murres").



Shirley Wells topped off the Orange County (inland) count by finding a female HEPATIC TANAGER in William's Cañon in the Santa Ana Mountains on December 30. It will be interesting to see if she, the Tanager I mean, returns next year, as the male at Hillcrest Golf Club has done for seven winters. In this regard, Larry Sansone brings disturbing news of this old Tanager—it's routine seems to have changed this year and its plumage is ragged. He fears that it may not survive to return for the eighth winter.

The Pasadena count produced the expected HARRIS' and WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS at the Arcadia Arboretum, a SOLITARY VIREO and two SLATE-COLORED JUNEOS at the Mt. View Cemetery, and a HYBRID PINTAIL x MALLARD duck at the small pond which is all that remained behind Devil's Gate Dam. This bird, at first glance, looked very much like a drake Pintail but, on closer inspection, its head was dark green without the characteristic white neck stripe of the Pintail, the speculum was green not brown like a Pintail nor blue like a Mallard, there was a smudge of chestnut on the white breast, and the legs were

## About the Author

Shum Suffel is our regular contributor on Southern California Birds. We are fortunate to have a tireless, active expert in the field. His summary of the year of 1969 appeared in the lead article in our last issue. He has offered a very modest "biography":

My earliest memories and interest in birds came through my mother, who had a mild interest in field identification and a greater one in conservation. In the early twenties she followed the fate of the Heath Hens at Martha's Vineyard as we now do the Whooping Cranes and Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. Through high school, college, and young married life my interest in birds was passive, but I've always "ridden my hobbies hard" -- gardening, lilies, cymbidiums, etc.; photography; duck hunting; and now, of course, birding. I'm an avowed li ter and conservationist -- more interested in field identification and habits, than in the more scientific aspects of Ornithology.