

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 36

MARCH 1970

NUMBER 7

Condors

by John C. Borneman
Condor Naturalist



The July sun beat down on the brush covered ridge. The steep walls of the canyon traced the tortuous meanderings of the narrow stream. Three miles to the south, a speck appeared moving slowly but unwaveringly up the water course, keeping above the lower ridgelines and avoiding the twisting route that the stream was forced to take. As it came closer, it became apparent that the speck was a condor.

Although the flight was steady, it had the appearance of a man walking a tight wire whose steady progress belies an incomplete trust in his ability to stay on the wire. This subtle lack of confidence was apparent in the flight of the condor and was understandable when the bird was recognized as a juvenile which had not yet learned mastery of the airways. Its wing linings lacked the pure white of an adult bird. Also, its black head was easily seen, distinguishing it from the orange or yellow adult bird heads.

When it reached the vicinity of the nest site where it began life, it commenced to circle for altitude. The reason for its circling became clear when the smaller dark form of a golden eagle was seen circling below the young condor. The eagle rapidly gained elevation until it was a good three hundred feet above the condor. Suddenly, the eagle's wings folded and its brown body shot through the air toward the condor.

As the eagle approached, the condor took evasive action by flexing its huge black wings, drooping and twisting until the pursuing eagle passed the condor by. As the young condor came out of his dive, he flex-glided in all haste, back down the canyon from where he had come. The eagle did not give pursuit.

The terrified juvenile made the down canyon trip in half the time it took to come up canyon. At the confluence of another stream, a second condor entered the scene and soared serenely with the young bird. Both birds circled together for a few minutes then headed up the distant canyon, led by the second condor, presumed to be an adult.

Although the biologist refrains from anthropomorphisms, it is sometimes fun to indulge in the practice: A child returns to the neighborhood where he was raised only to find the "block" taken over by a bully who makes him feel most unwelcome by driving him out. The bully's victim "runs home to mother" who consoles him and leads him to a much quieter neighborhood, free from such "people."

About the Author

John Borneman came to work for the National Audubon Society in 1961 where he joined the staff of Audubon Center of Southern California.

In 1965 he became the Society's Condor Warden. Later his title was changed to Condor Naturalist when it was realized that his duties were more along the educational and public relations line rather than law enforcement.

At the present time he assists the biologists from the U. S. Forest Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries & Wildlife and California Department of Fish & Game in their research on the condor.

John lives in Ventura with his wife Linda and their children Bobby, age 4, and Kaye, age 2.

from neighborhood to neighborhood, driven out by themselves.

I turned my back on the primeval landscape and the drama I had witnessed as I started hiking down an old fuel break. I could see the long tan ribbons of freeway-in-the-making, the earth-loaders moving along its course like miniature yellow beetles. Soon the tan ribbon would be white and the beetles would be smaller, faster and multi-colored, transporting small creatures

I wondered if it was just a matter of time until the "beetles" and their occupants would be establishing new routes of travel into the heart of the condor country, making the condor a most unwelcome creature in its own home. I wondered if these rational creatures would learn to respect the territory of their coinhabitants of the earth.

Washington Post - February 1, 1970

Around the Nation

50 Condors Given New Lease on Life

FILLMORE, Calif.—Plans for an \$89 million water project have been suspended by the Department of Interior to head off a threat to the nearly extinct California condor.

Only about 50 of the huge, vulture-like birds are still alive and scientists said the water project would have frightened them from nesting places in Sespe Creek, north of Los Angeles County. Some scientists believe the condor is North America's only link with the Pleistocene, a glacial era about two million years ago.

The condors, which have a wing span up to 11 feet, once ranged over much of the West Coast. But as civilization closed in, they have been pushed into two craggy sanctuaries in the Los Padres National Forest.



CALIFORNIA CONDOR

The California condor is North America's largest land bird. It also is one of the continent's rarest birds.

Its population once numbered in the thousands and its range extended from the Columbia River in Washington into Baja California, but now there may be fewer than 100 left, and the species is precariously balanced on the brink of extinction.

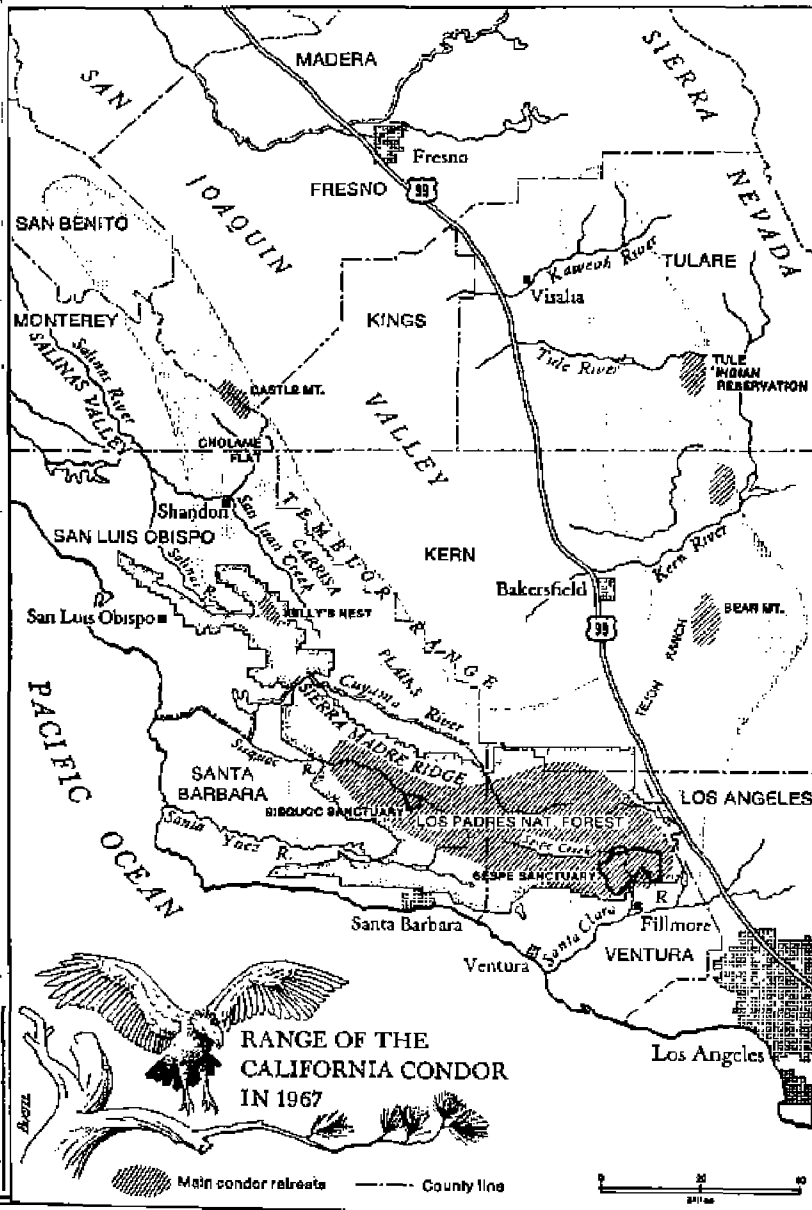
Both the Department of Fish and Game and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service consider it a rare and endangered species.

To gather information about the number of condors remaining, to locate nesting and roosting areas and to alert the public to the need for action to preserve this rare bird, the Department of Fish and Game and others concerned with preserving this unique species organized and conducted the first annual condor survey in 1965.

By stationing observers at vantage points throughout the eight counties which constitute most of the remaining condor range, and by comparing their reports to eliminate duplicate sightings, the Condor Survey Committee determined that a minimum of 38 condors had been sighted.

The condor survey has been held each year since 1965; observers have become more skilled; better vantage points have been located; and evaluation procedures have been constantly improved.

In 1966 the survey recorded 51 condors; in 1967 the total was 46; and this year 52 positive sightings were reported.



Whooping Cranes Total 56
 WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 (UPI)—A late arrival at the Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas has increased the wild whooping crane population to a new high of 56, according to the Interior Department.



FOR FURTHER NEWS ON PRESSURES ON THE CONDOR'S ENVIRONMENT SEE PAGE 8.

PLEASE HELP THE CONDOR FUND - LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY'S OWN PROJECT

!announcements

Are you planning to go birding tomorrow? Dial AUDUBON BIRD REPORTS at 874-1318. Latest information available twenty-four hours a day. This is a new service instituted by the society for the many people, both local and from other cities who call us for advice on birding areas.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING?

TO DATE OVER 900 ENVIRONMENTAL BILLS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE,

OUR COMMENT? HELP!!

ANYONE INTERESTED IN HELPING OUR LEGISLATIVE ANALYST SORT THROUGH SOME OF THESE PLEASE CALL: JOANN LEONARD, 554-9594.

TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR LETTER WRITING WE WILL BE HAPPY TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A COPY OF THE LIST THAT OUR LEGISLATIVE ANALYST, Katherine Brooks, has prepared. This list is a comprehensive summary of the good (and bad) environmental bills that have been introduced in this session of the state legislature.

RIGHT IN OUR OWN BACK-YARD.....

Friends of Griffith Park, a new group formed to protect our priceless Griffith Park from what could be development unconcerned with the ecological integrity of the park, is interested in hearing from you if you would be interested in helping with a wildlife inventory of Griffith Park. Any interesting sightings L.A. Auduboners make will be appreciated. Friends of Griffith Park also want you to know that they are very interested in starting a series of birdwalks through the Park. They need leaders, so if you can help, please let them hear from you.

To contribute information, or obtain some, the person to contact is Judy Nelson, 1630 No. Edgemont St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90027. Judy also informs us that the Griffith Park Rangers are conducting Bird Sanctuary walk and talks every Sunday at 1:00 p.m.



Q:

S. W. asks, "How do Long-billed Curlews get food from the tip of their bill to their stomachs?"

A. B. asks, "How did the Oldsquaw get its name?"

a message from the president PART TWO

In response to my request for comments on the birding versus conservation issue in a recent Western Manager, we have heard from a good number of people.

Thoughts on this subject ranged all the way from a desire for more emphasis on birding "there are too few sources of this type information" to complete dedication to conservation "our planet is rapidly deteriorating before our eyes." However, the great majority of replies agreed on a balanced emphasis between enjoyment of the out-of-doors and active participation in fighting the battles of conservation.

It will continue to be our intention to cater to the broad interests of our rapidly growing membership. We do not want to polarize our people into two camps. Constructive criticism is always welcome, but the direction of the Society is guided by those who are willing to do the work. A new season is approaching and soon we will be looking for people to accept the responsibilities of various positions on the Executive Board. For those who would change and improve our organization, this will be an excellent opportunity to do so. For those few who are very critical of our policies and do not wish to work cooperatively with us, I respectfully suggest that there are other organizations which perhaps would suit those particular individuals better.

I want to thank all of you who took the time and trouble to convey to us your thoughts on this matter and by no means are we closing the door on the subject. We will always try to be responsive to the desires of the fine group of people who are the members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

Herbert Clarke, President



ONCE EACH YEAR THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY ASKS ITS MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONDOR SANCTUARY FUND. CHECKS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

YOUR PAST GIFTS HAVE PRODUCED RESULTS. WE MUST NOT STOP NOW!

Please make checks payable to:
Los Angeles Audubon Society

Vacation in Venezuela

Part 2

A path leading to the cloud forest behind Rancho Grande was reputed to produce Quetzal but we only found Band-tailed Guan there. Portachuelo Pass, fabulous in migration, was disappointing the few times we stopped there. One day on the Turiamo Road on the low north slope of the range, we found a tree that had an orange flower or fruit, distance made it difficult to be sure which, that attracted many different species of tanagers as well as honeycreepers and manakins. Here, too, lived colorful lizards, morpho butterflies, enormous millipedes. We watched a pair of Hooked-billed Kites eating snails. Jacamars sat silently in a cacao grove.

Down at the seacoast we watched Magnificent Fritagebirds soaring and admired the flaming poinciana trees in the square in Ocumare. A Long-winged Harrier was perched in a snag above a pasture where Cattle Egrets were feeding with the cattle and Wattled Jacanas burst into color in flight and melted out of sight after alighting in the high grass. Huge twiggy nests of Rufous-fronted Thornbirds dangled above the road and we saw the birds going in and out of a nest when we stopped to cool off with a cerveza.

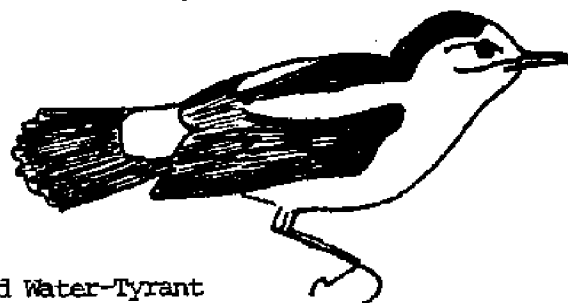
The proximity of the park to Maracay, the variety of habitat as the good road led us from the low cool hills, up through the forest, down the north slope to the hot, dry cactus scrub edging the sea, and back again with the varying temperatures and scene made this truly a dream world for birders. It was with reluctance that we checked out of the Maracay, said goodbye to Davy, the orange cat that spent his time on the hotel doormat, and started the long drive south to the llanos.

It was raining and we had a few misgivings as we had been warned the llanos were in flood stage in the wettest year in history. Our spirits rose, however, when the sun came out as we stopped for breakfast at Lago Bella Vista and got our first glimpse of the profusion of water birds we would be seeing for the next few days. A field across the lake was white with egrets. Close by, Pied Water Tyrants and White-headed Marsh Tyrants rivalled for our attention. A Striated Heron flapped slowly by, Rufous-and-White Wrens scolded in the reeds.

As Highway 2 led down the slopes through San Juan de Los Morros, "gateway to the llanos," according to the guide book, we were seeing more and more of the flood. The road was pitted with chuck holes and it was necessary to zig zag to miss the deepest ones, if one could judge. It rained intermittently. Rivers were more frequent and streams, without bridges, sometimes flowed across the highway itself. One particularly nasty stretch worried us a bit. We watched the truck we had been following plow through the muddy, turbulent water and decided to risk it. We made

it, but the road washed out and we had to take another route when returning a few days later. Fortunately there was very little traffic. Apparently no one but foolhardy birders ventured south during the flood stage.

The next morning we drove to the biological research station located about 6 miles out of town. The dirt road from the station to a pond we wished to visit was impassable for our car, but the director of the station graciously provided us with a jeep and driver. We splashed through puddles and slithered through mud that only a 4-wheel drive vehicle could maneuver. The pond rewarded us with excellent opportunities to view and photograph a Whistling Heron. We saw Azure Gallinule, too, before the rain returned and we had to return to the station. The rest of the day was not too disappointing. We were in country of spectacular water birds and water was everywhere. It was not really necessary to seek remote ponds. Following the paved highway we had our first glimpse of Scarlet Ibis, one of the birds we had especially come to see. We saw them several times while we remained in the llanos and each time were delighted all over again. Another spectacular bird was the Jabiru - a large stork, larger than the Maguari Stork which was also seen. The Buff-necked Ibis, Pied Plover, Southern Lapwing, Large-billed Tern and Greater Ani were other birds at home in the wet grassland. All three species of tree ducks were there in flocks, but we saw only individuals of the Comb Duck and Muscovy.



Pied Water-Tyrant
Fulvicola pica



White-headed
Marsh-Tyrant
*Arundinicola
leucocephala*

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

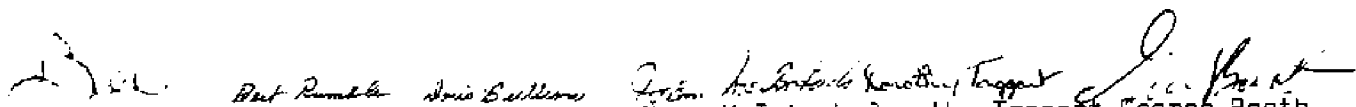
Mrs. Abigail King, Executive Secretary
 700 Halliday Avenue
 Los Angeles, California 90049
 476-5121

1970		March					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	
29	30	31					

- Mar. 5 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8:00 p. m.
- Mar. 10 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p. m., Plummer Park. Dr. Jay Savage, Ecology of the Neotropics (Slides).
- Mar. 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 the Golden State Freeway to Osborne St. and east on Osborne to Foothill. This is a desert area within Los Angeles, similar to the Mojave Desert and having many of the bird species to go with the vegetation.
 Leader: WARREN BLAZER, 272-8598
- Mar. 28* SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Irvine Park and O'Neill Park. This is the "Sunday Field Trip" but has been scheduled on a Saturday for the last two or three years because of the Sunday crowds in the area. Meet at 8:00 a. m. at the entrance to Irvine Park. Take the Santa Ana Freeway to Chapman Ave. and go east on Chapman through Orange to Irvine Park.
 Leader: OTTO WIDMAN, 221-8973
- Apr. 2 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8:00 p. m.
- Apr. 11 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Chantry Flat and Santa Anita Canyon. Meet at 8:00 a. m. Take the San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd. Go north on Rosemead to Foothill Blvd., then east to Santa Anita Avenue and north to the end of the Santa Anita Canyon Road. Be prepared for a hike down to the canyon stream and falls to see resident dippers and early migrants.
 Leader: HAL BAXTER, 355-6300
- Apr. 14 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p. m., Plummer Park. To be announced in the "Western Tanager."
- Apr. 25 SATURDAY Morongo Valley and Salton Sea area.
 26 SUNDAY

*Note this date differs from the projected schedule given in the Year Book.

WELCOME TO A MEMBERS' OPEN HOUSE AT THE
 AUDUBON CENTER OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 SUNDAY, April 19, 1970 10:00 a. m. to 3:00 p. m.
 Bring a lunch - Browse the trails Tel. 444-1872



 STAFF: Bill Goodall Bert Rumble Doris Bullion Norm McIntosh Dorothy Taggart George Booth

audubon activities

AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

The annual dinner was held at the Fox & Hounds Restaurant on January 13th. The social hour before the meal gave members and guests an opportunity to greet old friends as well as providing an opportunity to become acquainted with the newer members. Following dinner, the President, Herb Clarke, officially welcomed the society's guests for the evening. He next introduced the members of the Executive Board and asked that Abigail King, Headquarters Chairman, introduce the members of the Audubon House staff. The meeting was then turned over to Arnold Small, program chairman, who introduced the speaker, Mr. Eben MacMillan. Mr. MacMillan presented a program, "Australia Outback." This was a lecture, accompanied by slides, of the trip that Mrs. MacMillan and he took around the entire continent of Australia. The quite remarkable photographs of the continent's wildlife were intermixed with equally interesting photographs of the Australian countryside and cities. Mr. MacMillan described the characteristics of the land in the different areas of the continent and discussed the problems facing the Australians, if they are to continue to enjoy their wildlife and conserve their country in its natural state.

Salton Sea Field Trip - January 24-25

No matter how often trips are scheduled to the Salton Sea there is always something interesting and different to be seen. This year was no exception. Trip highlights would include the tremendous flock of SNOW GEESE that flew in and settled in the field where we gathered on Saturday morning, excellent views of the LOUISIANA HERON and AMERICAN BITTERNS flying around us at the National Refuge, and the one BLUE GOOSE among several hundred Snow Geese.

Saturday afternoon Refuge Manager Bob Ellis invited us into Unit 1 to help in their duck banding program. It proved to be an interesting experience for those of us who sat it out waiting for the net trap to be shot off.

We had expected to spend Sunday morning searching the fields around Calipatria for CATTLE EGRETS. You can imagine our surprise when we learned that a flock of about twenty egrets were sitting in the field next to Finney Lake. The field had been irrigated during the night and had attracted many birds to it. Several people were able to photograph the egrets that morning. By the time we gathered at Ramer Lake to count the list we had observed a total of 97 species. —Laura Jenner,

Morro Bay Field Trip, 14-15 February

By now the members of the field trips have seen Morro Bay in about every weather condition. This year it was just about at its best. Heavy seas churned the ocean into every shade of whites and greens but the sea ducks, cormorants and loons fished as usual. There were all three SCOTERS, BUFFLEHEAD, LESSER SCAUP; there were DOUBLE-CRESTED, BRANDT's and PELAGIC CORMORANTS; and among the LOONS were COMMONS, ARTIC and RED-THROATED. The 50 members of the Society and several friends out at the Rock could swing their glasses out into the Bay where PELICANS (only 4), GREBES, bay ducks, and the BLACK BRANTS were. Arnold Small called our attention to a RED-NECKED GREBE—a first for many of our members. From the Rock Bob Blackstone, our Leader for the day, led the way to the state park where we could overlook the Bay from several localities and here the ducks (7 species) and the sandpiper groups were. Here we saw KNOTS, GREATER YELLOWLEGS—at least 13 species in all. The Monterey Pine and Cypress in the camping area were alive with the land birds—HERMIT THRUSH and CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE, which we came to see, some having little or no chestnut on their sides—Jim Hoffman called our attention to 6 RED CROSS-BILLS. Before we left the bay area we saw ROYAL and CASPIAN TERNS, the COMMON MURRE at the Wilderness area and at the east of camp we saw the Warblers, Swallows, Swifts, Hummingbirds—"Peggy" Van Essen uncovered an ANNA'S on her nest. TURKEY VULTURES, very much in evidence for 14 February, seem very early. HAWKS (RED-TAILED, RED-SHOULDERED COOPER'S, SPARROW, SHARP-SHINNED) all were much in sight, especially the Red-tails. Just about every group was represented. We had PYGMY and RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, HUTTON'S VIREO, MYRTLE WARBLERS (5 others too).—Otto Widman.

Lake Norco - January 10

Under the threat of fog or rain, 24 of us gathered for the Norco trip. However, by about 10:30 a.m. the sky cleared and from then on the weather was ideal. Most of the usual water birds were there, except that for the first time in many years no Night Herons were seen. We all enjoyed seeing several flocks of 50 or more CANADA GEESE fly overhead before landing on the water.

As was true last year, the bird of the day was a EUROPEAN WIDGEON which was well seen by everyone. For added interest, just as we were finishing lunch and getting ready to break up, Eva Millsap found a well-concealed BARN OWL roosting in a palm tree almost overhead. The list for the day was 42 birds—Harold Baxter, Leader.

BIRDING IN AFRICA

By BONNIE KENNEDY

What with decreasing air fares and increasing affluence, more and more birders are going abroad to lengthen their lists and widen their enjoyment. Some of our members have been fortunate enough to participate in East African birding safaris and have returned with glowing reports and a strong desire to repeat the experience. Many others are even now planning safaris, since one has to start making the arrangements about a year in advance. Still others, like me, are merely consumed with a great longing to go before it's too late to hear the monkeys chattering outside the tent and lions roaring in the distance.

For those of you who have not yet been tempted but think you might like to be, or who enjoy nature books and books about far-off places, peoples, and cultures, or who just enjoy good reading, I can heartily recommend two books on Africa: Isak Dinesen's *OUT OF AFRICA* and Alan Moorhead's *NO ROOM IN THE ARK*. Isak Dinesen (pseudonym of the Danish Baroness Karen Blixen) writes masterful English prose, usually in the form of short stories. In this autobiographical work she writes lovingly of her life on a Kenya plantation in the twenties.

In her introduction to the book, Bernardine Kieley says, "I travelled 19,888 miles by airplane, because I had read *OUT OF AFRICA*. Others must have done it too."

NO ROOM IN THE ARK, by the author of *THE WHITE NILE* and *THE BLUE NILE*, is a beautifully written account of Mr. Moorhead's travels in South and East Africa, as well as a plea for conservation of the area's wildlife. If you are planning to do the trip on your own (and I have been assured by a 64-year-old school teacher who did it on her own that it is very easy), then this book would make an excellent travel guide even though it was not intended as one. If you are going with a tour group or with a guide, it will sharpen both your anticipation and your appreciation. It is available in Dell paperback and in our library.

If you limit yourself to armchair adventures, you will find these among the most delightful of your vicarious experiences. But if you have already decided, or should decide after reading these two books, that you too must experience East Africa, you will need the following two guides.

Continued on Page 9


Sales Department

AT LAST AUDUBON'S GIFT HUNTERS WILL HAVE A PLACE OF THEIR OWN! TO SEEK AND FIND THE PERFECT GIFT FOR NATURE LOVERS. IN ADDITION TO A WIDE SELECTION OF BOOKS AND BINOCULARS, THE FLUMMER PARK AUDUBON HOUSE NOW CARRIES A SELECT LINE OF FINE GIFT ITEMS.

NOW, FOR EASTER GIFT GIVING AND HOME DECORATION WE HAVE EGG CANDLES, FLOWERED CANDLES, CANDLE HOLDERS, MOBILES, AND A FINE SELECTION OF COURAC TRAYS.

NOTICE TO THOSE ON RARE BIRD ALERT

If you are like the Venatta's, there probably are a number of birds that are more or less regularly seen in California that are not unusual enough to put on the alert but which you have never seen.

To aid you—and us—to locate some of our missing lifers, please send in your list. I will compile a master list of all wanted birds and send copies to everyone with notes as to who needs what.

Then when you know where a bird can be located that someone needs, you can make a single phone call (without putting it on the general alert) and, hopefully, make somebody very happy.

Send your list to: George Venatta, Box 161, Palos Verdes Estates, California 90732.

P.S. If you are not now on the rare bird alert but would like to broadcast your wants, send along a list—no more than 10 birds please— together with \$1.00 to cover cost of preparation and duplication until August 31, 1970, and we'll try and get a similar list included with the April Tanager.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Western Tanager

Official Publication of the
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles, Calif. 90046

EDITOR

Gilbert W. King

Assistant Editor
Production Editor
Field Notes
Typing
Mailing Supervision

James D. McClelland
Robert M. Sandmeyer
C. Shumway Suffel
Hanna Stadler
Hans Hjorth

Condors

The latest word from John Borneman is that all our letters to BLM Director, J. Russell Penny in Sacramento really helped!

John Borneman has been advised by the Bureau of Land Management that they will not grant the oil drilling leases in the Sespe Condor Sanctuary (approximately 29 leases have been applied for) until after the completion of a study that the U.S. Forest Service is doing in this area. The Forest Service has recommended that there be no oil drilling permitted in the Sanctuary.

John suggests that we reinforce and support the Forest Service recommendations by writing to Secretary of the Interior, Walter J. Hickel, C and 18th Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240, urging that no leases be permitted in the Sanctuary, and that a copy of this letter be sent to J. Russell Penny, Director, Bureau of Land Management, New Federal Building, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, Calif. 95825.

AND...while you're writing to Secretary Hickel you might mention that you appreciate the stand of the Department of Interior on the \$89 million water project that had been planned for Sespe Creek. This project has been halted by the Department of Interior because it threatened the Condor nesting areas. There is some degree of bitterness in the Ventura County Water Conservation District concerning this denial of their request to dam the Sespe. E. Domingo Hardison, Chairman of the Ventura County Water Conservation District has stated, "It seems that the birds are more valuable to the entire world than water is to Ventura County." It is possible that the District might appeal to President Nixon on this matter, as he is the only one who could alter the Department of Interior decision.

Even though 40 percent of the coastline is in public ownership, much of this percentage is unavailable for public use because it is used for military bases. One of the chief objectives of these bills should be to assure that these public lands, such as Camp Pendleton, be turned over for public use at the earliest possible time.

Letters to your state assemblymen are needed in support of the concept of strong California Coastal Conservation and Development Commission. We will be studying both bills in the meantime, and watching their progress through committee. Establishment of this sort of strong Coastal Commission is what will prevent destructive development, such as that planned by Signal Oil for Bolsa Chica Lagoon.

CONSERVATION

CORNER

...Joann Leonard

This may just be the year that we save California coastline. Several bills will be introduced in Sacramento that would set up a California Coastal Conservation and Development Commission. One bill is being jointly introduced by Assemblymen Alan Sieroty (D-Los Angeles) and John Dunlap (D-Napa, Solano). Another bill introduced on February 9, 1970, by Assemblyman George Milias (R-Gilroy) is similar. The bill number is AB-640. There are some minor differences between these bills; however, their objectives are the same, that is to regulate development along the state's coastline.

More than half of the 1072 miles of the California coast are in private ownership. If protection of our state's shoreline is not achieved rapidly, it will be almost impossible to preserve it. Oil wells, power plants and parking lots, among other things have polluted much of the water and scenery along the coast. Commercial and housing developments have cut off public access to many of our finest beaches. Only a tiny fraction of our original magnificent estuarine areas remain....many of these are badly polluted by industrial and agricultural effluents, and threatened by filling and development. Add to these problems the pressures of a too rapidly growing population and it becomes apparent that unless we act now to save our shoreline, in a short time there would be nothing much left to save.

The coastal legislation that has been introduced has been patterned after the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), which was successful in protecting San Francisco Bay against private and public encroachment.

In the case of this proposed Commission (CCDC) four or five regional commissions would have authority to issue or reject permits for coastal development, including port and industrial development. Basically the coastal zone would be determined to be the area extending from one-half mile inland to three miles offshore. A call for a halt to offshore oil drilling should be included in both bills.

Continued in opposite column



The law doth punish man or woman
that steals the goose from off the commons,
But lets the greater felon loose
that steals the commons from the goose.

Author unknown,
c. 1764

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS Continued...

are giving our area. Two CATTLE EGRETS at Pt. Mugu discovered by Jerry Johnson and Larry Sansone on February 1st were found independently by Marge and Sandy Wohlgemuth the next day! There may be as many as several hundred near the south end of the Salton Sea but as yet there is no indication of nesting anywhere in the West.

Miscellany: Arnold Small gives us our only local record of a GLAUCOUS GULL for this winter—an immature at Pt. Dume on January 25th. An adult LOUISIANA HERON was seen on the L. A. S field trip to the Salton Sea on the last day of January, along with one BLUE GOOSE among the thousands of Snows. Our faithful Santa Barbara correspondent, Richard Webster, brings news of up to five WHITE-WINGED DOVES at Arroyo Burro Beach near there, an amazing number for a coastal location, where only single wanderers are expected in the winter. He also gives us our only report of a wintering WARBLING VIREO this year—one in his Santa Barbara yard during January. While attempting to find a life bird, the Yellow-throated Vireo at Fairmount Park in Riverside, for Terry Wahl of Bellingham, Washington, on February 7th, we (Bruce Broadbooks and G. Shumway Suffer) failed in our prime objective but did add a NASHVILLE WARBLER to the unusually long list of warblers present this winter but not expected. Thayer Scudder reports a pair of RED CROSSBILLS near his Altadena home on January 30th. They are very scarce in the lowlands this winter. E. N. Anderson of U. C. Riverside sends us one of the very few winter records of a LESSER NIGHTHAWK—a single bird was hawking for insects at his home near Riverside on December 13th.

Terry Wahl, ardent birder and bander from Bellingham, Washington, spent a week in our area on business, and only one day birding, but his news from the Canadian border area is worth repeating. They had an "echo-flight" of Snowy Owls in the winter of 1967-68, following the invasion winter of 1966-67 when a few Snowies were found as far south as Northern California. This December he found about fifteen REDPOLLS and with them one HOARY REDPOLL, probably a first record for the West Coast of the United States. While we are "out of state," the Cornell University News presents an interesting parallel to our Hepatic Tanager story. In their case it is a LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL, a European species rare in North America, which has been wintering on the south shore of Cayuga Lake near Ithaca, N. Y., for the past seven years.

The coastal waters will furnish the best birding in March. Most winter ducks, divers and gulls are still here, and their numbers are being supplemented by birds moving north

from more southerly areas. The Salton Sea and Death Valley are always rewarding but the weather and flowers are at their best this month.

It is rather amusing to study the results of convergent evolution (the process of evolution by which species of widely different origin tend to become more similar when they fill the same ecological niche). To illustrate this we have made up two lists of equivalent birds from widely separate orders: the owls being primarily nocturnal, while the hawks are almost exclusively diurnal, yet, they both are birds of prey adapted to a wide variety of habitat, of worldwide distribution which range in size from medium to very large. These lists are arranged in alphabetical order:

<u>HAWKS</u>	and	<u>OWLS</u>
1. Goshawk		A. Great Gray Owl
2. Kestrel (Sparrow Hawk)		B. Great Horned Owl
3. Marsh Hawk		C. Hawk Owl
4. Pigeon Hawk (Merlin)		D. Long-eared Owl
5. Red-shouldered Hawk		E. Pygmy Owl
6. Red-tailed Hawk		F. Screech Owl
7. Rough-legged Hawk		G. Short-eared Owl
8. Swainson's Hawk		H. Spotted Owl

Now, match up the equivalents on the basis of size, habitat, habits and food preference. Your list and reasons probably won't be the same as mine but it's stimulating, and you'll probably learn from it. I know I did.

Answers next month

AFRICA

Continued...

Williams, John G. A FIELD GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL PARKS OF EAST AFRICA. Houghton Mifflin, 1968. 352 pp. with 16 color plates and 16 black-and-white plates by Rena Fennessy. Foreword by R. T. Peterson. \$8.50

This companion volume is an essential supplement to Mr. Williams' bird guide. It is not only a travel guide for the parks and reserves but at the same time a field guide to the mammals and to the rarer species of birds not covered in the earlier volume. Part 1 succinctly but comprehensively describes each of the national parks, game reserves, and other faunal areas of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; there is a map for each park, a note about its accommodations, a list of its mammals, and a list of its birds with page references either to the earlier volume or to the section in the present volume where the bird is described.

(To be continued)

March can be a disappointing month for birdwatchers. It seems like Spring, it's getting warmer and the flowers are in bloom, but the birds instinctively know that, while it may seem like Spring is here, Spring is several months away on their northern or mountain nesting grounds. So don't be disappointed if you can't find those long anticipated migrants. You're rushing the season. True, many of our summer resident species (Orioles, Kingbirds, etc.) and the earliest migrants (mostly Hummers and Swallows) arrive this month but the big migration won't get underway until mid-April reaching a peak in early May.

Winter birds have been good to us, however, and most of them are still here. Along the coast SCOTERS of all three species were present in normal numbers ("normal" for the so-called "Common" species is very few); KITTIWAKES had another big year as in 1968-69; two OLDSQUAWS favored us locally unlike 1968-69 when none were reported; two WHISTLING SWANS were present in Santa Barbara in mid-January (*fide* Richard Webster) and another was seen off and on in the San Diego County lagoons, most recently by Trudi Siptroth on January 31st at Buena Vista Lagoon. Further inland the YELLOW-THROATED VIREO, the LARK BUNTINGS, the HARRIS and the WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, all previously reported, were apparently staying for the winter. The HEPATIC Tanager at the Hillcrest Golf Club has not been seen since December 13th and some of us fear that we have lost an old friend. If there are any more recent sightings Larry Sansone is very anxious to hear about them.

In contrast to last year (see the January Tanager) there were very few reports of unusual waterfowl, except those mentioned above. Upper Newport Bay was repeatedly scanned by glass and by 'scope but kept it's probable treasures hidden in the crowd or unrecognizable because of distance. For several years birdwatchers in the San Gabriel Valley have sorted through the hundreds of Widgeon at Legg Lake in El Monte searching for that one EUROPEAN WIDGEON that just had to be there (they occur about one per 1,000 or so Widgeon in our area) but Don Sterba was the man with the rabbit's foot in his pocket. He found it on February 2nd. When it was seen the next day, something drastically different was noticed about this bird—there was no white in the wing, as I had always thought was the case with all male

widgeon, and so, this is the way we learn. Kortwright in "Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America" says, in essence, that first winter males of both species are in adult plumage except possibly for the juvenile wings (without white wing coverts) which may be retained until their second fall. In this same flock of widgeon there is an unusual drake with a completely light head and neck except for the green streak through the eye and down the neck. Normally the white is only on the top of the head with dark gray below the green stripe and on the neck.

BALD EAGLES were widely reported this winter and all were immatures. Single birds were at Upper Newport Bay in November, at Lake Arrowhead on Christmas Day (Jon Atwood), at Pt. Mugu on January 22nd (Don Sterba) and at least two at Lake Mathews (several observers). GOLDEN EAGLES also were reported from the fields above Newport Bay and from Lake Mathews, where six were seen by Richard Hilton in late January. In this regard Richard and two other L. A. A. S. members, Peter Burg and John Giegling, are doing a population survey of the raptors in that area in cooperation with the California Fish and Game Department. As a sideline they are installing vesting boxes for Sparrow Hawks (a gross misnomer, why can't we call them American Kestrels?)—a fine project.

CATTLE EGRETS were reported along the coast from San Diego to extreme northern Oregon, and this gives us a chance to demonstrate the excellent coverage L. A. A. S members

FIELD NOTES TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO

SELBORNE, Jan. 15th, 1770.

Dear Sir,—It was no small matter of satisfaction to me to find that you were not displeased with my little *methodus* of birds. If there was any merit in the sketch, it must be owing to its punctuality. For many months I carried a list in my pocket of the birds that were to be remarked, and, as I rode or walked about my business, I noted each day the continuance or omission of each bird's song; so that I am as sure of the certainty of my facts as a man can be of any transaction whatsoever.... The Rev. Gilbert White, A.M., Selborne (Letters collected in "The Natural History of Selborne").