

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 36 APRIL, 1970 NUMBER 8

"Take me to your leader!"

with apologies to the Chairman of the Field Trip Committee...

by Robert R. Rathbone

PROLOGUE: The society's program of field trips has been expanded so much in recent years that it is often difficult for the chairman to find enough qualified leaders to go around. He strongly believes, however, that there are many potential leaders within the membership, and he further believes that they would join the effort if they were enlightened in the fine art of birdsmanship. Since I am convinced that he is right, and know little about the art myself, I have prepared this article for the purpose of providing that enlightenment.

Someone once said, "To become a competent field expert, the newcomer must concentrate on developing his ability at speed identification." Whoever said this (probably it was Ludlow Griscom, but it could have been Robert Smart) put first things first: as a would-be leader you must impress your charges with your alacrity at identifying any and all birds on the wing or in the bush. Practice announcing the names of birds aloud in a crisp, stentorian voice (in the privacy of a closet, preferably). Then pick your debut wisely. One such opportunity usually arises on the boat ride to the Isles of Shoals. If the sea is rough and the weather biting (and thus the boat rocking), pick out a bird on the horizon, making sure that he is flying away from the boat, and boldly announce, "Greater Shearwater!" By the time everyone has focused in the general direction you indicate, the bird will have gone out of sight and you have won an easy victory.

An embarrassing, yet common, occurrence in the life of a leader is to have everyone in his party spot a rare bird but not be able to find the bird himself. Here is a case in point. Suppose you have led your party to a fresh water marsh and happen to be looking south when someone yells that a least bittern just flew up in the north end of the marsh. All

eyes go in that direction, including yours. But you draw a blank. Then a little old lady next to you, opera glasses to eye, exclaims, "Isn't that wonderful!" Someone else shouts in whispers, "That's a life bird for me!" Everyone becomes so excited that applause breaks out spontaneously (whereupon the bird flies up again just as you turn your back to get your scope). You focus and refocus on a blurred object in the cattails; it finally comes clear: a red-wing! At the height of your dismay, a veteran birder comes over, pumps both your hands and says, "This is great! Thanks so much for finding it for us." Naturally you have only one course of action to follow: accept the accolade graciously. Tell your friend, "I thought the little fellow would still be around."

Every so often you may find yourself puzzled over the identity of what appears to be a common species. If you're the only one to spot the bird, you can forget the whole thing. If, however, you notice that others too are looking at it, you must act quickly. For instance, you could (1) find another bird (such as a chickadee) and draw everyone's attention to it, (2) you could mutter something like, "That's funny!" and begin to disassemble your binoculars, or (3) you could query in a loud voice, "Isn't it time for lunch?" (No Auduboner I know has ever been able to resist that call.)

A worse predicament can arise when two or three members of the party spot a bird in, say, a thicket and call you over to identify it. You can not now rely on retreat, nor can you change the subject. But you can maneuver for

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Take me to your leader!

CONTINUED

time. First, ask the trio, "What have you got there?" Play one against another. While they're arguing the point, take a good look at the bird but pretend you don't see it. You can then ask, "Where is this fellow, anyway?" (This will allow you even more time to examine it while they're giving you conflicting directions.) If you now feel you know the bird, identify it immediately with a casual, "Why that's a -----." If you still haven't the foggiest, take out your handkerchief and either (a) blow your nose, (b) mop your brow, or (c) flip it vigorously to drive away the black flies (real or imaginary). The chances are good that the bird will disappear through the back of the thicket, much to your disgust, naturally.



Identifying bird calls and songs always presents a thorny problem. The wood warblers are the toughest to tell apart. (But then they have the faintest voices and you can always confess to not hearing them.) A tried and true method for coping with the situation is to announce that you have been requested to conduct a class in bird-song identification and that each member of the party will be asked to participate. You then proceed to explain that you will be the last to identify the song so that everyone will have a chance to say what first comes to mind. The rest is easy: if there is a majority opinion, stick with it; if there is no majority, agree with the most likely authorities; if no one agrees, say, "I guess you'd all better study up on that one!"

No one can consider himself a seasoned field trip leader until he has lost at least one member of his party. On the whole, birders are a social group and dislike being left behind. Yet there are ways around the dilemma if the leader will but put his mind to

it. He can, for example, insist that everyone go in separate cars so that the caravan will be a long one. He then can map his route over the major highways, especially those with numerous stoplights, intersections, and shopping centers. These obstacles usually produce the desired result, since a wise leader never informs the drivers what the destination will be. If the trip falls on a Sunday, another hazard can be added: the caravan can be paraded past a large church as the service is letting out! As a last resort, you could give different directions to each driver (the confusion that results is indeed amazing). But this rule is considered by most veterans as a sign of immaturity. The leader who "has arrived," so to speak, is one who can lose half his party without resorting to any subterfuge whatever. It does take practice, however.

And finally, there is the co-leader gambit. No accredited field man today would think of organizing a trip without calling on this handy fellow. All would-be leaders therefore are advised to give the matter their full attention. Concentrate first on selecting the proper partner. If you can find someone who knows more about birds than you do (but thinks you know more), sign him up immediately. You can refer all the tough questions to him with the assurance that he will be grateful to you for "giving him a piece of the action." If you cannot find this superior candidate, **DO NOT DESPAIR**. Go to the opposite end of the spectrum; pick someone who knows practically **NOTHING** about birds. Then follow the same procedure: refer all the tough ones to him. ("You want to look at this one through the scope for me, Charlie? Got a cinder in my eye.") Who knows, he may come up with a lucky guess—it has been known to happen—and you will receive all the credit!



Bird Locations

editorial

This section is devoted to brief listings of where uncommon birds can be found, either permanently or on a regular seasonal appearance, as a supplement or confirmation of Pettingill's "Guides to Bird Finding." Contributions are of course appreciated. Date and authority are requested.

Kirtland's Warbler

Is easy to find May 15 - July. Go to Mio, Mich., on the north end of town, on the right-hand side is a ranger station where you can obtain a map of the current nesting grounds. Learn the song before you go, so you can locate the males from the road.

Smooth-billed Ani

Loxahatchee Natural Refuge, Florida. Nature Trail, flock of 12, November 20, 1969, G. W. King.



Everglades Kite

Lake Okeechobee, Florida. The location of three birds are known to Mr. L. T. Stern, RFD #2, State Road 78, Moore Haven, Fla. 33471. Beware of guides who show you Marsh Hawks. G. W. King

PELAGIC TRIPS SCHEDULED

THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY IS SCHEDULING A PELAGIC TRIP TO THE FARALLON ISLANDS ON APRIL 26TH. Fare: \$10.00 per person. Make checks payable to the Golden Gate Audubon Society and mail to Valeria da Costa, 2090 Pacific Ave., San Francisco, Calif. 94109.

THE REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY WILL SPONSOR AN OCEAN TRIP TO OBSERVE SEA BIRDS (AND MAMMALS) ON SUNDAY, APRIL 26, Fare: \$6.00 per person; make check payable to the Redwood Region Audubon Society and mail to Dr. Stan Harris, Wildlife Dept., Humboldt State College, Arcata, Calif. 95521.

THE CALIFORNIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS ARE SCHEDULING TWO PELAGIC TRIPS OUT OF SAN DIEGO. Sunday, April 26th, 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Fare: \$7.25. Saturday, May 2nd, 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Fare: \$12.00. Make check payable to California Birds and mail to Mrs. V. P. Coughran, 747 Stafford Pl., San Diego, Calif. 92107.

In this issue we are introducing a new feature "Bird Locations" as an additional source of information to our readers. "The Western Tanager" is designed to meet the needs of the members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, whose prime interest is in bird life and all that affects it. Individuals have different emphases, but most of our readers have considerable interest in seeing various species, and knowing where they can be found.

The "Rare Bird Alert" which has been under way for some time serves the need, felt by some, to provide instantaneous reporting of the appearance and whereabouts of birds rare to Southern California.

In the last issue of "The Western Tanager" an announcement was made of a new service to members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, and visitors to our territory, namely of a recording, available by telephone, reporting appearances of birds of interest. (A similar service is made available by the Massachusetts Audubon Society for Boston and for Western Massachusetts, and has been invaluable to local residents and visitors.)

George Venatta also in the last issue of "The Western Tanager" began an organization of those of us who are interested in the location of birds of interest to us individually, which may or may not be "rare."

The new feature of "Bird Locations" is directed at a different requirement. Many of our membership have occasion to travel outside of the confines of Southern California, either on business, personal affairs, or actual birding trips. O. S. Pettingill's two famous volumes "A Guide to Bird Finding" - "East" and "West" are invaluable, but unfortunately have become obsolete in some areas of population growth, and indeed, they never could be exhaustive. "Bird Locations" is an attempt to corroborate and supplement Pettingill.

"Birding," the publication of the newly formed American Birding Association has introduced a feature of providing detailed maps of where to find unusual species, currently.

"The Western Tanager" will continue to let its readers become aware of all the sources of information on bird locations. However, the best birds are the ones you find at a location you discovered yourself. —G. W. K.

AUDUBON BIRD REPORTS - 874-1318

Dick Robinson is now responsible for the up-to-date recordings on bird sightings. If anyone has a sighting that they believe should be listed, please call him at 749-1886 or call Audubon House 876-0202 between 10 and 4 any day except Sunday.

Vacation in Venezuela

Don and Caroline Adams

CONCLUDED

San Fernando de Apure, on the Apure River at the southern terminus of Highway 2, has a dramatic fountain surrounded by figures of cayman. These reptiles had been seen from the road, and even on the road, as we drove south. Our goal here was to see the Hoatzin, an unusual gallinaceous bird that has eyelashes and whose young have claws at the bend of the wing which enable them to clamber about in streamside vegetation. We had expected difficulty in locating Hoatzin but found them easily from a dike road close to town where we had prolonged views of several individuals. Along this man-made lagoon manatees were observed feeding on the water hyacinths, howler monkeys lolled in the trees above a native hut, and Venezuela's national bird, the colorful Troupial, was added to our list.

After leaving San Fernando, we doubled back to Calabozo for the night and an early start next morning toward Guanare, birding as usual along the way. We reached Barinas about noon the following day and then left the main highway to go up a mountain road which quickly left civilization behind. We passed through villages and then saw only scattered huts, many perched precariously on the steep slopes. The road had innumerable curves, many of which were marked with little shrines in which candles glowed. We wondered if these designated the places some poor travelers had met their deaths. We arrived safely at Santa Domingo at dusk. The Hotel Maruco was beautiful and the view of the Andean ranges was spectacular.

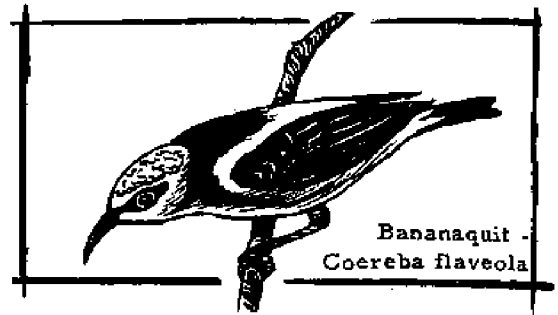
Hoatzin

Opiethocomus hoazin



On an early morning walk to the river a mile or so below the hotel, we saw Collared Jay, Torrent Tyrannulet, White-capped Dipper, and a pair of Torrent Ducks which we watched for some time as they dove and swam in the swift current. The flowers in the vicinity were spectacular, and the wild begonias fascinated us.

Next morning we drove above the forest into the paramo, alpine meadows that were bleak and tundra-like. At Apartadero the slopes were criss-



Bananaquit
Coereba flaveola

crossed with rock walls, piled up over the centuries to make space for meager crops. Oxen pulled the plows and threshing was done by hand. At 13,500 feet the road reached Pico del Aguilo Pass where Indians wearing colorful red and navy blue ruanas were waiting hopefully to be photographed by the tourists. In this bleak landscape we found the Paramo Pipit, Andean Siskin and the Andean Cinclodes.

That evening we descended to Merida, a modern city located in a valley surrounded by snow-capped peaks. Our next day was long and disappointing from a birder's standpoint, although we enjoyed the spectacular scenery. We took a side-trip on the arduous road leading to Pregonero but the higher we got the thicker the clouds were. We could barely see to drive, much less to bird. Following a night at La Grita we had somewhat better weather and picked up a few new birds including the Orange-throated Sun-angel, one of the many hummingbirds, along the road to Queniquea.

From LaGrita in the cool, damp mountains, we went to the other extreme of climate at Ureña on the Colombian border in the desert scrub where it was hot and dry. The Hotel Aguas Calientes was renowned for its hot mineral baths, and each room was adjacent to a walled patio equipped with a deep tub. There were three color-coded faucets with different kinds of hot water. We were all fascinated with the facilities, but somehow never got around to trying them. At breakfast we were surprised to have Bananquits zipping back and forth through the dining room to the open courtyards on either side. We saw Cattle Tyrant (Fire-crowned) on the lawn.

At this point we decided to fly back to Caracas from Merida and avoid the long drive, thus allowing time to spend a few more days at our favorite birding place, the Henri Pittier Park. From the air we saw Pico Bolivar, the peak we couldn't reach because the cable car was under repair, and Lake Maracaibo which we had decided to forego because of the extreme heat. Our second visit to the park was rewarding and brought our trip list up to approximately 260.

As happens with all good vacations, the end arrived too soon. So, it was back to Macuto, on the coast near the airport, where we had a gala farewell evening at the luxurious Sheraton before boarding a Pan Am jet to return home via Panama and Guatemala.

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		April					1970
SUN	MON.	TUES	WED.	THUR.	FRI	SAT	
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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			

- April 2 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p. m.
- April 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 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
- April 14 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p. m., Great Hall, Plummer Park. Arnold Small, past president of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, will present an illustrated program, "COLOMBIA-A PARADISE LOST" which was an outgrowth of his birding trip to this South American country in 1969.
- April 19 SUNDAY - OPEN HOUSE at the Audubon Center of Southern California, 10:00 a. m. to 3:00 p. m., Telephone 444-1872. Turn off Pomona Freeway south at Peck. Watch for sign, turn west onto Durfee Road.
- April 25 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Morongo Valley. Meet between 7:00 and 8:00 a. m. in Covington Park, Morongo Valley. Take Interstate 10 east to the Twenty-Nine Palms Highway (2.5 miles east of White Water). Go north approximately 10 miles. Excellent for migrating birds. This is planned as a one-day trip, however many may wish to stay over to bird in nearby Joshua Tree National Monument or at the Salton Sea on Sunday. Camping facilities are available in the Monument. Leader: George Venatta, Days: 547-2487, Eves.: 378-8941
- May 2 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Morongo Valley. Meet between 7:00 and 8:00 a. m. in Covington Park, Morongo Valley. See April 25 instructions for route. As this is one of our most popular field trips, we schedule it twice each spring on successive weekends. Leader: Jim Huffman, 545-1224
- May 9 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Big Sycamore Canyon in the Point Mugu State Recreation Area. Meet at 8:00 a. m. at the entrance, which is approximately 20 miles up the Coast Highway from Malibu. The success of last year's trip has encouraged us to repeat it this year. Migration should be in full swing. The walk up the canyon is 2-3 miles round trip. Leader: Sandy Wohlgenuth, 344-8531

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Western Tanager

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The Editor expresses his appreciation of the continued contributions of Robert Sandmeyer to the art work.

FREE TO MEMBERS - ALL OTHERS \$2.50
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audubon activities

Field Trip - L. A. Arboretum and Legg Lake
February 22, 1970

EVENING MEETING - February 10 -

The President, Herb Clarke announced he had appointed George Venatta chairman of the nominating committee and that the executive board had elected Don Adams as second member. Nominations were requested from the floor for the third member. Bruce Broadbooks was nominated and unanimously elected.

Joann Leonard, Conservation Chairman, spoke on various conservation measures.

The meeting was then turned over to Arnold Small, Program Chairman, who introduced Mr. Shumway Suffel, chairman of the evening's panel. Mr. Suffel introduced the other members of the panel, Dr. Roland Ross, Mr. Jay Shephard and Mr. Michael San Miguel, and announced that they would take up various aspects of migration.

Roland Ross, who taught biology and ornithology for many years has, since retirement, made a full time study of weather and its effects on birds, especially during migration. He pointed out the effects of varying weather conditions, for instance drizzle and rain which halt night migration—a radar discovery; and hurricanes which carry birds along with them. Jay Shephard discussed navigation and commented on the fact that there is a learning process, shown by the fact that most so-called strays are immatures. Mike San Miguel traced the history of bird banding back to the earliest records in 200 B. C. and described modern bird-banding methods, as officially sanctioned by the Department of Fish and Game, and noted that the present bands and records are used internationally. Shum Suffel completed the program with a discussion of vagrants. He stated that not a great deal is known about them, but they have one thing in common, they are lost or late. About 99.44% of these vagrants are immature, as mentioned earlier by Jay Shephard.

It was an extremely interesting evening and we are grateful to Mr. Suffel for bringing together such a knowledgeable group to talk to us. We regret that it is not possible in this space to give a more adequate review of the panel's discussion.



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

Almost 50 people celebrated a delightfully warm, sunny Washington's birthday trip that started at the L. A. Arboretum, then moved on to heavily populated Legg Lake for a picnic lunch and some more birding. Billed as a trip for the novice or beginner, it was a pleasure to find that some 20 of our more experienced birders were on hand to help those that really didn't know our year round common residents and winter visitors.

The pace was leisurely and it was a rewarding experience to watch the "Birding Bug" take hold among the newcomers, both young and old. Quite a bit of time was spent walking towards the lake, identifying the male and female HOUSE FINCH, HOUSE or ENGLISH SPARROW: differentiating between the MOURNING and SPOTTED DOVES, etc.

At the lake everyone had excellent looks at ducks - RINGNECK, SHOVELER, MALLARD, plus COOTS, all of which were wild, as well as the pinioned REDHEAD and several species of pinioned geese. A couple of male RUDDY DUCKS swam up accompanied by their rather drab mates and then a pair of WOOD DUCKS flew in and came up quite close to everyone's delight.

There was a definite lack of numbers of any species - even the White Crowned Sparrows, Brown and Rufous-sided Towhees, Chestnut backed Chickadees and Chipping were not anywhere abundant. We looked for the rare Harris' Sparrow which had been seen during the week, but to no avail - too shy perhaps to face the Sunday crowds.

After lunch on the grass under a shade tree at Legg Lake, we walked to the North Lake which is fenced and the only place that the people hadn't taken over with their radio controlled boats, fishing etc. Here we added a number of other species, including the GREAT BLUE HERON, PINTAIL, GADWALL, RINGBILL and BONAPARTE'S GULLS, and just before breaking up Russ Wilson made the day an even greater success by locating an EUROPEAN WIDGEON among several AMERICAN WIDGEONS and CINNAMON TEAL!

Altogether some 41 species were observed and everyone felt that this trip should be done several times each year to help and encourage more neophytes to become active in the great sport of birding. - George Venatta



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

Please make checks payable to:
Los Angeles Audubon Society

CONSERVATION CORNER

Continued..

LETTERS ARE NEEDED NOW FOR NEWPORT BAY AND MALIBU TOO

Hon. Alton Allen, Chairman
Orange County Board of Supervisors
515 No. Sycamore
Santa Ana, Calif.

and....

Norman B. Livermore, Jr., Secty.
Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, Calif. 95814

and....

F. J. Hortig, Executive Officer
State Lands Commission
1020 12th Street
Sacramento, Calif. 95814

The gist of the letters might be...
Do not alter Upper Newport Bay as
there is vast lack of knowledge
concerning possible harm to the
ecology. Oppose any tidelands trade.
Suggest that any proposal for a
trade be sent back to the State Lands
Commission for further intensive
study.

While you're writing... bear in mind that
passage of either AB 730 (Sieroty), or
AB 640 (Milias), could prevent the
destruction of Upper Newport Bay.
These bills are in the Natural Resources
and Conservation Committee of the
Assembly, right now... so write NOW!

Your State Senator
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

and....

Your State Assemblyman
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

and....

copies of your letters to:

Hon. Paul Priolo
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Hon. Robert S. Stevens
(same address)

The gist of the letters might be:
Support of legislation to remove the Malibu-
Whitnall Freeway from the Ventura Freeway
to the Pacific Coast Highway, from the
Master Plan.

While you're writing... consider that if the
freeway (which is not needed) is built as
planned, construction easements as wide as
1,000 feet will be used to cut and fill, in
many places, across the entire creek bed.
A man made channel will hold the creek. The
Malibu Lagoon will be cemented over with a
freeway interchange. Since much of Malibu
Lagoon is a Wildlife Refuge, administered by
the Dept. of Parks and Recreation, perhaps
the Director, Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr. might
also be interested in your views. His address
is: P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento, Calif. 95811.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD



Q: "How does the Los Angeles Audubon Society stand on the topic of Falconry?" The National Headquarters has held lengthy discussions on this subject with falconers for many years while the various Audubon branches have for so long upheld the traditional view that falconry is opposed by conservationists.

Please do not quote the passage entitled, "Why is falconry opposed by conservationists?" appearing in 1001 QUESTIONS ANSWERED ABOUT BIRDS, by Allan and Helen Cruickshank, page 272.

If you want details of how the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers is destroying habitats in California, read WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in California, 1969 - and be depressed.

1970 CONDOR BATTLE #1 Won

Congratulations all you fine folk who wrote to Mr. J. Russell Penny and to Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel protesting the proposed oil drilling in the Sespe Condor Refuge. This battle appears to be won. Mr. J. Russell Penny has received a telegram from Secretary Hickel declaring a moratorium on all oil drilling in the Sespe Condor Refuge. This is a perfect example of how much all those cards and letters really do count, but winning a battle isn't winning a war, and it does seem as if a war has been declared on the Condor,

1970 CONDOR BATTLE #2 Up to You

The following report has just been received from John Borneman. U. S. Gypsum has applied to the Bureau of Land Management for a lease to strip mine at the base of Pine Mountain in Los Padres National Forest. The mine site is located between Pine Mountain and State Highway 33, and while the proposed site is not within the boundary of the Sespe Condor Refuge, it is visible from the Reyes Peak road, and from many points within the Sespe Condor Refuge. The proposed strip mine is located in an important Condor foraging area, and is a vital part of the Condor range.

Those of you who are from the east, or who have travelled through areas where strip mining is practiced, may know the devastation and pollution that are inevitably part of the strip mining operation. The proposed mine would be 5 miles long... phosphates would be the product gouged from the land... and the mine would permanently scar an area that has great potential for wilderness classification. The mine site is located in the Sespe Creek drainage, and strip mining activity would cause serious pollution of Sespe Creek. Phosphates are particularly bad as stream pollutants due to their fertilization properties.

As if all this weren't bad enough... let's not forget that any product mined has to be processed. Presently, a little known phosphate processing plant is now in operation in Santa Paula. Plans are afoot to build a large phosphate processing plant at Pine Mountain, once production from the strip mine established. We know the product we and the Condors will receive from this, stench, smog and pollution.

It is long past time for any agencies of the Federal Government to take a positive firm stand against the continual threats to the California Condor and other endangered species. I think we have all had quite enough of pronouncements such as, ... the Condor is an endangered species and must be protected, but... There can be no buts if Condors are to survive. It is perfectly clear to me, and I'm sure to all our readers, and it is clear to many others, that serious disruption of the land in, or near, Condor Refuges, will be... voila!... no more Condors. If this is perfectly clear to us, then it must be made perfectly clear to the agencies of the Federal Government whose job it is to administer these areas.

...Joann Leonard

FRIENDS OF GRIFFITH PARK

On Sunday, April 12.... Friends of Griffith will hold a triple treat combination, . . . bird-walk.... discussion of the Griffith Park Master Plan.... afternoon hike. There will be two starting times to suit all dispositions. At 10:00 A.M. meet at the Bird Sanctuary, and spend an easy morning, ending up at the Green Picnic Area back of the Greek Theatre parking lot. From 1:00 - 2:00 P.M. there will be a discussion of the proposed master plan, and if you haven't seen it, here's your chance. A hike with a view toward changes that the master plan may mean for Griffith Park is scheduled after lunch.

We just found out about this, and want to share it with you. Every Tuesday evening at 6:15 p.m. radio station KPFK (FM 90.7), presents, An Ecologist Views the News, with Dr. Richard Vogl. Dr. Vogl puts a new perspective on what you may have thought was just the same old news... we think you'll find his program different and interesting.

THE NEXT LOS ANGELES AUDUBON CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE ON THE 4TH TUESDAY OF APRIL, THE 28TH, AT 8:00 P.M. AT AUDUBON HOUSE.

All members and friends are cordially urged to attend.

The threats to species on the verge of extinction seem never to end. If it isn't a dam on the Sespe, it's shell dredging near the Aransas Wildlife refuge, or oil drilling in the Sespe Condor refuge... and now it's strip mining! Lately our batting average at batting down these hydra-headed threats has been pretty good. This time let's let our correspondents know that major land disruptions... including highway building, dam building, and all forms of mining should be prohibited in or near Refuges set aside for the survival of endangered species. Your letters and cards are needed, NOW.

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

Secty. Walter J. Hickel
Secretary of the Interior
C Street & 18 Street N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20240

Continued on Page 7

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

Continued...

Western Orioles, Bullocks and Hooded. Incidentally, we have had almost no reports of Orioles this winter.

WHITE PELICANS were much in evidence in late February. Fourteen at Upper Newport Bay were the subject of many reports, while a hundred or more rested at the south end of the Salton Sea. Mike San Miguel counted more than eighty pelicans flying westerly over his banding location near Azusa on the 23rd. This is on their regular migration path from the south to the large inland nesting lakes, but the date is about a month earlier than normal.

Dick Robinson up dated the last known sighting of the HEPATIC TANAGER at Rancho Park to mid January. Does anyone have a later report?

By early March there were many reports of RUFOUS and ALLEN'S HUMMERS, and of TREE, CLIFF and ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS. By the time this appears in print, the WARBLERS, VIREOS, FLYCATCHERS and other small migrants will be equally noticeable, so make your plans to visit the desert oases this month. As

suggestions, how about Borrego Springs, Morongo Valley, Whitewater Canyon, or farther afield the New River dike or Finney Lake at the south end of the Salton Sea, the Colorado River near Yuma or Death Valley.

Don't overlook the coastal marshes and lagoons for a one-day trip. The shorebirds are putting on their "courting clothes" now - the Dunlin's black belly, and Avocet's rusty head are in striking contrast to their drab winter outfits, and on the ponds and lakes the pompous little Ruddy Duck drake, all rusty red with a bright blue bill, makes a ridiculous sight as he courts his drab little mate with exaggerated "bumps and grinds". While you're duck watching keep an eye out for Blue-Winged Teal (they've been seen recently with the Cinnamon's at Newport and at Malibu) and for Wood Ducks, but be sure they're wild birds (three females on a San Diego County farm pond probably were).

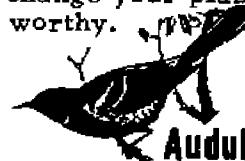
For a last minute report on local birds don't forget to call the L. A. A. S Bird Report (874-1318). It may change your plans and make your trip more bird worthy.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S QUIZ

- 1-C Medium size, boreal, predatory on birds.
- 2-F Small, colorful, insectivorous, sometimes urban.
- 3-G Medium size, open country, low barrier flight.
- 4-E Small, arboreal, predatory on birds.
- 5-B Large, specialized habitat, rodent killers.
- 6-B Large, widespread and adaptable, rodent killers.
- 7-A Largest, boreal, "invasion" species, rodents.
- 8-D Large, western U.S., predatory on rodents.



Baltimore Oriole



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* Sales Department

Recently we have had a number of inquiries about books on the California Condor. Following is a list of titles available in our Sales Department.

Man and the California Condor - Ian McMillan
A comprehensive history of the California Condor, with a detailed description of its behavior and habitat by a man familiar with the Condor and the refuge area since boyhood. Maps and photographs.

The California Condor, Vanishing American - Dick Smith & Robert Easton with an introduction by Brooks Atkinson
An account of the Condor from the Pleistocene Age to today; the legends and myths often associated with it and observations from early explorers. Photographs and drawings.

The California Condor Carl B. Koford
A reprint with minor corrections of the National Audubon Society's Research Report #4 (1953).

The above books are also in our library along with other information on the Condor. The Sales Chairman wishes to remind members that phone and mail orders will be promptly filled and that we can generally order books that are not regularly stocked.

!announcements!

A knowledgeable and hard-working group of birders have the first issue of a new quarterly journal "CALIFORNIA BIRDS" ready to go to press. It will focus on all aspects of field observation and study, and problems of field identification. The first issue will contain the first complete up-to-date list of California birds in twenty-five years, and an article on identification of Common and Arctic Terns. Membership in the California Field Ornithologists is open to all and includes a subscription to "California Birds." There are five classes of membership from \$5-regular, to \$1,000-patron. Make checks payable to "California Birds" and mail to C. R. Lyons, 6424 Mt. Adelbert Dr., San Diego, Calif. 92111.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

Shumway Suffel

By mid-April we should be emerging from the doldrums which have plagued birders during March. A good number of our summer resident species - Swallows, Orioles, Grosbeaks, etc. - are here or will be arriving this month. Better yet, spring migration is starting now and will build to a peak in early May. These are the exciting days to be afield, to meet old friends, both birds and people, and to find new ones.

The best place for small land birds in April is the southern desert. Here the oases, and canyons with water and trees, can literally swarm with migrant Warblers, Vireos, Tanagers, and Thrushes. This probably is the nearest we in Southern California can come to an eastern "great wave" of migrants, but here the cause is somewhat different. Here the northbound migrants are grounded by the intensity of the prevailing north winds, but Arnold Small can tell it far better than I, as he did in the May 1964 Tanager:

"Spring migration of small landbirds was well underway by the end of March. Many of these birds enter the greener parts of California after a long and difficult journey across the deserts to the south and east, and for this reason tend to "jam up" at desert oases, especially during unfavorable weather and wind conditions. Winds blowing through San Geronimo Pass (which is an important "Port of Entry" into green California from the deserts) almost invariably are from the west. This is due to several factors (even though one would expect winds from the east to be blowing from the rather steady high-pressure areas to the east of here). One of these factors is the existence of the high mountain ranges which surround San Geronimo Pass and from which emanate the strong and constant winds. Air, cooling on the high slopes gains in density, and flows downhill, and the peculiar topography of that area channels these winds into the pass from a westward direction. Here, they meet the drier winds from the eastern deserts and cause great turbulence.

But the remarkable thing is, that into this atmospheric maelstrom, pour hundreds of thousands of migrants from the south and southeast. A few hours spent in Whitewater is most rewarding in early April and through early May. Diurnal migrants (such as swallows and swifts) can be seen (and counted) as they battle their way into the teeth of the unfavorable winds. Many of them crouch exhausted in the safety of the few small shrubs at the mouth of Whitewater Canyon. Many of them make their way at last into the canyon itself, following the natural riparian vegetation there, and this might explain why this area acts as such an effective bird trap in the spring."

Most of the previously mentioned wintering birds remained through February at least, and a fair number of noteworthy birds were discovered. The RED-NECKED GREBE found

by Rusty Scalf near Bluff Cove at Palos Verdes on Washington's Birthday stayed in the same area until at least March 7th, and was seen by many L. A. A. S. members. It was gradually coming into summer plumage and showed some rosy pink on the front of the neck. Two LOUISIANA HERONS showed up in the Seal Beach Marsh on the 26th. One was just below the highway bridge and the other on the Navy property. The best bird along the coast had to be an "ATLANTIC" BRANT discovered by Richard Webster in the Goleta Slough just north of Santa Barbara on March 8th. In addition to being light bellied (the obvious field mark) it showed two white neck spots not joined in front as is usually the case with our BLACK BRANT.

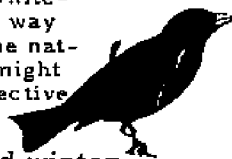
Concentrations of large hawks are always good news and they tend to occur when imminent or underway. We (Don Sterba & S.S.) found more than twenty REDTAILS in view at once on the Irvive Ranch near U. C. I. on the 26th. A day's hawk watching in Leona and Antelope Valleys turned up eight GOLDEN EAGLES and six FERRUGINOUS HAWKS for Olga Clarke and S.S. Min Gerhardt and Eleanor Fevog "hit the jackpot" in California Valley when they found not only a FERRUGINOUS HAWK but a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK as well on Feb. 15th. Reports of immature BALD EAGLE continue to come in from Upper Newport Bay, and behind Oceanside and two from Lake Cachuma behind Santa Barbara. Best of all there is news from that area that a pair of OSPREYS are building a nest. This is the first nesting attempt reported in our area for many years. Let us hope that they bring off their brood before the human interference from fisherman and campers becomes too severe.

Two SUMMER TANAGERS were reported - a striking red male drifted through the chaparral which adjoins the Hu Weiser's Hollywood Hills home; while a dull female was studied by Jon Atwood, Don Sterba and Kay Yagii in Fairmount Park, Riverside (the YELLOW-THROATED VIREO was still there on March 8th). The Summer Tanager is a very difficult bird to distinguish from a female "Hepatic" unless the characteristic call note is heard. Although very few Summer Tanagers are reported from the coastal region, these few are almost equally divided between stragglers from Southeastern California or Mexico where the "cooperi" race is a summer resident, and vagrants from the East where "rubra" is the nesting race. This is similar to the winter Oriole situation, in which the Eastern Orioles, Baltimore and Orchard, are almost equal in numbers to

Continued on previous page



Summer Tanagers



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