

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 37 1970-71 NUMBER 8 APRIL

Mist Netting from Dawn to Dusk

By G.N. "Peppy" VAN ESSEN

At dawn in 35° temperature, I met Jay Sheppard and Mike San Miguel at Big Morongo Creek where it exits from Morongo Valley. In amongst the cottonwoods and the willows, approximately ten mist nets had been placed strategically about 1/3 of a mile along the small creek. The 42 - 60 foot long nets were set up in tiers totaling from 3-1/2 feet to about 20 feet high, held up by trammel lines. Various patterns and angles were used along the natural flyway.

Bird banders are conscientious about their banding. They are careful in extracting birds from the nets. For the well-being of their captives, they believe in taking the net OFF the bird and NOT the bird out of the net. The principle is similar to the pulling off of a sweater or peeling a banana. The secret is to determine into which side of the net a bird has flown and then to act accordingly by taking the netting off the tail, the feet, the wings, and then the head last on the side of the net it had flown into. If the bird shows signs of exhaustion, a couple of drops of water on a finger will be run lightly along the bill and the bird will drink this and revive. After the bird is released, the bander will watch it to see that it fares about and successfully flies away.

Banders are concerned with the well-being of their charges. The birds are held gently, but firmly on their backs in the palm of the hand with their necks between the index and middle fingers and the legs held by the other hand when handling.

Exhausted hummingbirds when found in the mist nets, especially on chilly mornings, have the tips of their bills put into a vial of sugar and water to revive them. Stimulated by the dampness and taste, the birds start to work their tongues. The bander can tell when they start to drink and for how long by the rhythmical movements of their head feathers, which results from the action of the muscles that propel the hyoid apparatus backwards and forwards.

After the birds are disentangled from the nets, they are put in carrying (holding) bags and taken to the recording station. Here the

date, time, species, age, sex, and etc. were all noted. Each bird was weighed, banded, its wing length measured, and its fat content noted. To examine the amount of fat content, the bird is held on its back and the breast feathers are blown apart so that the yellow fat can be seen just beneath the skin. The amount of fat content suggests whether the bird is feeding and resting in this area or has just arrived during its migration flight. Those recaptured showed weight loss on second day (as much as one gram), but showed weight gain on third and subsequent days of one to two grams.

We banded 162 individuals during the daylight hours of May the 6th; approximately 120 were warblers and of these 91 were Wilson's warblers, 25 were divided between Orange-crowned and Yellow Warblers, and one or two of the following: MacGillivray's, Townsends, Hermit, Nashville, and Black-throated Gray. Of particular interest in the Empidonax group were one Hammond's and a few Westerns.

Continued overleaf



Approximately six of each the Solitary and the Warbling Vireos were banded. Six Swainson's Thrushes were also banded.

Not just anybody can net and band birds. A person wanting to band birds must first obtain a sub-permit and show good reason why he wants to band birds, and then must band under the supervision of a person with a master permit. After one, two, or three years of this, a person can apply for a master permit. He must show his interest, skill, and knowledge in handling birds, filling out the reports, keying out and identifying birds age, sex, and etc. He must show his dedication and interest by using facilities at hand, such as, studying museum skins and mounts, using nearby libraries and acquiring his own ornithological library. Also, the aspiring banders must have three or four recommendations from master banders, ornithologists, teachers, or museum curators.

Point Reyes Bird Observatory has had a bird-banding station for the last few years and the banders have concluded that the birds migrated in the Fall close to the coast and in the Spring they migrated much further inland. The Point Reyes bird-banding station this Spring, for the first time, had banding substations at 13 locations for a 10-day period to determine approximately where the birds start cutting inland on their way north and the length of time involved in migrating north. Morongo Valley was one of these 13 stations, and as we furled the nets for the night we knew that this was just one of the days of the survey accomplished.

FROM THE AUTHOR

My mother introduced me to birds by taking me to the Los Angeles County Museum and bought me George Willett's "Birds of Los Angeles County." Years later a Bewick's Wren at Lava Beds scolded and followed me as I was walking. I just had to know what bird it was and with a Park Ranger identified it by thumbing through Peterson's "Field Guide" and I have been an enthusiastic birder ever since. A member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society since 1969, my most rewarding experience was a three-week birding trip to Texas and Arizona with Jim Lane last year. I was a milkman for a number of years in the Los Angeles area, a long-distance truck driver, a hard-rock miner and an extra in John Wayne's movie "True Grit" in Colorado, a commercial fisherman in Florida, and a sardine canner in Maine. Through my interest in birds, my stay at each of these localities added many life birds to my list and an appreciation of the ecology. Finally, I must give credit to Jay Sheppard and Shirley Wells for being most cooperative in providing me with information for my article.



GRANDFATHER

Otto Widmann

CONCLUDED

I shall try to give a resume of the events of Widmann's later life. After becoming a Fellow in the AOU, he worked several years on bird migrations. The rest of his life he returned to the Mississippi as often as he could. But his long hours in the drugstore and his strenuous birding expeditions caught up with his health. In 1889 he was forced to sell his drugstore and move away from smogbound St. Louis. So he went to old Orchard near Webster Groves. His long walks in the country and his short birding trips gradually restored his health and the asthma, which had plagued him, subsided. By 1896 his voluminous notes were taking shape and he began thinking of writing a book on the birds of Missouri. He had finished the land birds and was waiting for further notes on the water birds, when he decided to take a trip for his 30th wedding anniversary back to Germany. So in April 1902 the grandparents left for Hamburg and Karlsruhe. While they were gone, an overheated flue caused the house to be burnt. All his 25 years of notes and his manuscript were lost. He was greatly discouraged and for several years did nothing. But by 1906 he had renewed his enthusiasm and decided he would rewrite the book. This time he sent for lists of birds from 36 birders throughout Missouri, 18 of these were or had been members of the AOU. So their lists came, some disgraceful, some praiseworthy. There were 253 species in Missouri proper and 50 more marginal. The task took one year but by fall of 1907 the book was published. He notes having seen the Roseate Spoonbill, the Whooping Crane, Whistling Swan, Carolina Parakeet, the Passenger Pigeon and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (by others) — all seen and recorded in Missouri — all gone now. It is hard to believe that he saw the tens of thousands of Passenger Pigeons pass over the city.

In 1903 the AOU made its first field trip to the West Coast, covering the highspots from Washington to the Grand Canyon. Otto Widmann took this trip and made his list of birds of Yosemite, which he published in the *Auk*, Vol. XXI #1. He noted 57 species during his four-day stay (May 21). He was particularly pleased at the exclusion of firearms and subsequently the tameness of the birds, the large number of species and individuals. "Those who expected to see only cold majestic grandeur are most agreeably surprised to find in the heart of the Sierra such a gentle garden spot, full of mellow sunshine, benevolent quiet and blissful joy." He was the only one who bothered to list the birds. This is one of the first listings of the birds of the Yosemite. The State of California in 1914 - 1916 sent a survey team to study the complete ecology of the valley. They used Otto Widmann's list as a basis for their study of the birds. On this trip Otto Widmann met Joseph Grinnell and Frank M. Chapman and learned

BINOCULARS FOR BIRDING

part 4

Focussing

a single telescope is not difficult, but it is more complicated in the case of the two telescopes in a single frame that comprise a pair of binoculars. First, the center of the two eyepieces should be spread apart at the same distance that separates the centers of the observer's eyes—the so-called interocular distance.

Modern binoculars are focussed by a center post which moves both optical systems at once. It must be noted that the two eyes of most individuals are not identical. To balance the pair, one should shut the right eye, focus with the central post on a sharp object such as a telephone wire. Then close the left eye, open the right, and adjust the right *eyepiece* to focus. For convenience, note the reading of the dial on the right eyepiece. In active field work the right eyepiece can get rotated, so it is good practice to note occasionally the reading on the dial, and reset it if necessary to the number you have determined as above.

In focussing binoculars, either to set the right eyepiece as above, or in actual field use, whenever possible, it is important to have the eyes completely relaxed. This occurs when they are focussed for parallel light, as it would come from infinity without binoculars. To make sure the light is parallel at focus when looking through binoculars, bring them into focus from the *near* side (eyepiece extended). If this is not done, the eyes because of their extraordinary ability to accommodate are viewing with a slight but unconscious muscular contraction, which over a day's birding amounts to considerable strain.

If the above procedure is followed, for most people the two telescopes are now in balanced focus for all distances of the object to be viewed, and a single motion of the central post is all that is needed to bring it into focus. However, each individual should go through the focussing exercise described above for a sharp object both at infinity and at closest range. They may differ slightly, so note and remember the reading on the dial of the right eyepiece, and set the eyepiece to the appropriate reading for near and far objects. It will be found that each of the two readings varies a little, depending on the physiological condition of the eyes—tiredness and slow adjustment for instance. The scale on the dial is graduated in diopters, which is a measure of the correlation used by ophthalmologists. A *diopter* is the reciprocal of the focal length of a correcting lens in meters. The graduations on the eyepiece range from plus to minus five diopters, the usual range of optical correction.

On most binoculars there is a scale on the center post, also measured in diopters. When set at "0" the left eyepiece is focussed for infinity for normal eyes. The scale usually ranges from -5 to +5. For a particular individual, the setting for infinity is likely to be either on the negative or positive scale showing a degree of myopia. What need this scale serves the user of binoculars has eluded the author, but a particular use has been invented and described below.

Early types of binoculars had the two telescopes independently focussable. This design allows greater rigidity in maintaining parallelism than obtainable with the single center post, and for this reason are still called for in military specifications. More time is needed to focus on a given scene, and as we all know, all

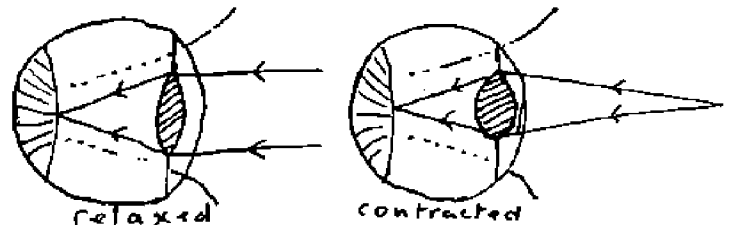
too often the bird has gone before the adjustments are perfected. On the other hand, this type of binocular is preferable for people whose left and right eyes need different focus setting for distance and nearness. This type can also be used to advantage for rapid acquisition of a bird: one telescope can be set in advance for medium distance, and the other for short range. Then, because of the depth of focus, one or the other eye can see an object at any distance.

All binoculars of course can be focussed at one limit, infinity, where so many birds are, and also focussed at the other limit, some minimum distance—the value of which varies with manufacturer. The smaller the magnification the closer the nominal distance from the observer at which a bird may be brought into focus. Specifically 15X are poorly set for looking at warblers, and even 10X can force the viewer to back off—over a cliff!

Because the right eyepiece has a separate focussing device, for the average eye, it can be turned to the minimum value on the diopter scale, and thereby reduce the range (for the right eye only) to a few feet, making even 15X binoculars quite satisfactory for close-in work—although only the right eye and telescope is used.

There is a better way to adjust binoculars for use at very close range. All makes of binoculars provide extra motion of the center post in order for near-sighted viewers to focus on infinity. Near-sightedness can be told by a negative reading on the diopter scale on the center post. If this value is no more than minus two, the mechanism can be adjusted to remove the excess instrumental range from the setting at infinity and make it available at the other end of the range, thus allowing birds to be seen closer in than the nominal setting of the binoculars as assembled by the manufacturers. For example well-made 10X binoculars can be set to four feet—even closer than the nominal value of 7X or 6X.

To be continued in another issue





environment besieged



by

KATHRYN BROOKS

SENATOR GAYLORD NELSON INTRODUCED in the Senate a package of 24 bills and resolutions dealing with the environmental crisis. Letters of support could certainly make the difference as to whether a bill passes or fails. S. 192 would phase out the dumping of wastes at sea in 5 years. The President endorsed the concept of this legislation. S. 193 will prohibit flights of all commercial supersonic aircraft within the U.S. SCR 2 is a resolution recommending that the issue also be put on the agenda of the 1972 U.N. Conference on Human Environment. S 75 sets up environmental performance standards on all detergent ingredients. S 76 would require comprehensive testing of all new as well as already approved food additives. S 282 would regulate the throwaway packaging, such as disposable bottles, cans, and jars, charging industries for packaging that is not recycled or easily disposable, with the funds returning to local government to aid solid waste disposal. SJR 14 would recognize and protect the right of every person to a decent environment, establishing the right of citizens to bring appropriate legal actions against those who unnecessarily and indiscriminately degrade the environment of others. SJR 15 would designate the third week in April annually as Earth Week. S 77 requires controls on all strip mining and initiate reclamation of previously ruined areas. S 275 would hold all untapped ocean oil in U.S. undersea areas in a national trust until we need the oil and have the technology to extract it without the risk of repeated environmental disasters. S 194 would give Governors the option to use some of their U.S. Highway Trust Fund money to build urban mass transit. S 272 is the reintroduced bill to ban DDT. S 232 bans eight other toxic, persistent pesticides. S 281 sets standards of degradability and toxicity on all pesticides. S 274 would replace the U.S. mineral leasing law. It proposes a mineral leasing system based on modern public resource protection standards. S 273 would put a halt to the widespread poisoning of predatory animals by Federal "control" agents in the West. S 78 would prohibit the hunting of wildlife from aircraft, which is aimed especially at protecting the few timber wolves left in America. S 280, the National Lakes Preservation Act, would launch a major shoreline protection and

restoration program. S 276-9 are four legislative proposals for a program of fellowship grants for students in planning for environmental careers. SCR 1 urges U.S. automakers to declare a moratorium on styling changes and reallocate these funds to assuring a near-pollution-free automobile.

"The question is whether we can join together in a massive cooperative effort to preserve the integrity and livability of our environment before it is too late. We have the means, but only if we have the will!"

--Senator Gaylord Nelson

SIERRA CLUB on KPFK RADIO. On April 2, 2-2:30 p.m. -Man's impact on the wilderness. On April 11, 6-7 p.m. -What is the Sierra Club? one hour live. April 16, 2-2:30 p.m. -Shoreline legislation by Dr. Richard Ball and Larry Moss. April 25, 6-7 p.m. -Air or airport?, one hour live.

CONDOR PROTECTION. "Interior Secretary Rogers Morton refused to grant oil and gas drilling rights to the U.S. Royalty Oil Corporation which had requested permission to operate inside the Los Padres National Forest's Sespe Condor Sanctuary, where 75 percent of the endangered California condors nest. In March 1970 Interior called for an indefinite moratorium on any new oil and gas leases there. At that time about 28 applications for leases were pending." Audubon Leader, Vol. 12, No. 5



S. 249, CRANSTON'S NATURE PROTECTION ACT would prohibit transporting, selling, purchasing, hunting, capturing, killing, or taking of any species of fish or wildlife which is in danger of becoming extinct in the U.S., and would prevent states from collecting bounties.

EARTH WEEK, THIRD WEEK IN APRIL. Volunteers are needed to help distribute information, make posters, give talks, type, etc. Call Kathryn during the day at 825-1217 and evenings and weekends at 479-0830.

More on page seven

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

- Mar. 28 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Stehly Ranch, 7351 Carbon Canyon Rd., Brea. Meet at the ranch gate at 9:00 a.m. Take the Santa Ana Freeway to the Riverside Freeway to Harbor Blvd., Fullerton. Go north on Harbor Blvd. to connection with Brea Blvd. and go north-east on Brea to Imperial Highway. Take Imperial east to Valencia Ave. and go north on Valencia which becomes Carbon Canyon Rd. at Brea city limits. Follow Carbon Canyon rd. to 1/2 mile beyond LaVida Hot Springs. Ranch gate is marked by two lion heads. Trip will last till about 1 p.m. For information call Bob Blackstone, 277-0521.
- Apr. 1 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m.
- Apr. 10 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 on Foothill to Santa Anita Ave., then north to the end of Santa Anita Canyon Rd. Be prepared for a hike down to the canyon stream and to the falls to see resident Dippers and early spring migrants. Leader: Harold Baxter, 355-6300.
- Apr. 13 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - Plummer Park, 8:00 p.m. Program: Mr. Ron LeValley of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Bolinas, California, will present an illustrated lecture on the work of this unique station.
- Apr. 24 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 Whitewater). 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 in the Salton Sea area on Sunday. Camping facilities are available in the Monument. Dry camp, bring your own water.
Leader: George Venatta, days 547-2487
eves. 378-8941
- May 1 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Morongo Valley. Meet between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. in Covington Park, Morongo Valley. See April 24 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 7 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m.
- May 11 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - Plummer Park, 8:00 p.m. Program: Mr. John Borneman, National Audubon Society Condor Naturalist, will present an illustrated lecture, "The Seychelles," about his recent trip there.

WEDNESDAY BIRD TRIPS - Time and place will be announced
on Bird Report 874-1318 each week.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Western Tanager

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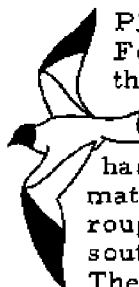
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audubon activities

FIELD TRIP - February 13, Terminal Island. Almost fifty people turned up for Jay Shepard's workshop on gull identification. Jay gave a short talk to the group before leading the way down to the beach where a small group of gulls afforded an opportunity to explore the difference between immature WESTERN, HERRING and CALIFORNIA GULLS. A nearby pond was the resort of another small group of shorebirds and gulls, including MEW and BONAPARTE'S GULLS. Quite a bit of time was spent here studying points of identification of adult and immatures. On the way back to the parking lot a fairly large flock of gulls in an open field was studied for some time. Unfortunately, the numbers of birds seen on this trip was disappointingly small. Nevertheless, for beginners and even for the more advanced birders, it was a welcome opportunity to learn some of the fine points of gull identification, particularly of immatures.



PELAGIC TRIP OUT OF SAN DIEGO, February 27—The California Field Ornithologists arranged a trip headed for the Sixty-mile Bank, on the chance of seeing a Laysan Albatross. This species has been seen there, and February is estimated as the most likely time. Unfortunately rough seas forced the boat to run off at the southern tip of San Clemente to the Coronados. The American Oystercatcher was not seen there, and very few birds were seen anywhere. Three Rhinoceros Auklets and two Xantus' Murrelets were the only alcids. Sooty, Pale-footed and Manx Shearwaters were seen in very small numbers, and one Fulmar.

Perhaps the best sightings of the day were Gray Whales leaping from the ocean.

FIELD TRIP - February 27-28, Morro Bay. Twenty-eight participants met at 8:30 a.m. at the foot of Morro Rock. The air was sparkling clear emphasizing the scenic beauty of the deep blue ocean and the rolling green hills of the coastline. After observing the sea- and bay birds near the Rock, we drove to the Great Blue Heron rookery in the tall eucalyptus trees just south of the Golden Tee Lodge. Herons were seen carrying twigs to build even higher the traditional nests of many years' occupancy. (For further information about the threat to this rookery, see March Tanager.)

RUFOUS, as well as ALLEN'S and ANNA'S, HUMMINGBIRDS were seen. Eight or more BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS were in eucalyptus trees near the marina. The next stop was Montana de Oro State Park, where 9 BLACK OYSTERCATCHERS were seen below the cliffs. Many RED-TAILED HAWKS were soaring above the hills and a pair was observed trying to drive a GOLDEN EAGLE from their territory. Increasing wind and cold made afternoon birding at Baywood bone-chilling; but a colorful dividend was

the sight of dozens of male hummers coming to feeders of a home near the shore.

Sunday morning's birding was productive, both at the mud flats at low tide, and at the dense thicket of trees and shrubs at Chorro Willows. In all, 97 species were counted, including the PEREGRINE FALCON in the usual place.

Betty and Laura Jenner

EVENING MEETING - March 9. A good turnout of members and guests enjoyed Mr. James Hammond's excellent film on the wildlife of Malheur. In twenty-one visits over a four-year period, using an enormous amount of film footage and spending hours editing, Mr. Hammond created a remarkable documentary on the refuge. His sequence of the mating behavior of the Western Grebes was uniquely beautiful, showing the ballet-like patterns of the birds bowing, diving, and running on the surface of the water. Other water birds shown included Eared, Horned, and Pied-billed Grebes, Great Blue Heron, Coot, Swans and Mallards. A family of Burrowing Owls with eight young were delightful. Unfortunately, time ran out and the second reel had to be cut short after some interesting shots of the Yellow-headed Blackbirds at their nesting activities. Mr. Hammond gave us an in-depth study of birds that few, if any, of us would ever be able to see on our own.

**Audubon
Bird Reports
874-1318**

The Bird Report is recorded each Wednesday afternoon. Anyone wishing to report a sighting for the tape may call Jean Brandt 788-5188 Tuesday evening or Audubon House 876-0202 Wednesday morning.

As you know eighty acres of land in the Big Morongo Canyon is being preserved by The Nature Conservancy.

The Southern California Chapter of Conservancy has already raised \$9,718 of the needed \$25,000 to complete the project.

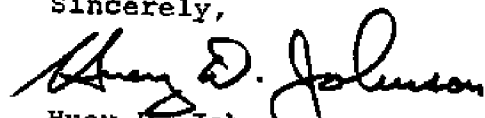
Your assistance is now needed to complete the fund drive.

All gifts are tax deductible and should be sent to

The Nature Conservancy
Big Morongo Canyon Project
c/o Wells Fargo Bank
P.O. Box 60616, Terminal Annex
Los Angeles, California 90060

Please make checks payable to The Nature Conservancy, Big Morongo Canyon Project.

Sincerely,



Huey D. Johnson
Western Regional Director



OTHER STATES
CAN DO THINGS

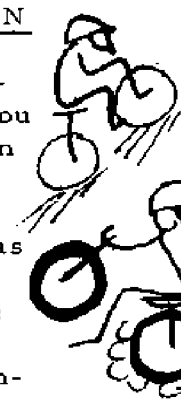
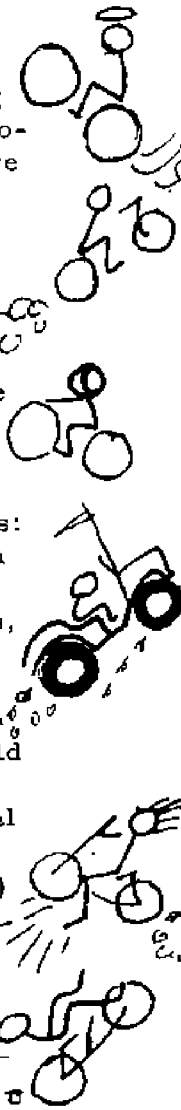
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SST -- A BUNDLE OF BOOMS and FALSE PREMISES . . . "The Administration is joining with labor in a massive effort to push the appropriation through (\$290 million)--the unions have a \$350,000 nationwide advertising campaign, and the Government's SST Committee has produced a new structural design that purports to substantially reduce engine noise. . . Some counterarguments: The structural redesign will not reduce or diminish the sonic boom. Cutting the roar of the jets at take-off would be an improvement, but it has nothing to do with the "boom," a traveling shock wave that will follow any object moving through the air faster than sound. Economically speaking, two points: first, unexpected spiralling production costs in all countries producing supersonic planes may in all probability lead to excessively high fares, thus removing travel on the superlarge planes from all but a small segment of the population. Second, the technological knowledge of those persons whose jobs are said to be at stake would and could much more effectively be put to use in urban mass transportation and environmental planning, in line with the new priority shift in public needs and wants." (Audubon Leader, 12, 5)

If you would like more information concerning the SST, call 473-2792. If you would like to volunteer to answer phones and distribute SST information, call this same number. The Coalition Against the SST needs your help.

TIMBER SUPPLY BILL BACK AGAIN

"And it's as bad as ever. Rep. Griffin of Mississippi has reintroduced the National Timber Supply Act (H.R. 156), which, you will recall, asked for development of maximum timber productivity as soon as possible. You may also remember that the conservationists' victory in defeating this bill in March, 1970 was undermined by an executive order from President Nixon which authorized virtually the same timbering as the "defeated" bill. We urge the Forest Service not to permit any increased timbering unless and until proved necessary by a complete review of our timber and forest needs--including recreational needs. Sen. Church's promised hearings on public lands offer a good opportunity; he plans to stress forestry policies." Audubon Leader, Volume 13, Number 4.



Rare-Bird Hunt Halts Timber Cutting

Special to The New York Times
COLUMBIA, S. C., March 13 —South Carolina officials agreed this week to postpone timber harvesting in a 10,000-acre swamp that may be the habitat of the ivory-billed woodpecker.

An Audubon Society official said last month that he had heard cries from the hawk-sized bird in the dark recesses of the Santee Swamp. The 25-square-mile area is roughly 40 miles northwest of the Four Holes swamp area, a 3,800-acre tract purchased early this year by the Audubon Society for \$1.5-million.

For 40 years it had been believed that the ivory-billed woodpecker was extinct. There has yet been no sighting of the bird, but Robert Manns, southeastern representative of the Audubon Society, calls its presence "a virtual certainty." His reported discovery came on a trip to the swamp last month with State Representative Alex Sanders, who has successfully supported environmental issues in the past.

For almost five minutes, the eight-note, amplified, taped mating call played by Mr. Manns drew a response from the swamp. "It was unbelievable," Mr. Manns said later. "No other bird will return the call in the same way except an ivory-billed woodpecker. There was either someone in the swamp who is awfully good at imitating the bird or there's a bird there."



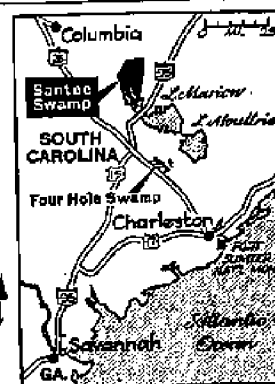
FOUND NOT EXTINCT: An ivory-billed woodpecker of the type seen in Santee Swamp, S. C.

Mr. Manns took along the tape of the mating call because of a report about two years ago by John Dennis an ornithologist, that the ivory-bill might still exist. Mr. Dennis made his report after a study in a Texas area similar to the wilderness of the Santee Swamp.

Audubon Society officials in New York were restrained. Robert Boardman, public information director of the society, said, "It can't be considered more than a possibility until experts confirm it, but we were surprised to hear of it and very pleased at the outside possibility."

Agreement to postpone timber cutting until a year's study of its effects can be completed was announced by the South Carolina Public Service Authority, which controls the state-owned Santee-Cooper project. The authority had agreed to an \$800,000 contract with two companies, Korn Industries and Georgia-Pacific, to cut all trees more than 14 inches in diameter.

Mr. Sanders, a 32-year-old Columbia lawyer said that evidence of the ivory-billed woodpecker had been a major force in consolidating public sentiment against the cutting of the timber.



The New York Times March 14, 1971

AUDUBON HOUSE NOW HAS COPIES OF YOUR CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATORS AND CONGRESSMEN. GET A COPY NOW & WRITE!

!announcements!



AUSTRALIAN BIRDING TOUR

ANNOUNCING A THREE-WEEK ESCORTED BIRDING TOUR OF AUSTRALIA DEPARTING NOVEMBER 6, 1971, SPONSORED BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY.

PURPOSE OF TRIP TO SEE AND IDENTIFY MAXIMUM NUMBER OF BIRD SPECIES.

SEE AUSTRALIAN PARROTS, HONEYEATERS, BOWER BIRDS, LYREBIRDS, BIRDS OF PARADISE, WINTERING ASIATIC SHORE BIRDS, PENGUINS, EMUS, CASSOWARIES, KANGAROOS, DUCK-BILLED PLATFUS, KOALA BEARS, FLYING FOXES.

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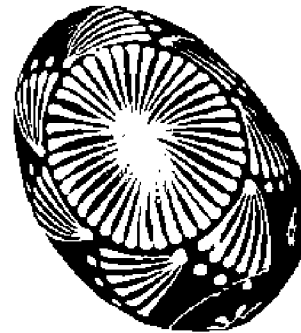
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ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1971-72

The Nominating Committee for next year's officers consists of Miss Frances Kohn, Chairman appointed by the Board of Directors in accordance with the Constitution. Mr. Eric Brooks and Mr. Donald Adams were elected by the membership at the stated monthly meeting of February 1971.

The Committee nominated:

Mr. Herbert Clarke for President
Mr. Leslie E. Wood for First Vice President
Dr. Gerald Maisel for Second Vice President
Mrs. Herbert Clarke for Recording Secretary
Mrs. Gilbert W. King for Executive Secretary
Dr. Moulton K. Johnson for Treasurer
Mrs. Moulton K. Johnson for Registrar

In accordance with the Constitution the Junior Past President is also an officer: the present incumbent is Miss Laura Lou Jenner.

feeder and at Mary Johnson's feeder in San Pedro remained at least through February. It has puzzled many observers that the WHITE-THROATED SPARROW at the Arboretum has black and brown crown stripes rather than black and white, as is usual. Since it has been found in the same place, acting in the same way for three winters, it seems probable that it is the same individual and therefore has to be an adult. The explanation seems to be that there are two color phases—the black and brown crowned one being the rarer.

Along the coast at least two LOUISIANA HERONS and two male BLUE-WINGED TEAL were seen in the Seal Beach Marshes during February. Further north, Ed Navajosky found a BLACK OYSTERCATCHER at Leo Carrillo State Park in Malibu. They are rare on the mainland, although one or two are reported nearly every year. Many of us are disturbed about the scarcity of loons and particularly of cormorants along our coast this winter and it may be some consolation to repeat what Arnold Small wrote in 1962, "The spring flight of loons was very poor and our local waters were practically devoid of all birds except gulls. Loons, grebes, cormorants, pelicans, and scoters all seemed to have deserted our waters." These seem like the words of doom, and possibly they are but at least they were premature in 1962.

Many of you added a new bird to your lists with your close range study of that very accommodating little SAW-WHET OWL at Salton Sea State Park during February. Now, possibly, you are inspired to do more owling, but it won't be that easy again. SPOTTED OWLS should be relatively simple, as they are suckers for tape recorded

calls and can be found in our local mountains (Santa Anita Canyon is good). SCREECH OWLS can be called up at nearby Chantry Flats and at many other places along the foothills and sometimes even in the residential districts, BARN OWLS and GREAT-HORNED OWLS also can be city dwellers. LONG-EARED OWLS seek out the wilder places in the lowlands, especially willow groves along streams, even in the high desert. FLAMMULATED and PYGMY OWLS are mountain nesters and usually difficult to find. Hanna Flats Camp near Fawnskin at Big Bear Lake is a traditional place for Flammulateds but has proven unproductive recently. Wear warm clothes as it can be bitter cold in our mountains at night in April and May. Why not try for SPOTTED and SCREECH OWLS after the field trip on April 10th?

The coastal canyons (Tuna Canyon, etc.) and promontories (Pt. Fermin, Pt. Dume, etc.) should be at their best for small migrants late this month, while the lagoons and marshes will be alive with shorebirds at any time. But the greatest chance for rare birds lies in the desert oases—Morongo is tops for migrants and as the most westerly nesting area for VERMILLION FLYCATCHERS, SUMMER TANAGERS and WIED'S FLYCATCHERS (in May); Whitewater is good during high winds which pin down the migrants, as is Thousand Palms (by permission only) and many other spots a little farther away.

P.S. Don't forget to send your March observations to Jay Sheppard, 4002 Howard Ave., Apt. 9, Los Alamitos, Calif. 90720, or phone him at 598-3955 before April 7th. After that, send them to me at 1105 No. Holliston Ave., Pasadena 91104, or phone 797-2965.

OTTO WIDMANN Continued from page two.

of the newly established Cooper Ornithological Club. He joined that society when there were only 90 members, and he remained a member for the next 30 years. These three men corresponded the rest of their lives. Observations at Mariposa Groves and other stops near Yosemite brought his list to 67 species.

Writing about birds was not enough, so about 1900 he organized the Naturalist Club: a group of 12 scientists covering all fields who met each month to present their papers. Otto Widmann organized the First Audubon Club in St. Louis, but it soon folded for lack of support. He revived it some years later and it has been in operation ever since. He was instrumental in organizing the Academy of Sciences for Missouri, the St. Louis Horticultural Society, the Missouri Botanical Society, and the Zoological Society. He was great at organizing, but he was the poorest of speakers; he blames this on his innate shyness. He hated public speaking, being his happiest when he could write about his birds. Finally in 1927 his friends persuaded him to write his *Autobiography* and it was published in

the Bulletin of Wilson's Ornithological Club.

Then in 1931 at the age of 90 Herbert Hoover wrote from the White House and congratulated him on his birthday. A few years later on his death Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a message of condolence to the members of his family on the loss of one of our pioneers. During his last hours, he asked the doctor to move him to the window where he could see his beloved birds, "so huedsch, so gerne — meine lieblings".

But while the making of the law is of importance, the enforcement of it is still more important and should not be left to a state game warden who may or may not be in sympathy with it, possibly being a very good fish and game warden, but a very poor protector of birds generally.

Even if he should be an enthusiastic bird protectionist, the work itself must chiefly rest in the hands of his deputies and of the local police as well as office game wardens, men who very often are not in sympathy with the law and would not count to incur the enmity of their fellow-citizens for the sake of a law for which they generally care but little or not at all.

Excerpt from manuscript of Otto Widmann now in possession of his grandson.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

Shumway Suffel

APRIL is the month of migration. By the time this is read, migration will be building up steam for a big blow-off in late April and early May. Some of our summer residents—ORIOLES, KINGBIRDS, etc.—are here already and will increase as the month progresses. Others like the BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS and WARBLING VIREOS will not arrive in numbers until mid or late April. The migration on the deserts is inclined to lag by a week or so to that along the coast. This is due in part to the fact that many desert migrants are headed for the mountains or for more northerly areas where nesting conditions are not favorable until late May or early June.

For a detailed discussion of "A Spring Migration at Morongo Valley"—one of our most popular desert birding spots—one should reread Russ and Marion Wilson's article in the "Tanager" of last July and August. They tell of their almost daily observations over a two-month period, of the migration peaks and valleys, and of the disastrous effects of the freeze in late April of 1970. An interesting sidelight on the migration of desert birds was brought to our attention by Shirley Wells, who, along with several others, found more than fifty SAGE THRASHERS (normally fairly solitary birds) in loose flocks near the south end of the Salton Sea on February 28th. This may seem early, but we should realize that Sage Thrashers nest in the high desert where conditions will be at their best in March and April not during the hot, dry weather of May and June.

Many previously reported winter birds remained until late February or early March. Although many of the CANADA GEESE had left the Salton Sea area by March 1st, there were still over 10,000 SNOW GEESE there and with them at least one BLUE GOOSE. The ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK in the same area was not seen after February 1st but one was found near Pt. Mugu by Ed Navajosky on February 22nd. Ed also brings us our latest report of a FRANKLIN'S GULL at Malibu Lagoon on February 15th. This along with scattered records throughout the winter at Malibu, King Harbor, and Santa Barbara confirm the wintering, for the first time, of at least one, possibly two, FRANKLIN'S GULLS in our area. Shirley Wells has had CASSIN'S FINCHES at her Palos Verdes feeder and in her nets in February (they are very unusual in the coastal lowlands). The LARK BUNTING in Balboa Park, San Diego, remained into March as an attraction for visiting birders, along with one "EASTERN" BRANT among the thousands of BLACK BRANT in the channel at the mouth of the San Diego River. This latter bird proved particularly difficult to locate, since these Brant seldom fly or come out on the shore, thus hiding their characteristic light ("Eastern") or dark ("Western") bellies. This left only the neck marks (joined in front on the Black Brant but not on the "Eastern") and the possibility of seeing the light belly as the Brant "tipped up" to feed on eel grass.

The outstanding find of the winter was made by Jim Fairchild of Riverside who discovered a well plumaged male PYRRHULOXIA at Heise Springs (southwest corner Salton Sea) on February 24th. This is one of Jim's favorite birding spots and he well deserves the satisfaction of finding a

new California bird there. We learned a few days later, that the Pyrrhuloxia was attracted to this particular spot by bird seed left out by the rancher's wife for her pet peacock. Strangely enough, we found the wary Pyrrhuloxia but couldn't locate the tame peacocks. One of our friends non-bird-watching wife remarked that her husband was going to the Salton Sea looking for a "paraphanalia," or something. A little later the same morning, I was fortunate enough to look into a ditch, as we crossed over it, just as a BLACK RAIL streaked into the undergrowth. Bob and Elizabeth Coppers were also among the fortunate few when they found a BLACK RAIL at Upper Newport Bay on February 20th. This is at least the third sighting in that area since last November.

Jan Tarble reports a RED-SHOULDERED HAWK near Palm Springs (they are very rare on the desert side of the mountains) and a LEWIS' WOODPECKER at nearby Snow Creek (our only local report since Christmas count time). From Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley comes word that LEWIS' WOODPECKERS were fairly common, and that the YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER was still there on February 21st (Durward and Leona Skiles), and that Bunny Follis of San Francisco rediscovered two HARRIS' SPARROWS there. This our only report since mid-November 1970, when several were seen at the Ranch.

Elsewhere, Kim Garrett reports that he and Jon Dunn saw three BALD EAGLES at Baldwin Lake, plus a VARIED THRUSH and a WINTER WREN at Morongo Valley on February 14th. The WHITE-THROATED SPARROW at the Arboretum has not been seen since the Pasadena Christmas count but the ones at the Skiles' Topanga Canyon

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