

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 39, 1972-73 No.4 DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS COUNTS ARE IMPORTANT by Sanford Wohlgemuth

On December 31 an adventurous group of birders, experts, and novices alike will fan out over a large chunk of Los Angeles and count birds all day long. They will be participating in a ritual as hallowed and traditional as Norman Rockwell and Thanksgiving—the annual Christmas Count. Seventy-two years ago 27 intrepid pioneers in the East made the first official count. Last year 18,798 people in 963 count areas covered the United States and Canada! The heartening growth of birding's popularity is demonstrated by the fact that each year the number of participants in the Christmas Count and the number of Count areas increases over the previous year. There were over 2000 more observers and 60 more Count areas last year than the year before. The Count area is a circle 15 miles in diameter which remains the same each year so that useful evaluations of trends and changes in bird populations may be made. It also gives the human population a goal to shoot at: how will we do this year compared to last year or the year before that?

So Christmas counting is a satisfying blend of science and fun. Anyone skeptical of the scientific value of Christmas Counts is invited to browse through "American Birds" published by National Audubon in collaboration with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In a fine article on the status of the White-tailed Kite in the June 1971 issue, extensive analysis of Christmas Counts over many years was used to demonstrate the remarkable increase in population and extension of range of this bird. In the December 1971 issue, ornithologists at the University of Colorado detailed methods of plotting fluctuations of bird populations of twenty birds using computers and the records of 20 years of Colorado Christmas Counts. They noted, for example, that Red-breasted Nuthatches and Red Crossbills were commonly known to be subject to periodic fluctuations in winter. What their study revealed was that both species cycled *together*: populations of both were numerous or scarce in the same years. After discussing the possible reasons for this they concluded,

"While the answer requires more study, the fact remains that without Christmas Bird count data this interesting relationship probably would never have been detected."

The essence of Christmas Counts, then, is counting all the birds, common as well as unusual. The good news about kites or nuthatches is important but so are the drab reports of the status of Brown Towhees and Starlings. So you can see that the dedicated volunteers who cover Pershing Square and McArthur Park are making a vital contribution: without them we would not have had 52 Ringed Turtle Doves—highest in the nation last year. Audubon's Warblers may be a bit irritating after a while on the Christmas Count but the Los Angeles Count last year was the most anywhere with 3807. I'm sure, though, we would prefer this attractive warbler (however distracting) to the 3,000,000 Brown-

headed Cowbirds at College Station, Texas. And our 202 Surfbirds was the greatest number ever tallied on any Christmas Count in history!

It would be foolish to deny that the excitement of a Christmas Count is the ever-present possibility of an unusual bird. This is the icing on the cake, the cherry on the sundae. It could happen anywhere—and to *you!* After all, last year Los Angeles had a Yellow-shafted Flicker in a cemetery, a Rufous Hummingbird at a backyard feeder, a Cassin's Finch and a Steller's Jay in Griffith Park. And the three American Golden Plovers at Playa del Rey were a great find: together with Harris Neck, Georgia, they led the country in number.

This leads us into the giddy stratosphere of species counts. As with other more conventional sports, it seems that records are made to be broken. After the first man jumped 7 feet, it seemed as if 7-foot high jumpers appeared everywhere. The same might be said of the 4-minute mile. In 1967, San Diego was the first place in the country to go over the 200-species mark—up to that time considered almost impossible of attainment. Since then, every Christmas Count has had two or three counts over 200. When San Diego produced an incredible 224 species in 1970, it was looked upon as a quantum leap that could never be equaled. Yet, last year Freeport, Texas, set the all-time record with 226 species!

Join The Christmas Count

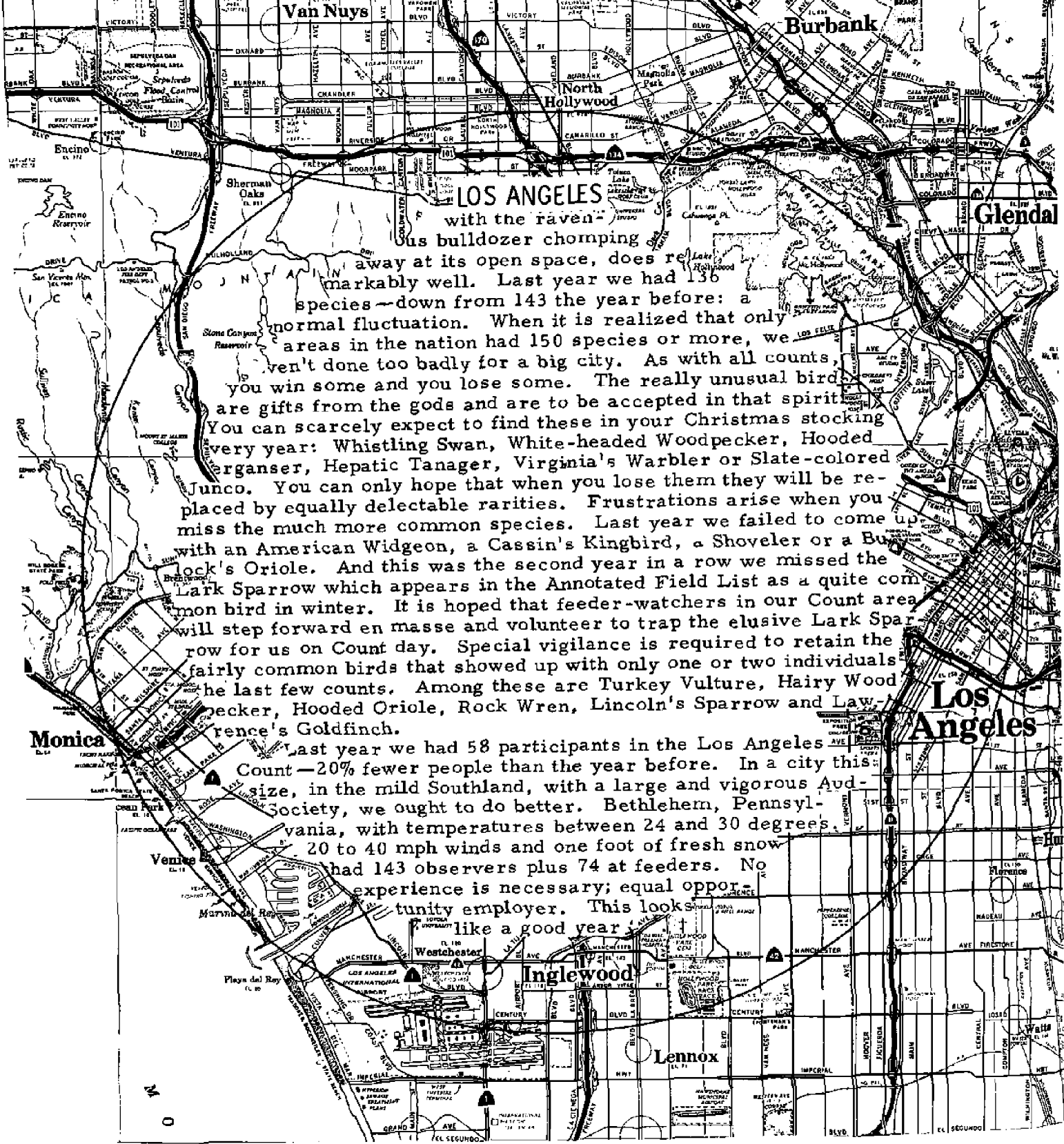
Call

Sandy Wohlgemuth

19354 Calvert Street

Reseda, California, 91335

Tel. 344-8531



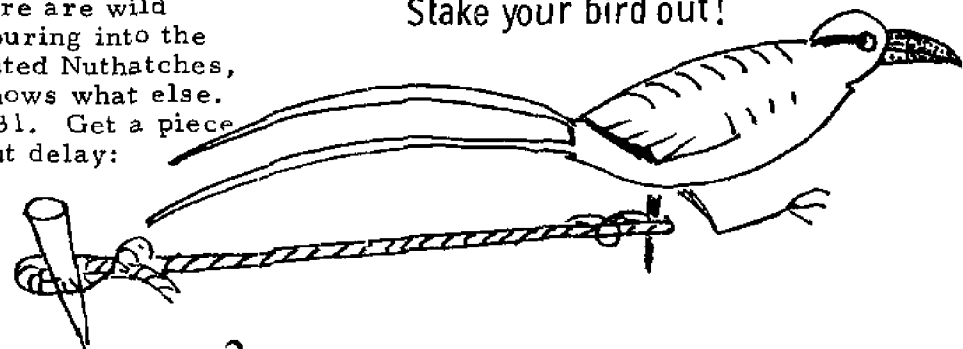
Los Angeles
 with the raven
 Our bulldozer chomping
 away at its open space, does re-
 markably well. Last year we had 136
 species—down from 143 the year before: a
 normal fluctuation. When it is realized that only
 a few areas in the nation had 150 species or more, we
 haven't done too badly for a big city. As with all counts,
 you win some and you lose some. The really unusual birds
 are gifts from the gods and are to be accepted in that spirit.
 You can scarcely expect to find these in your Christmas stocking
 every year: Whistling Swan, White-headed Woodpecker, Hooded
 Merganser, Hepatic Tanager, Virginia's Warbler or Slate-colored
 Junco. You can only hope that when you lose them they will be re-
 placed by equally delectable rarities. Frustrations arise when you
 miss the much more common species. Last year we failed to come up
 with an American Widgeon, a Cassin's Kingbird, a Shoveler or a Bu-
 lock's Oriole. And this was the second year in a row we missed the
 Lark Sparrow which appears in the Annotated Field List as a quite com-
 mon bird in winter. It is hoped that feeder-watchers in our Count area
 will step forward en masse and volunteer to trap the elusive Lark Spar-
 row for us on Count day. Special vigilance is required to retain the
 fairly common birds that showed up with only one or two individuals
 the last few counts. Among these are Turkey Vulture, Hairy Wood-
 pecker, Hooded Oriole, Rock Wren, Lincoln's Sparrow and Law-
 rence's Goldfinch.

Last year we had 58 participants in the Los Angeles
 Count—20% fewer people than the year before. In a city this
 size, in the mild Southland, with a large and vigorous Aud-
 ubon Society, we ought to do better. Bethlehem, Pennsyl-
 vania, with temperatures between 24 and 30 degrees,
 20 to 40 mph winds and one foot of fresh snow
 had 143 observers plus 74 at feeders. No
 experience is necessary; equal oppor-
 tunity employer. This looks
 like a good year.

coming up. The Yellow-shafted Flicker is
 back at Rosedale cemetery and there are wild
 tales afoot about mountain birds pouring into the
 lowlands: Pinyon Jays, Red-breasted Nuthatches,
 Clark's Nutcrackers and heaven knows what else.
 Find out all about it on December 31. Get a piece
 of the action. Write or call without delay:

Sandy Wohlgenuth
 19354 Calvert St.
 Reseda, Calif. 91335
 344-8531

Stake your bird out!



BOOK STORE

MARION PICKETT

Owing to the increasing number of new book publications that already fill our book shelves, we recently reduced several of the PETERSON FIELD GUIDE SERIES (shells, ferns and stars & planets) \$4.00 each, and THE LIVING WORLD SERIES (profiles of individual animals) \$3.95. Also WORLD OF BIRDS by Fisher & Peterson at \$5.95 makes this a real treasure for the new and serious bird enthusiasts. Many bird records have been reduced too including "Bird Songs In Literature" plus a variety of others.

Even tho our stationery sales are always high at this time of year, we still have some unusual Xmas note paper from Current and Family Tree for those post-holiday thankyou's! A new line of hand-crafted silver bird pins are attractively displayed in the show case featuring six species of predators.

For our luxury bird book of the month may we recommend THE SHOREBIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA by Gardner D. Stout. This book is no stranger to our store and is the most complete reference book on shorebirds. Due to many requests, we finally have THE LIFE OF BIRDS by J. C. Welty back on our shelves. This book speaks for itself so hope you can visit us real soon at Audubon House. Lastly, an excellent Xmas gift for those of you contemplating our Audubon bird tour to Malaysia and India, we already have Vols. 1 thru 6 of HANDBOOK OF BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN by Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley.

Public to See Audubon Originals for First Time Today

By DEIRDRE CARMODY

The entire known collection of the original watercolors by John James Audubon for his "Birds of America" will go on exhibition for the first time today at the New-York Historical Society.

On display are Audubon's 433 drawings of 489 species of birds that have been hung throughout the ornate building with its high, arched ceilings and its polished parquet floors at 170 Central Park West, at 77th Street.

The exhibition, which is free, will be open until February, Tuesday through Friday and on Sunday from 1 P.M. to 5 P.M. and on Saturday from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.

THE NEW YORK TIMES,

WEDNESDAY,

OCTOBER 18, 1972



Great horned owls

ANNUAL DINNER

FEBRUARY 13, 1973

YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT!

! NEW YORK CUT STEAK
with all the trimmings

!! for only \$6.25
and how does 50¢ a drink grab you?

!!! and

ARNOLD SMALL

too,
presenting a superbly illustrated program on

"THE ENCHANTED ISLES"

but

YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT!

and send your check PRONTO because
you can't AFFORD to stay away!!!

WHERE?

Officers' Club,
Los Angeles Air Force Station.

Interstate 405 and
El Segundo Boulevard.

WHY?

to see your friends and have

A DELIGHTFUL EVENING

HOW?

Directions to Annual Dinner

Starting at the intersection of Interstate 405 Freeway and El Segundo Boulevard, proceed west along El Segundo Blvd. There are stop lights at La Cienega, the entrance to the Freeway South, and at Isis Street, all within a third of a mile. Turn left and south at Isis St. (76 gas station on northwest corner) and drive around to the back of the buildings. Entrance to the Officer's Club will be on the right, and in front of you as you face north. There will be ample parking space. If you pass a missile on your left on El Segundo you have gone too far.

Give a Xmas Gift of Membership to
National Audubon Society.

If you make a check for \$25 or more, the new member will get in addition a

Ray Harm Print
from Frame House Gallery
(delivered in 1973).

audubon activities

DONALD ADAMS

UPPER NEWPORT BAY, Oct. 16. New friends, old friends, 80 species of birds and a beautiful day added up to make this very special field trip. We had several Clapper Rails, including one which came out into full view and "clapped" (sang???) for us. A Blue-winged Teal, a Gadwall and two early male Buffleheads were found in with the 1,000's of ducks. An adult Louisiana Heron at the Hwy. 10. bridge in Seal Beach on the way home marked the end of a perfect day!

Jean Brandt, Leader.

HORSE CANYON CAMPING TRIP, Oct. 14. Finding our camp area already occupied, we stopped in a box canyon nearby an old Indian encampment where we flushed a Golden Eagle from a Joshua tree and a LeConte's Thrasher from a bush. From this point we moved to Kelso Creek (via high desert pass), lunched and hiked along the creek bed and saw a group of Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins. At our new camp site, while setting up for the evening, we saw a Black-throated Gray Warbler. Night-fall brought us to our blazing campfire with intermittent star-gazing, satellite and meteor watching. Morning found us in 29 degree temperature, but a quickly started fire and rising sun returned the warmth. We all took a hike after breakfast, then returned to break camp. It was a memorable weekend for the people on this camp-out and successful initial trip of this nature for the Society. Pamela Greene, Leader.

TIJUANA RIVER WASH, Oct. 14. Thirty people turned out for a good day of birding in fine weather, under the leadership of Otto Widmann. Among the 58 species observed, the better finds were Blue-winged Teal, Tropical Kingbird, Water Pipit, Green-tailed Towhee, Bobolink, Black-throated Blue Warbler and Blackpoll. The last three mentioned birds were lifers for many of the group.

FIELD TRIP—SANTA BARBARA, Nov. 11. Ten people braved the northerly winds and squalls to attend the field trip at Santa Barbara. Mr. Nelson Metcalf and Leslie Cook met the group at the Santa Barbara Sanctuary: Fifty Canvasbacks and twelve Black-crowned Night Herons, and there were spotted views of adult and immature Double-crested Cormorants. The ponds at Los Carneros gave us a Sora, Green Heron, Cinnamon Teal, Shovelers, Canvasbacks, and Pintail. The most distinguished bird of the day was a White-tailed Kite perched at close quarters. High winds suppressed most of the land birds, except for Yellowthroats. A very large flock of Pine Siskins came into the Redwoods at the Stow Grove Park. At Atascadero Creek immature Night Herons passed overhead continually, and four Snipe were seen.

MAURICE ALVEY

Maurice Alvey, husband of Olive Alvey, Curator at Audubon House, died on October 16th, after a long illness. A skilled cabinet-maker by avocation, Maurice exercised his hobby on behalf of the Los Angeles Audubon Society on numerous occasions. Together with Olive, he designed and constructed many of the exhibits at Audubon House, including the much admired and very beautiful butterfly case. Although in rapidly failing health, he recently completed specially planned display cases for the Sales and Conservation departments. The staff at Audubon House will greatly miss the occasional visits from this always cheerful, gentle man. We extend our deepest sympathy to Olive at this time.

Fire Destroys McKinley Hotel

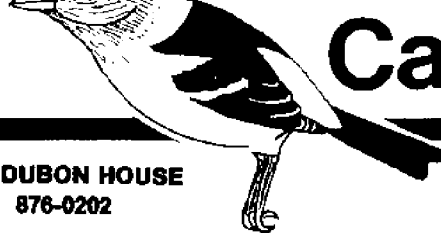
The Mt. McKinley Park Hotel has been completely destroyed by fire. It is unlikely that visitors will be accommodated in the summer of 1973, although the new 50-room wing still stands.



AUDUBON HOUSE OPEN MONDAYS

Beginning December 4, Audubon House will be open Monday through Saturday from 10 to 3. We are able to do this thanks to the volunteer additions to our staff. The response to Dorothy Dimsdale's call for help has been most encouraging. We are most pleased that we now have filled many of our gaps. However, the larger the staff the more we seem to need. Those of us who work here at Audubon House can't imagine why we did not heed earlier calls for help. Won't some of our members who have a possible "free" day a week consider joining us. We assure you that you will not find it dull!

EVENING MEETING—Nov. 14. Russell Wilson presented a happy account of the trip he and Mrs. Wilson took from Organ Pipe, Arizona, to Churchill, Manitoba, by car and train. Russ' excellent photographs of birds, people, and terrain made us all feel we had made the trip ourselves. Most remarkable were the photographs of the camouflage of birds, their nests and their eggs (including a magnificent blue-gray picture of a Screech Owl) without losing the objects completely.



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

DOROTHY DIMSDALE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Audubon
Bird Reports
874-1318

CAROLINE ADAMS
CALENDAR

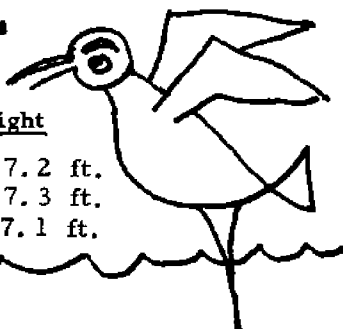
CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Name	Compiler	Telephone	Date
Los Angeles	Sandy Wohlgemuth	213-344-8531	Dec. 31
Palos Verdes	Shirley Wells	213-831-4281	Dec. 18
Santa Barbara	Wm. Ure*	805-966-5350	Dec. 16
Topanga-Malibu	Joan Mills	213-CR5-4821	Dec. 20

* 2310 Sta Barbara St S.B. 93105

Exceptional High Tides

Date	Time	Height
Tuesday Dec. 19	7:16 am	7.2 ft.
Wednesday Dec. 20	8:05 am	7.3 ft.
Thursday Dec. 21	8:57 am	7.1 ft.



All Field Trips will start at the stated times. Party moves off five minutes later. Allow enough time to fill up with gasoline at the start. People with pets will not be allowed to join.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

PHONE-IN REPORT ON BIRDS BEGINS

Audubon Society Designates
832-6523 as Hotline Here.

By JOHN C. DEVLIN

The pioneering recording tells about a European kestrel, a falcon similar to sparrow hawks in this country, reported at Cape May at the southern tip of New Jersey. It was only the second time a European kestrel had been reported sighted in North America and no one seemed to know what it was doing here.

About a year ago the Linnaean Society of Ornithologists got the idea of having all pertinent new information gathered by local experts and phoned in for taping. Equipment was purchased and installed at the Audubon headquarters.

Semiweekly, six-minute messages will be prepared by Dr. P. A. Buckley of the department of biology at Hofstra University, and by Thomas Davis, president of the Linnaean Society.

Mr. Arbib said the Audubon Society intended to expand the service with brief announcements about meetings, field trips, conservation hearings and legislation of interest to bird watchers and conservationists.

- Dec. 7 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.
- Dec. 9 SATURDAY-SUNDAY CARRIZO PLAIN. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in Maricopa at the junction of State 33 and 166. Besides Sandhill Cranes, this trip usually produces LeConte's Thrasher, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle and Mountain Plover. Those planning to stay at the California Valley Lodge should write, or phone, for reservations, address California Valley, CA 93453, (805) 475-2272. Leader: Larry Sansone, 870-6398.
- Dec. 11 MONDAY CAMP PENDLETON for monthly bird census. Phone Jean Brandt, 788-5188.
- Dec. 12 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. Scott Sway will give a program on the myths of terrorizing wolves, and the true story based on research at Isle Royale National Park.
- Dec. 31 SUNDAY LOS ANGELES CHRISTMAS COUNT Sandy Wohlgemuth, 344-8531.
- Jan. 4 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.
- Jan. 9 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. Program to be announced.
- Jan. 13 SATURDAY BUENA VISTA LAGOON. Take San Diego Freeway south to Oceanside. Leave freeway just north of Oceanside, taking the right-hand road that leads through town. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the north end of the road that crosses the lagoon. Leader: Les Wood, 256-3908.
- Jan. 22 MONDAY SANTA CLARA RIVER MOUTH 8:30 a.m. Details will be in the January Tanager, check for possible changes. Ed Navajosky, leader.
- Jan. 27 SATURDAY-SUNDAY SALTON SEA. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Wister turnoff on Highway & 28 111 (about 36 miles south of Mecca) north of Niland. Those wishing to camp Friday or Saturday night may do so at Finney Lake or at Wister Campground. Please be sure to register at Wister. Bring firewood and water. For others there are good motels in Brawley. Excellent trip for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Check January Tanager for possible changes and leader.

Annual subscription to "The Western Tanager" is \$3.50; first-class postage \$4.50. Free to members assigned by the National Audubon Society to the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

Los Angeles Audubon Society

The Western Tanager

EDITOR
Field Notes
Audubon Activities
Calendar
Typing
Mailing Supervision

Gilbert W. King
Shumway Suffel
Donald Adams
Caroline Adams
Hanna Stadler
Hans Hjorth



Official Publication of the LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

CONSERVATION

CAMP PENDELTON SURVEY

In July 1971, the Base Personnel of Natural Resources at Camp Pendleton initiated a program to assess the importance of the Santa Margarita estuary to bird life, planned to tie in with California Fish and Game statistical shorebird census projects. Mrs. Alice Fries of Valley Center, a birder of note, was recruited to take charge of the bird counts. Her report of the first six months of the survey is included in the Conservation of Natural Resources Annual Report for 1971, put out by the Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California.

Mrs. Fries describes the area covered by the census as limited to the portion of the Santa Margarita estuary between the freeway and the ocean, and Camp Del Mar to the opposite lease lands. The area includes marsh, salt flats, sandy shore and lagoons. During the first month of the census, July, Alice Fries did bi-weekly counts, mostly on foot and more often than not, alone. In August the counts were reduced to once a week and at least a part of the time, Alice was able to count on eager volunteer helpers, in part, at least, from L. A. A. S. In December the rain made the area inaccessible for counts, even to the most enthusiastic and dedicated birder.

According to Mrs. Fries' report a total of 58 species have been charted, with dates of arrival, departure, and peak numbers of migrant birds, as well as the varying numbers of the resident population. One of the most important aspects of the survey is the Least Tern study. Santa Margarita is thought to be one of the last breeding areas for this species in California, and with the excellent cooperation of the Marine Corps their nesting grounds are being protected from all man-made disturbance. During the nesting period, nests, eggs and finally chicks were individually counted by Mrs. Fries and her crew of faithful counters. Among

other nesting birds reported was Gadwall, seen with her brood of ducklings, a very rare occurrence so far south.

The actual census is limited to shorebirds, water birds and marsh birds, though no one is prevented from using eyes and ears to search for non-census species. There is always the possibility of finding a rarity, and occasionally a "lifer." An immature Little Blue Heron seen on October 26 made the day for the census taker from Los Angeles. It was seen again on December 6th. (An adult Little Blue was seen by Alice Fries and two volunteers from Los Angeles in 1972.) One beautiful day in late August three white-winged doves joined Alice for a day at the seashore and in mid-September she was greeted by three Lewis' Woodpeckers down from the mountains for a visit to the beach.

The census has been continued through 1972 on a monthly basis, and will be carried on probably somewhat expanded in 1973. The counts start at 8:00 and are finished by 12:30 or earlier, depending on the number of people taking part. They are always instructive, often exciting, and Alice Fries is a wonderful birding companion. Anyone interested in joining these counts which take place on the second Monday of the month, should get in touch with Jean Brandt at 788-5188 or Alice Fries at 714-725-4512.

Camp Pendleton recently won the National Award for Conservation in Military Camps out of more than 200 contestants, the first time that the award has been given to a western U.S. base. Due to the efforts of the Marine Corps this beautiful area north of San Diego is being preserved in its natural state. The Marines deserve our gratitude and our cooperation, so that this small part of California may remain a permanent refuge for wildlife in a land where such areas are rapidly disappearing. the result of man's depredations. - A. King

TIJUANA ESTUARY

Senator John V. Tunney has introduced S. 4027, which is designed to protect the Tijuana estuary south of San Diego by establishing a national wildlife refuge. It is hoped that this bill will be acted upon when Congress reconvenes in January. Anyone interested in this bill should write Senator Tunney expressing their views.

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

President Nixon has allocated \$60.6 million for land acquisition and \$58 million for development for his recently announced Golden Gate National Recreation area. Two of the land parcels involved, the Green Gulch and Slide ranches on the Marin County coast have already been acquired by the Nature Conservancy.

Bleitz Wildlife Foundation is interested in finding a couple or woman alone who would be willing to care for a number of tropical American birds - hummingbirds, tanagers, manakins, etc. which are being kept for study, and to perform other maintenance work, in return for a beautifully furnished, large single apartment, with all-new built-in kitchen, full tub and shower, etc. Additional paid typing work is available. Bleitz Wildlife Foundation
5334 Hollywood Blvd.
463-6636

LASSEN VOLCANIC WILDERNESS

President Nixon has signed a bill establishing the Lassen Volcanic Wilderness within the Lassen Volcanic National Park. The area consists of 78,982 acres. The total park acreage is 106,000.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

Continued from back page

Lagoon on November 3, was much admired by a host of birders. There was a seldom observed movement of HAWKS, both buteos and accipiters, in late October. Pat Andrews counted 30 Red-tails late one afternoon in West Los Angeles and over downtown Los Angeles Ed Navajosky counted a straggling flight of forty five large and small hawks. A delayed report of an OSPREY over Santa Monica on September 30 comes from the Andrew Hazis. Since eleven BROAD-WINGED HAWKS were observed flying south from Marin County, in early October (Larry Binford), it seems appropriate to add a probable sighting of an immature in West Los Angeles on October 31 by Jan Tarble.

Thrills are few and far between for bird banders but Mike San Miguel was amazed to find a SAW-WHET OWL in his nets above Duarte on October 22, and Shirley Wells was excited at netting and positively identifying an immature male BROAD-TAILED HUMMER in her San Pedro garden November 5. There is only one previous sighting of a Broad-tail along the coast, which may be due to the difficulty in identifying females and immatures which do not have the adult male's squeaky wing noise.

Passerine species, too, were widely reported during October. TROPICAL KINGBIRDS were seen below San Diego, where one or more are found every fall; and along Malibu Creek above the lagoon in late October (Robert Fleischer). The two EASTERN PHOEBES, previously mentioned, make this a better than average fall for this uncommon vagrant. A COUES' FLYCATCHER (fifth California record) at the Brock Range, east of Holtville, on October 22 (Driscolls and Steve Cardiff) was at the same oasis where the second California specimen was taken in 1965. A WHITE WAGTAIL was reportedly found and described by Ruth Parker at the edge of the lagoon in McGrath State Park, Ventura, on October 18. Even though it stayed for two days, by the time the news spread it could not be found, which is a great shame since it was not photographed or otherwise verified, and what might have been a new record for the U. S. remains only hypothetical. A letter from Paul and Violet Orr tells of their move from Altadena to North Palm Springs, and of their excitement when they found a BROWN THRASHER (possibly two) there on October 9 and 10. Another BROWN THRASHER was found at Deep Springs Ranch, Inyo County, on the same day (Lee Jones).

Reports of PAINTED BUNTINGS (known as Siete Colores—"Seven Colors"—to our neighbors south of the border) always pose a problem. Are they wild birds or escapees from a nearby aviary? Our two recent reports—a male at Kelso Station on October 21 (Alfred Driscoll) and a male at Furnace Creek Ranch on November 4 (Mike San Miguel and Guy McCaskie)—certainly are about as distant from an aviary as one is likely to be in California. It seems probably at such places that they are wild birds, but is the same individual involved in both sightings or did we have a minor invasion of "bunting technicolor" from

Mexico? One of our rarer and more difficult seedeaters is the CLAY-COLORED SPARROW. It was unknown in Southern California in 1961 but now seems to be rare but regular in the fall. Lee Jones studied one at Furnace Creek Ranch on October 10, and another, along with two LARK BUNTINGS, was found in a large flock of sparrows below San Diego on October 21 (Guy McCaskie). HARRIS' SPARROWS are regular in small numbers, east of the mountains particularly at Furnace Creek Ranch, where two of them were found on November 4. They are less common on the coastal slope, but Irma Rogers has a charmed feeder in Monrovia, which hosted a HARRIS' and a WHITE-THROATED SPARROW in April 1971 and now, in early November, has a HARRIS' SPARROW again. One LAPLAND and two CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPURS were found on the golf course at Furnace Creek Ranch on October 22, but none were reported in the vast flocks of Horned Larks in the Antelope Valley or along the coast.

With so many exciting winter birds already reported, it seems inevitable that the Christmas Counts will give us a bonanza of mountain and hopefully northern birds. These "Counts" are a cooperative effort and the various leaders need our help (see listings elsewhere).



MALAYSIA & INDIA BIRDING TOUR

RESERVATIONS TAKEN NOW!

Jim Huffman
2912 Manhattan Ave.
Manhattan Beach,
Calif. 90266
(213) 545-1224

Olga Clarke
2027 El Arbolita Dr.
Glendale, Cal 91208
(213) 249-5537



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds SHUMWAY SUFFEL

DECEMBER should see mountain birds in the lowlands in unprecedented numbers, both as to number of individuals and number of species. To date, November 10, all the local mountain species have been seen. The recent major addition was EVENING GROSBEAKS--which were widely reported coastally, where they occur only about one year in ten; in Bundy Canyon on October 11 (A. King); in Palos Verdes two days later (Grace Nixon); one in the Baxter's garden in Arcadia on October 23, and several sightings at the desert oases. VARIED THRUSHES were also seen (about one year in three) "at least five" at Morongo Valley on October 23 (Betty and Laura Lou Jenner), and one in Topanga Canyon (Lee Jones), another near Upper Newport Bay on November 5 (Chuck Sexton), and two in Death Valley where they are even less frequent (Mike San Miguel and Guy McCaskie). An appropriate replacement for the WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKER at Pt. Fermin Park on September 20 and 21 was a male WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER (only one or two coastal records) in Jean Muller's Palos Verdes garden on November 2 and 3. Reports of GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS came in sparingly—two at Deep Springs, Inyo County, three at Furnace Creek Ranch, and two in West Los Angeles on November 1 (Jan Tarble). All three species of NUTHATCHES were found on a walk around Lake Hollywood on October 15. The only report of RED CROSSBILLS comes from Guy McCaskie who found "a few" on Pt. Loma in San Diego in early November.

Warblers dominated the birding scene until the final exciting weekend of October 21 and 22 (following a week of storms), after which only a few late stragglers were found. Two more species were added to the twenty-eight species reviewed last month—a male HOODED WARBLER was studied by Lee Jones at Kelso Station, east of Barstow, on October 10, and a YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER of the "Sycamore" race (white lores) was found and photographed by Jerry Maisel at the South Coast Botanic Gardens on October 21. It stayed only a day, but was seen by several birders who were there looking for the EASTERN PHOEBE (found by Eric Brooks and Shirley Wells on October 17), which, by then had departed. Another EASTERN PHOEBE was found at Furnace Creek Ranch on October 14 (Guy McCaskie). While looking for the Yellow-throated Warbler on October 22, Arnold Small found a BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, which stayed in the Botanic Gardens for several days.

We had more than our share of BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER reports this fall; a fine male on the L. A. A. S. field trip below San Diego on October 14; another male on the same day at China Ranch (Shirley Wells); one near Vivian Strumfell's place in Arrastre Canyon for several days in mid-October; another male found stunned on the lawn of Marion Pickett's neighbor in West Los Angeles on October 13, which they later revived and released; and one reported by the director of the California Jungle Gardens in Malibu on October 18. PALM WARBLERS, too, were found in unusual numbers; one at Rosedale Cemetery in downtown Los Angeles on October 7 (Ed Navajosky); one along Malibu Creek on October 22 (Robert Fleischer), and again on November 4 (Steve Anestad); one at Play del Rey on October 29 (Ken Landis); and *five in one tree* below San Diego on October 21 with a *sixth* one seen later the same day. Such numbers are particularly amazing when one considers that Pyle and Small's [Annotated Field List (1961)] cites only one Southern California record.

Other interesting warbler reports were two VIRGINIA'S banded in Eaton Canyon by David Foster on October 7 (rather late for this early migrant); a BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER at Pt. Fermin on October 10 (Ed Navajosky) and another in Tapia Park in early November; BLACK-THROATED GREENS below San Diego on October 21 (Guy McCaskie et al.), and at Scotty's Castle on November 4 (Mike San Miguel and Guy McCaskie); a late BLACK-POLL along Malibu Creek on October 28 (Robert Fleischer); a very late TENNESSEE near Upper Newport Bay on November 5 (Chuck Sexton); and NORTHERN WATER THRUSH at Lake Sherwood (Ernie Abeles) on October 28.

Single immature LITTLE BLUE HERONS were reported by Chuck Sexton at both Upper Newport Bay and at Bolsa Chica during late October. On November 6, Alice Fries found an *adult* LITTLE BLUE at Bolsa Chica. Ten CATTLE EGRETS arrived along the coast in late October below San Diego, in Cerritos, near Legg Lake in El Monte and along Caspar Road above Pt. Mugu.

Our ugly duckling, the drab flightless HARLEQUIN DUCK which summered at Playa del Rey, has turned, not into a beautiful Swan, but even better, into a full-plumaged Harlequin drake capable of flight and of migrating again when instinct bids it. Ed Navajosky also found a female COMMON SCOTER there on November 5 and the next day two females. A male HOODED MERGANSER found by Hal Baxter in Malibu

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