

# The Western Tanager

VOLUME 39, 1972-73 No.5 JANUARY

## GUATEMALA -TIKAL LANDS OF ETERNAL SPRING.

BETTY JENNER

**Tikal** is the site of the largest ceremonial center of the ancient Mayans, it covers an area of about six square miles, and includes pyramids, plazas, altars large stone shafts called stelae, and causeways. This amazing civilization began about 600 B.C., and increased in glory and power until about 900 A.D. when it unaccountably collapsed. Many theories have been advanced why all these lowland Mayan centers came to an end at about the same time - it was not from earthquakes. The land is limestone, about 800 ft altitude, and the jungle growth could be called quasi-rainforest. This tangle of concealing forest covered the great limestone block buildings until the Guatemalan Government and the University of Pennsylvania uncovered and interpreted the great structures.

Our first birds were seen as we took the guided tour which acquainted us with the history and mystery of the ruins. Huge-beaked Channel-billed Toucans; noisy Brown Jays; colorful Trogons-Violaceous, Slaty-tailed, Bar-tailed and Citreoline; Orange-breasted Falcon perched on top of the highest temple; overhead, clouds of Rough-winged Swallows, twittering with most untypical musical notes over the ruins; above them numerous Vaux's Swifts--all were a taste of things to come. Our lodging was a thatched bungalow at the Posada de la Selva, or Jungle Lodge, presided over by the genial proprietor, Sir Antonio Ortiz.

What if there was no hot water for showers--the meals were delicious, and there was a great variety of birds right around our bungalow. Brown-hooded and White-crowned Parrots; Olive-throated Parakeets, Melodious Blackbirds; Blue-crowned Motmots; Ruddy Ground Doves; and a bewildering number of Flycatcher species, kept us busy with the binoculars.

One of our favorite bird-watching areas was between the small museum and the terminal building at the end of the airstrip, where there were many flowering shrubs. As we sat on a large round stone altar, we could see Red-capped and White-collared Manakins, Yellow-throated Euphonias, Black-cowled Orioles, Black-throated Shrike-Tanagers, Red-throated Any-Tanagers, Yellow-winged Tanagers, Rufous-tailed, Fawn-breasted, and Little Hermit Hummers, Short-billed Pigeons, Golden-fronted and Black-cheeked Woodpeckers, Tropical Kingbirds, Kiskadee and social Flycatchers, --and more species constantly flying in! On evening walks along the airstrip, Barred Antshrikes called from the thickets on each side; overhead, the huge Montezuma Oropendolas flew by the hundreds to their evening roosts; Blue-black Grassquits called their buzzy

notes from weeds and grass; at the forest edge, two Ocellated Turkeys grazed, their bronze wing patches shining like metal in the evening light. Even ordinarily matter-of-fact ornithologists describe the head and neck of this beautiful bird as "forget-me-not blue."

Daily walks along the causeways that led through the jungle forest gave us many wood-creepers and flycatchers, including the active and vocal little Royal Flycatcher. White-breasted Wood Wren whistled as he foraged in low branches;



Photograph by Laura Lou Jenner

Temple of the Giant Jaguar. The jungle is reclaiming this pyramid, bright limestone when first uncovered, it is again being darkened by lichens. Keel-billed Toucans and several Trogons may be seen and heard from here.

brilliant Rufous-tailed Jacamars noisily snapped insects in mid-air. After a rain shower, Purple-crowned Fairy Hummer bathed in puddles in the causway. Northern Waterthrush teetered along the edge of the road. A pond or "aguada" which is the water supply for the settlement gave us more good birding: Olivaceous Cormorants, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, --and that wasn't a log out there in the water--it was an alligator! Dense underbrush gave us brief glimpses of Gray-headed Tanager.

Our final morning was most memorable of all. Very early, we walked up the road from our bungalow to the lower side of the Great Plaza. A tremendous din of discordant sounds turned out to be made by a flock of the big Blue-crowned Parrots in a huge tree. Montezuma Oropendolas gurgled their liquid notes nearby; two Ringed Kingfishers flew over a temple, and a coati-mundi nosed around a fallen log. As we came out on to the Great Plaza, mist nearly obscured the tops of the 200-foot high pyramids--the scene was four-dimensional as we felt almost a physical sense of Time. A little gray fox trotted along the base of an ancient pyramid, --he stopped, looked at us, and cocked his leg against the limestone placed there perhaps fifteen centuries ago. Sounds of the black howler monkeys drew us toward the deep woods. In a clearing was a sight to treasure: three Ocellated Turkeys wandering among the stelae, their beaks expertly stripping seeds from tall grass stems.

I have purposely named a number of the species we saw, because we found similar listings so helpful in articles written for "TANAGER" by Dudley Ross, Don and Caroline Adams, and others. Also, we found brochures given out by the Florida and Massachusetts Audubon Societies, describing their tropical tours, to be most helpful. Smithe's "Birds of Tikal" is indispensable for this particular area. We also took along the Irby Davis "Birds of Mexico and Central America," Herklots' "Birds of Trinidad and Tobago," and "Birds of Colombia: and "Birds of South America" by de Schauensee. By making notes in the field and checking these books later, we identified nearly all the birds we saw.



*Photograph by Laura Lou Jenner  
The author by one of the few great trees remaining. The hills in the background have been logged off.*

## PANAMA--THE CHIRIQUI HIGHLANDS

Hiring a small car--a Nissan--we drove an ascending, picturesque road up into the Chiriqui (Cheery Key) Highlands. The 11,000' Volcan de Chiriqui dominates the landscape, and its numerous valleys are cooled by the mist locally called "bajareque" or "falling down," --created by the colliding of Pacific and Atlantic winds. The village of Boquete, situated in a green bowl among greener hills, is a favorite vacation retreat for the people who live in the hot lowlands.

Chiriqui Province has long been a favorite area for ornithologists because of the remarkable number of species to be found, including many endemics. Eisenmann, in "The Species of Middle American Birds," p. 7, remarks: "The surprising number of endemics (lowland as well as mountain species) in Southern Costa Rica and the adjacent Chiriqui Province of Western Panama must indicate that at one time the Costa-Rica-Chiriqui area was much more isolated than today."

Near our hotel, the Panamonte Lodge in Boquete, we soon saw many hummers, finches, and flycatchers, including Rufous-tailed Hummer, Streaked and Buff-throated Saltators, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Variable Seedeater, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, and the ubiquitous Bananaquit. We hired a wagon with driver to take us up the stony road to a forested area about 7000' altitude. This is the Collins Finca, known to bird-watchers as one of the few places where Quetzal may (or may not) be seen. We were fortunate enough to see a female Quetzal, a handsome bird in her own right. Among other sightings were the rather large Hoffman's Parakeet, Three-wattled Bellbird, Blue-throated Toucanet, Long-tailed Silky-flycatcher, Slaty Flower-piercer, Chiriqui Chlorospingus, White-throated Mountain-gem (a Hummer), and numerous Slate-throated Redstarts, which were to be our most frequently-seen warblers; the red of father-north climes is replaced by a brighter yellow the farther south one goes.

Leaving Boquete and returning to David, we drove farther west for several miles along the Pan-American Highway, seeing Yellow-headed Caracaras and several White-tailed Kites as we drove. Turning north again on a very fine road, we began the long ascent to the western slope of the great volcano, not far from the Costa Rican border.

Our hotel, the Dos Rios, was in the small town of Hato del Volcan. It was surrounded by green lawns and groves of trees, and a stream ran through the grounds which was the home of Torrent Tyrannulets. It was not unusual to have these pretty little flycatchers hunting insects right at our front door, which faced the garden. Roadside Hawk posed for us in a tree across the stream. Our destination was still higher in the hills, --the sanctuary maintained by Florida and Panama Audubon Societies in conjunction with the Florida State University. At this point the road winds between green hills, along a rushing river, and with at least the illusion of a great tropical forest rising on either side. Most of the trees are being taken down so that more cabbages and potatoes may be grown. A the

*Continued on page four*

# BOOK STORE

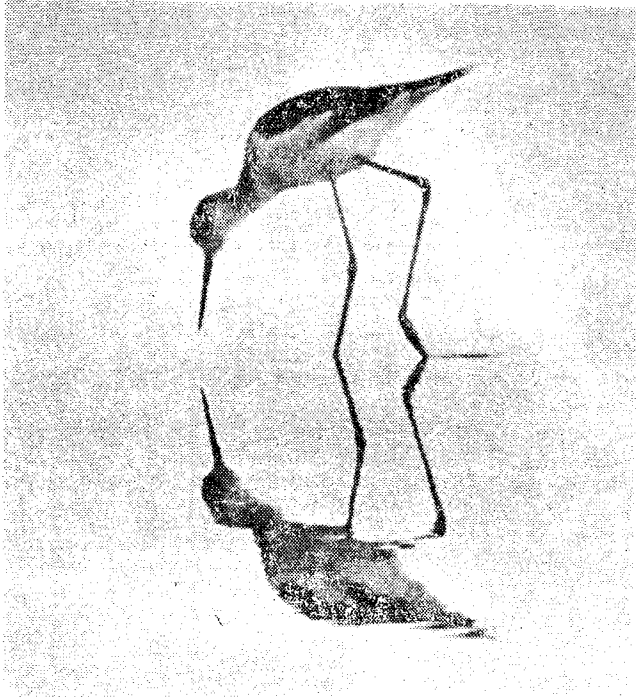
MARION PICKETT

BIRDS OF THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC by E. Mayr is back on our shelves again. It has had a long standing reputation as being the only field guide book of its kind available covering birds of the Samoa, New Caledonia and Micronesia area. The latest revised edition of BIRDS OF THE SANTA BARBARA REGION has just been released so now we can fill the many back orders and hopefully new ones.

Since our youth is sharing our increasing concern regarding protection of wildlife, we now have the only bird guide for ages between 5 and 14 entitled WESTERN BIRD GUIDE FOR YOUTH by E. Booth. It's ideal for lower and upper grades and jr. high school. A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA by Williams is available again. This is the most useful and attractive field guide produced for that particular area of Africa. Any serious book collector will want to add this to his basic collection.

We still have an impressive variety of bird books at reduced prices including BIRDS OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN by Shackleton \$7.50; WORLD OF BIRDS by Fisher & Peterson \$5.95; AUDUBON ILLUSTRATED HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN BIRDS by Reilly \$15.00; A NATURAL HISTORY OF AMERICAN BIRDS OF EASTERN & CENTRAL NORTH AMERICA by Forbush \$7.50.

For those of you who have been inquiring about buying gift items advertised in the National Audubon Gift catalog, we do not carry any of these items in our local book store since they can be ordered directly from the New York hdqtrs. We do appreciate you shopping at Audubon first!



*Alcid facing right or.....  
turn to bottom of next page.*

*Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times.*

# ANNUAL DINNER

FEBRUARY 13, 1973

**YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT!**  
**! NEW YORK CUT STEAK**  
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Officers' Club,  
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Please make checks payable to Los Angeles  
Audubon Society and send to: Joann Gabbard  
823 D, 19th St., Santa Monica, Ca. 90403.  
Please list all members of your party.  
Deadline for reservations Sat. Jan. 10.  
There will be no refunds after this date.  
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### 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.

\*the San Diego Freeway

# audubon activities

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

CONCLUDED

## DONALD ADAMS

MC GRATH STATE PARK, Nov. 19. It was a very pleasant day for all who attended this field trip. Comfortable temperatures and reliable shorebirds could have been the theme. The find of the day was a female COMMON GOLDENEYE and rumors of the sighting of a mysterious PHILADELPHIA VIREO. Thanks to the numbers and varieties of wintering waterfowl and shorebirds, we all kept occupied during the entire trip. Pamela Greene, leader.

EVENING MEETING, Dec. 12. Mr. Scott Sway of the North American Association for the Protection of Predatory Animals showed a unique film which dispelled many of the myths and superstitious folklore about wolves. It explained how wolves fit into nature's plan and are not wanton destroyers of domestic stock or attackers of man, but instead are actually in great fear of man and in danger of becoming extinct because of man's ruthless destruction of their habitat and his continued use of guns (now from planes and snowmobiles) in his effort to kill for sport or bounty. In a realistic and beautiful sequence the organization of the wolf pack was shown, including the family life of the dominant pair, their mating, preparation of the den and birth of the pups. After answering many questions, Mr. Sway allowed the audience to meet and pet his 8 month old wolf who travels with him on his lecture tours. To top off this delightful evening, homebaked goodies were served with coffee and punch in Audubon House which was attractively decorated for the holiday season.

CARRIZO PLAIN, Dec. 9. In spite of the snow and cold (only 21 at high noon), the 15 adventurous birders who braved the storm and survived the hazards of icy highways had an exciting trip. LE CONTE'S THRASHER calling from a fence, MOUNTAIN PLOVER huddled in the snow, a GOLDEN EAGLE majestically perched on a white hill, thousands of HORNED LARKS busily feeding along the road, their scratching making little crystal clouds around their feet, all made for a magical day. The sight of fields full of SANDHILL CRANES and a single WHISTLING SWAN at the pond near California Valley climaxed the trip and brought the list of birds to 45 species. Caroline Adams, last-minute leader.



### LANDS OF ETERNAL SPRING-GUATEMALA - TIKAL

*Continued from page two*

sanctuary there is a comfortable small house where researchers may live as they pursue their studies. Thick jungle-like forest rises behind the house.

The small town at road's end is even more attractive than Boquete. It is named Cerro Punta; it is a prosperous little settlement, since everyone raises and markets flowers or vegetables, or strawberries. Beyond the town, a mule trail

The new year is a time for making plans, and your winter plans should certainly include a trip to Death Valley for birding at Scotty's Castle and Furnace Creek Ranch (but please avoid the golf course), with short stops en route at Shoshone, Tecopa and possibly Saratoga Springs. The Salton Sea is best left until after hunting season ends (Jan. 21) unless you're after the LITTLE GULL which was not found on Dec. 9 and 10. Northern California, too, can be rewarding and very beautiful after it snows. Monterey and Humboldt Bay are good for northern sea and shore birds, with Tule Lake and Honey Lake offering possible northern hawks, Emperor Geese, longspurs, etc.

In addition to the "once in a decade" chance for northern birds locally, there are some conspicuous "no-shows" to date (Dec. 10). Along the coast there have been no reports of Red-necked Grebes, Swans, European Widgeon, Oldsquaws, Rock Sandpipers, or Glaucous Gulls. A few of these will probably be found on the Christmas Counts, but there will still be more than enough to challenge even the most ardent birder. So, with every prospect for a good birding year ahead, let's make 1973 the best year of all!

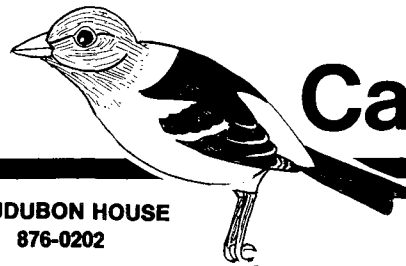


begins which leads around the mountain to Boquete, so it's called the Boquete Trail. We climbed the trail to about the 7000' altitude; in fact a few steps more would have brought us to the Continental Divide--the same divide we had crossed so many times in our own country, with a different kind of scenery.

*To be continued*



Photograph by Laura Lou Jenner  
The Fernandez children. Aladdin, Estrella and Juan. They live at the family finca by the Boquete Trail at nearly 7000 ft altitude. They were fine little birders and took us on their secret trails through the woods. Members of tour groups have given them field guides, so although they spoke no English and we spoke no Spanish, they were a great help to us.



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

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CAROLINE ADAMS  
CALENDAR

- Jan. 4 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.
- Jan. 9 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. "Birds of the Pampas" by James Clements.
- 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. Les Wood, leader; 256-3908.
- Jan. 22 MONDAY- MALIBU LAGOON. Meet between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. at the Malibu Inn parking lot opposite the Malibu Pier. The group will bird the lagoon and adjacent coast. Ed Navajosky, 938-9766.
- Jan. 27 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - SALTON SEA. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Wister turnoff on Highway 111 (about 36 & 28 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. There are good motels in Brawley. Excellent trip for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Leader: Lee Jones. Phone Audubon House for information if desired.
- Feb. 1 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING , 8:00 p.m., Audubon House
- Feb. 10 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - MORRO BAY. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the foot of Morro rock. This is one of our & 11 best areas for wintering coastal birds; it also provides excellent birding in wooded areas and canyons in the vicinity. Many people go up Friday night in order to have a full day Saturday & 17 and a half day Sunday. There is camping in Morro Bay State Park (reservations advisable) and & 18 good motels are available in Morro Bay and nearby San Luis Obispo. Morro Bay is approximately 210 miles north of Los Angeles via U.S. 101. Leaders to be announced in February Tanager.
- Feb. 13 TUESDAY - ANNUAL DINNER, Los Angeles Air Force Station, Officers' Club. Arnold Small will present a program on the Galapagos Islands, "The Enchanted Isles."
- Feb. 26 MONDAY - MOJAVE NARROWS STATE PARK. Ruth Lohr, leader. Details in February Tanager.

NEWS RELEASE FROM THE

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF BIRDS OF PREY

Four Gyrfalcons were removed from an eyrie in Mt. McKinley National Park last spring by three California falconers, the Society has learned on a tip from SPBP member Dr. Walter Spofford.

One of the falconers involved in the incident is the son of SPBP member Roy Glassburn, 420 Bard St., Moorpark, Calif. 94563.

On a request by the Society, James W. Brooks, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, checked arrest records and found that a Johnny L. Glassburn and Nolan P. Vessart of Morro Bay, Calif. were arrested at the Alaskan Border with the two falcons.

Both men were tried, convicted and sentenced to 30 days in prison, which they served.

Field Trip Information: The Los Angeles Audubon Society cannot be responsible for providing transportation on field trips. Bring binoculars and lunch on all trips. Please, no pets and no collecting. On weekend trips, leader is responsible only for the first day. Participants are expected to arrange their own schedules on the second day.

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.

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**

Official Publication of the LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

EDITOR	Gilbert W. King
Field Notes	Shumway Suffel
Audubon Activities	Donald Adams
Calendar	Caroline Adams
Typing	Hanna Stadler
Mailing Supervision	Hans Hjorth



# CONSERVATION

## CONDOR STATUS BEING CLARIFIED

### 50 to 60 BIRDS IN TWO AREAS.

A clearer picture of the range and numbers of the endangered California condor is emerging from recent research, reports the National Audubon Society.

The best guess is that between 50 and 60 of the huge birds still exist, split between two areas. About 10 are believed to be resident in the Coast Ranges of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, the rest in the Sespe Condor Sanctuary of Los Padres National Forest in Ventura County and the ranch country of the Tehachapi Mountains.

Although carefully conducted condor "surveys" have been taken annually since 1966, scientists consider the results to be only an indicator of population trends. The rare giants soar over an immense area, much of it rugged and almost impassable, so it is impossible for the survey teams to be certain they have not missed some birds, or counted some twice.

The picture has been clarified by a new study by Sanford R. Wilbur, biologist for the U.S. Bureau of Sports Fisheries & Wildlife, whose findings disclosed the existence of two separate populations which have their own breeding, roosting and feeding areas. Mapping this pattern has been complicated by the fact that the non-breeding birds of both populations wander northward in summer, at which time they may occur north to San Jose and in the Sierra foothills of Fresno.

Wilbur is stationed in Ojai, and the Bureau, together with the U.S. Forest Service, California Fish and Game Department and National Audubon, is taking part in a cooperative study of condor conservation needs. A report based on the study appears in the October issue of the Audubon Society's ornithological journal, "American Birds."

According to John C. Borneman of Ventura, condor naturalist for the Audubon Society; formal recommendations for additional condor conservation measures are expected in a new research report to be published by the Society in mid-1973. (Earlier Audubon reports on the condor were published in 1953 and 1965.)

**An international group** of 150 plant protection scientists, meeting at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization headquarters in Rome, expressed alarm at the reduction and, in some cases, "outright abandonment" of the development of new pesticides. The scientists, noting that many of the most important pests were developing resistance to pesticides, called for expanded research to aid the discovery of new chemicals that would control pests and have a minimal adverse impact on the environment.

### OPERATION DOLPHIN

The Detroit Audubon Society has brought to our attention that a very large number of dolphins - estimates run from 200,000 (Tuna industry) to 900,000 (Smithsonian scientists)-are killed or injured in nets now that the tuna fleet has switched from hook and line to purse seining. The "marine mammal protection act" virtually exempts the dolphin from protection from "incidental killing" by the tuna fleet. It is recommended that people may show their concern for this situation by boycotting all tuna products, writing to the tuna industry telling of their boycott until it is publicly proven that no more dolphin are being killed accidentally by fishermen, and the display of bumper stickers. Letters may be sent to:

The President  
Ralston Purina Co. Del Monte Corp.  
Checkerboard Square San Francisco,  
St. Louis, Mo. 63188 Calif. 94119

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Comm.  
Scripps Institution of Oceanography  
La Jolla, Calif. 92037

Star-Kist Foods, Inc.  
Terminal Island, Calif. 90731

Bumper stickers may be obtained from :  
OPERATION: Dolphin 10 - \$1.50  
Detroit Audubon Society 50 - 6.00  
814 W. Seven Mile Road 100 - 10.00  
Detroit, Michigan 48203

### **Student to Try to Save Bird From Extinction**

ITHACA, N.Y., Nov. 26 (AP)—A Cornell University graduate student is scheduled to leave here in January to spend 18 months on a tiny island in the Indian Ocean in an attempt to save a rare species of bird from extinction.

The student, Stanley A. Temple, a doctoral candidate in Cornell's division of biological sciences, will try to help the government of Mauritius, a 720-square-mile island, find a way of stopping the decline of the kestrel

population, which some scientists say numbers fewer than a dozen.

Mauritius, 530 miles east of Malagasy, formerly Madagascar, is an independent nation within the British Commonwealth. Because of its isolation, scientists say, a unique bird life is endemic to the island.

The island is the former home of the dodo, a flightless bird that became extinct shortly after man discovered the island.

Mr. Temple's work will be supported by the International Council for Bird Preservation and the World Wildlife Fund, both headquartered in Washington.



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

Continued from back page

The immature male BROAD-TAILED HUMMING BIRD at Shirley Wells' feeders stayed at least into December and, as it moults into adult plumage, is getting a red gorget and is even developing the "squeaky wings" of an adult male. Two late reports of EASTERN PHOEBES have come in—Richard Webster found one at Kelso Station on November 24 and Ed Masthay properly identified an immature at Lake Sherwood on December 3. This gives us four records of this casual vagrant this fall and ties the previous mark set in 1970. A DUSKY or HAMMOND FLYCATCHER observed by Lee Jones' bird class at the Arcadia Arboretum on December 10 is very late for a fall migrant, and will be very unusual if it winters there. A delayed report of a RED-EYED VIREO (our only one this fall) comes from Jo Vaughn, who saw one in the olive grove near her San Bernardino home on November 4. Jean Brandt has three immature BULLOCK'S ORIOLES at her Encino feeders. She says they were reared there and stayed on when their parents left because they were "hooked on" the sugar water she furnishes.

A third report of a male PAINTED BUNTING comes from Fern Tainter in San Luis Obispo. The bunting stayed in a neighbor's yard for almost a week in late November, and later on December 3, Fern had a male ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK at her own feeder. From Shirley Wells comes word that first she saw, then later, she caught and banded a male ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK on December 10. Dave Foster banded a WHITE-THROATED SPARROW in Eaton Canyon, Pasadena, on November 20 for our only local record this fall. Two very secretive SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS at Upper Newport Bay were found by Chuck Sexton on November 20 and were seen by many other birders for several days thereafter during the exceptionally high tides which prevailed then. These sparrows are seldom reported on the West Coast, not only because they are rare here, but because they normally stay hidden in the marsh grass and, like the rails, only appear when flooded out by high tides. They have been seen before there and may winter.

*Continued on page four*

## MOUNTAIN PLOVERS in CALIFORNIA by Ronald Jurek

The mountain plover doesn't live up to its name: it doesn't live in the mountains. Furthermore, you won't normally find this little shorebird near the shore.

This brown-backed plover is essentially a resident of the plains. It nests on the grasslands and semidesert areas east of the Rockies from Montana to New Mexico. The wintering grounds are primarily in the southwest states and in Mexico.

Each year a segment of the mountain plover population flies west from the breeding areas to winter in California, where the birds are present in large flocks from about September through March. In central California they occur in the Central Valley south of Marysville; important areas are the southwest portion of San Joaquin Valley and many of the valley plains in the Central Coast Range. In southern California large numbers winter in Imperial Valley. Occasionally these birds are sighted on the coastal plains of southern California, where the species was abundant before urbanization.

Mountain plovers inhabit grassy or nearly barren areas where brush or other tall vegetation is sparse or absent and where terrain is flat or gently rolling. In agricultural areas the birds may feed in newly plowed field. Flocks sometimes follow planting, disking or harvesting equipment, feeding on organisms dislodged from the soil. Insects and other invertebrates in or on the soil constitute the entire diet of the mountain plovers.

Department of Fish and Game requests information on mountain plover sightings in

California. Such information is needed to help us determine the current status of the species in our state. We urge bird watchers to report past or current observations. Whenever possible the following information should be included:

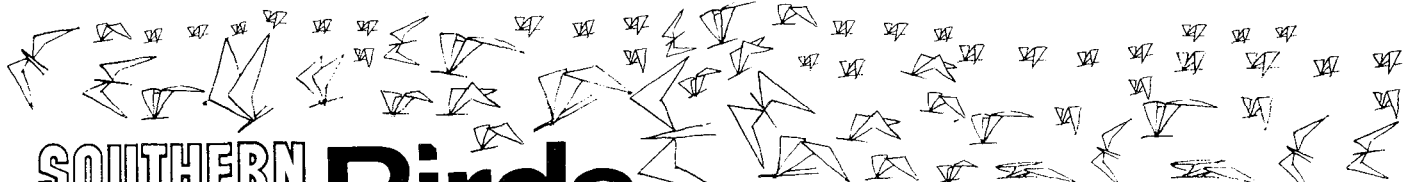
1. Date of sighting
2. Specific area
3. Number of mountain plovers observed
4. Type of habitat birds were using
5. Name of observer.

Also, look for colored leg bands on mountain plovers. Color banding is being done in conjunction with a breeding population study in Colorado.

Please report observations and color band information to Ron Jurek, Department of Fish and Game, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, Ca 95814.



*Photograph by Bob Martin*



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds SHUMWAY SUFFEL

**LATE** November witnessed the arrival of the last of the expected northern birds, plus one totally unexpected and very exciting species. During the storms at mid-month, Gene and Steve Cardiff ventured over Westgaard Pass and found hundreds of GRAY-CROWNED ROSY FINCHES with ten BLACK ROSY FINCHES. This species (possibly of an intercontinental super-species) has been recorded in California a few times in the Great Basin area. These birds breed in the north central Rocky Mountains and are swept south-westwards with the large flocks of Gray-crowns from even further north. Anyone going to this area should scan all flocks of Rosy Finches carefully, but remember adult male Gray-crowns are deep chestnut brown (almost black) and the females are lighter brown. On the same trip the Cardiffs found a GOSHAWK and two TREE SPARROWS at Deep Springs Ranch. Anyone would think that eager birders like the Clarkes, Arnold Small and Jerry Maisel would welcome the sight of the first NORTHERN SHRIKE of the winter, but such was not the case. When those birders were photographing Rosy Finches the Shrike's appearance flushed their whole flock.

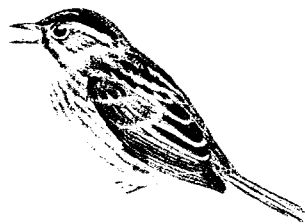
BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS were the other new bird for this winter. About six were found in the date grove at Furnace Creek Ranch on November 26 (Kim Garrett) with another twelve at Shoshone (Lee Jones and Guy McCaskie). Six Bohemians were at Yaqui Wells on December 3. Robins and Waxwings arrived by the thousands with the rains and cold weather of early December. VARIOUS THRUSHES and EVENING GROSBEAKS were widely seen. RED CROSS-BILLS were in Averill Park, San Pedro, on November 25 (S. W.). Linda Gordon in nearby Rolling Hills found two STELLER'S JAYS on November 18. Just over the hill the Bradleys and Rusty Scalf saw a female WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER on November 26 (a male was previously reported in Rolling Hills on November 2).

Two HARRIS' SPARROWS were discovered on the bluff above Leo Carrillo Beach in late November (Ed Navajosky). Large flocks of OREGON JUNCOS were present, and with them were a few SLATE-COLORED JUNCOS—two at Mt. View Cemetery in Altadena and at least one in Forest Lawn Cemetery. Bonnie Kennedy, however, reports all three species of Junco at her Malibu Canyon feeder including our only local report of a GRAY-HEADED JUNCO to date. FOX SPARROWS of the gray-headed and brown-headed forms were common in brushy areas, but Hal Baxter, in his Arcadia garden, and Mike San Miguel in his Duarte neighborhood studied birds of the rusty Eastern form (much brighter than our western races, being light gray and white, heavily streaked with rusty red).

The San Diego Pelagic trip on December 2 found only a few Shearwaters. (MANX SHEARWATERS were common near the coast.) There were no petrels, a fair number of COMMON MURRES and only one FULMAR (another was found dying on the beach near Ventura on November 4). WHISTLING SWANS were seen along the Colorado River and in the Owen's Valley, and should be looked for locally. Three female HOODED MERGANSERS (usually rare here) at Malibu Lagoon on December 5, raised

our 1972 total to at least seven birds. There was also a male COMMON MERGANSER (also rare along the coast) at Malibu in early December. Our only lowland report of a GOSHAWK comes from Mike San Miguel, who saw an adult near Hemet on November 19. An adult BROAD-WINGED HAWK, in a very emaciated and weakened condition, was caught in Inyo County by Guy McCaskie, fed hamburger until it regained its strength, and later released in San Diego County. FERRUGINOUS HAWKS are regular in small numbers near Lancaster and in the San Joaquin Valley but are seldom seen west of the mountains. Ernie Abeles photographed an immature at the north end of Malibu Canyon which was found by Joe Silverberg on November 29. Three PIGEON HAWKS were reported in October at widely separated places.

Arnold Small found a FRANKLIN'S GULL at Harbor Lake on October 24, and Rusty Scalf sighted an immature at King Harbor on November 26. KITTIWAKES can usually be found at King Harbor, even in the summer, but none have been reported this winter, even in Monterey where they are often abundant. Dr. Robert Norton reported the sighting of a LITTLE GULL with Bonapartes at the south end of the Salton Sea on December 3. This is the third report on the West Coast and all came from Southern California.



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