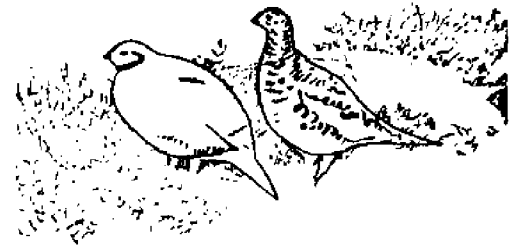


The Western Tanager

VOLUME 40, No.2 October

CHURCHILL:

A FAMOUS NAME by Hyrum Strong



Churchill on the Hudson Bay (named after an ancestor of the late Prime Minister of Great Britain) has been an objective for birders for many years. As it remains a fairly inaccessible place, for which information about accommodations and facilities is not readily obtained, we have asked permission to publish a condensation of Hyrum Strong's report of his trip, first appearing in the "Pacific Flyway," newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society.

At last the exciting day arrived when we were to board the train for the 24-hr. trip to Churchill. (As there is no highway to Churchill, the only way to get there is by train or air. We left our motor home at the only mobile home park in The Pas.) Four friends were on the train, having boarded the previous day at Winnipeg.

Our train ride was neither comfortable or uncomfortable. No attempt was made to speed as there was constant danger of derailment, since the roadbed is built on quaking muskeg. Stops were frequent at tiny settlements to drop mail and packages, infrequent passengers. When we awakened on the morning of June 13 and went to the diner for breakfast our view was one of true arctic tundra, flat, with innumerable ponds and with a pygmy forest of black spruce and tamarack or larch. As far as the eye could see was the hummocky, oozing muskeg of the tundra of the North. During breakfast, we were treated to our first lifers of the tundra—a pair of Willow Ptarmigan in changing plumage. We were also thrilled to see a red fox and a pair of Barren Ground Caribou.

We arrived at Churchill about 9:00 a.m. and were greeted by an icy chill wind with traces of sleet. Our Tucson friends, who had preceded us by three days, met us at the train with our rental car. Although there are no roads to Churchill, there are about a hundred miles of road in and around the town.

Churchill itself is strictly a small compact frontier town whose only reason for existence is the shipping of wheat by sea to European markets. It is located near the mouth of the Churchill River and is dominated by huge wheat granaries. The wheat is shipped in by rail from the western prairies and for a few short weeks, beginning

about the end of July when both Hudson Bay and the river are ice-free, large freighters enter the river to fill their holds with wheat. The night before we arrived, the river ice went out and we were there in time to see the enormous floes of green, blue and white ice floating down the river to pile up in mountainous packs out in Hudson Bay.

We checked into our motel and immediately left for the ponds near the granary and for Cape Merry which is at the mouth of the river where it empties into the Bay, for Lapland Longspur, Arctic Tern, Thayer's Gull, and Baird Sandpiper. After lunch, we went with Mrs. Blanche Smith, the local bird authority, to the town garbage dump. There we saw thousands of Herring and Thayer Gulls being harrassed by Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers. Here we saw two beautiful Glaucous Gulls. Later in the afternoon on a sightseeing trip out Goose Creek Road we found a Red Phalarope—an uncommon bird for the Churchill area. Later in the week we were to see all three phalarope species—Northern, Red, and Wilson—on the same pond at the same time.

Part of the Precambrian Shield—some of the oldest rock in the world—Cape Merry juts up from the flat landscape. Mosses, lichens, and tiny flowering plants crowd the crevices, and the small clear tarns and ponds in the ancient rock are fairylands of beauty. It was hard to believe that only a few short weeks before, these gray slabs of stone had been frozen in winter's icy grip. It was here we added the beautiful and graceful Sabine Gull to our list and watched the Beluga Whales as they came up the river with the rising tide.

We found the subarctic tundra utterly fascinating. For nine months of the year the tundra is a hostile, frigid, apparently lifeless area. But in June a miracle begins. With ever-lengthening days the summer sun brings out plant species in myriads. Flowers appear, delicate and colorful—all of them in miniature. Shorebirds, waterfowl, and passerine birds by the millions arrive, in a hurry to mate, nest and head south again before winter once more encloses everything. It sounds as if birds were

NOTICE

The Western Tanager is published monthly, except for issue number 4 for December and January which will appear December 15. Number 5 will appear February 1. Issue number 10 for July and August will appear July 15.

everywhere, but such is not the case. Because of the vastness of the area, most species took some looking for.

The ground in the tundra felt yielding and springy as we walked. With each bouncing step we sank six inches or so. Looking behind we saw the plants instantly trying to recover. It is difficult to imagine how structurally fragile the indestructible-looking tundra really is. Such a delicately balanced relationship exists between the tundra plants and the soil beneath, above the permafrost, that encroachment of any kind, such as a footpath, may leave never-healing scars.

One of our most pleasant days was spent going to the Twin Lakes area, which was on a Military Reservation and required permission. This is the most heavily wooded section around Churchill. It was "shirt-sleeve" weather, all the more welcome because it followed two days of icy cold and biting wind. Birds found on the trip were Common Redpolls, Blackpoll Warblers, and a totally unexpected and wonderful view of a Long-tailed Jaeger. On our return, we found a Smith's Longspur with the help of a tape recording. The highlight of the day was finding a pair of Willow Ptarmigan feeding alongside the road. Again with the help of a tape we aroused the indignation and protective instincts of the male. For about 15 minutes he double-dared us to advance an inch, all the while the hen went about her business, apparently eating willow buds and utterly unconcerned with our presence or confident that her belligerent mate would protect her from all harm. To me the cackling of this cock ptarmigan, his blazing eyes and air of belligerence epitomized the urgency of flora and fauna to "make haste quickly" in this briefly burgeoning subarctic world.

One beautiful bird new to us, that we found in reasonable numbers at both the granary ponds and Landing Lake was the Hudsonian Godwit. It would be difficult to say which of the birds we saw at Churchill was the most impressive. The Hudsonian Godwit would certainly be a contender, as would be many striking Oldsquaw Ducks with their unusual head pattern, the long pointed tail and each back feather delicately edged in gold. However, I believe my final vote would have to be for the Golden Plover, which we had never seen before in breeding plumage. They reminded me, for all the world, of the pictures we had seen of old-time English barristers, with the black robes and long powdered wigs. They were every bit as dignified, too.



Salton Sea Continued

by Martin Goldsmith

WHY DON'T

OTHER LAKES INCREASE IN SALINITY AND DIE?

Some, those without outlets, often do. But an outlet permits some of the more saline water to escape, carrying salt with it. When this amount just balances the salt entering with the relatively fresh feed water, an equilibrium is reached. Thus, to save the Salton Sea, an artificial outlet must be constructed. One way to accomplish this is to simply pump water from the Sea to the nearby Gulf of California. A study by the author has shown the feasibility of this, but the cost would amount to \$20 or 30 million, and would require a right-of-way across Mexico. Also, the problem will be so serious by the time such a scheme could be in operation, that it would be many years before the Sea would be returned to usefulness; also this solution would lower the level of the Sea by about five feet. It has also been proposed that this pumped water be disposed of by re-injection into a geothermal field near the Sea. Unfortunately this geothermal development is problematic. Federal and State studies have indicated a preferred solution to be the creation of an enormous evaporation pond, 50 square miles, to get rid of the removed water. (The Dead Sea acts as such an outlet and evaporation pond for the Sea of Galilee.) But where could one construct such a pond? How about in the middle of the Sea itself, by diking off a central area for this purpose? Unlikely as it seems at first sight, the method will work, and has minimum impact on other areas.

A reconnaissance study report is to be published soon that is expected to recommend the dike, and has been reported to estimate the price at \$50 million. The tax base represented by the recreational area surrounding the Sea probably cannot support such an investment. Thus State or Federal funds would be required. The sum is large, and the Salton Sea would be competing for funds that could be used to create other recreational resources (for example, the purchase of coastline or other areas now in private hands). These decisions are political and social, and always require time. However, time is short for the Salton Sea.

Still other factors enter. The salinity increase is not the only water quality problem at the Sea. Irrigation drainage carries large loads of nutrients, mostly nitrates. Domestic sewage in the New River (mostly from Mexico) adds phosphates. In the standard fashion, these chemicals support algae growth in the Sea, which are unsightly and unpleasant. The algae die after blooming, and their decay in the water robs it of oxygen, with resultant fish kills; the entire affair affronts the nostrils. None of the proposed solutions for the salinity increase will cope with these other water quality problems.

Moreover, the entire balance achieved by a salinity control system can be upset if the flow into the Sea is substantially changed. Such a

Concluded on page seven

A DAY IN THE BIG THICKET by WERNER SCHUMANN

A renewed effort has been made by Congressman Bob Eckhardt to save The Big Thicket of Southeast Texas. His bill H. R. 5941 provides for a total of 100,000 acres in seven different areas. The designator for these areas has not yet been determined. Since they no longer qualify as National Park or National Monument, they will probably be declared a Big Thicket National Biological Reserve. As a guest of Mrs. Geraldine Watson, I visited some of the outstanding areas to be protected.

On a warm, humid May morning we stepped down the road embankment to Pine Island Bayou and made our way through palmetto growth of Basswood, Pignut Hickory, and Bald Cypress at the water edge to name only a few. Mrs. Watson called my attention to the song of a Parula hidden in dense foliage and Spanish moss overhead and to a Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Chickadee.

A few acres of the Marysee Prairie have recently been acquired by the Big Thicket Association. It is a wet grassland interspersed with so-called pimblemounds. The origin of these mounds are pioneer shrubs invading a sandy area at a geological earlier time and subsequently accumulating sand and debris around their bases. A few plants show a preference for these only about 10-inch high mounds, Bumelia—a small tree—being one of them. In the grassland the 30-inch high Eastern Gamagrass was making a comeback. The typical birds of this area were Eastern Meadowlark, Yellowthroat, and Varied Bunting.

The Loblolly Unit is planned for inclusion into the National Reserve. It constitutes a mature forest which developed the last 75 years owing to the absence of fire and the rapid growth rate in these latitudes from an open Pine Prairie. In the understory growth I tracked down my first White-eyed Vireo while the call of the Pileated Woodpecker resounded in the heights of this cathedral-like forest.

The Kirby Preserve—donated to the Public by the Kirby Lumber Company—is a fine example of a virgin Beech-Magnolia-Loblolly Pine forest and along Village Creek of the Streambottom-Hardwood community. There were blooming Magnolias among the giant Bald Cypress. The Tooth-ache tree is a Prickly Ash whose stem is covered with 1-inch long coneshaped protrusions. It's bark contains an analgesic which will bring relief from toothache when released by chewing; an oldtime remedy. Green Dragon and Jack-in-the-pulp were sprouting from bulbs on the almost bare forest floor.

Our next stop took us into another area acquired by the Big Thicket Association, the Hazel Green Preserve. It includes Wetland Longleaf Pine Savannah and Upland Longleaf Pine Savannah. In the first we found Pitcher-plants in abundance. We investigated the insect-catching pitcher for prey and Mrs. Watson explained the function of the enlarged pistil

in the hanging flower as a pollen-trapping device for self-pollination. Sundew, another carnivorous plant, was growing closeby. Splashes of light purple indicated that the Grass-Pink Orchid was still well in bloom. The Orange-fringed Orchid was only just sprouting. A total of at least 30 orchid species are found in the Big Thicket. Next to these highly developed plants grow some of the most ancient ones like Cinnamon Fern and Clubmoss.

Walking along the trail took us across a hardly noticeable embankment which marked the border zone towards the Upland Pine Savannah. Noteworthy is that this border zone carries a flora distinct from either of the two.

These plant communities are dependent on fire, since hardwood species would otherwise invade them. For the time being the Big Thicket Association tries to maintain them by removal of hardwood growth and mowing. After acquisition of additional acreage, periodical burning of the area is planned.

We ended the day at Grass Lake. (A photograph of it appeared in the Audubon issue of May 1971.) The approach led us through a sandy area where Yucca and Prickly Pear Cactus were blooming, another surprising aspect of the Big Thicket. Grass Lake is an old arm of Village Creek from a time when it was much wider. The evening sunlight made the different shades of green along the forest wall on the far shore appear in vivid brightness.

There is still opposition to the planned "park," mainly from the lumber companies. In view of the minimal financial losses to them this is really quite illogical. They have however hired the largest public relations firm in Houston to prejudice the local people against the "park" by telling them that their homes would be taken away by the Department of the Interior. The lumber companies intend to convert more virgin forest into tree farms, in which they operate already large areas. Real estate interests are an additional threat to the Big Thicket. This is truly a vanishing wilderness and if it is not preserved now it will certainly be lost forever. Out-of-state support for the bill of Congressman Bob Eckhardt is therefore especially important. His proposal of 100,000 acres and the inclusion of Village Creek cannot be over-emphasized.

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Schumann:

Thank you for your letter of June 2 in support of legislation to establish a Big Thicket National Biological Reserve. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and will be considered by the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, whose chairman is Representative Roy Taylor of North Carolina. In answer to your question as to how

Continued on page four

audubon activities

DONALD ADAMS

IRVINE PARK, Aug. 11. At the appointed time, fifteen eager birders took off through the park in search of life birds, if possible. ACORN WOODPECKERS and STARLINGS seemingly were everywhere. Two noisy CACTUS WRENS feeding busily in the tall grass were life birds for some, and everyone had excellent views of them. An excellent view was also had of pair of RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS, one of which was in especially brilliant plumage. In all fifty-two species were seen. Les Wood, leader.

PELAGIC TRIP—September 15, San Diego to San Clemente Island. Cold water and cold weather seems to have repelled pelagic birds, especially those accustomed to waters off Mexico, from the Southern California coast—as was evident also in LAAS pelagic trip of September 8. However, excellent views of two NEW ZEALAND SHEARWATER were seen for many minutes as the birds flew ahead of the boat. This Shearwater is quite rare in this area. Excellent views of a SABINE'S GULL were also obtained close to the boat for a long period, for the entertainment of several visitors from the East Coast aboard. A completely black melanistic POMERINE JAEGER followed the boat for a while, and several females were seen in magnificent plumage. Van Remsen told us the Pomerines with well-marked bands completely across the breast are females, which live and travel separately from the males (except presumably on the breeding grounds).

The only alcids were two clearly seen CRAVERI'S MURRELETS and one RHINOCEROS AUKLET—three alcids ahead of the previous week. A PARASITIC JAEGER, BLACK PETRELS, SOOTY and PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATERS complete the pelagic count.

The outstanding land birds on this trip were an OSPREY and BLACK-THROATED GREY WARBLER.



AUDUBON CAMP

Each year the Los Angeles Audubon Society offers a limited number of scholarships to the Audubon Camp of the West, situated in Dubois, Wyoming in the Wind River Mountains. The four sessions of two weeks each start in late June. The camp provides an excellent opportunity for nature study with emphasis on ecological relationships and an understanding of the principles of conservation. Anyone interested in this opportunity should submit an application in writing to the society, stating their reasons for wishing to attend the camp.

BOOK STORE

The Sales Department would appreciate it very much if those people wishing to order by phone would call in on a Wednesday, since that is the only day at the present time that its staff is at Audubon House. Also, those people able to do so, are advised to come in on Wednesday to buy books, for the same reason. Although the Headquarters Staff will do their best for members on the other days, they are not familiar with the stock and are not as able to answer questions or give advice.

If there is anyone who has the time and is willing to give a few hours each week to work in the Book Store, won't they please call us,

Book Review

African Avifauna

Birds of West Central and Western Africa. By C. W. Mackworth-Praed and C. H. B. Grant. Volume 2. Pp. vi+818+plates 47-93. (Longman: London, April 1973.) £8.

THE surviving author is to be congratulated on the completion of an ambitious project for covering the whole of Africa south of the Sahara with a uniform system of ornithological textbooks. There are three series, each consisting of two volumes, and these deal respectively with eastern and north-eastern Africa, with the southern third of Africa, and with west central and western Africa. There is of course some overlap of species but each series is complete in itself. The first series opened in 1952 and ran into a second edition; the second appeared in 1962-63, and the earlier volume of this series came in 1970. Captain Grant died in 1958, but by then he had put in many years of preparatory study at the British Museum (Natural History) and had laid the foundations, especially as regards taxonomy, of the whole work; he is thus fittingly regarded as joint author even of this final volume.

The area covered by the third series is larger than that usually denoted by the term West Africa, and extends from southern Mauritania to northern Angola, as well as eastwards to the borders of the Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. This second volume includes all the passerine families except the larks. There are 736 species, some with several recognized races, and each of the latter receives separate treatment. For each, as before, brief particulars are given of distinguishing characters, distribution (with marginal map), habits, nest and eggs, recorded breeding and call. The colour plates figure every species except a few for which drawings have been considered sufficient.

There are some excellent books, of various dates, on the birds of particular parts of Africa; and there are important recent works making a broad biological approach to the whole avifauna. But as a systematic basis for study of the birds of the Ethiopian Region the six volumes of Mackworth-Praed and Grant have no equivalent.

A. LANDBOROUGH THOMSON

THICKET

Continued from page three

you may support it, I would suggest that Californians get in touch with any member of their delegation who is a member of the before-mentioned Committee. Following are the names of Californians who are members: Harold T. Johnson, Phillip Burton, and Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, all Democrats; and Craig Hosmer, Don H. Clausen and William M. Ketchum, all Republicans.

If there is any further way I may be of service, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Bob Eckhardt June 6, 1973

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

**Audubon
Bird Reports
874-1318**

Dr. Gerald Maisel, PRESIDENT

Agnes Evans, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

- Sept. 30 Sunday Cabrillo Beach. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the southwest parking lot of Harbor Lake off Anaheim Blvd. in Wilmington. The group will go to Averill Park and Pt. Fermin for fall migrants. Leader: Shirley Wells, 831-4281.
- Oct. 4 Thursday - Executive Board Meeting, 8 p.m., Audubon House.
- Oct. 6 Saturday - Pelagic Trip Monterey, sponsored by the California Field Ornithologists. Call Clifford Lyons, 714 453-1000, ext. 1450 (before 5 p.m.) or 714 276-8628 (after 6 p.m.)
- Oct. 6 Saturday Malibu Lagoon. Meet at 8 a.m. in the supermarket parking lot adjacent to the lagoon. Leader: Jim Clements, 472-3902.
- Oct. 9 Tuesday Evening Meeting, 8 p.m., Plummer Park. "Birding in India," a slide program by George Venatta.
- Oct. 13 Saturday Tijuana Riverbottom. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Oscar's Restaurant on Palm Ave. in Imperial Beach. Go south on Rte. 5 to Imperial Beach turnoff, Palm Ave., and proceed 3/4 mile to Oscar's on right hand side of Palm. We hope to see rare migrants. Because of the large number of birders in recent years, some private lands and ranches are now closed to birders. Please observe posted areas. Leader: Otto Widmann, 221-8973.
- Oct. 14 Sunday Mt. Pinos. Group will meet at 8:30 a.m. at the summit. There will be no specific leader as most of the birding will be done from the Condor Observation Point. For further information call Pamela Greene, 398-2955.
- Oct. 15 Monday Newport Back Bay. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at west end of Back Bay Dr. behind Newporter Inn. Leader: Phil Sayre, 476-5121.
- Oct. 21 Sunday Newport Back Bay. Same as above. Leader: Dr. Freeman Tatum, 476-5121.
- Oct. 27 & 28 Saturday-Sunday Butterbread Spring Camping Trip (limited to 8 vehicles), 20 miles north of Mojave off Highway 14. Good chance to see LeConte's Thrasher and fall migrants as well as other interesting desert birds. Travel will be on dirt roads passable with caution. ABSOLUTELY NO FACILITIES (this includes water, picnic tables, toilets, and other such luxuries). Reservations will be accepted by mail only. All directions and pertinent information will be sent along with confirmation of reservation. Send self-addressed stamped envelope to Pamela Greene, 12023 Dewey St., L.A., CA 90066. Leaders: Keith Axelson and Pamela Greene, 398-2955.
- Nov. 1 Thursday Executive Board Meeting, 8 p.m., Audubon House.
- Nov. 4 Sunday Pelagic trip aboard the Paisano out of Oxnard. Directions and instructions will be sent with reservation confirmation. Fare \$10. Make check payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society and send with stamped, self-addressed envelope to Joann Gabbard, 823-19th St., Apt.D, Santa Monica, CA 90403. Phone 395-1911. Please list all members of your party.
- Nov. 3 Saturday Goleta Slough & Santa Barbara) Details
- Nov. 9 Tuesday Evening Meeting) in
- Nov. 10 Jalama Beach Camping Trip Saturday & Sunday) November
- Nov. 12 Monday Malibu Lagoon) Western Tanager
- Nov. 18 Sunday McGrath State Beach & Santa Clara River)

Field Trip Information: The society cannot be responsible for transportation. Bring binoculars and lunch on all trips. No pets and no collecting permitted. Leader is responsible for the first day, only, on weekend trips. The Los Angeles Audubon Society and its authorized leaders accept no responsibility for the protection or well-being of persons attending field trips, or for any accident, personal or otherwise, incurred during society sponsored field trip.

Annual subscription to "The Western Tanager" is \$3.50; first-class postage, \$4.50. The Tanager is free to members assigned by the National Audubon Society to the Los Angeles Audubon Society. By sending \$1.00 to Chapter Headquarters, Chapter members may receive the Tanager first class.

Los Angeles Audubon Society

The Western Tanager

EDITOR	Gilbert W. King
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Audubon Activities	Donald Adams
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Official Publication of the LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

RAPTOR MANAGEMENT STUDY URGENTLY NEEDED IN CALIFORNIA

Ever since the days when all hawks and owls were considered vermin, shot by the plunker and trapped by the farmer, man has manipulated and controlled their numbers. And, as a result, bird of prey populations have suffered greatly. Even today, in light of a recent amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, hawks and owls can legally be taken from the wild in most states. As widespread as harvesting has become in California, no one can provide evidence that the proliferation of this activity in the state has not contributed to established problems which have caused the demise of predatory birds: persistent pesticides, trapping, shooting, poisoning, and habitat encroachment.

If a nongame group of wildlife is to be likened to game animals — as birds of prey are presently being treated in California — then sound management techniques must be undertaken to insure that over-exploitation of this resource does not occur. **Wildlife management programs should insure that populations are stable and healthy before classifying that resource a safe and renewable one.** Raptor management programs should include the securing of valuable nesting habitat and providing adequate protection for endangered or depleting species.

California has the largest number of falconry permit holders in the nation, yet its Department of Fish and Game has no management program for birds of prey and has conducted no research on the effects of harvesting. **That removal of raptorial birds is legally allowed without any knowledge of the annual mortality and productivity of these birds is scientifically unsound.** Although many ornithologists, birders, and environmentalists challenge California's laws which allow the taking and possession of adult and fledgling birds of prey, all agree that if harvesting is to legally occur, the agency charged with enforcing these regulations — the California Department of Fish and Game — must show and produce evidence that harvesting can be adequately controlled, managed, and that birds of prey do not suffer as a result of such activities.

California's Fish and Game Commissioners want to hear from you. Express your concern about raptor populations in California by recommending a study on the legal and illegal activities of harvesting. **Letters should urge that during such a study, the issuance of falconry permits be ceased and that no predatory birds should be taken from the wild.** If birds of prey are to be classified as a renewable resource, as they presently are, then a comprehensive population study is one prerequisite towards a proper management program.

Direct letters to any one or more of the five Commission members listed below and address your letters in care of **Mr. Leslie Edgerton, Executive Secretary, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth St., Sacramento, Calif. 95814.**

CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSIONERS

Sherman Chickering, *President*
Peter T. Fletcher, *Vice President*
Timothy M. Doheny
C. Ransom Pearman
Joseph Russ III

The following is an initial list of organizations sponsoring this raptor management concept: Defenders of Wildlife, El Dorado Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth, Redwood Region Audubon Society, San Diego Audubon Society, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, Sea and Sage Audubon Society, Sequoia Audubon Society, Sierra Club, and the Society for the Preservation of Birds of Prey.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

Continued from back page

It is surprising that this "commonest bird of the Eastern woodlands," which nests in Eastern Washington should be one of our rarest vagrants, (not seen at all some years). Single BOBOLINKS were found at Furnace Creek Ranch and at Kelso, east of Barstow, as well as below San Diego, where as many as twenty are found each fall.

While conducting a tour of the Southwest Botanic Gardens on Labor Day, Eric Brooks was excited to get a flash of an all red bird, and frustrated because he could not follow it up. Later in the afternoon he re-found it - a male SUMMER Tanager which stayed in the gardens for at least a week. Another stop-light red male was found by Hal Baxter on Sept. 8 just above Scotty's Castle. It is interesting to note that Summer Tanagers found west or north of Arizona and S. E. California where the "Cooperi" race breeds, (Morongo Valley being the NW'ly outpost), are probably of the eastern "rubra" race (as all collected specimens have been).

Exciting reports came from Northwestern California where Richard Webster found and photographed a HUDSONIAN GODWIT at Humboldt Bay on Aug. 9, second records for the state. Tom Davis, who does the bird tape for the New York area, reports a REDSHANK and a BAR-TAILED GODWIT at Brigantine Refuge in New Jersey, and two SHARPTAILED SANDPIPERS on Long Island. Can you top that Jean Brandt?

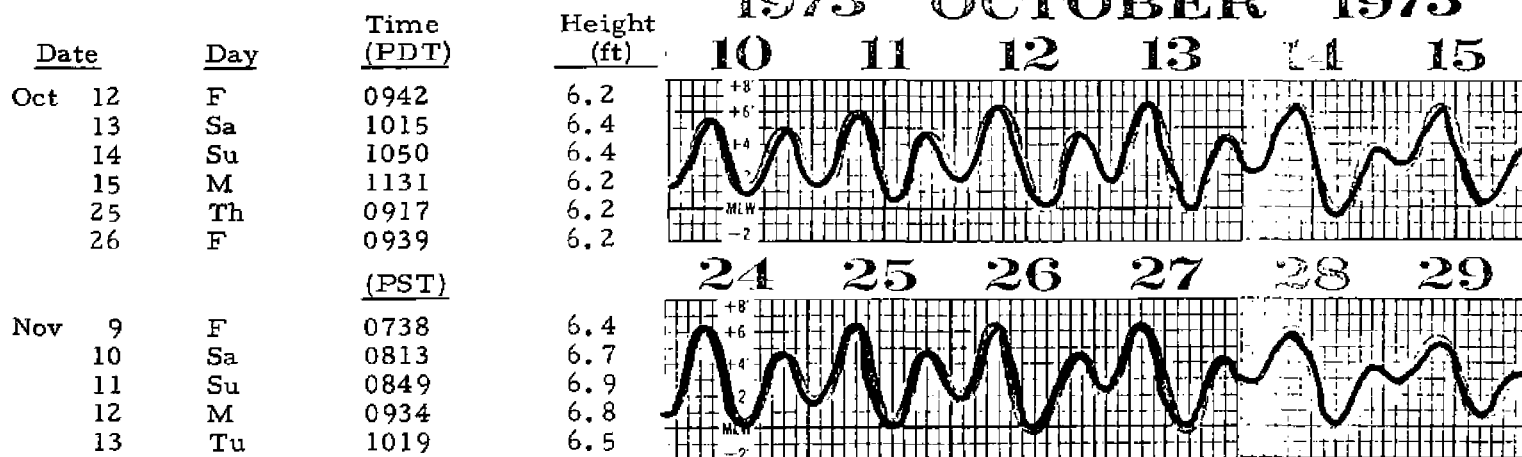
By October 1st our two most dependable winter residents, White-crowned Sparrows and Audubon's Warblers will be common in our area. In fact, a few of both species were seen on the deserts as early as Sept. 8, but there have been no other reports of winter birds - no chickadees and no Nuthatches in early September as there were last year. This may not be a bad omen for the winter, but it certainly is not a good one! So bird while the birding is good and it should be topnotch in October.



Hudsonian Godwit, identified and photographed by Richard Webster, 10 August 1973, in Humboldt Bay, Humboldt County, California.

Late News: A BAY-BREASTED WARBLER in excellent plumage was discovered by Jon Dunn, at the Cemetery on Point Loma, the morning of September 16, and seen by many who stayed over from the pelagic trip of the previous day.

High Tides at Newport Bay — 1973 Los Angeles San Diego Tides 1973 OCTOBER 1973



SALTON SEA CONCLUDED

change could occur for several reasons; alteration of irrigation patterns in the Imperial Valley is the one that has been mentioned most often. A new factor has arisen. Owing to the problems of siting powerplants on the coastline, greater attention is being given to siting in inland areas of California. Here the problem is the supply of makeup water required for cooling towers or ponds. Irrigation waste water has been pointed out as a likely source, and increased attention is being given to that possibility. The Imperial Valley drainage is the largest in Southern Cali-

fornia, and its diversion to power production would seal the doom of the Salton Sea, by drying up its source. Yet, social priorities and legal perceptions might suggest and permit just such a step.

Thus, great decisions lie before us in determining the future of the Salton Sea. There are residual doubts remaining in the overall question of "Can it be saved?" There are further doubts in the question, "Is it worth the price?" There are further debates possible over the question of "highest and best use" of the feed water itself. But, the fight to save the Salton Sea is being carried out vigorously by those who love it, those surrogate parents of the little orphan ocean.

OCTOBER, as we've said before, is the month for rare-bird watchers, and what bird-er does not thrill at the sight of a new or rare bird? Even though the occurrence of vagrants in the early fall has become an accepted phenomenon here, still, the probability that more species will be recorded this month than during any other month of the year is noteworthy and unique to California. In Southern California alone about fifteen species of Flycatchers, thirty species of Warblers, and forty-five species of seed-eaters, from Cardinals to Longspurs, will be seen in October. Many of these species occur because fall is a time of change—a few summer residents still linger on, the first winter residents arrive, the migrants are at their peak early this month, and the much sought after vagrants bring the species total to maximum numbers. No one person will see all these species, but birders who spend their time birding in the most likely places will certainly see their share.

The Salton Sea continued to provide good birding into early September, as it has all summer, and this year it was easy with most of the best birds in view from one's car on the Whitewater River dike. In addition to the more than a dozen SPOONBILLS, the LITTLE BLUE HERON (now in all dark plumage) up to seven SKIMMERS, and a few GULL-BILLED TERNS there were late reports of a single WOOD STORK (first occurrence at the north end of the Sea), and John Mencke's seven sightings of FRIGATEBIRDS involving a minimum of four individuals on Aug. 26. The big disappointment was the complete lack of BOOBIES to Sept. 10th. Between one and one hundred have been seen there in each of the past five years and we had learned to expect them every year!

Along the coast there were scattered reports of Frigatebirds from San Diego to Monterey Bay, where the Wildlife Federation Fieldtrip on Aug. 2 photographed an immature soaring over their boat (the Coppers and Lois Boylen). Ed Navojosky and Phil Sayre's trip to Morro Bay on Aug. 26 found a drake HARLEQUIN DUCK at Montana de Oro Park, which is very early for this uncommon little duck. Possibly it was summering as the one at Marina del Rey did in 1972. Single Ospreys were seen at Upper Newport Bay in late August (many birders), at Leo Carrillo Beach on Aug. 6 (Ed Nav.), at Malibu Creek on Aug. 20 (Hal Baxter) and at Catalina Island on Sept. 8 (Lee Jones).

Ed Navojosky's weekly visits to McGrath State Park near Ventura produced most of our early shorebird reports: two BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS on Aug. 13, two BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS (very rare) on Sept. 4 and both a SOLITARY and a PECTORAL SANDPIPER on Sept. 10. An earlier SOLITARY SANDPIPER spent mid-August along Malibu Creek (Andrew Hazi et al). At Pt. Mugu, Hank Brodtkin thought he might have another Buff-breast, but a critical examination of it determined it was a moulting GOLDEN PLOVER

of the "dominica" race, still golden but without black on the underparts. Otto Widman's sighting of two XANTUS MURRELETS from the Venice Pier on Aug. 20 was our only recent report of alcids. The pelagic trip of September 7 did not produce any either.

One of the early and unusual birds was the TROPICAL KINGBIRD reported by Alice Fries on Aug. 15 at Camp Pendleton. Two EASTERN KINGBIRDS were found on Sept. 9—one on Catalina Id. (Lee Jones) and another in Shoshone, Inyo Co. (Hal Baxter). The latter bird was still in juvenile plumage with a dark brown back, and an all black tail (no white terminal band, which is said to be diagnostic by the field guides). WESTERN KINGBIRDS and TRAILL'S FLYCATCHERS were widely reported along the coast during the first week of September, apparently the peak of their fall migration. Nesting of BLACK SWIFTS in Santa Anita Canyon above Arcadia has been suspected for several years, but it remained for John Black, a visiting Canadian, to actually see the adults feeding young under the falls there. Both the BLACK SWIFTS and PURPLE MARTINS stayed into August near Chantry Flats according to Phil and Mary Silverstone and Peppy Van Esen who saw them on several occasions.

Numbers of "vagrant" warblers locally were rather disappointing with a REDSTART at Pt. Fernin (Jesse and Donna Morton), a TENNESSEE WARBLER in Pacific Palisades on Sept. 9 (Ed Scharr) and two NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES along the San Gabriel River near Duarte on Sept. 9 (Mike San Miguel) being the only reports. A little farther afield at Morongo Valley Hal and Dotty Baxter found another REDSTART and a BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER on Sept. 11, and Lee Jones on Catalina Island for the weekend of Sept. 8 and 9 found a WATERTHRUSH, VIRGINIA'S WARBLER and a GRAY VIREO (2nd coastal record). All of these were probably new birds for that island.

The well worked San Diego area, Pt. Loma and the Tijuana River Valley, was more productive for Guy McCaskie, Cliff Lyons and Jon Dunn, who found a few BLACKPOLL WARBLERS, a REDSTART or two, a rare CANADA WARBLER and an ORCHARD ORIOLE in early September.

The desert oases east of the mountains were covered on the first and second weekends of September, with NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES being the outstanding species: two at Deep Springs, two or more at Oasis, five at Scotty's Castle, one at Mesquite Springs and one at Furnace Creek Ranch. These with those previously mentioned make a total of fourteen in just ten days. Certainly Waterthrushes must be considered more regular than just vagrants, which reinforces Austin's suggestion (Condor Winter '71) that Black-and-White Warblers, Redstarts and Waterthrushes utilize a desert flightline. Two RED-EYED VIREOS in one weekend was unprecedented—one at Deep Springs on Sept. 1 and another at Furnace Creek on the 2nd