

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 40, No.3 November

THE DRY TORTUGAS

THE DRY TORTUGAS are a place of wonder to any birder, and a place to see some unusual species. (Three are seen nowhere else in the U.S.) Herbert Clarke described them in "The Western Tanager" of January 1965. His description is updated here, with a discussion of the birds as they are today, including those not known to be there in 1965. The facilities available today are briefly noted as a convenience to those planning a trip.

Transportation to the Dry Tortugas (120 miles west of Key West) has to be made by special arrangement. In recent years, BIRD BONANZAS has arranged a tour. A chartered boat leaves Key West Municipal Pier at midnight on Friday, returning Sunday evening. Key West in turn can be reached from Miami, by rental car over good birding on the Keys—or by plane directly. Good taxi service is available in Key West.

Cars should not be left, nowadays, at the Municipal Pier (although there is ample parking), but at the parking lot between the Greyhound Bus and Police Stations. It is a stiff walk back to the Pier, but taxis are available.

One can sleep on deck or on canvas bunks below. In the case of rain (which can occur at any time of year), or heavy seas, everyone gets pretty wet, but usually a warm day on the islands soon dries out clothes and equipment. Each traveler has to provide his own sleeping bag and tent, as well as food and water for the whole trip. On occasion of heavy rain people have slept in the prison cells of the Fort. The skipper provides a marvelous fish dinner on Friday, if the crew has been successful in fishing during Saturday.



Sooty Tern on nest.



Campground outside Fort Jefferson, Garden Key.

After landing, everyone is on his own. He may wander around Garden Key, and on top of the Fort. Repeated visits to the pilings on the northeast are advisable, as many species fly in and sit there during the day (see below). Cattle Egrets have found their way to both Garden and Bush Key. On the latter they live on the tern's eggs and nestlings, but on Garden Key they are destitute. Some live on equally destitute warblers, and may die standing up. The lack of water means few insects, and migrating birds probably all starve to death, rather than fly on. Perhaps the only healthy land-bird to be seen regularly on the Tortugas is an oddity—the Cave Swallow. The most exciting find of the 1973 season was a Bahama Mockingbird (*Mimus grundlachi*) observed and described in detail on East Key, on May 3, a first for North America.

In addition to the Roseate, Sooty, and Noddy Terns, described in Herb Clarke's article, Black Noddy Terns (*Anous tenuirostris*) probably nest among the ordinary Noddy on Bush Island. They are seen fairly regularly on the posts at the northeast side of Garden Key sitting with the Noddy. Until we have seen one, most of us worry about recognizing the Black, but in point of fact the two are quite distinct. The Black is distinctly smaller, has a longer

bill proportionately, but slimmer. Its darker color makes the white crown stand out more.

The Bridled Tern is not usually seen on the keys, but over the open warm water. The return trip is supposed to loop out into the Gulf Stream to see such warm-water birds.



Philip DuMont and Hal Baxter look hopefully for a Blue-faced Booby from the top of the Fort.

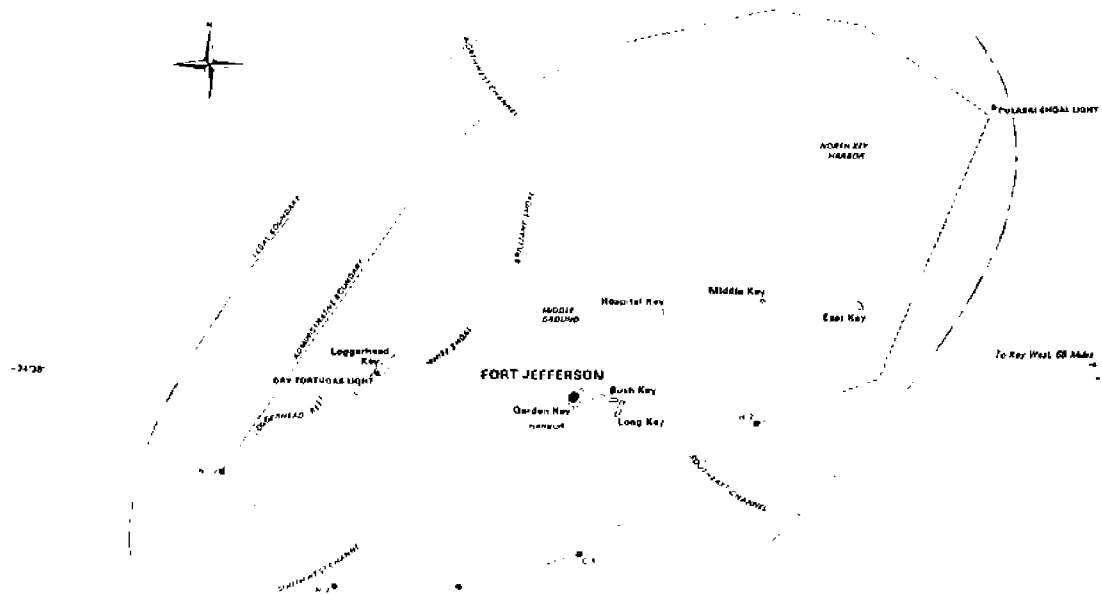
The White-tailed Tropicbird is a casual visitor. Four were seen over the Fort in early June 1973. Brown Boobies are to be seen on Bush Key, and circling around to Garden Key, usually immatures. They are also often seen on the tower at Rebecca Shoals.



Cattle Egret on its last leap, within the Fort. Prison cells in the background.

The Blue-faced Booby might also be seen in flight at Garden Key, at the tower, or during the trip, especially in the Gulf Stream. It nests on both Loggerhead and Middle Keys (part of the Dry Tortugas). Although there is a lot of talk of circling these keys on Sunday, when the time comes it seems the water is too shallow for safety. Some one might make an arrangement in advance to charter the shallow-draft ship's boat to make a special expedition to these keys.

FORT JEFFERSON NATIONAL MONUMENT



CONSERVATION CONSCIENTIOUSNESS by Roy Crytser

While Watergate still dominates the news, people are letting the purge on our environment to continue at an even more rapid and devastating rate.

In an unprecedented ruling, pitting environmentalists against the oil industry, the previously Senate approved \$3 BILLION Trans-Alaskan oil pipeline from Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Ocean to the city of Valdez on the Ice Free Gulf of Alaska, was approved by the House of Representatives.

As most people are aware, the pipeline is to traverse 787 miles of some of the most earthquake prone land on the face of the earth. Being built almost entirely above ground, it will desecrate some of the most beautiful true Wilderness areas in the U.S. The pipeline will cross numerous rivers and streams, and if there should be a break in the pipe, oil could spew into these pure waters.

From the city Valdez, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1964, the oil will be transported along the often foggy and storm plagued coast of the North Pacific to points south by gigantic supertankers. Shipping would become quite heavy in these waters, and the potential of a devastating collision and ensuing oil spill is multiplied many fold.

Environmentalists argue that if, indeed, oil is so desperately needed that the construction of a pipeline is warranted, that it would be ecologically sounder to have an alternate route through Canada and the midwest, thus eliminating the proven earthquake prone regions and the need to ship the oil by supertankers.

One major issue involved here is whether the pipeline is truly needed. President Nixon said in a letter to the House, that the suits filed by the various environmental groups were subject to exemption from the National Environmental Protection Act, terming his views "Appropriate and necessary in light of the unique circumstances surrounding the issue." He said it was desperately needed to cope with the nation's energy crises.

On Thursday, August 2 of this year, the oil industry reported that the gasoline reserves are now greater than 1 year ago this date, by more than 2 million barrels. The reserve now stands at 203.5 million barrels (1 barrel = 42 gallons). They further reported excess stock in heating oil, diesel fuel and other distillates over last year.

How much did it cost you to fill your tank last time?



POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY

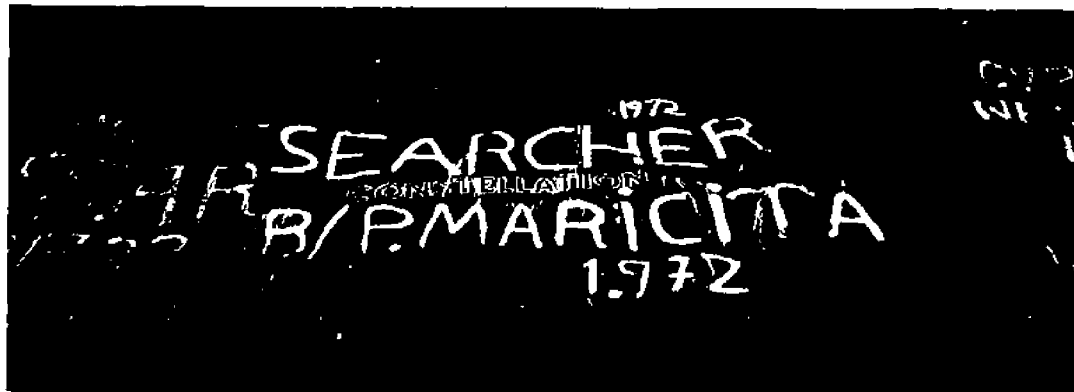
Mesa Road, Bolinas, California 94924

The Point Reyes Bird Observatory is suddenly in serious financial difficulties. Three major grants have been discontinued—The Merrill Trust in 1970, Standard Oils gift after the 1971 oil spill, and the three-year Farallon grant from the Dean Witter Foundation have all come to an end. These grants supplemented the traditional backing from individual membership and donations, which have established the Observatory through three remarkable years of increased achievement, maturity and public esteem.

The President and Board of the Los Angeles Audubon Society urgently appeals to members to join or make donations to the PRBO to help it in these immediate difficult times.

MEMBERSHIPS: Student - \$5.00/yr. Regular \$7.50/yr. Family - \$10.00/yr. Sustaining \$15.00/yr. Contributing - \$30.00/yr. Life - \$225.00. Patron - \$1000.00. Please make checks payable to PRBO, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Mesa Road, Bolinas, Calif. 94924,

GRAFFITI IN THE GALAPAGOS



On the inside back cover of the September issue of Audubon is a distressing photograph of the name of the Searcher painted on the Cliffs (in 1972). The R/V Searcher was a research vessel for the Los Angeles County Museum. The latter has written the President of the National Audubon Society. Pertinent extracts of the letter are:

"The Captain of the ship, Donald Matthews, authorized crew member Craig Hampton to add the name of the vessel to ... the rocks at Tagus Cove. This was done over the vigorous protests by the Chief Scientist, Dr. John W. Wright, and guest scientists from three universities... Right or wrong, a Captain at sea has the final authority. Even on a research vessel, where the Chief Scientist directs the program... the will of the Captain prevails."

audubon activities

BOOK STORE

SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

In reviewing the summer activities, the most interesting were the monthly field trips to Mt. Pinos (without leaders). A total of 43 sightings of Condor provided many with great thrills. Thousands of people from all over the country visit Mt. Pinos just to see the Condor. A great number of these summer visitors are successful in seeing this bird, but many return home without even a glimpse and hoping they will be luckier next time.

The September 16 Malibu Lagoon field trip's highlight was the sighting of a Northern Waterthrush making it's way along the mud flats north of the bridge. Not all members of this trip were able to observe this bird but a number did and to good advantage. Although the total number of birds seen was small, we did enjoy a comfortable day and lunched alongside the stream in Tuna Canyon.

With the growing number of members in the Los Angeles Society, we are faced with larger crowds on the popular field trips. More field trips will be scheduled to meet our needs along with camping trips and other trips with emphasis on different interests such as wildflower identification trips in the spring. We plan to have several bird workshops for those of us who feel we need little help. Hopefully, the year ahead will provide us with good birding and many new field trips. Pamela Greene

Monday, Sept. 24, Field Trip to Malibu and Ventura. The day got off to tremendous start when the leader, Ed Navajosky, showed the group a Common Murre off Malibu Pier. Yellow Warblers were seen in the stream bed above the bridge. The group then proceeded to the Santa Clara River mouth at Ventura, where spectacular views were had of Parasitic Jaegers, including one dark phased individual. Two Pectoral and at least three Golden Plovers of the "dominica" race were well seen by all present. A second look at a Common Murre was had at the end of the day when one came in to the beach in the surf.



OCTOBER 7, PELAGIC TRIP, Monterey Bay. The California Field Ornithologists organized a two-boat expedition into the bay, from Monterey; and another group sailed from Moss Landing. The outstanding event was the inspection of two Thick-billed Murres in the harbor, one in fairly good plumage. The white line behind the bill, which is emphasized in guides as a field mark is usually hard to see (and indeed was non-existent on one bird). The real field marks, especially in comparison with the Common Murre (also present in numbers) is the short thick bill, the upper mandible being curved downwards in a striking way. The head is black even in winter. There is a white wedge, pointing upwards, coming well up under the throat, with the neck being otherwise black.

Shearwaters were few in number (50 Sooty and 20 Pink-footed), although 4 New Zealand's were sighted. (The numbers refer

The Book Store is open during Audubon House hours, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Best service is available when Book Store personnel are present, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, to take orders by telephone or in person. Mail orders also are welcome.

The Society would greatly welcome volunteers for the Book Store on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, especially the latter, and especially between now and Christmas.

to the total of all three boats.) A rarity was the sighting of 3 Fulmars and 3 Skuas and 1 Tufted Puffin. About 30 Rhinoceros, 200 Cassin's Auklets were seen, and 2 Xantus' Murrelets. A Red-necked Grebe, 200 Northern Phalaropes, 2 Common Loons, and the usual Brandt's and Pelagic Comorants completed the list, crowned by 5,000 Ashy Petrels and 1,000 Black Petrels.

Monday, Oct. 15. Field Trip to Upper Newport Bay. Although the bay was blanketed in fog in the early morning, good looks were had of Soras and most of the group also had glimpses of Virginia's and Clapper Rails. This was an especially satisfactory start, since there were two relatively new birders in the group as well as a visitor from Ontario, all of whom were able to add these birds to their life lists. Excellent views of two Ospreys were had as they circled above the water or perched on posts.

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS CENSUS COUNT

will be held Sunday, December 30, 1973. To participate write Sandy Wohlgemuth, 19354 Calvert Street, Reseda, Calif., 91335 or call 344-8531.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERS LEAD TRIPS

Four members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society will be leading birding tours in 1974 for Flying Carpet Tours, Inc.

SURINAM AND FRENCH GULIANA, with option to the Amazon, Feb. 23-March 6, Herb and Olga Clarke. **SOUTHERN MEXICO**, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Yucatan, Mar. 15-Apr. 5, Jim and Polly Huffman.

SURINAM & FRENCH GUIANA, option to the Amazon, Feb. 23-Mar. 6, Herb & Olga Clarke. **SOUTHERN MEXICO**, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Yucatan, Mar. 15-Apr. 5, Jim & Polly Huffman. **PERU & ECUADOR**, Andes, Amazon Watershed, MachuPichu, Option to Galapagos, July 25-Aug. 15, Jim & Polly Huffman.

For further information contact: Olga L. Clarke, 2027 El Arbolita Drive, Glendale, Calif. 91208, (213) 249-5537 or Jim Huffman, 16856 Edgar Street, Pacific Palisades, Calif. 90272, (213) 454-4279.

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

- Nov. 3 GOLETA SLOUGH AND SANTA BARBARA—8:30 a.m. As you enter Santa Barbara, turn off Highway 101 at Cabrillo Blvd. (left-hand offramp). Meet at the bird refuge to the right just under the bridge. Leader: Nelson Metcalf. Call Audubon House for information.
- Nov. 4 PELAGIC TRIP onboard the Paisano out of Oxnard. Leader: Shumway Suffel. Directions and instructions will be sent with reservation confirmation. Fare, \$10.00. Make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society, and send with stamped, self-addressed envelope to Joann Gabbard, 823 19th St., Apt. D, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403, phone 395-1911. Please list all members of your part.
- Nov. 10-11 JALAMA BEACH CAMPING TRIP—restricted to 10 vehicles. We will camp along side the ocean. We will enjoy the tide pools, chapparal, and shore birds. For information call: 398-2955. Send self-addressed, stamped envelope to Pamela Greene, 12023 Dewey St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90066. All pertinent information such as directions, meeting time and place, etc., will be sent to you along with confirmation of your reservation. Since this is a State campground, there will most likely be a small camp fee.
- Nov. 13 EVENING MEETING. Dr. Thomas R. Howell, Professor of Zoology, UCLA, will present two motion pictures: "The Birds of Is. La Raza" and "Studies of the Desert Nesting Gray Gull of Chile."
- Nov. 17 McGRATH STATE PARK & SANTA CLARA RIVER. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the park (ranger will give you parking directions). We hope to see a wide variety of shore birds and water fowl and perhaps an interesting migrant or two. Leader: Sandy Wohlgemuth, 344-8531.
- Dec. 1-2 CARIZZO PLAIN. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in Maricopa at the junction of U. S. 399 and State 66. Besides Sandhill Cranes, this trip usually produces LeConte's Thrasher, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, and Mt. Plover. Those planning to stay at California Valley Lodge should write or call for reservations early as the lodge is usually sold out before the trip. Write to the lodge at California Valley, Calif. 93453 or call (805) 475-2272. Leader: Gilbert King, 476-5121.
- Dec. 15 (SEA AND SAGE FIELD TRIP.) UCI Marsh in the afternoon and an evening Owl Prowl. Leader: Pete Bloom. For further information please call the Sea and Sage Audubon Society.
- Dec. 30 LOS ANGELES CHRISTMAS COUNT. Chairman, Sandy Wohlgemuth, 19354 Calvert St. Reseda, Calif. 91535. Phone: 344-8531.



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

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Official Publication of the LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

CAN WE SAVE THE DESERT?

Pamela Greene

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT CALIFORNIA DESERT MANAGEMENT PLAN

By Daniel Taylor

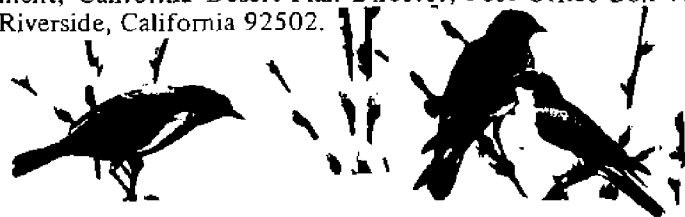
The Dove Spring and Jawbone Canyon areas are located approximately twenty miles north of Mojave off Highway 14. These two areas encompass a sizable portion of the high desert and lie beneath the south-eastern section of the Sierra Nevada range. Much of the beauty can be seen in the change of vegetation as you approach the foothills.

Slightly to the northwest of Jawbone Canyon, is Butterbread Spring. A great number of us have enjoyed the many field trips to this area in the past years and know of its value as a prime birding spot. This natural spring provides an unusual and unexpected oasis in this normally arid country. Besides the birds frequently seen here such as LeConte's Thrasher, three species of Quail, Sage Sparrow, Scott's Oriole and seldom seen Chukar, more than 130 other species have been noted in this spot.

Farther to the west is the Kelso Creek. This creek runs all year round (including quite a healthy flow during the hottest parts of the summer). Located beneath the Piute Mtns., many mountain birds along with migrants and residents have been observed here.

Owing to the unique features of both of these areas, it is very important to save them from further destruction by motorcyclists and other off-road vehiclists. The fragile conditions of Butterbread Spring, Kelso Creek and surrounding land must be preserved now before it is too late. It is the general feeling of Los Angeles Audubon Society that attacking the desert as a whole would be an extremely difficult and unrewarding task, but to focus our attention on two of sixty-nine proposed zones is not unreasonable. It is our desire to urge the redesignation of areas 8 and 9 from "open" and "special design" to "designated roads and trails" which would limit vehicular use to roads and trails authorized by the Bureau of Land Management. It should be noted that these two areas (8 & 9) are the only two isolated areas within hundreds of square miles of proposed designated trails and roads. These two areas in question have surely been designated open and special design only because of the obvious destruction which has already occurred in the past few years.

It is not too late to let the Bureau of Land Management know that you are in favor of our proposal. Please write to them and express your opinions. Your help is urgently needed. WRITE TO THE BLM AT: Bureau of Land Management, California Desert Plan Director, Post Office Box 723, Riverside, California 92502.



Los Angeles Audubon Society

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The President and Board of the Los Angeles Audubon Society hereby make a formal request for approval of a Constitutional Amendment:

The position of Chairman of Sanctuaries be eliminated.

A new position of Chairman for "The Voice of Audubon" be created.

A vote will be taken at the next stated meeting of the Society, November 13, 1973.

The Bureau of Land Management, in a briefing held September 15, 1973 at their Riverside headquarters, unveiled their Preliminary Desert Plan to an audience made up of Audubon chapter members from throughout Southern California. Bureau spokesmen answered numerous questions from concerned members.

The plan outlines the use areas within the California desert. The primary conflict in the plan is the appropriations or use of the desert by two divergent groups: the off-road vehicle users and those who wish to preserve the natural beauty and sensitive ecology of this unique area.

Reaction from the audience was one of both appreciation for the effort involved in formulating the plan and apprehension over the workability and protection which the plan gives areas of prime wildlife value.

Experienced birders, within the Los Angeles Audubon Society, have suggested mounting an effort to attempt to change the status and thus lend more protection to two particular areas of prime birding interest. They are areas 8 and 9: Dove Spring and Jawbone Canyon. The Bureau of Land Management has invited opinions from interested citizens thus such an effort might prove successful.

If you concur, would you please advise the BLM office, California Desert Plan Program, P.O. Box 723, Riverside, CA 92502, of your individual recommendations. Have other members of your chapter participate in this, too. It is important to have all the input we can.

PREDATOR BILL

POWERFUL FORCES ATTACK PREDATOR BILL IN HOUSE IN MOVE TO ADD WEAKENING AMENDMENTS AND RELAX BAN ON USE OF POISONS

The woolgrowers' lobby and forces within the House Agriculture Committee are devoting large-scale efforts to weakening H.R.4759, the predator control reform bill. The bill is now being marked up by the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment, chaired by Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.). The woolgrowers lobby is pushing for amendments that (1) would delete language specifically designating state wildlife agencies as responsible for management of predators, thus allowing a take-over by pro-poison agriculture agencies, and (2) would reinstate use of the M-44 (cyanide gun), presently banned. Although cyanide does not have secondary effects, other species besides coyotes can still trigger the mechanism. We strongly oppose these amendments.

In an effort to persuade Mr. Dingell to report a weak bill, Rep. W.R. Poage (D-Tex), Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, held a three-day hearing this month to provide a forum for the ranchers to complain of their losses since the Executive Order ban on use of poisons on federal lands went into effect.

Cynthia Wilson, our Washington representative, testified for us at the "forum." She pointed out that although there have been individual reports of tremendous losses since the ban went into effect, official statistics have not backed up the claims. . . "Although we agreed that coyotes do kill livestock, sheep in particular," she said, "we are not convinced that total losses have skyrocketed since the poison ban took effect, although it is possible that they have increased in some areas."

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

Continued from back page

TENNESSEE WARBLER on Sept. 16, a PARULA on Oct. 3, a MAGNOLIA WARBLER which stayed in the Pt. Loma Cemetary for about ten days after Sept. 22 (Cliff Lyons), a YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (less than ten Calif. records) on Sept. 19 (Tom Taylor), female BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER on Sept. 29, two BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS (Hal Baxter and the Cardiffs), a BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER on Sept. 24, two BAY-BREASTED WARBLERS on Sept. 16 and 29, a PRAIRIE WARBLER about Sept. 23 (Jerry Johnson), and two male ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS, one on Sept. 22 (Bruce Broadbooks) and one on Oct. 4 (S.S.). With birds like these, it is not surprising that both Jon and Guy have seen over thirty species of warblers this year.

While the desert oases are not as productive nor as well worked in the fall as the coastal promontories, our few reports are very interesting. Jan Tarble heard from friends that large pink birds were seen in the Tecopa marsh, 50 miles north of Baker. Although Jan was unable to find them in mid-September, she feels sure from the description that they were ROSEATE SPOONBILLS. Another SPOONBILL spent "all summer" at a small lake 30 miles east of Barstow. These are the first reports from the northeast part of our region. Mike San Miguel found an adult CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER at Deep Springs on Sept. 26. Another one was seen at Dirty Socks, Olandra Sept. 23, and an immature was seen at the

pond on the Yucca Valley Golf Course by Hal Baxter on Sept. 18. These two with the three spring adults give us at least five Chestnut-sideds for the year, which is unprecedented for this rather rare warbler. A very early WINTER WREN was feeding, sometimes within a foot, with the Chestnut-sided at Yucca Valley. BLACKPOLL WARBLERS are unusual away from the coast, but Lee Jones found one at Oasis, Inyo Co., on Sept. 23, and Hal Baxter saw another in Morongo Valley on Sept. 29. Lee also saw a MAGNOLIA WARBLER and a BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER at Panamint Springs on Sept. 23.

We cannot expect this parade of rare birds to continue into November, but we can enjoy the return of our familiar winter birds, and the search for the few migrant and summer birds which linger on into late fall. The coastal bays and marshes will still have many shorebirds, with sea ducks, loons and grebes arriving this month. The high tides in the early mornings of Nov. 10, 11 and 12 should be best for rails and possibly for the Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Upper Newport Bay. The birding and the weather should be good in Death Valley this month with a chance for a rare bird at Furnace Creek Ranch or Scotty's Castle, and the possibility of a Rusty Blackbird at Saratoga Springs, now returned to its primitive condition - no trees. No one knows what birds winter will bring, but you'll be one of the first to find out if you are out in the field.

FRIENDS OF NEWPORT BAY

BOX 4088, IRVINE STATION
NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA 92664

THANKS FOR HANGING IN THERE . . . In the past six months, we have begun to see meaningful results from five years of continued efforts to hang onto the Bay. The Appellate Court decision last Spring finally killed the land exchange program between the County and the Irvine Company. It has become apparent that FONB is now looked to as the group with ideas, knowledge, and clout. We have had requests for opinions from several county departments, relative to the impact of proposed actions on the Bay, and we have tried to provide adequate answers.

Most recently, and most significantly, we have been asked by Orange County Supervisor Ralph Clark to appear before the Field Committee (State, Federal, County, City, and Irvine Co. representatives) to present our ideas for a park/preserve. This presentation was made on September 20 by Ray Williams.

In preparation, a committee has been working very hard preparing backup material for a park and preserve, including all the Bay above Dover Shores, and adequate uplands. We engaged Dr. Joel Hedgpeth, head of the Oregon State University Marine Science Institute, to review our plans, and to help formulate a safe method of restoring the salt flats and the badly silted areas to marsh status.

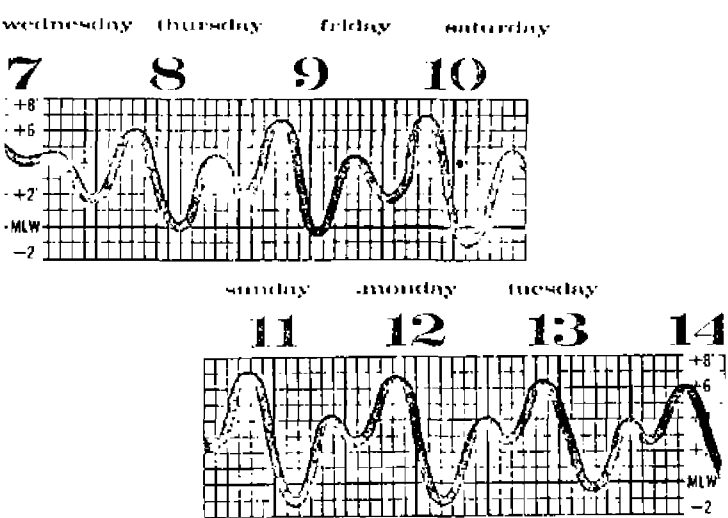
None of these recent, encouraging developments would have taken place if we didn't have a large, active membership, and if we hadn't let our representatives know we existed. In this last Newsletter before the election of a new president, I want to personally thank all of you for "hanging in there" for long years. Hopefully, the recent turn of events signals the beginning of a new, positive phase of our work, with the actual implementation of a park and preserve system as the next goal.

Chuck Greening - Retiring President

HIGH TIDES

AT NEWPORT BAY

November



(PST)				
Nov	9	F	0738	6.4
	10	Sa	0813	6.7
	11	Su	0849	6.9
	12	M	0934	6.8
	13	Tu	1019	6.5
Dec	7	F	0631	6.3
	8	Sa	0711	6.7
	9	Su	0755	7.0
	10	M	0840	7.1
	11	Tu	0925	7.0
	12	W	1016	6.7

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds



NOVEMBER

most of our regular winter birds — the shorebirds, gulls and ducks are already here in large numbers and most of the geese and loons will be arriving this month. The question that remains to be answered is, will we have another invasion of northern and mountain species as we did last winter? If arrivals of these species in September are an indication, the answer is "NO"! Last year Mountain Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches were widely seen in the lowlands by early September, with Nutcrackers, White-headed and Lewis's Woodpeckers, Pygmy Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and even Pinyon Jays being reported by early October. This September a single Chickadee was in Pasadena on the 14th and three Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen in Morongo Valley on the 29th — not very promising for a winter invasion.

SEPTEMBER provided a bonanza of noteworthy birds for active birders. Locally, shorebirds received and deserved much of the attention, with Ed Navajosky's weekly trips to McGrath State Park near Ventura providing a GOLDEN PLOVER of the migratory "dominica" race on Sept. 24 and from two to four PECTORAL SANDPIPERS during the last two weeks of the month. Another Pectoral was reported from the Zuma Beach pond by Robert Fleisher on Sept. 14. News from Alaska is that Pectorals had poor nesting success last summer, which would account for their relative scarcity here this fall. There were two late sightings of SOLITARY SANDPIPERS, one at Tapia Park, Malibu on Sept. 30 (Sandy Wohlgemuth) and another at McGrath Park the next day. The only recent BAIRD'S SANDPIPER was a late bird at Harbor Lake during one the last week of September (Shirley Wells). There were from one to five PARASITIC JAEGERs at McGrath during the last two weeks of the month. When first reported they were chasing Elegant Terns, but Oct. 1st most of the Elegants had left, but the Jaegers were still there. Could they have been preying on the much larger and almost equally aggressive Western Gulls, which were there by the hundreds?

Dr. Charles Collins (an authority on Swifts), confirms John Black's report in the last Tanager, "BLACK SWIFTS definitely bred at Santa Anita Canyon this year! I saw two adults and an in-nest young bird on 29 July" and he comments on the lack of definite nesting records locally. Also unusual are reports of BLACK SWIFTS in fall migration. Ernie Abeles gives us one of these, "Twelve Black Swifts, well observed at Tapia Park" on Sept. 16. He and Joe Silverberg also saw YELLOW-BILLED MAGPIE there on the same date. All previous Magpie reports from our area have been of the Black-billed species and have been considered escapees because "Black-bills" are sometimes kept in captivity and occur only east of the Sierras.

TROPICAL KINGBIRDS are a once a year occurrence in our area, so the one which showed up near McGrath State Park was much admired during its stay from Sept. 23 until at least early October. To my knowledge, there is only one previous coastal record of a GRAY VIREO, yet we have two current reports — Shirley Wells saw one in her San Pedro garden on Sept. 11 and Lee Jones found one on Catalina Island a few days later.

The warblers are one of the most varied and beautiful families of small birds and consequently are much sought after. Rich and Dave Bradley gave a description of a warbler seen at Pt. Fermin on Sept. 29 which could only apply to a rare HOODED WARBLER. Nearby at the South Coast Botanic Gardens an early PALM WARBLER was found by Shirley Wells on Sept. 22. There is something very personal about "a yard bird" and particularly if it happens to be a MAGNOLIA WARBLER in the garden of one's new home in Monrovia, as Mike San Miguel reported on Sept. 29. Eric Brook's SUMMER Tanager in the South Coast Botanic Gardens STAYED into October, and later in the month from four to six BOBOLINKS were found in the extensive plantings of Sudan grass there. An early LARK BUNTING was found in Camp Pendleton by Alice Fries on Sept. 17, and another was seen by Dave Foster and Mike S. M. in the El Monte Nature Center on Sept. 30. CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS were not known in California until the last ten years, probably because they were not recognized among the very similar and much commoner Chipping Sparrows. Now a few are seen each year, including one in the S.C. Botanic Gardens in late September and another in the large flock of Spizella Sparrows in the Pt. Loma Cemetery, San Diego.

Our Channel Islands are one of the most challenging, yet least birded areas in Southern California due to their inaccessibility and the difficulty in obtaining landing permits. A comprehensive survey of the resident birds was made before 1920 by A. Brazier Howell ("Birds of the Channel Islands, "Pac. Coast Avifauna" No. 12), but until this year very little work was done during migrations. Now Lee Jones at U.C.L.A. has access to most of the islands and is finding many new birds for those islands. On the weekend of Sept. 28 to 30, he and Jon Dunn on remote San Nicholas Island (70 miles off the coast) netted or observed a SOLITARY VIREO of the eastern Blue-headed race (1st Calif. record), a male CAPE MAY WARBLER (very rare), three VIRGINIA'S WARBLERS, a SCOTT'S ORIOLE, six BOBOLINKS, a DICKCISSEL, a BENDIRE'S THRASHER and several SAGE THRASHERS and PHAINOPEPLAS (all of the latter are unusual even on the mainland coast). We have learned on the Farallon Islands, which are now covered 365 days a year, that offshore islands are great magnets for vagrant birds, which are lost anyway or they wouldn't be flying over the ocean, but now we know that our islands are equally attractive. Lee also made an interesting observation of two WANDERING TATTLERS along a willow bordered stream some two miles inland on Santa Cruz Island. Tattlers are almost never found away from the rocky coast.

The San Diego area, particularly Pt. Loma, was the hot spot for rare birds in September. All observations are by Guy McCaskie and/or Jon Dunn, who bird the area almost daily, unless otherwise noted: an immature LITTLE BLUE HERON at Camp Pendleton on Sept. 21 (Alice Fries and Shirley Wells), an immature ZONE-TAILED HAWK at Pt. Loma on Sept. 19, a BROAD-WINGED HAWK there on Sept. 24, a possible LEAST FLYCATCHER on Oct. 3, several BLACK-AND-WHITE and BLACKPOLL WARBLERS, a WORM-EATING WARBLER (5th Calif. record) with the flock of Chipping Sparrows on Pt. Loma on Oct. 1 (Harry Kreuger),²

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