

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 41, 1974-75 No. 7 April



AUDUBON HOUSE 1956-1966

Marion Wilson

In 1956 Los Angeles Audubon Society's Nature Museum was located in the front half of the Plummer House in Plummer Park. The four rooms were the west, center, east and bay window room. The front door at that time opened into the bay window room, which served as the library. The other two doors to the outside from the center and west rooms were locked as were the two doors into the north half of the house, where ceramics classes were held. The key to our door was kept in the park office and we had to get it and return it each time we used the house. The museum exhibits were in glass-fronted or open-fronted bookcases, china cupboards or any other piece of furniture that could serve and which had been donated by members and friends. One of the first pieces donated after I took office as Curator and Headquarters Chairman was brought in by Caroline and Don Adams. This was one of their first contacts with the Society and they soon became very valuable and active members.

Through Mary and Bill Hood we were able to secure the large exhibit case that stands along the north wall of the center room. Since I knew nothing about setting up exhibits, I depended on the help from Mary Hood and her contacts with the Los Angeles County Museum. She was a former President of the Society, an active worker since the beginning and is now President Emeritus. My neighbor, Howard Capwell, built the sales counter which was first used in the center room and comprised our sales department. All the records of officers and chairmen were kept in their homes. **First** of the several goals I decided to work for was to keep the house open as often as possible for youth groups and the general public. As more persons volunteered we were able to do this for two, three and finally five afternoons during the week. Saturdays were more difficult. Youth groups came in the mornings by appointment.

Second I felt I must have a key to the entrance door plus a key to the outside door in the west room. This was accomplished through very cooperative Director of Plummer Park.

Third there must be a telephone. The Board voted to let me work with the Park Department on this problem as a phone had been requested before but never granted. After much correspondence and a written statement from the Board that they would assume responsibility for all expenses and would not use Plummer Park as part of the address in the telephone directory, a telephone was installed in the west room, where I had placed the desk Bob Blackstone secured for us, and this room became the first office.

Fourth I wanted to have the use of the entire house which I felt should be shown to the public for its historical value and which would give us more needed space. In the meantime it was decided that the library should be moved to a quieter area and so it was moved into the east room. This gave us two exhibit rooms for youth groups after they had toured the yard. Mr. Capwell made new bookcases to match the two we had and also built the library table.

When we finally received permission to use the rest of the house, plans had to be made for the rearrangement of rooms. The Park Department repaired and painted the north two rooms and bathroom. I had persuaded the Department to remove the iron bathtub which they could use in some other historical house.

After the painting was done we moved the office into the northwest room. The sales counter was moved to its present location in the center room, which became the sales room. Shelves

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were built behind the counter. Shelves built along the west wall of the bathroom were used for storage by the librarian.

I believe it was about this time that some of the records and files of officers and chairmen were brought from their homes and placed in Audubon House, board meetings began to be held here instead of in private homes and I brought the mailing of the Western Tanager here. With these changes the house became the official headquarters with most of the activities emanating from it.

Now that we had more room, Mary Hood and I decided it was time for new exhibit cases. We went to the Los Angeles County Museum to see what was being used there for their smaller exhibits. The front west room became the entrance room and from plans made after our visit to the museum, Mr. Capwell built the three large cases along the north wall and the two smaller cases on each side of the entrance door. Vernon Mangold, a member and professional artist, painted the background for the three large cases. The large exhibit case along the north wall of the center room was left in place and Mr. Capwell built more cases for the bay window room.

I began to work on my last goal, a fence around the yard and a gate we could lock. I had just about given up when I received word it was to be built and a large sign placed on the west side. When I had requested it years before, I had stipulated a picket fence six feet high placed as near the ground as possible.

One morning I arrived at Audubon House and found the men at work. The posts and stringers were in and the six foot pickets were being shortened to five feet, as the architect thought it would be more attractive to have a foot or more space below the fence. Should I admit I blew my top? After much explaining why we wanted the fence in the first place, the men decided to lower the pickets. And so another goal was partially realized.

Many people, both members and non-members, helped to make all the above possible with their time and money. The yard was an important part of our tour for youth groups and a quiet place for members to bird and botanize. When we decided to take over full care of it, help was desperately needed. Some volunteered for a few hours now and then but Otto Widmann came to the rescue and took full charge, spending many hours each week.

During these ten years I served as Curator, Headquarters Chairman, Executive Secretary and Registrar. It is gratifying to me to see the continuing progress being made since 1966.

Birds of the California Channel Islands CONCLUDED

by H. Lee Jones

Of the Amphibians and Reptiles, there are three species of salamanders, the Pacific Tree Frog, five species of lizards, including the endemic Island Night Lizard mentioned earlier, and six species of snakes most of which are found on Catalina. The Pacific Rattlesnake is the only species of poisonous snake found on the islands and it is limited to Catalina.

There are about 50 species of birds which breed on the islands and another 230 which have been recorded at least once. Of the 50 breeding species 12 are represented by one or more endemic subspecies on the islands. The Song Sparrow heads the list with four endemics, one on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands, one on San Miguel Island, one on San Clemente Island (probably extinct). A subspecies of Bewick's Wren, found only on San Clemente Island, apparently now consists of only one individual, a male. It was formerly abundant on the island, but the goats ate all of its habitat. The same is true of the Song Sparrow and Rufous-sided Towhee on the island, both of which may now be extinct.

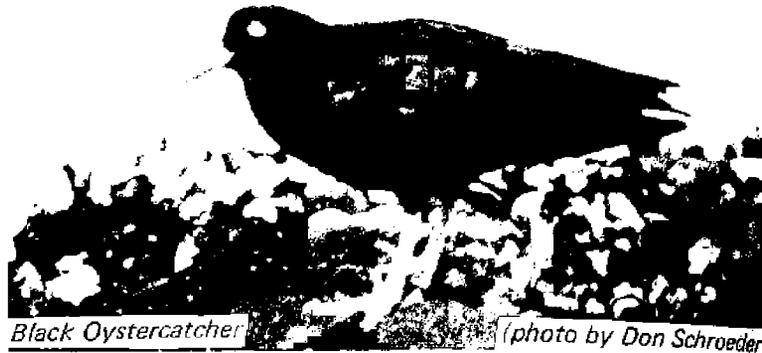
Some of the more interesting non-endemic birds on the islands are the Brown Pelican which still nests on Anacapa and occasionally on Santa Cruz; the Black Oystercatcher, which is found on most of the islands; the American Oystercatcher which has turned up recently on Anacapa and Santa Cruz; and several species of alcid, namely the Pigeon Guillemot, Xantus' Murrelet and, formerly, the Tufted Puffin, Common Murre and Cassin's Auklet. The guillemot and murrelet still breed on most of the islands and both are particularly common on Santa Barbara Island most years. In the early part of the century the islands were noted for their breeding Bald Eagles, Ospreys and Peregrine Falcons, but these have all disappeared as a combined result of shooting, poisoning of prey species such as the ground squirrel on Catalina, and the increasing use of pesticides.

One of the first animals to disappear from the Channel Islands through "competition" with man was the Sea Otter. Formerly common in the kelp beds around the islands, it was nearly exterminated in the 19th Century by fur traders and has never re-established itself here. The Guadalupe Fur Seal and Elephant Seal suffered the same fate. For many years the fur seal was thought to be extinct, but in 1926 a small herd was discovered on Guadalupe Island. Two were taken for exhibit in the San Diego Zoo and the rest of the herd disappeared. Twenty-three years later one was discovered on San Nicolas Island and since then a small breeding population has been found again on Guadalupe Island. The Elephant Seal was slaughtered by commercial sealers until only a couple of dozen were left on Guadalupe Island in 1890. Since then they have made a spectacular recovery and now breed as far north as the Farallones.



Brown Pelican

(National Park Service photo)



Black Oystercatcher

(photo by Don Schroeder)

There are a surprising number of species found commonly on the mainland that have never reached the Channel Islands. Among the herds, perhaps the most surprising example is the Western Toad, and of the mammals, the very common Dusky-footed Wood Rat and several common species of deer mice which never have made it to the islands. In these cases it is perhaps understandable because of their limited dispersal capabilities of the birds, some of which are capable of flying hundreds of miles at a time, many have nevertheless failed to reach any of the islands. It is understandable that a weak flier such as the Wren-tit has never crossed the waters and one can even accept that the limitation for many highly sedentary species such as the Brown Towhee, California Thrasher, Nuttall's and Downy Woodpeckers, Screech Owl, Plain Titmouse, Red-shouldered Hawk and White-tailed Kite, but how does one explain the absence of the Common Crow, the Turkey Vulture and the Golden Eagle? The crow has only been recorded once, yet the Common Raven has reached all the islands and is common breeder on most. The Turkey Vulture has only been recorded on San Clemente where it appears to be breeding resident now. The Golden Eagle has only been recorded twice on Santa Cruz. Perhaps most surprising is the Black-chinned Hummingbird which is a common summer resident on the mainland and which migrates thousands of miles every year, but which has never been recorded on any of the Channel Islands! One obvious explanation is that it has been overlooked, and this may be true to some extent. Yet Costa's and Rufous are seen rather frequently among the resident Anna's and Allen's and the latter two show up regularly on islands where neither is resident. Even the Calliope has been recorded.

Several migratory species, which breed on the adjacent mainland, pass up what appears to be equally suitable habitat on the islands during spring migration. Warbling Vireos, Western Wood Pewees, Swainson's Thrushes, Lazuli Buntings and, until recently, Ash-throated Flycatchers and Black-headed Grosbeaks, pass through every spring without breeding. The latter two have recently begun breeding on Santa Cruz in small numbers, but still do not breed on Catalina, which has similar habitats. The answers to these questions may be very subtle and based on differences in species composition and niche relationships between birds on the islands and the mainland.

Among the plant species which are absent from the islands, the yucca, *Yucca shipplei* and Laurel Sumac, *Rhus laurina* are the most conspicuous absentees. Both are very common chaparral plants, but neither is found on any of the Channel Islands. The yucca can be cross-pollinated only by the Yucca Moth and the moth, in turn, is dependent on the yucca for its survival; therefore, the chance that both would disperse to the Channel Islands simultaneously is very unlikely. The absence of Laurel Sumac, on the other hand, is more difficult to explain. A close relative, Lemonade-berry, *Rhus integrifolia*, is abundant on the larger islands and another close relative, the Sugar Bush, *Rhus ovata*, is common on Catalina.

As you can see, the Channel Islands present many fascinating biological problems that remain to be solved.

audubon activities

MORRO BAY, February 8. The Peregrine Falcon was quite active and was seen in the air and perched on the rock. As one bird was chasing away a Red-tailed Hawk that hovered over the rock, it appeared that a second falcon was also in the air, so we might have seen the pair. We visited the Morro Coast Audubon Society's recently completed Overlook Bird Observation in Baywood Park. It is well located for observing the bay and mud flats and has a covered platform accommodating about a dozen people, making it very convenient in rainy weather. It is reached by going west on Santa Ysabel to 4th St., right on 4th to Santa Lucia Ave. (one block), then right on Santa Lucia one block continuing on the driveway beyond the last house to a small parking area. Two Soras and a Virginia Rail were seen in the reeds near the observation platform.

This trip was notable, or perhaps more accurately, notorious, by our inability to find a single Black Brandt. The closest we came was a string of decoys left by hunters. Black-crowned Night Herons also seemed to be much less abundant than in past trips, although we did not conduct the most diligent search. The most interesting observation, on Sunday morning in the fresh-water lagoon at Cambria and not seen by the group, was two male Common Goldeneye displaying for six females. The action continued intermittently for about an hour until they all left. Freeman Tatum, leader.

ANNUAL DINNER, February 11. Over 100 members and guests attended the annual dinner at the Smith Brothers Fish Shanty. The facilities were perfect for our social hour, and the dinner was excellent and beautifully served. Our President, Dr. Gerald Maisel, reported on our recent success at Legg Lake, which is a part of the Whittier Narrows Recreation Center. He also announced that the recipient of the award for outstanding service to the society was Gilbert King in appreciation of his superb editorship of "The Western Tanager." In addition, Dr. Maisel presented Condor Naturalist John Borneman with a check for \$2,400.00, the result of the 1973-74 Condor Fund drive. The program was by John Goddard, "Exploring Africa Wonderland." His film, taken in East Africa, included many thrilling close-ups of lion and cheetah. He took us from the floor of Ngorongoro Crater to the crest of Kilimanjaro, a truly memorable experience.

TRIPPET RANCH, February 16 On a brisk Sunday morning, thirty birders met at the Trippet Ranch area of the newly created Topanga State Park. A perched Red-tailed Hawk was observed while the group waited to start their hike. Flocks of California Quail were flushed from the grassy fields on the way to a pre-Chumash Indian site. Returning to the stream below, a single flock of 50 Western Meadowlarks was spotted. The trees along the stream failed to produce hoped-for owls, but a hunting pair of Red-shouldered Hawks were heard and found. Dr. Gerald Maisel found a "Red-naped" Sapsucker in the Oak trees and Ed Navajosky located a Purple Finch to the delight of the group. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was spotted by Dr. Maisel as we hiked up and out of the oak woodland and along an adjoining chaparral covered bridge. Hermit Thrushes were seen and a male Anna's Hummingbird performed its courtship display flight for us. A Raven's nest was located on a cliff face. In all, about four miles were covered on foot and a total of 42 species seen. Roger Cobb, leader.

HOPPER MT. NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE has been established following the purchase of the 1,880 acre Hopper Ranch by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The Hopper Ranch borders the southern boundary of the Sespe Condor Sanctuary and provides a vital "buffer" area for the Hopper Canyon nesting complex. The ranch has long been a feeding area for condors. Unfortunately, the Fish & Wildlife Service was unable to purchase the mineral rights. As a result the northwest portion of the ranch is now under oil development by ARGO Petroleum. Many management problems are yet to be worked out but the supplementary feeding program is already underway on the new refuge.

books

BIRDS OF FRENCH POLYNESIA: TAHITI, a paperback museum publication with black & white drawings of bird species will soon be available. It is the only publication covering that area that we know of.

Prices are rapidly rising on all books. Do you have all the books you need for your spring and summer birding trips? Plan ahead and save money!

Wildflower time is NOW.

LONGEVITY RECORDS

"The Ring," a Polish publication on the subject of ringing, or banding, recently published a list of longevity records of North American birds, which is summarized here in toto. It deserves careful browsing. One is delighted to see that the Laysan Albatross can reach 18 years of age, and perhaps amazed to find a Louisiana Heron can have a life of 16 years. The 20-year possibility of an Osprey shows how a little effort in protection could bring this bird back in numbers.

Unexpected long lifetimes are those for the terns — 26 years for the Caspia and Sooty and 14 years for the Red-winged Blackbird. Of the smaller birds, the span of 9 years for the Black-capped Chickadee is noteworthy, and 7 for the Fox Sparrow.

The Great Horned Owl can be in nest the same locality for 12 years, and unfortunately the Cowbird can be with us for 7.

Longevity (years)

Common Loon	7	Black Skimmer	9	Rufous-sided Towhee	8
Laysan Albatross	18	Ground Dove	5	Brown Towhee	5
Black-footed Albatross	17	Inca Dove	5	Snow Bunting	7
Leach's Petrel	12	Mourning Dove	8	Tree Sparrow	7
Red-tailed Tropicbird	8	Great Horned Owl	2	Chipping Sparrow	7
White Pelican	10	Snowy Owl	5	Field Sparrow	5
Brown Pelican	6	Screech Owl	2	White-throated Sparrow	7
Gannet	16	Burrowing Owl	7	Harris Sparrow	8
Double-crested Cormorant	13	Barred Owl	7	White-crowned Sparrow	12
Anhinga	9	Chimney Swift	12	Cardinal	12
Great Blue Heron	15	Ruby-throated H-bird	4	Black-headed Grosbeak	5
Reddish Egret	11	Yellow-shafted Flicker	1	Scarlet Tanager	7
Little Blue Heron	6	Downy Woodpecker	9	Ovenbird	7
Louisiana Heron	16	Harry Woodpecker	9	Canada Warbler	6
Black-crowned Night Heron	14	Red-headed Woodpecker	8	Pine Warbler	5
Green-winged Teal	7	Great Crested Flycatcher	5	Red-eyed Vireo	5
Black Duck	7	Eastern Phoebe	8	Yellow-headed Blackbird	7
Lesser Scaup	9	Western Kingbird	6	Common Grackle	14
Ring-necked Duck	9	Tree Swallow	7	Brown-headed Cowbird	7
Blue Goose	8	Purple Martin	5	Baltimore Oriole	6
American Wigeon	8	Loggerhead Shrike	5	Rusty Blackbird	7
Common Eider	12	House Wren	6	Red-winged Blackbird	14
Black Vulture	11	Catbird	8	Tricolored Blackbird	6
Osprey	20	Mockingbird	5	Boat-tailed Grackle	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	Brown Thrasher	11	Pine Siskin	5
Golden Eagle	10	Gray-cheeked Thrush	5	American Goldfinch	7
Red-shouldered Hawk	8	Hermit Thrush	5	Evening Grosbeak	8
Ferruginous Hawk	7	Robin	1	House Finch	6
Swainson's Hawk	7	Black-capped Chickadee	9	Purple Finch	8
Ruffed Grouse	6	Tufted Titmouse	6	Pine Grosbeak	5
Gambel's Quail	6	Carolina Chickadee	5	Scrub Jay	6
Common Gallinule	5	Mountain Chickadee	7	Common Crow	13
American Coot	8	White-breasted Nuthatch	9	White-necked Raven	5
American Woodcock	5	Pygmy Nuthatch	5	Fresh Crow	7
Semipalmated Sandpiper	11	Wren-tit	5	Blue Jay	12
Herring Gull	31	Slate-colored Junco	9	Stellar's Jay	6
California Gull	11	Oregon Junco	7	Gray Jay	8
Ring-billed Gull	10	Mexican Junco	5		
Claucous-winged Gull	20	Song Sparrow	7		
Western Gull	15	Savannah Sparrow	6		
Franklin's Gull	5	Fox Sparrow	9		
Caspian Tern	26	Aberl's Towhee	5		
Least Tern	20				
Fairy Tern	26				
Roseate Tern	6				

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME announced the purchase of 59 acres of private land in the Coldwater Canyon area of the Sespe Condor Sanctuary. This land will be put into an Ecological Preserve. The purchase was made possible through the sale of monogrammed license plates.

**Audubon
Bird Reports
874-1318**

HEADQUARTERS, LIBRARY AND NATURE MUSEUM LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE

PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 90046 876-0202

PRESIDENT Dr. Gerald Maisel
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Dorothy Dimsdale
HOUSE CHAIRMAN Abigail King

Audubon House Hours 10 to 3, Monday through Friday

Thu., Apr. 3. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.

Sat., Apr. 5. CHANTRY FLAT & SANTA ANITA CANYON. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at end of Santa Anita Canyon Rd. Take San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd., north on Rosemead to Foothill Blvd., east on Foothill to Santa Anita Ave., then north to the end of Santa Anita Rd. Be prepared to hike down to the canyon stream and upstream to the falls to see resident Dippers and Spring migrants. Leader, Hal Baxter.

Tue., Apr. 8. EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. Dr. Thomas C. Emmel of the Department of Biology, University of Florida, will present a beautifully illustrated program — "Some Aspects of Tropical Ecology."

Sun., Apr. 13. PELAGIC TRIP TO SANTA BARBARA ISLAND. This trip departs from Oxnard Marina on board the Paisano. Boat will leave at 5:00 a.m. Fee \$15 per person (48 passengers). Send check, with full names of all in party to Joann Gabbard, Apt. 7, 1318 Euclid Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404 Tel. 395-1911, together with stamped, self-addressed envelope, and telephone number where you can be reached the night before in case of cancellation on account of bad weather. Clothing for cold and wet weather is always advisable. Leader, Lee Jones.

Sun., Apr. 13. TRIPPET RANCH. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in picnic area near entrance. Take Topanga Canyon Blvd. to Entrada Dr., 1 mile north of the village. Take Entrada Dr. to fork and left fork to gate at end of road. Excellent area for chaparral birds and owls. Leader, Roger Cobb.

Thu., Apr. 17. CONSERVATION MEETING, 8:00 p.m. at Plummer Park. Glenn Olson, Chairman.

Sat., Apr. 19. BUTTERBREAD SPRING. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Jawbone Canyon turnoff on Rte. 14, 20 miles north of Mojave. The group will move off promptly at 8:30 so allow time to fill gas tank, etc. This trip will be over dirt roads passable with caution. There are no toilet facilities. Bring own water. Chukar and spring migrants are possibilities. Leaders, Keith and Pam Axelson.

Sat., Apr. 26. MORONGO VALLEY. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in Covington Park, Morongo Valley. Take Interstate 10 east from L.A. to the Twenty-nine Palms Hwy., State 62, 2.5 miles east of Whitewater. Go north approximately 10 miles. Dry camping facilities in Joshua Tree National Monument and motels available in Twenty-nine Palms and Yucca Valley. Vermilion Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Lucy's Warbler and rare Spring migrants are possibilities. Leader, Jerry Maisel.

Thu., May 1. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.

Sat., May 3. MORONGO VALLEY (Same as above.) Leader,

Tue., May 13. EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park.

Thu., May 15. CONSERVATION MEETING, 8:00 p.m. at Plummer Park. Glenn Olson, Chairman.



UCLA EXTENSION COURSE: "Field Studies of California Birds, Part II"

The second part of this popular course is being offered by UCLA extension for the first time. The course consists of 5 Wednesday evening lectures at UCLA plus 4 field trips to a diversity of natural habitats. The course extends from April 2 to June 7, 1975, costs \$65, and carries 3 units of Biology credit if so desired. For further information call University Extension at 825-3839 or attend the first meeting of the class at UCLA, Room 4216 Young Hall at 7:00 P.M., Wed., April 2, 1975.

BIRDING TOUR TO DENMARK, SWEDEN, AND FINNISH LAPLAND

Arnold Small, author of *The Birds of California* and former president of the Los Angeles Audubon Society will be taking a small group of birders to northern Scandinavia from June 19 through July 10 (22 days). Total cost of this first class tour (Los Angeles to Los Angeles) is \$1770 (all inclusive). Birds of this area include those of both eastern and western Europe as well as the subarctic and high arctic species. There are a few spaces available. Call Arnold at 275-8823 if you are interested. Places to be visited include Denmark, Sweden, and Finnish Lapland.

ROBERT L. LEGGETT

The Honorable Robert L. Leggett, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment,* a Congressman from California, has requested a statement from Rogers C.B. Morton, Secretary of the Interior, regarding the lack of funds for sufficient Agents to enforce the Fish and Wildlife Service regulation. The staffing far below the authorized level of Agents may very well encourage greedy duck hunters to ignore bag limits and shooting hours.

*Room 1334, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Field Trip Information: The society cannot be responsible for transportation. Always bring binoculars and lunch. No pets or collecting permitted. On weekend trips leader is scheduled for Saturday only. 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 a society sponsored trip. For last minute changes or cancellations always call the Bird Report 874-1318 on the Friday before a scheduled trip.

The Western Tanager

Official Publication of the
Los Angeles Audubon Society

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Field Notes Shumway Suffer
Audubon Activities Donald Adams
Calendar Caroline Adams
Mailing Supervision Hans Hjorth

"The Western Tanager" is free to members of National Audubon Society assigned to the Los Angeles chapter. For all others annual subscription is \$3.50. For first class mailing, send \$1.00 to Audubon House.

CONSERVATION TOPICS

Glenn Olson

The Audubon Society Conservation Meetings

The Audubon Society Conservation meetings strive to mollify man's momentary disharmony in this ongoing symphony of life here on earth. We can use your help. The meetings are open to the public and all interested persons are heartily encouraged to attend. Bring your opinions and enthusiasm — we will put our collective energy into purposeful conservation work. We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 8 PM in Plummer Park. Need more info or notes on upcoming programs? Call Glenn Olson at 472-4737, or listen to the Audubon Bird Tape, 874-1318, during the week of the program.

The February Conservation meeting featured a presentation by Douglas DeNike of the People for Proof organization. Dr. DeNike, vice-president of Zero Population Growth, has become involved with an effort to qualify an initiative on the June, 1976 ballot. The Nuclear Initiative would require public hearings and legislative confirmation on the effectiveness of nuclear safety systems and waste disposal methods. In addition, it would require removal of federal liability limits to the nuclear industry. In effect, it requires the citizens of California and the nuclear industry to examine the safety of nuclear energy at a time when we are not yet, as a nation, completely dependent on it. The possibility of catastrophic radiation disasters due to accident such as an earthquake or a "melt-down" of the emergency cooling systems, the hazards of transportation and storage of radioactive waste, and the fear of sabotage of nuclear materials are all questions to which the People for Proof want answers.

"MAYFIELD DAY"

AT MORONGO VALLEY

A special ceremony will be held on April 26 at Morongo Valley to honor San Bernardino County Supervisor **James L. Mayfield**, the man who was instrumental in assuring that this unique desert oasis would be set aside as a County Preserve. The Nature Conservancy owns a mile and a half of the canyon, but 500 acres of adjoining land was projected for a County Park, with a swimming lagoon, barbeque pits, and paved parking spaces for 200 cars and campers. Largely through Supervisor Mayfield's efforts, this plan was killed, and instead the County in effect agreed to add their land to the nature sanctuary, installing only two comfort stations and a small parking area. Recently all utility poles were removed and power lines were placed underground. An additional 100 acres of land were then acquired by the County to serve as a buffer zone between the Preserve and the main highway. Naturalists from the County Parks Department are now on duty in the Preserve to provide orientation for visitors and to assure that the natural features of the area are protected.

The ceremony on April 26 will coincide with our scheduled field trip to the canyon, and will follow a lunch hosted by the Morongo Valley women's group. We expect that all of the Southern California Audubon Societies will join us in presenting a scroll of commendation to Supervisor Mayfield, and the Nature Conservancy will confer upon him a national award.

The Sierra Club, the Desert Protective Council, and other environmental groups plan to participate as well, and display tables will be set up to introduce visitors to the biological, geological, and archaeological attractions of the valley. It is hoped that the publicity that is generated will further the appreciation of this outstanding natural area.

BIRDS OF PREY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the December 1974 issue of *American Birds*, a publication of the National Audubon Society, an editorial entitled "Why Falconry Now" appeared, written by Editor Robert S. Arbib, Jr. **It is strongly recommended that each member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society reads this article.** (Reprints can be had by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Audubon House)

Mr. Arbib expresses his personal opinions on the sport of falconry, and opposes the issuance of any federal regulations by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which would in effect "legitimize" the sport. Instead he proposes a 10-year moratorium during which time reliable data can be gathered on continental raptor populations and an evaluation made of the population trends in the various species. He points out that: "(the Fish and Wildlife Service) which regulates the annual waterfowl harvest, would never issue its annual regulations without first censusing the resource, and then carefully controlling the harvest."

Members of conservation organization have every right to hold *personal* opinions regarding whether or not falconry as a sport should be abolished, but it is not appropriate for the organization itself to make such attitudes a matter of policy unless they are based on soundly established biological grounds, with unbiased research data to prove that pursuance of the sport is or is not damaging to the species concerned, or to the ecological picture in general. For this reason, the Board of the Los Angeles Audubon Society does not oppose falconry per se, although every member of the present board is personally in full agreement with all aspects of Arbib's arguments. However, the Board is unanimous in its support of the principle that no regulations be issued at this time, and that a national moratorium be declared on the taking of birds of prey for sport for a period of time (perhaps 10 years), during which time research data be collected by appropriate authorities on the status of all birds of prey. It is essential that such research be directed by those whose established position is neither that of the falconer nor the strict preservationist. We also feel that this should be the official position of the National Audubon Society. We also agree with Arbib that this " . . . should not be construed or misused as opposition to experimental breeding programs conducted by responsible institutions."

It is essential that we have an expression from all members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society who *oppose* such a policy. We therefore earnestly request that all those who do so please write to the President at Audubon House, expressing such opposition and their reasons and suggestions for alternate policy. Gerald Maisel, President.

As our President, Jerry Maisel said in his letter to the other Audubon Societies, "the Los Angeles Audubon Society feels that opposition to environmentally destructive activities should be only part of our conservation policy. We should also take positive action to recognize and publicize those whose actions further our cause, especially if they are figures in public life. By demonstrating our gratitude and support, we may encourage them and others to take further steps in our direction. Our message should be that protection of the environment can be politically as well as spiritually rewarding."

Barry Clark

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

by Shumway Sufi

APRIL is a month of change and, if past experience is an indication, it will be a change for the better as far as birders are concerned. The dull days of late winter and early spring are past and every week should bring new migrants to delight those of us who are in the field.

New birders tend to think that old timers have special places, even secret places where they find rare birds, but this is true only to a very minor extent - 99% of the best birding spots are available to everyone, and the reason rare birds are found is that these good places are birded more frequently by experienced birders. Last fall's record at the previously neglected Big Sycamore Canyon is a prime example - two new species for California and dozen or more rare vagrants, any one of which would normally have made a birder's day. It is doubtful that a fraction of these birds would have been reported except for the publicity following the initial discovery of the Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher there.

While local parks and coastal canyons will provide convenient birding in April, the desert oases are the best spots for spring migrants. The old stand bys - Morongo and Yucca Valleys, Twenty-nine Palms, Cottonwood Springs (are there still Elf Owls there?), and the Anza-Borrego areas - are ideal for one day trips or for overnights if you make a loop trip. Further afield, an overnight to Finney Lake, the Brock Ranch (east of Holtville), and the Colorado River above Yuma, with a special look at Westpond where California's only Olivaceous Cormorants have been found in mid-April, can be rewarding. Later in the month or in May try for Desert Center and nearby Corn Springs (Elf Owls possible), Kelso and Cima (railroad oases), then Saratoga Springs, Shoshone, Furnace Creek Ranch, Scotty's Castle, and Deep Springs for a long weekend.

Even now (March 8), after a week of soaking rain, reports of early migrants are beginning to trickle in. Russ and Marion Wilson saw eleven very early VAUX' SWIFTS while swimming in a pool in Huntington Beach on Feb. 21. Herb and Olga Clarke's Glendale feeder had its first RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD on Feb. 19, but except for resident Anna's and a few Allen's along the coast, which are probably wintering birds, there are few other reports. Swallows are always early and conspicuous. TREE SWALLOWS winter with us but numbers have increased noticeably since mid-February. Dave Foster found the first CLIFF SWALLOW on Feb. 10 and by March 1 they were building nests under the overpasses of Highway 15 in Kern County (Jerry Johnson). On Feb. 9, Jerry studied a puzzling swallow at Marina del Rey which showed many, but not all, of the characteristics of a CAVE SWALLOW, and which he believes might be Cave X Cliff Swallow hybrid. The Monday Birders in the company of Dave Foster, whom they met while studying the TRUMPETER SWAN which returned briefly (if it was the same individual, as seems probable) to Legg Lake on Feb. 15 - 17 after an absence of six weeks, visited a large gravel pit in nearby El Monte. Here they saw a flock of 175 COMMON MERGANSERS (considered uncommon in coastal Southern California), which included only seven adult males - an unexplained sex ratio. Also here were three male BLUE-WINGED TEAL, and hundreds of SWALLOWS - Tree, Violet-green, Rough-winged and Cliff, the first that most of us had seen this year. A male HOODED ORIOLE arrived at Jean Brandt's Encino feeder on March 2 (about three weeks early for this area) which she thinks, because of its habits and familiarity with her garden, is the same

individual that summered there last year. Strangely enough we often have winter reports of WHITE WINGED-DOVES along the coast, but almost never from the deserts where they nest, so it seems probable that the Russ Wilson's two White-wings in Borrego State Park on March 2 were indeed early migrants.

The drake HARLEQUIN DUCK, which has been at Marina del Rey off and on for three years now, disappeared after the LAAS Christmas count, but reappeared at least briefly on March 5 in the main channel, not in Ballona Creek which it favored previously (Jerry J.). In the nearby marsh, Hal Ferris found four GOLDEN PLOVERS of the Siberian race (fulva) on Feb. 12, and on the breakwaters there were at least two BLACK OYSTERCATCHERS. Is nesting possible on the isolated breakwater across the harbor mouth where they would be undisturbed? Our frequent comments, that MERLINS are increasingly rare in the Southwest, has brought two recent reports - Lane Slate, a new arrival from New York, saw one at his home in Pacific Palisades on Jan. 24, and Lloyd Kiff spotted one near Lake Castaic on Feb. 27 while doing raptor survey. Large buteos, except for Red-tails, also are a cause for concern particularly due to urbanization of their winter habitat locally. All buteos are unaccountably scarce in the Imperial Valley which makes the sighting of two FERRUGINOUS HAWKS there on Jan. 26 (Hal Baxter), and of a single ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK there on Feb. 15 (the Clarkes) especially noteworthy. The Clarkes also saw single SANDHILL CRANE near the south end of the sea on March 1. A few winter there now and then.

It was formerly thought that Gray Flycatchers were the only Empidonax to winter normally in Southern California (Pyle and Small '61), but recent winter reports of Western and Dusky/Hammond's Flycatchers have at least equalled those of Grays. At hand are two reports of GRAY FLYCATCHERS - one on the Griffith Park Golf Course on Feb. 12 (Jerry J.) and another at Yaqui Wells, Borrego Park (the Wilsons). We also have two reports of DUSKY/HAMMOND FLYCATCHERS - one wintering in Presidio Park, San Diego, and another seen in Big Sycamore Canyon on Feb. 23 (Jerry J.).

It is often difficult to decide whether February reports are of early migrants or of wintering individuals not previously observed. Such is the case of the WARBLING VIREO reported by Justin Russel in Griffith Park on Feb. 19. They are seldom reported in winter but one was seen in January in Arcadia so wintering seems probable in this case too. The two best warblers of the winter were found by Jerry Johnson on a willow bordered ditch near Caspar Road, Pt. Mugu, on Feb. 28 - a NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH and a PALM WARBLER. These two species plus a YELLOW WARBLER have wintered in this area previously. Justin Russel's GRAY-HEADED JUNCO stayed in Griffith Park well into February and a partially albino Junco with an all white head was studied at Idyllwild by Mary Tozier.

Almost anyplace, except the high mountains, provide good birding in April and May and these are exciting days to be afield and to meet old friends both birds and people and to find new ones.

