

# American Aviculture 60 Years Ago

by Jean Delacour  
Clères, France

[Editor's Note: This article was published in *Avicultural Magazine*, the *Journal of the Avicultural Society (England)* in May, 1937. It is used here with the kind permission of Mr. Frank Woolham, its honorary editor, and Professor J.R. Hodges, council chairman of the *Avicultural Society (England)*. Dr. Delacour writes on his experiences during a visit to California and we learn the extent to which American aviculture had risen 60 years ago. The number of species then kept is very impressive. The Tahitian, Ultramarine, and Kuhl's Lories were kept and the Ultramarine, for one, was even bred. The article identifies many unusual species of birds ranging from parrots and softbill to a California Condor. Delacour mentions hybrids observed in various aviaries and the editors of *Watchbird* have left those references intact in keeping with the philosophy of 60 years ago. DRT]

On 14th November I left Chicago at 6:30 a.m. by air, and before 7:30 p.m. I was at the Sacramento Aerodrome, a journey which takes over three days by train. Mr. W. Leland Smith was waiting for me, and took me to his home at Fair Oaks.

Most of the California Pheasant-breeders live in the Sacramento-San Francisco region. In the Sacramento Valley, climatic conditions are similar to those in the South of France: a mild winter, but often damp and sometimes as cold as 15°, and a very hot, dry summer. They seem to suit all sorts of Pheasants, as well as Pigeons and Doves. Mr. Leland Smith has an orange and flower ranch as well as an important bird-farm. He breeds Game birds in large numbers, all sorts of Pheasants — American Quails, Chukor Partridges, many species of wild Pigeons and Doves, including Crowned and Victoria's Gouras, and a few small birds, Parrots, and Waterfowl. He has well over a hundred aviaries, most of them very roomy and without artificial shelters, but shaded by century-old evergreen oaks. The soil is sandy. Like most Pheasant breeders in California, oats,

barley, alfalfa, etc., are sown and grown inside the aviaries during the winter to provide green food. Fruit is always plentiful and cheap in California.

Mr. Smith owns the finest collection of Pheasants in America, where nearly all the rarer species are represented, the gems of which are several pairs of the White Eared-Pheasant and a pair of Chinese Monauls. He also possesses and breeds Koklass, Rheinartes, Argus, Palawan and Bronze-tailed Polyplectron; and I saw there a pair of the rare *Tetrophaps tibetanus* [Tibetan Snowcock] a large Partridge from the high mountains of Western China. The different species of Firebacks do extremely well at Fair Oaks, and breed freely. Although Mr. Smith is endeavouring to make his collection pay through breeding, he is a most genuine and enthusiastic bird lover. I greatly enjoyed the few days I spent in his hospitable ranch.

My host drove me about the district for several days, and we visited together a number of interesting Game farms, without speaking of such wonderful mountain scenery as Lake Tahoe. We saw, particularly, the California State Game Farm at Napa, where thousands of Ring-necks and Mongolian Pheasants, Quails, Chukors, some Amhersts, Goldens, and Reeve's, and Mexican Wild Turkeys are reared annually. Excellent results are obtained with electric incubators and brooders, the latter placed in houses connected to small outdoor pens with cement floors covered with a couple of inches of sand. Mr. Bade, the superintendent, was most hospitable, and gave me very useful information. We also visited the aviaries of Mr. J. W. Steinbeck, who has a nice selection of rare Pheasants and Doves at Stockton; those of Mr. H. F. Kangieser, at Menlo Park, where there are some good Pheasants and excellent Doves, including many Mountain Witches and Kubary's Ground Pigeons, and some interesting *Phapitreton* [Fruit doves] from the Philippine Islands, among others, as well as hybrids,

*Gallicolumba Kubaryi* X *G. rubescens*. We also arrived just in time to see the aviaries, numerous and extensive, and a few remnants of the Pheasant collection of Mr. W. J. Jackson, who has just given up his hobby, a great pity as he was most successful in breeding several rare species, including Satyr, Temminck's and Cabot's Tragopans, Imperial, Edward's, and Mikado Pheasants, different Polyplectrons, Java, and Sonnerat's Junglefowl.

We paid a visit to Mr. S. H. Levin, who also was selling out his large collection of Pheasants, Parrakeets, Pigeons, Waders, and small birds. There were a dozen Victoria Crowned Pigeons, most of them bred on the spot, as well as several Blue Porphyrios [gallinules and/or swamphens], a mixture of the African, Indian, and Australian species. There were over 100 Peafowl, Blue, White, Black-winged, and Specifer, which are most prolific in California, even the last named, and are bred all over this State in numbers, as well as hybrids, which are quite popular.

In the different suburbs of San Francisco one finds many bird stores. Mr. Mori, a Japanese dealer, usually offers a good selection of Japanese and Filipino birds, from Cranes to Finches, as well as Australian and sometimes Indian species. He is now the first importer on the Pacific Coast. The best shops are on the eastern side of the bay, near Oakland, some quite far from the centre. These Californian bird-stores look very nice and different from what we have on this side of the Atlantic. They consist of a house, usually new and nicely built, on the road, with the shop in front; at the back there is an extensive piece of ground where rows of aviaries have been built, usually very neatly. Canaries, Parrots, and some show birds are kept in the shop, as well as cages, food, etc.; but the largest number of birds, including Peacocks, Pheasants, Doves, Parrakeets, etc., live, and often breed, in outdoor aviaries. The whole arrangement is far cleaner and more attractive than what we see in the usual European bird-shops. The best that I have visited are those of Messrs. Thierry, Poisal, and Julius, the two first of French origin, while Mr. Brock, a native of Scotland, has several town shops and is very clever with difficult insectivorous birds. He helped me greatly in the packing and care of the birds I brought over.

Since a few years, the city of San Francisco has a zoo, situated on the ocean

shore. From the name of its principal supporter it is known as the Fleishacker Zoo. The present accommodations are temporary and simple, but quite good, and Carnivora particularly — lions, tigers, black leopards, pumas, and jaguars are breeding regularly. There are only a limited number of birds. But a large modern zoo is now being built: what I have seen of the works and plans shows that it will become a very fine modern establishment. It is supervised by Mr. Edmund Heller, the well-known naturalist and explorer, who accompanied Theodore Roosevelt on his African trip.

The climate of San Francisco itself, and between the Bay and the ocean, is very peculiar; practically even all the year round, never very cold, never hot, with a lot of fog. It does not seem to be very favourable to birds in general. But on the other side of the Bay, and farther north and south, the temperature rises in the summer and drops in the winter, being comparable, I think, to the south-west of France. It suits Game birds perfectly.

In the San Francisco district there are many private aviaries, and I visited a number of them. Many amateurs have from one to twenty pens, with nice collections of small birds, Doves and Parakeets, also a few Quails and Pheasants. Some are more important and I should mention a few.

Mr. C. C. Broadwater, a Vice-President of the Avicultural Society of America, has a fine collection at Oakland. Several large and high aviaries, adjoining the house, are the home of many Australian and other Finches, which breed freely, and also Tanagers, etc. In another part of the garden there are rows of aviaries, mostly for Parakeets, and among many rarities I noticed three young Pileated. There are high shelters heated by electricity on a thermostat system, which seems to be very satisfactory.

Mrs. H. S. Bonestell has also a very interesting collection in several groups of aviaries, built on extensive grounds on the bank of a narrow, wooded valley, where lots of wild birds, especially Californian Quail, are very tame owing to protection. *Tanygnathus* and *Eclectus* Parrots breed regularly with her. I noticed particularly excellent Cissas and Fairy Bluebirds. Mrs. Bonestell is a great traveller in Eastern Asia and the South Seas, and she has brought home many rare birds.

On the south side of San Francisco, at Los Altos, Mr. R. A. Isemberg, whose

name is well known in aviculture, has large aviaries where he keeps and breeds many rare softbills, Touracous, etc. Unfortunately, I was not able to visit him this time owing to sudden change in the date of my sailing. He is now moving to a new and larger place.

For an Old World aviculturist, one collection is of very great interest, that of Mr. Eric Kinsey, at Manor, in a cool and shady canyon of Marin County, north of the Bay of San Francisco. Mr. Kinsey, the present president of the Cooper Club, is an excellent ornithologist, who knows as much of wild Californian birds as anyone on earth. But, quite rightly, he believes that there is a great deal more to be learned of the habits and behaviour of birds by keeping them in captivity, under special conditions, and he has been particularly successful in this endeavour. He has a very large and high aviary, thickly planted with trees and berry bushes, with a very roomy shelter; another good-sized aviary, half a dozen compartments, and a smaller flight, with a good shelter, as well as a number of cages complete his accommodations. I forgot to say that, so far, Mr. Kinsey has specialized on Californian passerine birds, and keeps no others, except a few Anna and Allen Humming-birds. Of course, he can only do so by enjoying a special scientific permit from the Federal Government and the State of California, as most species of birds are strictly protected. In Mr. Kinsey's aviaries one sees practically all species of local passerine birds. I was thrilled to watch in captivity such rarities as Varied Thrushes, Mountain and Western Bluebirds, Townsends' Solitaires, American Flycatchers, Horned Larks, Pipits, Rock Wrens, Nuthatches, Wren-tits (*Chamaea*), Thrashers, Waxwings, Phainopeplas, several species of American Warblers, including the beautiful "Long-tailed Chat" (*Icteria virens*), a fine songster, Troupials, Western Tanagers, different Grosbeaks and Buntings, Towhees, and Sparrows. Later on, I spent several days up country with Mr. Kinsey to trap some of the birds that I was kindly allowed to take home with me, and I had a very interesting experience, watching and catching such lovely species as Western and Mountain Bluebirds, of which I'll say more later on. Mr. Kinsey's enthusiasm and helpful kindness cannot be praised too much, and it is thanks only to him that I have been able to take with me an excellent collection of California birds, most of which had never before reached Europe alive.

There used to be a wonderful collection of Waterfowl near San Francisco, that of my late friend, Mr. de Laveaga. It was unfortunately dispersed after his death, although it had been donated to the Whittier Bird Club, a public institution situated near Los Angeles, which, unfortunately, could not be maintained owing to financial difficulties. Mr. N. B. Tucker had also built up an equally good one, at his duck-shooting club on the south-east of the Bay. Unfortunately, Mr. Tucker has just given it up, so that there are no more large Waterfowl collections in California. There are some, however, in Oregon, Washington, and Utah, I hear, but I had no time to visit them.

California, however, has a great attraction for the Waterfowl lover, as it is a paradise for wild Swans, Geese, and Ducks. Owing to protection, many bays and marshes are full of Waterfowl, some of them wonderfully tame. Even in towns, wild Ducks abound on ornamental waters, mostly Mallards, Pintails, Wigeons, Green-winged Teal, Ruddy Ducks, lesser and Ring-necked Scaup, and Canvas-backs. In sheltered bays there are hundreds or thousands of Ducks of different species: Pintails, Wigeons, Gadwall, Buffle-heads, Golden-eyes, Ruddies, countless Surf-Scoters (which on the wing, absurdly resemble Hill-Mynahs, with their yellow and white patches!), Velvet Scoters, Scaup, Reed-heads (scarce), and Black Brent. At sea there are some Mergansers, and I saw a lovely pair of Harlequins; and I am not speaking of the hordes of Waders, Cormorants, Loons, Gulls, etc. On waters sheltered by trees one sees some Carolina Ducks. The only two Californian species absent at that time of year, as they migrate south, are the Fulvous Tree-duck and the Cinnamon Teal. But the finest sight is that of hundreds of thousands of wild Geese in the Sacramento Valley: I watched them for two days and must have been about 300,000. The most numerous are the White-fronted, Lesser Snow or Cackling and Hutchin's Geese; there is only one flock of about 10,000 Ross's Snow Geese, all there is in the world, and a few Tule Geese or Greater White-fronted (*anser albifrons gambelli*). The larger Canadian Goose does not mix with the others, and is found in small groups on higher ponds; it is the only one that breeds in California. There are, of course, lots of Ducks in the valley, and I saw also hundred of Whistling Swans and came across a big flock of Sandhill Cranes (800 to 1,000), the largest

seen since many years. I am indebted for these interesting trips to Mr. James Moffitt, the ornithologist of the Academy of Natural Science in San Francisco, a keen field naturalist and a great lover and specialist of Water-birds. I owe also to his kindness the opportunity of taking home a Black Brent, a Ross's Snow, and a Cackling Goose.

At Oakland I had the pleasure of meeting several times my old friend Dr. E. W. Gifford, the well-known anthropologist, who keeps a collection of rare Pigeons and Doves. While, ten years ago, he was mostly interested in the different Ground Doves, he now specializes and collects only species in which the sexes are different.

Between San Francisco and Los Angeles, one must see Mr. R. Hearst's hacienda at San Simeon. It is the most astonishing place on earth. It includes several hundreds of thousands of acres of beautiful country: mountains and valleys, with the ocean shore to the west, all practically wild and extremely picturesque. Unfortunately, this fine scenery is somewhat spoiled by the huge house, an unfinished structure which is supposed to represent a Spanish castle, but rather reminds one of a glorified Monte-Carlo casino! It is surrounded by elaborate gardens, full of marble balustrades, steps, pavements, statues, temples, etc., where some beautiful things stand among less happy efforts. There are marvellous works of art inside the castle, and three smaller guest houses. There, to come back to our subject, one sees in huge enclosures all sorts of wild Cattle, Deer, Zebras and Antelope, Ostriches, Rheas, Emus, and Cassowaries at liberty, and that is well worth the visit. There is also a regular, if not very attractive, menagerie with Tigers, Lions, Elephants, Giraffes, Monkeys, etc.

At a large poultry and game farm are a few fancy Pheasants, Ducks, and Parrots; but nothing of special interest. I hear

that the famous Mr. Hearst has spent millions on his ranch, and I well believe it; what could not have been achieved by such means on such a wonderful site!

With the exception of one week in San Francisco, when I returned in mid-December, I was in Southern California from 26th November till 12th January. During my visit the weather was mostly warm and sunny, but there were cold nights, rainy, chilly days, and, for a few days, hard frosts (18° at Pasadena). Of course, the climate changes very much locally, some spots being always above freezing. On the whole, the climate is very similar to that of the Riviera, hot and dry during the summer, mild in the winter, which is the rainy season, with occasional cold spells. As it is, it suits birds in general admirably, particularly Australian and other Finches, Australian Parrakeets, African Lovebirds, Conures, Cockatoos and other Parrots, Pigeons, and Doves; they all live well and breed freely in outdoor aviaries with open shelters. I have no doubt that other exotic birds would do just as well, after being acclimatized, from what I have seen at some amateurs. But South Californian breeders' efforts have so far been mostly directed toward the breeding of seed-eating birds. Large numbers have been reared annually since a few years, and easily absorbed locally. Numerous people have built aviaries in the Los Angeles district, and surplus birds can be quickly disposed of. There are lots of bird-shops and farms, some very large and well-fitted, with numerous flights in their back gardens. The best are now "Flower's Tropical Bird Farm", "Bird Wonderland", "Southern California Bird and Pet Exchange". They have a very good assortment of Budgerigars, Canaries, Australian Finches, some African and Asiatic birds, many Mexican birds, and also a few rarities of various origin, as well as many Game birds, a few Waders, and Waterfowl. They usually have a large flight-cage in front.

The prices of imported foreign birds are generally higher than with us; but Japanese, Filipino, and Australian birds are about the same or cheaper. Mexican, Central American, Columbian, and Venezuelan birds, rather cheap. Indian and, still more, African birds are five or six times dearer than they are in Europe. Pheasants and Waterfowl have more or less the same value. Among the smaller birds bred in California, the rarer Parrakeets, Parrots, and Finches are very cheap, fetching about one-half of Euro-

pean prices only.

The Avicultural Society of America now have their headquarters in Los Angeles, as it is the American city where the greatest number of members live. It is also the seat of the California Game Breeders' Association, and of the southern branch of the Cooper Ornithological Club. These three societies most kindly entertained me at a dinner attended by nearly a hundred ornithologists and aviculturists, whom I was delighted to meet.


Nearly all South Californian aviaries are built of wood, with substantial shelters, often as large as the flights themselves, but not heated. There are no movable aviaries: they were found unnecessary on account of the sandy soil and dry climate. They are usually disposed in rows and blocks.

I have visited a number of aviculturists in or near Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego, and, later on, I'll give some information on the larger collections. But a few words in general on the birds one sees almost everywhere may be useful. With the exception of the Firetails and Painted Finches, all Australian species are numerous and bred in large numbers. Gouldians do extremely well, and also Diamond Sparrows. There are only a few Parrot Finches, and all African Waxbills are rare, although they do well. Zebra Finches are common and very cheap; a silver and a white strain has been evolved. White and grey Java Sparrows are widespread. Other seed-eaters are scarcer than in Europe.

Doves of all sorts are more numerous than they are with us, and do exceedingly well.

Quite a few Amazon and Grey Parrots, Ring-necks, and Conures are bred each season, and also *Eclectus* and *Tanygnathus*, and Cockatoos. Grass Parrakeets, Lorikeets, and Broadtails in general are reared in numbers; but there are very few King's, Crimson-wings, Blue-winged, Turquoise, Rock-Peplars, Barraband's, Bauer's, and Barnard's, and no Stanley's. Many-coloured, Hooded, Blue-bonnets, Queen Alexandra [Princes of Wales], nor Splendids [Scarlet-chested]. There are, on the other hand, a few odd *Pyrrhuloxia* and a fair number of Norfolk Island [Kakariki] and Pileated Parrakeets. Thousands of Masked, Fischer's, Nyassa, Peach-faced, and Black-cheeked Lovebirds are bred, as well as Budgerigars, and all have a low value. I saw a few Madagascar and Abyssinian Lovebirds, and some of the

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latter breed, although only on rare occasions.

As our members know well, it was Lord Tavistock's enterprise that started Parrakeet breeding in California. The birds he sent several years ago have produced many of the present inhabitants of the Los Angeles aviaries. All aviculturists ought to be grateful to him for such a happy initiative.

I stayed in South California with my friend, Marquess Hachisuka, the well-known Japanese ornithologist, who has lived at Pasadena and Los Angeles for the last eighteen months on account of his health, which, I am glad to say, is now going good again.

The largest private collection of birds in the district of Los Angeles is perhaps that of Mr. W. J. Sheffler, a vice-president of the Aviculture Society, who is also a keen ornithologist and egg collector. At his home he has a beautiful semi-circular aviary for small birds, consisting of a central house with eight flights radiating from it. There he keeps all sorts of Finches, Tanagers, and other small birds, and also some Road-Runners, the curious desert Ground Cuckoos of the south-west. It is one of the most varied mixed collections of birds that I have seen in the district, and artistically shown. Large box-cages are the home of some Tahitian Blue Lories, which nested last summer, but unfortunately resented inquisition and forsook their eggs. Some miles away, but still in Los Angeles City (one must not forget that the city limits include many towns, oil-fields, marshes, waste grounds, and cultivated tracts, its diameter being some 30 miles), Mr. Sheffler has built a large block of aviaries, walled-in, with a central house. They consist of four rows of flights, completed by a fifth row outside, and, in front, by a very large and high flight cage, containing a pond for Waterfowl. He keeps there several species of Tree-Ducks, Teal, and small Ducks, South African Sheldrakes, Currassows, a few male Pheasants, lots of Cockatiels, and Doves, Jays, and Magpies. In the numerous compartments live many different species of Parrakeets; Mealy Rosellas and Pennant's breed very freely, as well as different Cockatoos and Conures. I noticed especially several Brown's [rosella], a pair of Norfolk Island's, Lucon *Tanygnathus* [Blue-naped Parrot], Mitchell's and Forsten's Lorikeets, and hybrids with Swainson's. There are also quite a number of Jay Thrushes, Mexican Jays, etc., and a fine pair of Harris Hawks (*Parabuteo*

*unicinctus*), various Pheasants and Quails.

Dr. R. A. Woods also possesses remarkable birds, mostly Parrakeets, and has great success with King's, Bourke's, and other rare species, as well as with Finches. I noticed several All-green Tanagers, out of doors, in perfect condition, which is not often seen. Dr. Woods is also a keen field ornithologist and oologist.

Other interesting collections of Finches, Parrots, and Parrakeets are those of Mr. A. G. Orear, the editor of *Aviculture*; Mrs. V. Wright; Mrs. H. Scheu (who has blue and yellow Masked Lovebirds); and Miss I. Maurois, to mention a few I have visited. Mr. C. Naether has some excellent Doves, which he is studying very carefully. Mrs. S. Tomlinson, who has given up most of her birds after her husband's death, still has, in perfect condition after more than four years, her wonderful male Anna Humming-bird, which lives in a large sheltered aviary built along the wall of the house, full of creepers and bushes. Mr. S. Stevens, near Riverside, has a large and pretty aviary of two compartments, where he keeps a fine mixed collection of seed- and soft food-eating birds. I noticed there the finest Golden Oriole (the Philippine race) that I ever saw, a delightfully tame Plumed Ground Dove, and a lovely Tabuan Parrakeet [Red Shining Parrot].

Mr. and Mrs. B. Black have very large, wild aviaries, with many Pheasants, Pigeons, Parrakeets, etc. For over ten years they have bred the fine *Otidiphaps nobilis*, and they still have eight of them. I noticed a gorgeous hybrid Borneo Fireback X Swinhoe Pheasant. Mr. Black claims that they reared a hybrid between the Nicobar Pigeon and the *Otidiphaps*, which, unfortunately, I could not see.

Mr. Howland, at the foot of his oil wells, has a fine pheasantry, with many rare species. Mr. J. R. Gorton, the president of the Game Breeders' Association, has a good mixed collection. Mr. W. J. Parsonson, a keen beginner, breeds Pheasants and the smaller Waterfowl.

Mr. Gilbert Lee has been successful in breeding Grey Parrots and Eclectus for several years, and he has quite a breeding stock of them, as well as of some other species of Parrots and Parrakeets. The gems of his collection are a newly arrived and exquisite pair of Marquesan Blue Lories (*Coriphilus smaragdinus*) [ultra marinel], and a pair of Kuhl's Ruby Lories. These have been nesting repeat-

edly for several years, but only one young one was so far reared, all the others dying after a couple of days. Mr. Lee is now trying a new and more insectile diet, which they probably require.

Dr. Leon Patrick, at Orange, is one of the first and most successful Parrot breeders in California, and many of Lord Tavistock's birds have been entrusted to him. He has a choice collection, including several pairs of Norfolk Island, Pileated, and Derbyan Parrakeets. He has just bred a hybrid Panama X Levaillant's Amazon.

In the vicinity of San Diego, a very warm district, we visited what is perhaps the largest private collection of Parrots in America, that of Mr. I. D. Putnam. He has some 150 large outdoor compartments, built along walls in two rows facing one another, with a large space between them. Mr. Putnam owns many pairs of different species of Australian Parrakeets, including Brown's and Pileated, of Conures, Lories, Macaws, and Cockatoos, and a few others. There is a beautiful tame Masked Shining Parrakeet from Fiji, hybrid Edward's X Blue Mountain Lories, and also a few Game birds, among them some Masked Bob-whites (*Colinus ridgways*), from Texas, a rare species.

Farther away from the city, on a picturesque and rugged hill, Mrs. E. M. Robinson, an artist and animal lover, who lived many years in France, has large and fine aviaries inhabited by Tragopans, other rare Pheasants, and various birds.


In the San Fernando Valley, near Fillmore, two of the best Californian collections can be seen. Mr. F. H. Rudkin, who left England some twenty years ago, possesses a number of aviaries, some of them very roomy and high, and planted with tall orange and other trees. He keeps a beautiful selection of Parrakeets, Finches, and other birds, and he breeds them most successfully; for instance, I saw over fifty young Gouldians. There

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are, among other rarities, several pileated Parrakeets and blue Masked Lovebirds, the latter produced suddenly by his normally coloured birds during the last breeding season. Mr. Rudkin loves his birds, which are all tame and seem to know him well.

Not far from Mr. Rudkin's ranch, Mr. and Mrs. Keith Spalding own a unique collection on their large estate of "Rancho Sespe." Nearly all the aviaries I have been mentioning in South California are situated in towns or their suburbs, in small gardens, and, therefore, form very compact blocks. At Rancho Sespe, in the open country, they have been built on a larger scale, and remind one, more than others, of those of our European parks. There is, not far from the house, an enclosure with many pens and aviaries. A delightful little herd of exceedingly tame little Reeve's Muntjacs, as well as many Game birds, run round the pens and beg for food in a very amusing way. In the pens live rare Pheasants and Peacocks, Curassows, Cranes, etc., as well as many small birds, Doves, and Parrakeets. The whole aspect is very pleasing, the aviaries being well kept and attractive. A very bright Red-shining Parrakeet, from Fiji, attracted my attention, among many other rarities. A long distance away, and higher upon the slope of the hill, there is a very large Wader aviary and a Game farm, with numerous roomy pens; many Pheasants and innumerable Peafowl live and breed there, as well as what made "Rancho Sespe" famous in the avicultural world — a breeding pair of Ceram Cassowaries and their offspring. The male and the female live in adjoining pens, but separately: they can only be safely put together when the female is in breeding condition, and for a few hours at a time. Afterwards, the cock, much the smaller bird of the two, sits on the eggs

and rears the young. In 1934 two were bred and they look now almost like adults. Last year the hen killed the chicks through the wire partition, so that now the male and his brood are removed farther away. This year there is another fine chick. This achievement is almost unique in aviculture, as there are only a very few records of Cassowaries breeding in European zoos. Mr. W. Honsinger supervises with the greatest care and keenness the Rancho Sespe collection.

The least said of the very poor public zoo of Los Angeles the better, but there is an excellent one at San Diego, very cleverly managed by Mrs. B. Benchley. It is very remarkable that a city of 150,000 inhabitants has been able to promote and can sustain such an important establishment.

The San Diego Zoo occupies a large piece of ground in Balboa Park, all artificially wooded (mostly eucalyptus and acacias), with deep gullies and steep hills, very picturesque. There are some very good new buildings, but the greatest part of the accommodation is of the roomy, semi-wild, outdoor sort. There are excellent and rare mammals, including two wonderful mountain Gorillas; but the bird collection is particularly important. Parrots, particularly Lories (there is a hybrid *Eos histrio* X *E. bornea*), are very numerous, all kept in outdoor aviaries, many breeding regularly. Doves and small birds are also very interesting, and will soon be moved to new and better quarters. A pond is stocked with some Waterfowl and, during the winter, is crowded with wild migrants, mostly Pintails; it took these birds only a couple of years to find this quite small artificial piece of water, hidden under trees. A special feature of the zoo is the two immense flying cages, built on steep slopes over large trees. One measures 150 by 50 ft., and accommodates a mixed collection of large birds, among which are a Frigate Bird, which has lived there now for eight years, Kagus, Galapagos Gulls, all sorts of Herons, Tree Ducks, Ibises, Storks, Cranes, etc. The other one, just completed, is larger still, and contains Eagles and Vultures. The Birds of Prey collection is excellent, and I noticed especially four Galapagos Buzzards and a California Condor. The San Diego bird collection, one of the best in America, has the great advantage, owing to the climate, of being kept in the open where they have a much better chance to become established and to breed. At liberty in the grounds are literally hundreds of

Chachalaca (*Ortalis vetula*), or Texas Guans, which all come from a dozen originally introduced birds, and breed freely in the trees, as well as some other Game birds.

Another interesting establishment is the Catalina Island Bird Park. Catalina Island is about 20 miles from the San Pedro Harbour. It is a large, mountainous island, sufficiently well watered and wooded, the property of the Wrigley family (of chewing-gum fame), who have developed it into a pleasure resort. The late Mr. Wrigley, who was a keen bird fancier, combined his taste with his interests and created the Bird Park both for his amusement and as an attraction to visitors. Since his death, it has been maintained mostly for the second reason. For many years the Bird Park was managed by Mr. E. H. Lewis, who is now organizing the Waikiki Bird Park at Honolulu. The Bird Park is situated a few miles inland in a pretty and well-sheltered valley. It is a walled-in enclosure, with a large and high round-shaped flying cage in front, and several paths with rows of aviaries, all nicely built and laid out. At the back there is roomy breeding accommodation. The collection of birds is large and general, and contains very good things. There are many Pheasants and other Game birds, some Waterfowl, Ostriches, Rheas, Cassowaries, various Cranes, and other Waders, different Crowned Pigeons, Doves, a large number of Parrots, and many small birds, including Birds of Paradise. Many birds breed, and I noticed some curious hybrids: two beautiful Macaws (Blue and Yellow X Red and Blue), a lovely apricot colour underneath, pale greenish blue above, much prettier than either parents; some Lories (*Eos bornea* X *Tricoglossus moluccanus*), and Mikado X Swinhoe's Pheasants. The collection is well cared for by Mr. D. G. Mobley, and kept up to its standard, and it is quite an interesting and pretty show to the public. It is only to be regretted that the larger birds are not kept in more roomy enclosures.

I must stop here, and I fear that I have not done justice to our American colleagues; but our pages are, alas, limited. I hope, however, that it will give our European members some idea of what has been achieved in the United States, mostly in the course of the last ten years, which is quite remarkable. Also my numerous American bird friends, who gave me such a cordial welcome, may find here a small tribute to their great kindness and hospitality. ➤

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