

## WESTERN BIRD PHOTOGRAPHERS

### A PHOTO ESSAY BY FRANS LANTING

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Sparrow in willow tree, Holland, 1976

Often as I glance through a new issue of *Geo* or *Audubon* or *National Wildlife*, a single photo will arrest my attention: Frans Lanting must have taken this one. And usually he did.

Frans' photos are distinctive. Often moody and dramatic, they capture the subtleties of light and flashing wings. Frans will lie on a mudflat, drenched by the advancing tide, in order to photograph Willets or Marbled Godwits from their own height and perspective. He has a high replacement rate for camera equipment, but the results are stunning.

Frans Lanting's photos have won state, national and international awards, including First Prize and Grand Prize in the International Nature Photography Contest in the Netherlands for two years in a row, *Natural History's* First Prize for Wildlife Photography, and awards in numerous categories in the Califor-

nia Fish and Game Commission's annual competition. He has co-authored a book, *Feathers and Flight*, with David Cavagnaro, which is being published by Graphic Arts Center of Portland, Oregon; Roger Tory Peterson wrote the forward. His work is used by magazines such as *Life*, *Audubon*, *Geo*, *Natural History* and *Oceans*, as well as dozens of publications in Europe.

Born in Rotterdam, Holland, Frans now lives in Santa Cruz, California. His growing eminence as a wildlife photographer is well-deserved, for he pursues his craft with an intense, single-pointed focus. Frans writes, "I had no idea that all of the above was in the future when I made that photo of the sparrow in the willow, but my basic attitude hasn't changed much. I still photograph from the heart. The difference is that I've become much more sophisticated in my understanding of birds. For that I owe a lot to ornithologists the world over."

Frans occasionally teaches photo workshops, either through a university or at a special event, such as the annual Bald Eagle conference in Klamath Falls, Oregon. His workshops cover field work and camouflage, the mechanics of his techniques, special problems in wildlife photography and equipment. (He prefers older model Nikons.)

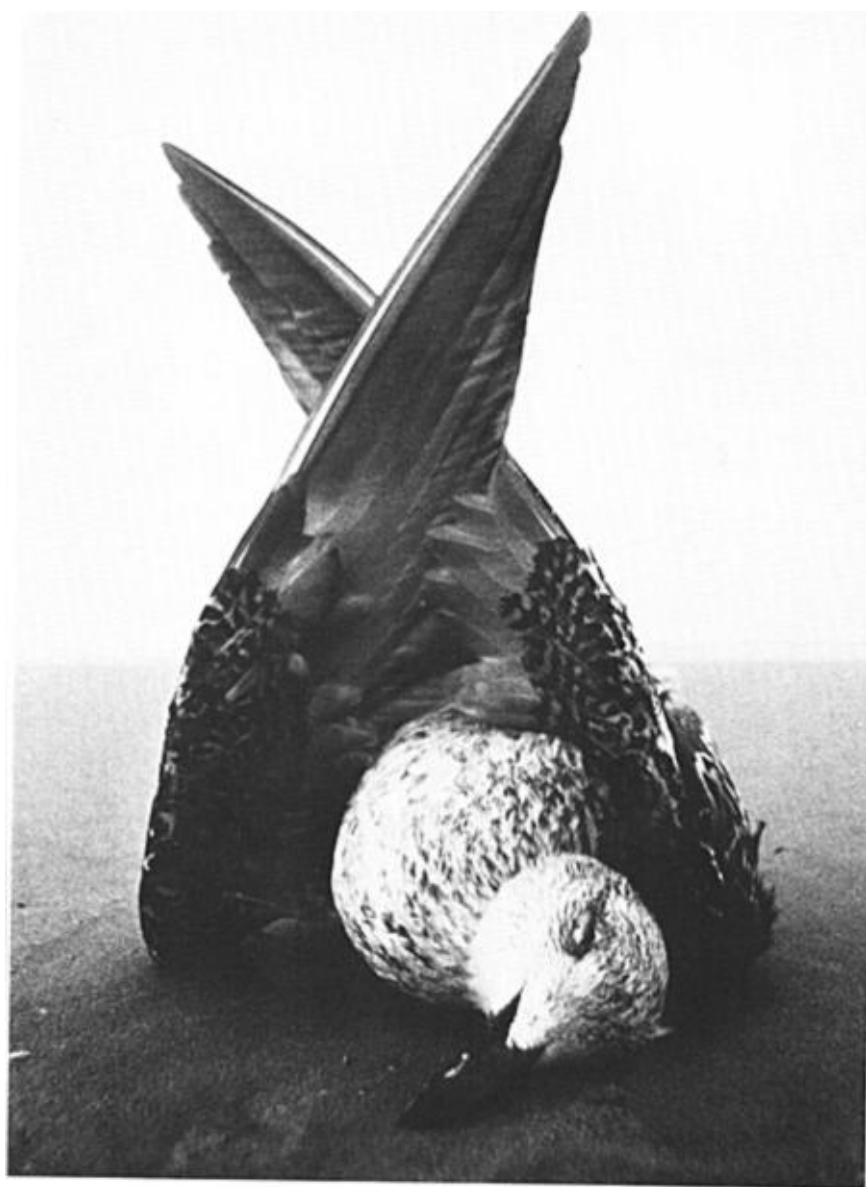
Frans' teaching and art are permeated by a deep understanding of and respect for his subject. To photograph a Bald Eagle, he studied the bird, questioned biologists, found a known eagle perch, packed in his equipment, built a blind—and waited. Three days later, an eagle appeared. By then Frans had used much of his film to photograph the play of light on a gnarled stump opposite the blind. With what remained, he photographed the eagle—superbly, without disturbing the raptor.

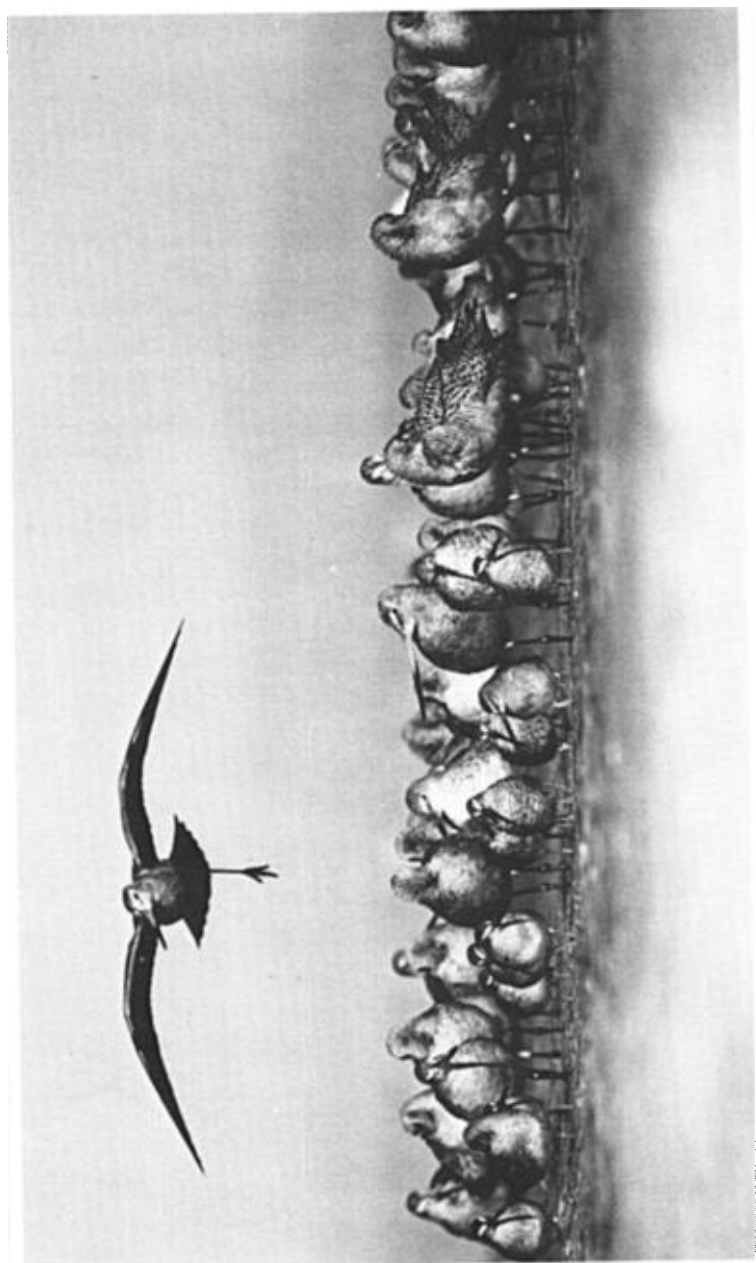
His distinctive style is not entirely the result of having mastered technique. Frans' work has depth. He probes all manner of subjects from the death of a gull to the beauty of massed Snow Geese in flight over Tule Lake. He also brings humor to his work. At one workshop a participant, staring pointedly at Frans' boots, asked, "Is it necessary to wear one black boot and one green?"

"No," replied Frans, "but it helps."

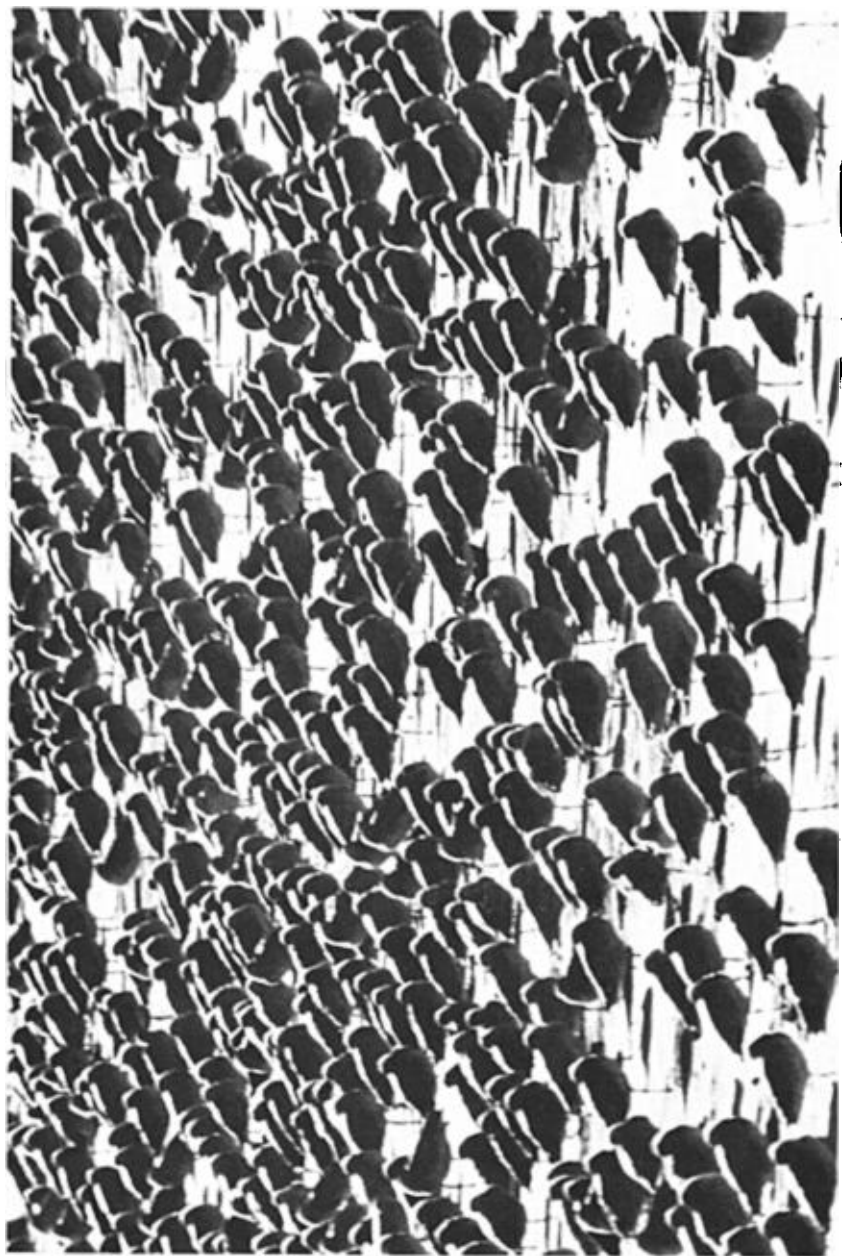
This photo essay, and the Tufted Puffin photo which will appear on the cover of Volume 14, Number 1, are samples of Frans' work. If you would like to obtain prints, they are available from Frans Lanting, 714-A Riverside, Santa Cruz, California 95060.

Dead Herring Gull, Maasvlakte, Holland, 1978

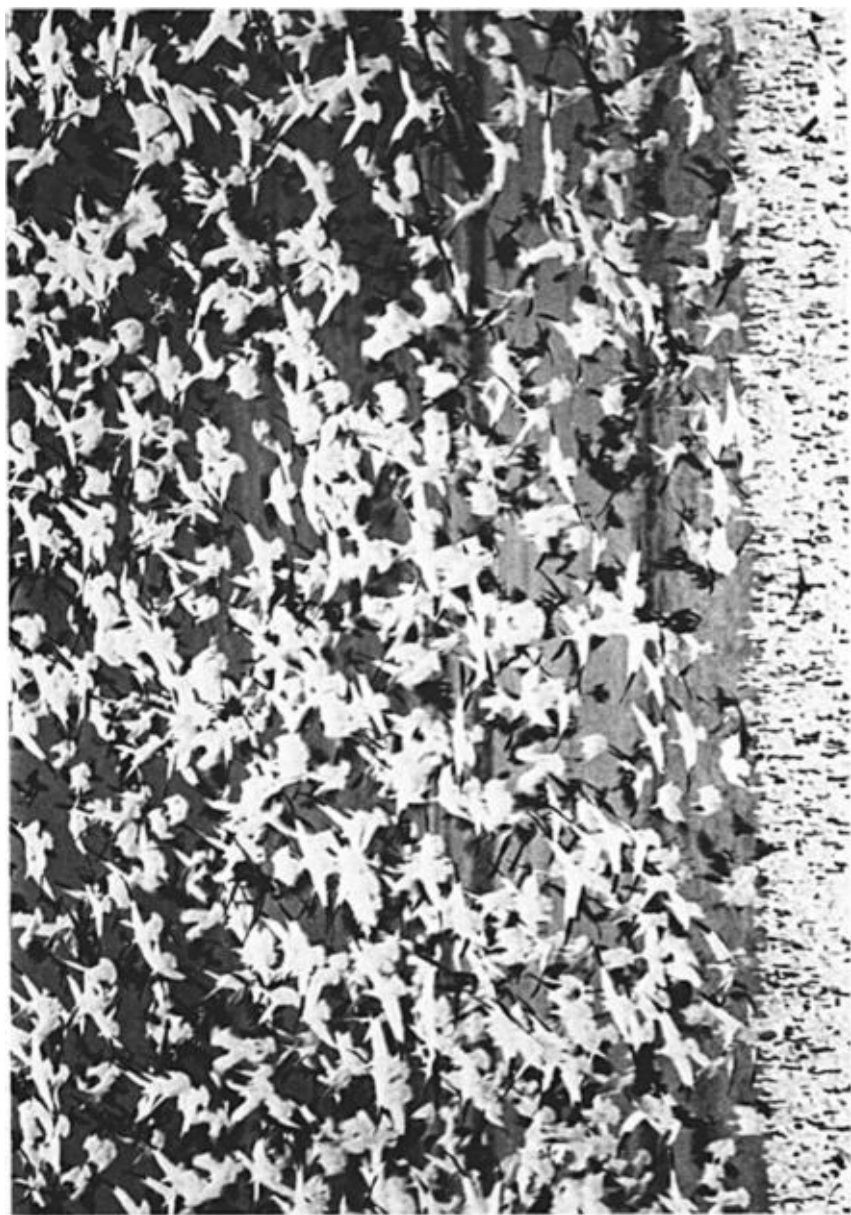




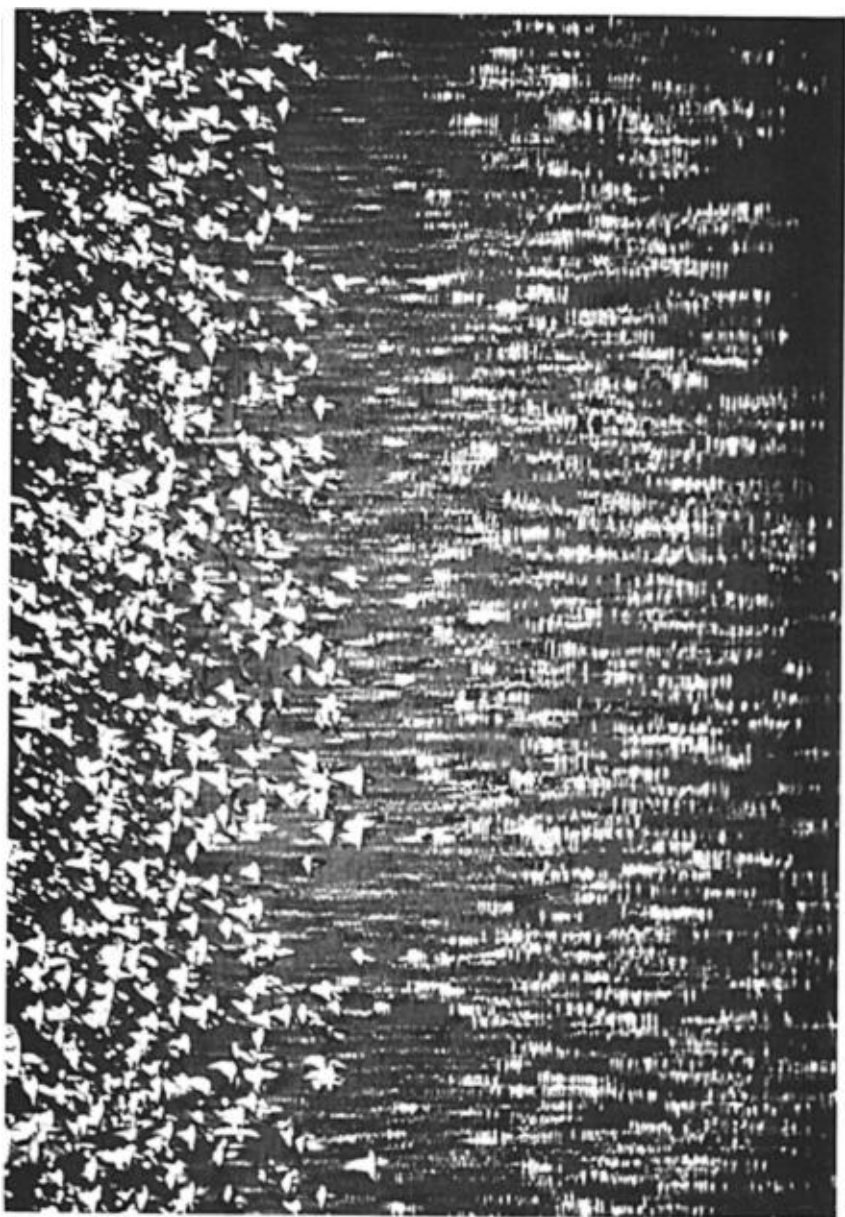
Marbled Godwit landing, Laguna San Ignacio, Baja California 1980



Marbled Godwits. Humboldt Bay, California, 1979



Snow Geese landing, Tule Lake, California, 1979

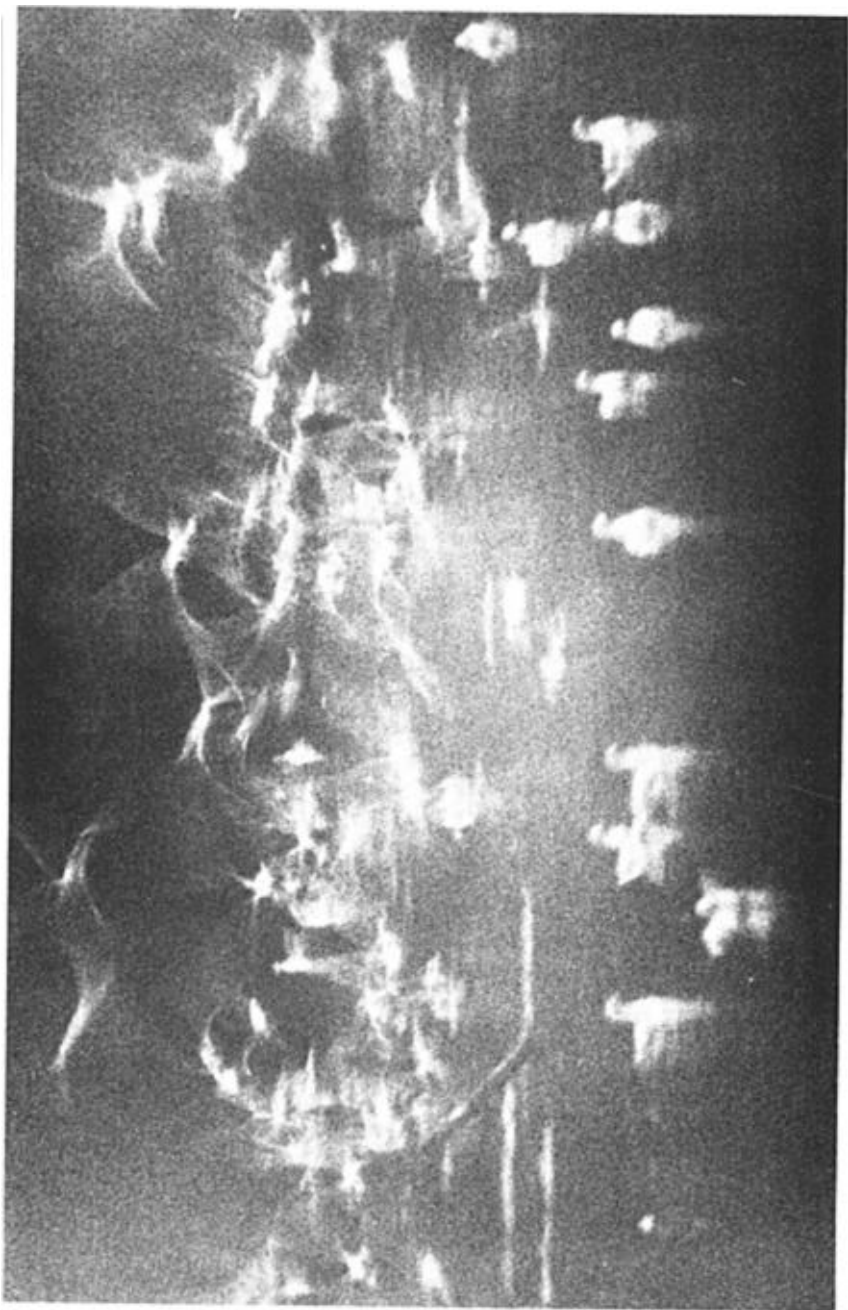


Dunlin in flight, Humboldt Bay, California, 1979

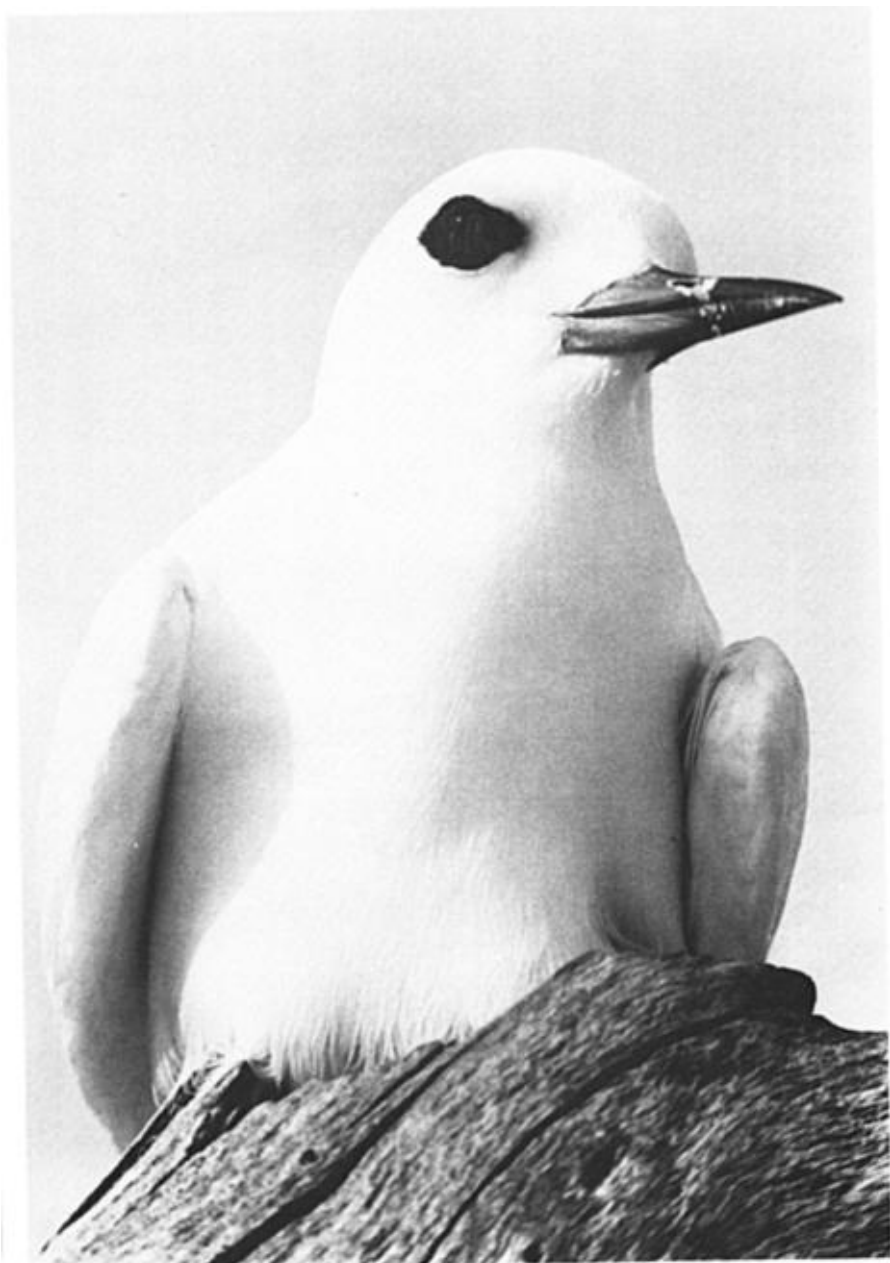


Face of dead gull, San Lorenzo River, 1980

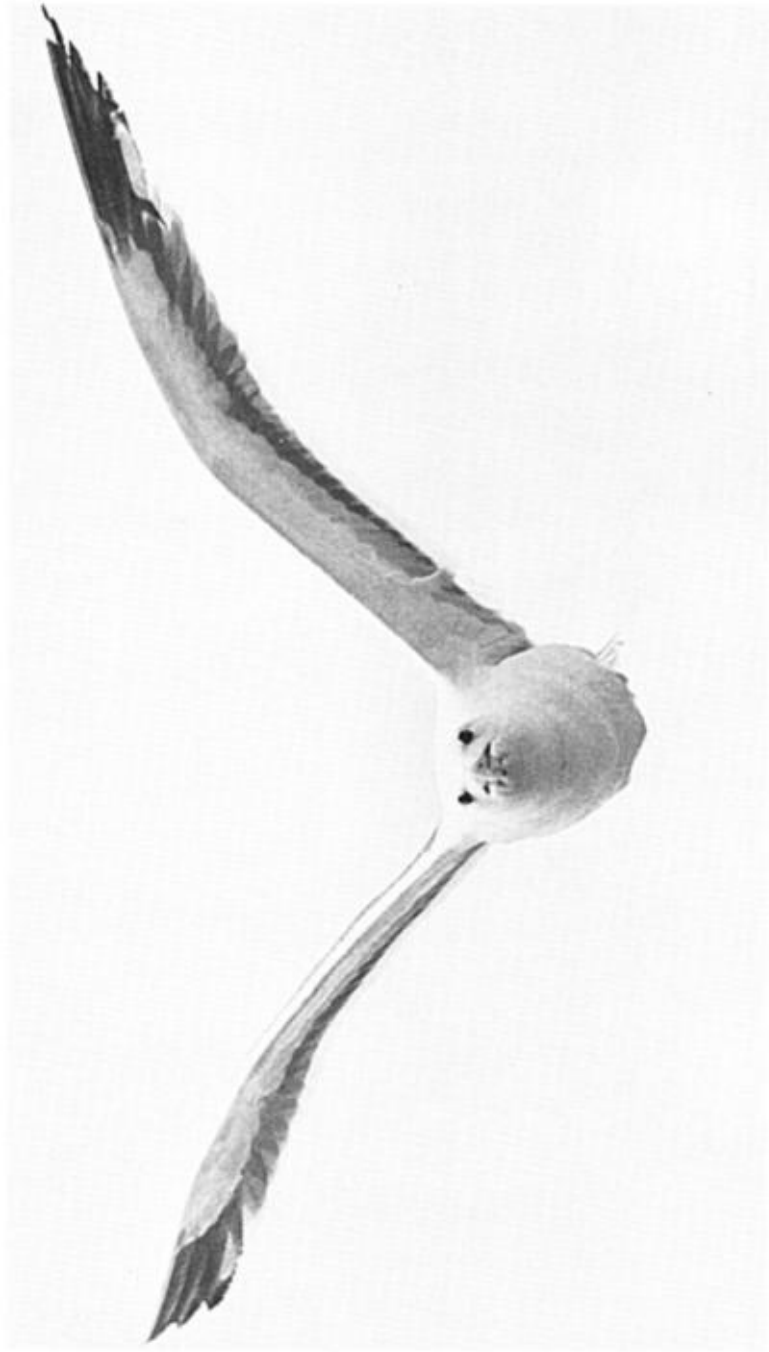




Gulls at dusk, Holland, 1976



White Tern (*Gygis alba*), Hawaiian Leeward Islands, 1982



Western Gull, Año Nuevo Island, California, 1980

Photos © Frans Lanting, 1983

**WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS**  
**8th Annual Convention**  
**29 September through 2 October 1983**  
**on Monterey Bay at**  
**SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA**

A dynamite weekend of field trips and lectures is planned! Numerous pelagic trips on Monterey Bay will observe the spectacular seabird migration. Owling and land trips are planned to a variety of habitats. Lectures and a dinner banquet are planned for Saturday, October 1.

REGISTRATION: WFO members and their families, \$25 per person.  
Non-members, \$39 per person (includes one-year membership and subscription to *Western Birds*)

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