

Western Tanager



Vol. IV

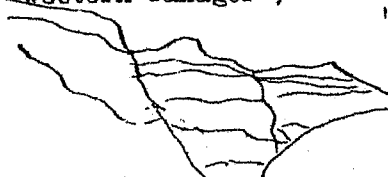
FEBRUARY 1938

No. 5

GRAND CANYON AND BIRDS

By - Edwin McKee
(Written especially for "The
Western Tanager")

Park Naturalist
Grand Canyon



"Now, far beyond all language and all art
In thy wild splendour, Canyon marvelous,
The secret of thy stillness lies unveiled
In wordless worship! This is holy ground;
Thou art no grave, no prison, but a shrine."



Thus speaks Henry Van Dyke of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, voicing the thought of many who feel the almost supernatural character of the chasm yet cannot express themselves in words. The profound effect on the human mind of this great abyss is an acknowledged fact. Its array of color and beautifully sculptured form extending for two hundred miles and having a depth of 5,000 feet stimulate and inspire most men beyond adequate expression.

But what of the lesser forms of life, the mammals and the birds, whose brains have not developed to our level? Does the Canyon stimulate these creatures when they suddenly come upon it, or do they simply take it for granted and accept it either as another hostile barrier or as a welcome home? This we will probably never know. Much can be learned, however, concerning the actual physical effects of the Canyon on various forms of life. Certain contributions to this knowledge have already been made.

Grand Canyon with all of its apparent barrenness and waste, often giving forth a superficial feeling of desolation and vast emptiness, is, nevertheless, a haven for many kinds of birds. It includes not one but many types of environment and, in each, some particular group of wild life finds its favorite niche for existence. One of the really striking features of a trip down the five thousand-foot walls of the Canyon is the marked contrast in animals with each change of environment. There are the spruce-fir areas on the highest elevations of the northern rim with their Canadian bird types such as Creepers, Three-toed Woodpeckers, Solitaires, and Nutcrackers. Farther down in elevation one encounters the yellow pine belt and then the stands of pinyon and juniper extending far down into the canyon -- each with its typical wild life. Finally, a lower "timber-line" with open desert below is reached and the mesquite and cat's claw, the burro brush and the cactus, largely adorn the landscape. But even here bird life is abundant -- black-throated Desert Sparrows, Canyon Wrens with their thrilling songs, and a host of others.

Not only do plant and animal life representing the orderly succession of belts which we term life zones, occupy the Grand Canyon, but also many exceptions. Great promontories jutting far out into the Canyon, alcoves, amphitheaters and even north-facing slopes develop "pockets" of unexpected types of life. Then there are the oases in the desert--dense thickets surrounding springs--where dwell the gaudy Lazuli Bunting and the noisy Chat. Perhaps the most amazing exceptions of all are along cold streams which flow right through the hot Sonoran belt, where the Dipper or Water Ouzel thrives. Even the water fowls are found in surprising number in Grand Canyon, wherever favorable environment occurs. In a recent boat trip through Grand Canyon six species of duck were seen; also two big Treganza's Herons moved downstream as if an advance guard for our party, staying just ahead for a distance of nearly eighty miles in a period of over a week. (Continued on Page - 20)

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The Los Angeles Audubon Society holds two regular meetings each month — the first Thursday being Field Day, the third Thursday, a program meeting held in the State Building at Exposition Park, at 2 P. M. The annual dues are \$1.25; Life Membership \$10.00 and Patron \$100.00.

Miss Charlotte Hamilton has listed the birds seen at the feeding tray and fountain on the grounds of her home. It is unusual, inasmuch as she is located in such a "built up" section of North Hollywood:

- Bush-tits
- Audubon Warblers
- Gamb el sparrows
- Plain Titmice
- Be vick wren
- Ruby-crowned Kinglets
- Mourning doves
- Mockingbirds
- Anna Hummingbird
- California Jays
- San Diego Song Sparrow
- California Brown Thrasher
- English Sparrows
- Linnets
- California Brown Towhees
- Cedar Wax wings

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	(3)	4	5
6	7	8	9	(10)	11	12
13	14	15	16	(17)	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	(25)	26
27	28					

--MEETING NOTICES--

FIELD TRIP - February 3rd. We will again meet in lovely Fern Dell, Western Avenue entrance to Griffith Park. Our field leader, Mrs. Daugherty, will be ready at 9:00 A. M., sharp, for the walk. It is hoped that the birds will be out in numbers to receive us. Mrs. Edwards will talk to us on the "Life Cycle of the Fern."

BOARD MEETING - February 10th, at 10 A. M., Plummer Park - 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles.

INDOOR MEETING -- February 17th, 2 P. M., State Building, Exposition Park.

DOUBLE FEATURE

Mr. Josiah Keely, world traveler, or Gypsy, as he is affectionately called by his friends, will speak on "Mystery of Bird Migration".

Our own Miss Mariam Faddis will talk on "Shore Birds".

Fascinating topics and capable speakers assure us of a record attendance. Come Early!

Friends Welcome!

STUDY CLASS: February 25th, 10 A. M., to 12 A. M., under the direction of Mrs. Grace Hall. "Field Identification of Birds". Bring a lunch if you wish.

Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon has been appointed Curator of the new Audubon Room at Plummer Park.

FIELD TRIP - JANUARY 6th

Were you among the fifty-eight members and guests who enjoyed the warm bright day and many birds at Chatsworth Lake, under the leadership of Mrs. Daugherty? The Lewis Woodpecker was absent, but all the other birds in that section were well represented, and over forty were listed. Mrs. Morain brought specimens to illustrate her fine talk on "Trees of the Desert". Mrs. Edwards also brought the desert to us in her "Impressions of the birds of Coachella County", making us all travel-minded.

Our bus was acclaimed a great success, both for comfort and convenience and for the fun of traveling together. We had six calls after all reservations were taken.

INDOOR MEETING

Growing interest in "Audubon" was evidenced by the attendance at the January Indoor Meeting.

We are indebted to Mrs. George L. Veatch for her help in having secured Patsy and Leslie Paullin, whistling soloists, pupils of Mrs. Milton Jeffs. Their unusual numbers were greatly appreciated.

Mr. A. H. O'Connor, of Australia, delighted the audience with pertinent remarks as he presented color slides of fauna and bird life of his country.

NEW MEMBERS

We are happy to extend a hearty welcome to our newest members, Mr. Francisco Holgin, and Elizabeth Sherman.

TUNE IN

New Time Schedule for Bird Program - Saturday Mornings - KEHE - 10:45 A. M.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All who read Mrs. Fuller's article in the January issue of THE WESTERN Tanager and the reports in our daily papers, will be glad to know they can greatly assist the work of acquiring Bixby Slough and Nigger Slough (Machado Lako) for a Park and Bird refuge by writing the Board of Supervisors and letting them know how many of us are really interested. It is feasible from an engineering standpoint and certainly from a nature lover and bird student is a necessity if we are to keep our rare Shore Birds for future generations.

CORRECTION: For the information of all concerned, we wish to state that the collection of nests and eggs donated by Mrs. Shearer were from a collection gathered by her late friend, Mrs. Bicknell.

Let's keep books and magazines in circulation by remembering to return them to Mrs. Veatch promptly. Your co-operation will be sincerely appreciated.

Audubonites are welcome to attend the meeting of the Nature Study Conference of the District Federation of Women's Clubs, to be held at Plummer Park, on February 17th, at 10 A. M. Mrs. J. H. Comby is Chairman. Miss Charlotte Hamilton will speak on the subject of "Butterflies and how to Attract Them."

ADVERTISING SECTION

(Greetings to Fellow Members of the)
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Let it be known among ornithologists and bird-lovers that the Grand Canyon has a wealth of bird life and an abundance of species. The recent Check-list of Birds records 185 varieties from the National Park alone. During the past eight years especially, numerous studies have been made and many data accumulated on the bird life of Grand Canyon. Very productive have been the results of banding and already much interesting information is available on the effect of the Canyon on the movements of certain species and on migrations. Especially noteworthy are numerous records showing the arrival of certain Shufeldt Juncos at practically the identical date and place two, three, and even four years after banding; also the migration of various juncos from one rim down into the Canyon, thence up to the other rim; and finally the movements of certain Pygmy Nuthatches which travel in definite groups and show remarkable regularity of purpose.

MISSING!

Can anyone give Mrs. Robert Fargo any help in locating her field glasses which have been lost for many months. These field glasses are treasured for sentimental reasons and they are needed badly for her bird study.

EXCHANGE OF FACTS AND COMMENTS

(Continued from the January, 1938, issue of THE WESTERN Tanager, Page 16)

From a letter written by Mr. Josiah Keeley, to Mrs. Grace Hall, July, 1936:

"Over the lakes and rivers of the interior of Alaska and British Columbia the short-billed and the Herring Gulls were prevalent, especially the short-billed which nests on the river bars."

"The four swallows; Violet Green, Cliff, Bank and Barn were nesting practically all the way to the Arctic Circle, and were the most conspicuous of all the birds. -- I had never thought of Alaska as being a land of gulls and swallows, but it is just that, and they must be missed after the short breeding season."

Our actual list after getting into Alaska was only about sixty-six birds, but they claim about two hundred breed there."

Arranged by Elsie H. Humphreys

INSPIRATION

When I look about me
And behold the earth
With its flowered fields
And living, breathing things,
And then gaze upward
At the faithful sun
Or the stars that smile

On a sleeping world,
I wonder how it is
that all men and women
Are not poets and artists,
Forever seeking to express
The ineffable glory of
creation.

James Warnack

REMINDER FROM OUR TREASURER!

Sorry -- Dues that were payable in October are now delinquent.

