

T H E

Western Tanager



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THE CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, Field Leader, Los Angeles Audubon Society

Once more we have had the pleasure of taking BIRD-LORE's Christmas Bird Census and we enjoyed it tremendously, even if it did come during the busiest time of the year.

The National Audubon Society tells us: "Forty years ago Dr. Frank M. Chapman printed the results of BIRD-LORE's first Christmas census,— twenty-five lists from thirteen states and two Canadian provinces. Last winter (1939), census from 47 different states, the District of Columbia, two Canadian provinces, Hawaii and Peru occupied a 72 page supplement to BIRD-LORE, and it would have taken another 30 pages to print all of those received."

Over 2100 persons participated in taking the 1939 census, and BIRD-LORE printed 262 censuses. The highest list was obtained by the Harlingen, Texas, group, with 155 species, 24,293 individuals. For comparison, our Los Angeles census group listed 121 species, 12,325 individuals. This year (1940) we obtained 126 species, 12,305 individuals.

We are told that the idea of this census is to sample bird populations rather than to build up long lists of species; that scientific information does not come from the running up of species lists, but from the careful poll of the species and numbers present. Also, "among all the activities of amateurs, none is a greater contribution to science than the taking of Christmas censuses; nowhere else in the world of biological science does there exist a body of data comparable to the Christmas censuses."

And how the birds did give us thrills! Suddenly to see a beautiful flock of 20 Red-breasted Mergansers come into view on one of our city reservoirs, when we were looking over that slope for a Say's Phoebe; to find in a long, dense tangle of brush high up in a canyon a fussy, tiny waif of a bird, with the shortest of tails tipped forward over its back and a faint line over its eye,— the Western Winter Wren (Stultz-Daugherty), when we were looking for a Golden-crowned Sparrow; to go to a certain spot where we were sure we would see the Western Belted Kingfisher, and wait, and wait,— no Kingfisher; and, just as we were giving up, to see it come winging down right past the spot chosen for it to do so — Ah-h-h, such a feeling of joy!

Here are a few high lights of our census: Great rafts of Scoters reported off shore, mostly Surf Scoters (Kents-Curry); Lewis Woodpeckers seen this year where they have been absent for several years past (Faddis-Hoffman); a Phainopepla found wintering in Griffith Park (Michael-Quattlebaum); an Ash-throated Flycatcher spending its sixth consecutive winter in Inglewood (Fuller); a Robin roost in a city canyon with some 300 Western Robins en route (Berry-Hall).

For best ornithological value, National Audubon urges that the censuses cover the same territory each year. This we have done for the past four years, namely, the same 15-mile area taking in a short stretch of seashore, sloughs, four city parks, canyons on the south and west slopes of Griffith Park, foothills within the specified area and city reservoirs, worked by sixteen observers, representing the California, Pasadena and Los Angeles Audubon Societies, the Southwest Bird Study Club of Los Angeles and the Calypse Club of Inglewood.

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NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME!

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- Mr. George T. Hastings
- Mr. A. Chandler Nott
- Miss Nora Proisker
- Miss Ada M. Weld
- Mrs. H. H. McMillan
- Mrs. Bertha Caroline Stockwell
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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
or 1156 North Vista Street

President Emeritus .. Mrs. Robert Fargo
 President and Editor. Miss Laura Greely
 904 Kendall Ave., South Pasadena
 Telephone: BLanchard 7-1849
 Treasurer Mrs. O. L. Wait
 8972 Dicks St., West Hollywood
 Telephone: CRestview 6-1990
 Curator and Librarian
 Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon
 1117 N. Fuller Ave., Los Angeles
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MEMBERS WHO are interested in minerals will not want to miss seeing the mineralogical show in the State Exposition Building February 15-28. This is said to be the finest collection of mineral specimens ever shown in the West.

TEXT BOOK, "Birds of the Pacific States," by Ralph Hoffman. The Society is in position to obtain this book for its members at a worth while reduction. And how about binoculars? See Miss Greely or Mrs. Wait.

THE CALENDAR

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 7:30 P.M. Plummer Park Club House. Illustrated lecture by Mrs. Mary V. Hood, on "Southern California Wildflower Favorites." Special exhibit of marsh birds, of added interest because of the Field Trip February 6. Admission 20 cents, for the benefit of the projector fund. Do not miss this, the last lecture of the series.

Thursday, Feb. 6. Field Trip. Bolsa Chica Gun Club grounds, just south of Seal Beach and about 34 miles from Los Angeles. Our last opportunity to study shore birds and ducks before they take off for the summer, and there are numbers of them at Bolsa Chica. The scouting party listed 63 species of birds within two hours, including seven species of ducks. Tanner Motor Bus leaves 544 South Hill St. at 8 A.M., returning about 4 P.M. Round trip fare, 80¢. Take lunch. Make bus reservation EARLY with Mrs. George L. Veatch, 3730 W. 27th St., Los Angeles, Parkway 6127.

Friday, Feb. 14. 1 to 4 P.M. Mrs. Shelford and Mrs. Rose will be hostesses in the Bird Section, Los Angeles Museum.

Sunday, Feb. 16, 8:30 A.M. Bird Walk. Leader, Mr. Arthur L. Berry. Meet at Park Cafe, near Zoo, Griffith Park. Bird there until 9, then go to Mineral Wells. Mr. J. B. Richardson, Griffith Park Trail Leader, will accompany the group.

Thursday, Feb. 20, 10 A.M. Board meeting at the home of Mrs. Warren J. Holden, 2802 South Western Avenue. "Leave your thermos bottles at home."

Thursday, Feb. 20, 2 P.M. State Building, Exposition Park. Program Meeting. Speaker, Mr. Howard L. Jones, Nature Photographer and Member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Subject: "California Birds and Animals" and "Life of the California Gull on Negit Island, Mono Lake." Illustrated with motion pictures in color. Visitors welcome.

Friday, Feb. 28. Study Classes, at Headquarters in Plummer Park. Bring text and note books.

9:30 A.M. Botany. Leader, Mrs. Wm. T. Shelford. Subject, "Early Spring Flowers".

10:30 A.M. Birds. Leader, Mr. W. A. Kent. Subject, "Hawks".

THE CHATSWORTH LAKE SANCTUARY field trip January 2, 1941, was made on a cold but sparkling sunny day, showing most beautifully the lovely blue water, rocky hills and distant mountains. We were happy to share the day with a number of guests, one of whom, after 30 years in the field, saw with us the rare White-tailed Kite. This handsome bird is decreasing rapidly. Dawson says its present rarity is due to "its habit of flying slowly back and forth at a moderate height from the ground on the lookout for meadow mice and insects, making it an easy target for the thoughtless gunner". Other special interests were a Ring-necked Pheasant, numbers of Lewis Woodpeckers, a charming little Rock Wren, American Egrets and California Blue Heron in silhouette on a rocky promontory. The placid breast of an immature Whistling Swan was undisturbed by shore discussions of its species. Mrs. Daugherty added to our technical knowledge by an exhibit of "museum" birds; Mrs. Hood's observing eye found clues to an owl's diet; Mr. Kelly made a weathered nest a subject of interest; and we all went home reluctantly. The day's list? Sixty-seven species.

---Mrs. Elizabeth B. Coolden

THE PROGRAM arranged by Mrs. Stultz for the Indoor Meeting January 16 attracted a record-breaking attendance. After some 400 persons had crowded into the hall, many others reluctantly turned away. Mr. C. A. Harwell, California representative of the National Audubon Society, was the speaker. Of breath-taking beauty were his motion pictures, in color, of Roseate Spoonbills and other nesting birds of the coastal lagoons of Texas, while his views of the Audubon Nature Camp, in successful operation in Maine for the past five years, held special interest because of the expressed intention of the National Audubon Society to establish a similar camp in California "not later than the summer of 1942". Mr. Harwell's whistling solo and his imitations of the songs of familiar birds added greatly to the enjoyment of the occasion.

MR. GUY EMERSON, the newly-elected President of the National Audubon Society, says: "Our objective, as I see it, is a many-sided one. Our interest does not lie exclusively in any narrow field, but involves nature as a living whole. We recognize fully the importance of scientific conservation. This great job has really just begun... But human conservation must always rank high in any program of the Audubon Society... Weariness, frayed nerves, bad tempers,--these can find their antidote in a keen outdoor interest... With all its fine enthusiasm for its cause, the Society must avoid over-emphasis. We are not trying to develop cranks about nature, but well-balanced men and women, with a sense of humor, who know that our job is not the only one, but is part of the whole effort being carried on by many wildlife conservation organizations. It is not our job to be intolerant extremists. As a nation we have never been more in need of reason, tolerance and sanity; my own view is that closeness to nature will materially aid in the achievement of these virtues... The Audubon Society must accept as part of its work the promotion of a richer outdoor environment for the generations to come. We must always put the emphasis on a fuller life, with fewer one-track minds."

From BIRD-LORE, November-December, 1940, p. 517

A DELIGHTFUL INVITATION comes from the Oregon Audubon Society. "Should any of your members be in Portland," writes Mrs. C. L. Marshall, co-editor of "The Audubon Warbler," "I am sure they would find a visit to the Pittock Bird Sanctuary, on the Cornell Road, quite worth while. Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Elliot are at the Sanctuary. They make our visitors most welcome. Distances are not great in Portland, so such a visit is not difficult to arrange."

THE CALIFORNIA AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc., has issued its Thirty-fourth Annual Report, a twenty page pamphlet filled with valuable information about the year's activities. Of special interest to the Los Angeles Audubon Society is the report of the Sanctuary Committee, on which we are represented by Mrs. Maud Murphy. It makes inspiring reading.

THE CALIFORNIA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INCORPORATED

Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers,
President

Mrs. Merta White, Secretary
Telephone: CLEVELAND 6-6702

FEBRUARY MEETINGS

Thursday, February 13, 7:30 p.m. Central Library, Fifth and Grand Streets, Los Angeles. Speaker, Mr. Ed N. Harrison, of Encinitas. Subject, "Bird Life in Our Desert Islands". Illustrated with motion pictures in color.

Saturday, February 22, 8:00 a.m. Field Day. Fern Dell, Western Avenue Entrance to Griffith Park. Leader, Miss Blanche Vignos. Visitors welcome.

THE DOROTHY MAY TUCKER BIRD SANCTUARY

By Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers.

Our readers know that on the 6th of July, 1940, the house and shop at Oakwood, the Dorothy May Tucker Bird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon, Orange County, owned by Mr. B. F. Tucker, burned to the ground,--cause unknown. Nothing was saved.

It had been Mr. Tucker's plan to will this lovely place to the California Audubon Society, Inc., to be maintained by the society as a perpetual memorial to his wife, who died August 19, 1939. After the fire Mr. Tucker decided to give the property to the Society and ask it to build as it could. Accordingly the deed to about nine and one-half acres of land is in escrow, and the Society is starting to build on the site where the home stood. The chimney was so damaged that it was torn down, but the stone steps and the front wall are intact and will be used. The porch will be the same size as before and will be screened in. The main room, which will serve as a museum, will be 20 X 24, and there will be a small kitchen, one bedroom and wash-room facilities.

The Society will need financial help to carry forward this project, and it hopes that those who have visited Oakwood will be glad to help in furnishing the building. We will keep you informed as to our progress; in the meantime, be thinking how YOU can help.

FEATHERS FOR MILLINERY PURPOSES. The Los Angeles Audubon Society adopted the following resolution January 16, 1941:

WHEREAS, we learn with horror and amazement of illegal traffic in the plumage of wild birds in connection with renewed popularity of feathers for millinery purposes, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Los Angeles Audubon Society go on record as opposed to the use of any wild bird plumage for millinery purposes, whether coming from within or without the United States or any state thereof, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers of the Los Angeles Audubon Society be instructed to cooperate with the National Audubon Society and other organizations in disseminating information to the public, in seeking remedial legislative action and adequate enforcement, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Los Angeles Audubon Society ask for the cooperation of its member clubs and individual members thereof in conveying to the management of leading department stores and millinery establishments in principal cities throughout the country information as to their opposition to the use of any wild bird plumage for millinery purposes.



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"Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live and act, and serve the future hour."

---Wordsworth