

T H E

Western Tanager



VOL. VII

MARCH, 1941

NO. 6

NOTES ALONG THE WAY TO NEW ORLEANS VIA THE GULF ROUTE
Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer, Member, Los Angeles Audubon Society

After many monotonous miles of desert road with no ornithological decorations save shrikes and sparrow hawks posing on the wires at almost regular intervals, it was a heartening sight to glimpse a white-tailed kite gliding along on our port side. He obligingly dipped and wheeled, showing his handsome black epaulots and remaining within binocular range for some time. This was the first of three that we saw before reaching Galveston. This little feathered aeroplane seemed to break the spell held over us by the shrikes and sparrow hawks, or perhaps the landscape changed for the better, because our course from then on was brightened by numerous meadow-larks calling cheerily, many bluebirds, an occasional roadrunner, and the song of the thrasher. South-central Texas has a vast covering of post-oaks which harbor many birds, but we could not identify them from the highway.

On arrival in San Antonio, matters ornithological began decidedly to look up. A friendly cardinal came to greet us at our first breakfast; golden-fronted woodpeckers were flying about in the pecan trees hunting for the proper spot in which to cache left-over nuts. These noisy fellows are named from their beautiful golden foreheads. The males wear a saucy red cap and a plaster of orange-red on the hind neck. Eastern Texas and lower Louisiana are so bountifully watered by creeks and rivers that bird-life seems to have more variety than with us. We had our first sight of the little green Texas kingfisher perched on a stub near a creek; he's not so cocky in appearance as our kingfisher, not wearing a crest. Great-tailed and bronzed grackles were much in evidence, and a flock of starlings had appropriated one section of Brackenridge Park, a lovely and spacious park left almost as Nature made it. Here is housed a large zoo and a comprehensive showing of birds. Being opposed to zoos, I was about to pass it by, but on glancing over the list of inmates, I found flamingos and roseate spoonbills named. We found them living under unusual conditions; a very generous section of a natural creek with wooded banks had been assigned to them, and wire fences had been to some extent concealed. They seemed contented and poked about in the creek seemingly oblivious of us. Their gorgeous feathers were glossy and they appeared to be in prime condition. Quite a contrast was afforded by the cage of songbirds, among which I noted five robins perched on a stick as close as possible to the wire fencing and gazing out longingly at the free birds flying about in the nearby trees. I wish some action might be taken in regard to the caging of wild songbirds.

Louisiana's swamps furnish wonderful sanctuary for waterfowl, but we had time to call at only one state refuge, Avery Island, established by Mr. McIlhenny, its owner, as a refuge for herons and egrets. Great rafts of ducks were there also, among which we noted many rodheads and canvasbacks. The great Rainey Wildlife Refuge is in this section, and is the winter home of more of the blue geese which come from the far north.

Farther north, on the road to Austin, we sighted numbers of marsh hawks flying low over the fields. In fact, this hawk was more in evidence than any other after we left desert country. Nearing home, we visited the Boyce Thompson Arboretum at Superior and were delighted to see a bridled titmouse flitting about, the only time we had seen him above the Mexican line. If any of our members are in that section of Arizona, they will be well repaid by a visit to this beautiful place.

THE WESTERN Tanager

published by
The Los Angeles Audubon Society
Free to Members
Outside Subscriptions 50¢ per year.

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Membership Dues

Annual \$1.25 Life, \$10.00
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NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME!

Mrs. T. G. White Mrs. John Q. Burch
Mrs. Anne B. Young

OPEN HOUSE. A request has come to our society from Mrs. Florence Lewis Scott, at Plummer Park, to open Audubon House one day a week. This is considered a great attraction to the park, and we ask those who are willing to act as hostesses one day a week for one month to call or see Mrs. Salmon, GRanite 9312. Wednesdays from 11 to 4 are the days and hours suggested. There is much pleasure to be derived from observing the birds and reading our splendid books. Let's make this a real success this year.

---Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon

THE STATE CONVENTION. Begin now to make plans to attend the first California State Convention of Audubon societies, to be held at Asilomar May 9, 10 and 11. A fine program is in the making. More about this in the April Tanager.

THE MARCH CALANDAR

THURSDAY, March 6, FIELD TRIP, dedicated to Bird and Arbor Day. Lopez Canyon, off Foothill Blvd., just beyond Hansen Dam. Tanner Motor bus leaves 544 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 8 A.M.; stops for passengers at Los Feliz and San Fernando Rd., Glendale, at 8:20 A.M. Returns about 3:30 P.M. Round trip fare, 70¢. Take lunch. Make reservations EARLY with Mrs. J. L. Morain, 1041 S. Gramercy Dr., Parkway 0339. Those driving go by San Fernando Rd. to Roscoe; cross over the valley on Sunland Blvd. to Foothill Blvd. Go left on Foothill to Fillmore St. and Lopez Canyon sign. Turn right, go up Canyon road to Foresters Home picnic grounds. After-lunch program on trees and shrubs in charge of Mrs. Maude McKnight, Chairman, Committee on Trees.

FRIDAY, March 14, 1 to 4 P.M. Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer and Mrs. Josiah Keely will be hostesses in the Bird Section, Los Angeles Museum.

SUNDAY, March 16, 9 A.M. Bird Walk, Playa del Rey. Leader, Mr. Arthur L. Berry. Meet at south end of old lagoon near life-guard station. Bring lunch. For those not driving, take bus leaving Pacific Electric Hill Street terminal at 8:20, arriving at Playa del Rey 9:01. It is a short walk from end of Culver Blvd. to end of old lagoon.

THURSDAY, March 20, 10 A.M. Board meeting at home of Miss Ruby Curry, 336 W. 46th Street. Our hostess will serve coffee and dessert.

THURSDAY, March 20, 2 P.M. State Building, Exposition Park. Address, "The Private Lives of Birds," by Dr. Henry Smith Williams, physician, scientist, author, lecturer and artist, who has devoted long years to study and research as a naturalist. Also, "Birds in a Home Garden," with motion pictures in color, by Miss Helen S. Pratt, Audubon Junior Club representative of the National Audubon Society. Visitors welcome.

FRIDAY, March 28. STUDY CLASSES at Headquarters in Plummer Park. Bring lunch.

9:30 A.M. Botany. Leader, Mrs. Maude McKnight. Subject, "The Oaks".

10:30 A.M. Birds. Leader, Mr. Josiah Keely. Subject, "The Economic Value of Birds".

INTERESTING READING. "Birding Below the Line," by Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President Emeritus, National Audubon Society, in Bird-Lore, July-August, 1940, and his later article on the same subject, "To South America with the Birds," in Collier's, Feb 1, 1941. Also, "High Adventure Begins at Your Doorstep", by Donald Culross Peattie, in Better Homes and Gardens, March, 1941, P. 104.

MRS. HOOD'S LECTURES. The evening lecture series recently completed at Plummer Park is worthy of more than passing interest,—it is a milestone. Those who have not seen the exquisite colored pictures by which Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Hood share their adventures with us must live in hopes of another opportunity. Indeed, many of us who were filled with their loveliness will welcome another chance no less. The attractive presentation through Mrs. Hood's talk bound each collection of slides together like jewels in a chain, graduated with just the right balance of simple informality and personal humor, erudition and substantial information. As if that were not enough, the setting given each of the six programs through habitat displays and exhibits heightened the dramatic effect and was not lost upon a single visitor.

Rarely are one's dreams exceeded by reality, but could I have looked ahead three years ago to such an achievement in our Nature Program I do not know which would have been the most surprising gratification,— the size and sustained interest of the group attending, or the richness of Mrs. Hood's gift itself, which could not fail of response. Thank you, Los Angeles Audubon Society! Thank you, Mary V. Hood!

-----Florence Lewis Scott, Community Center Director,
Los Angeles County Recreation Department.

THE FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP. Rain in February is not unusual in California, and our Field Leader arranges the trip for that month with many misgivings. And how it rained just before and even on the morning of February 6, when we had planned to go to Bolsa Chica! The chartered bus, with its forty-two reservations, had to be canceled. However, some fifteen enthusiasts ventured out in their own cars, and they report an interesting time. Arrangements were hurriedly made to take the same trip the following Thursday, "weather permitting",— and the weather permitted! Forty members and friends, including twelve visitors from the Laguna Beach Nature Club, appeared and those who followed Mrs. Daugherty over the marshes were rewarded with a list of 62 birds. Then to Recreation Park for lunch, and how delightful it was to find there three of our Long Beach members—Mrs. Squire, Mrs. Meadows and Miss Tambllyn—with the picnic tables spread and unlimited quantities of hot coffee waiting for us. Mrs. Daugherty had brought along some twenty or more mounted shore birds, and nothing could have been finer than the way Miss Faddis and Mrs. Wait described them and told something of their life histories. Altogether, the February "double bill" was quite a success.

TORRENTIAL RAINS FELL on Los Angeles February 20; nevertheless, 47 brave souls appeared for the regular program meeting, held in the Museum this time because of the temporary need of our usual meeting place for other purposes. By the magic of his exceptionally fine motion pictures our speaker, Mr. Howard L. Jones, took us to Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Yellowstone and the Black Hills, showing us some of the most beautiful spots on earth, with close-ups of their interesting wild-life; then to Negit Island in Mono Lake, the home of literally thousands of California Gulls. Finally, we had a pleasant surprise in an all-too-brief talk by Dr. John A. Comstock, the Museum's Director of Science. It was a happy and a profitable afternoon.

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY'S campaign against traffic in wild bird plumage is accomplishing its purpose. The Feather Industries of America, Inc., constituting 90% of the manufacturers, dealers and jobbers in this unhappy business in the United States, have entered into an agreement looking eventually to a complete ban on all such traffic.

MORE DOORYARD VISITORS. A Varied Thrush a daily visitor in Mrs. Veatch's yard; Mrs. Carl P. Smith found a Cooper Hawk devouring a Mourning Dove in her yard; Mrs. Foss reports a pair of Eastern Cardinals. Cardinals have now been reported from San Fernando, North Hollywood and Pasadena, as well as from Woodland Park. And robins in Plummer Park, and an Audubon Warbler singing!

THE OREGON AUDUBON SOCIETY reports a Christmas Bird Census of 87 species, 27,464 individuals. There were sixty-five observers in the participating groups.

THE CALIFORNIA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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MARCH MEETINGS

FRIDAY, March 7, 2:00 P.M. Rose Garden, Exposition Park. Dedication of Mickey's Gift. See below.

THURSDAY, March 13, 7:30 P.M. Central Library, Fifth and Grand, Los Angeles. Speaker, Mr. Harold E. Perry, Ranger Naturalist of Yosemite. Lecture on Yosemite National Park, illustrated with kodachrome slides.

SATURDAY, March 22, 8:00 A.M. Field Day. Fern Dell, Western Avenue Entrance to Griffith Park. Leader, Miss Blanche Vignos. Visitors welcome.

MICKEY'S GIFT

BIRD AND ARBOR DAY, March 7th, is in commemoration of the birthday of the great Luther Burbank, who did so much to make the world more beautiful and to enhance our enjoyment of Nature's bounty. This year it will have an especial significance for the bird lovers of Los Angeles. The Board of Park Commissioners have approved the dedication on that day of the bird fountains which our fellow member, Mickey Bishop, Canary, has donated to eight city parks. The ceremonies will begin at two o'clock with the dedication of the fountain in the Rose Garden at Exposition Park. Mrs. Fred V. Watson, President of the Park Board, and Mr. Gilbert L. Skutt, Superintendent of Parks, have promised to be present, and we have the following communication from the donor of the fountains:



"Mr. Mickey Bishop will be charmed to meet all of his Audubon friends at the dedication of his fountain in the Rose Garden, Exposition Park."



After the dedication at Exposition Park, ceremonies will be held at four other parks in the following order, Westlake, Echo and Elysian Parks and Sycamore Grove. Other fountains are located at Lincoln, Hollenbeck and Griffith Parks. And it will be remembered that Mickey had previously given a fountain to the birds of Plummer Park. Dedicated February 24, 1939, it stands in the lovely old garden surrounding "Audubon House." No sooner had the water been turned on than a Ruby-crowned Kinglet came to inspect it. He seemed to approve it and proceeded to take a bath. Think of the thousands of little wild birds of the future gathering around Mickey's fountains, drinking, bathing and preening!

This will be the first opportunity that many of us have had to meet Mickey in person. His soft yellow feathers cover a tender heart, his bright eyes are far-seeing, and many of the world's unfortunates find shelter under his wings. He represents so much that is bright and generous that our eyes are apt to mist a little and cause Mickey to appear rainbow-hued, a lovely symbol of happiness and cheer in the gloom of a troubled world.

---Mrs. Alma J. Stultz, Chairman, Sanctuary Committee