

T H E

Western Tanager



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JOHN JAMES AUDUBON - BIRD PAINTER

By W. Dan Quattlebaum, Member, Pasadena Audubon Society



The anniversary of Audubon's birth, April 26, reminds us of his lofty place among early American ornithologists. He is so famous that Audubon is practically a synonym for ornithology. And yet, he was neither an expert ornithologist, nor a great painter. Nor did he do something new. He did something better. Like Shakespeare he used old forms and by his naive genius and simple art, made commonplace things like birds and flowers radiant with beauty, interest and worth. His personality, prodigious labor and the sheer magnitude of his "Birds of America" were contributing factors to his fame.

We owe much to Audubon. Even his name, as used by our own and other bird clubs, has the appeal of warm personality, of adventure and heroic enterprise. Whatever some critics may say of the dashing, versatile Audubon, his fame is secure. His work is definitely "Of the colossal substance of immortality".



SOME BUTTERFLIES OF THE MOJAVE DESERT

By Mrs. Donald C. Meadows, Chairman
Committee on Butterflies, Los Angeles Audubon Society

The rarer species of butterflies found only in isolated locations offer a challenge to the collector or observer. Travel on foot to inaccessible places is sometimes necessary. It means enduring a hot sun, since butterflies are on the wing in greatest numbers from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. One needs a quick eye to follow some of these nimble creatures which dart about in what seems to be a teasing manner, often at inconvenient altitudes. Desert terrain, too, offers its hazard in the way of cactus and thorny bushes. The type of locality varies from level, open unprotected places as at Victorville, to higher levels like the Providence, Calico and Ivanpah Mountains. In March or April when the desert is in bloom, a trip across the Mojave from Mint Canyon to the Ivanpah Mountains would bring the traveler within reach of several of the spots known to be the habitat of rare and interesting butterflies.

In Mint Canyon one should find on the juniper trees the Juniper Hair-Streak, Mitoura siva juniperaria, which is never found far from this, its favorite plant. Only by forcing the butterfly to dart out and circle around the bush, usually by tapping with a stick, can one actually see it, so effectively is it colored to match its surroundings. The under surfaces of the wings are green, brown and white, closely resembling the juniper leaves. The upper side is a beautiful bronze.

At Little Rock and Valyermo, if one is lucky, one should see the Desert Orange-Tip, Anthocaris cethura deserti. This very rare butterfly likes the wild mustard, and should be observed about these plants in March and April. It is white in color, with primary wings tipped with a very pale orange fading into yellow. It has been seen in few places and never away from this desert region.

At Phelan one finds the Leanira Checker-Spot, Melitaea leanira, dark brown and white-checked with some red on the upper side. At Victorville, on the banks of the Mojave River can be found the beautiful little San Emigdio Blue, Plebejus emigdonis, which is usually not found elsewhere. The gray color of its underwings, showing when at rest, is the same as the gray leaves of the salt bush which is its food plant.

Perhaps the most elusive of the rare plant forms, and the most interesting, is the Small Blue, Philotes speciosa. This tiniest of the blues is found on the wind-

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
or 1156 N. 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., W. Hollywood
Telephone: CRestview 6-1990
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Telephone: GRANite 9312

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A TIMELY REMINDER
In this, the month of Audubon's birth, let us remember that there are, in our own library at Plummer Park, some exceptionally interesting books about him and his work. "Singing in the Wilderness" and "Audubon's America", by Donald Culross Peattie; "Audubon", by Constance Rourke; "Audacious Audubon", by Edward A. Muschamp; and Audubon's own "Birds of America". We have, also, three portraits of Audubon, gifts of members. One may spend delightful hours in our reading room, where the windows look out upon a garden which has become the favorite haunt of many birds.

THE WESTERN Tanager
If you are not keeping a file of the club paper, please return it, when through, to headquarters.

THE APRIL CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, April 2, 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. (and each succeeding Wednesday thereafter).
Open House at headquarters. Hostess this month, Mrs. David Watkins. If you have time to spare for this pleasant duty, make it known to the Curator, Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon.

THURSDAY, April 3. Field Day. Beautiful Stone Canyon grounds, with fine opportunities to study birds, trees, flowers and shrubs. Tanner Motor Bus leaves 544 South Hill St., Los Angeles, 8 A.M. sharp. Will stop at Sunset and Vine to pick up passengers. Return about 3:30 P.M. Round trip fare 70¢. Take lunch. Make reservation early with Mrs. J. L. Morain, 1041 S. Gramercy Drive, Los Angeles. Parkway 0339. Those driving, go West on Sunset Blvd. to Stone Canyon Road, turn right, go up canyon to picnic tables.

WEDNESDAY, April 9. Board meeting at home of Mrs. George L. Veatch, 3107 Strand, Hermosa Beach. 10 A.M.

WEDNESDAY April 16, 1 to 4 P.M. Bird Section, Los Angeles Museum, Hostesses, Mrs. O. L. Wait and Mrs. O. M. Stultz.

THURSDAY, April 17, 2 P.M. Program meeting, State Building, Exposition Park. Speaker, Prof. C. H. Woodruff, Supervisor of Secondary Education, Long Beach Public Schools. Subject, "Naming the Birds". Mrs. Bertha Caroline Stockwell, member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, will give bird songs and calls. Also, "Flowers at Work", a slow motion picture, in color, of flowers opening.

FRIDAY, April 25. Study Classes at Headquarters, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
9:30 A.M. Botany. Leader, Miss Ruby Curry, Chairman, Committee on Wildflowers. Subject, "Desert Flora".

10:30 A.M. Butterflies. Leader, Mrs. Donald C. Meadows, Chairman, Committee on Butterflies.

SAVE MAY 9, 10 and 11 for the State Convention at Asilomar. Mr. Harwell writes enthusiastically about the prospects for a delightful time. Convention facilities could not be better, he says, and birding and other types of excursions offer great possibilities. There is to be an exhibit, and a good program is being built with the cooperation of the National Audubon Society, the Hancock Foundation and others. The Monterey Peninsula Garden Club is assisting. Really, we cannot afford to miss it.

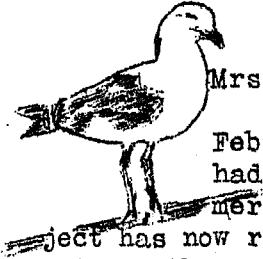
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wracked central Mojave, far from main-traveled trails, and abounds only when generous winter rains have favored this barren region. If there is an abundance of flowers, this little Will-o'-the-Wisp may be found hovering a few feet from the ground, unobserved except by the sharp eyes of the initiated. Because of its weak flight it can be best seen in the early morning before the strong desert wind begins to blow; or late in the afternoon after the wind has subsided. It alights in sunny places on the sand and fastens three legs of one side to a pebble, then allows the wind to blow it over parallel to the ground, the position of least resistance.

In the Providence Mountains there is another rare specimen so closely resembling the Pima Orange-Tip, Anthocharis pima, that no new name has been given it. It is distinguished from pima by the deeper yellow of the wings. It has not been found in any other locality. Also seen in the Providences, but more common, is the beautiful copper colored Neumogen's Checker-Spot, Melitaea neumogeni. It loves the isolation and solitude of these mountains.

The Ivanpah Mountains, which bring us to the end of this jaunt across the Mojave are the habitat of a very distinctive Swallowtail known as Papilio bairdi rudkini. It was discovered a few years ago by Mr. C. N. Rudkin, of San Marino, and named for him by Dr. John A. Comstock, of the Los Angeles Museum. Its distinguishing characteristic is a darker coloration than that of the common Swallowtail.

This brief account has mentioned but a few of the many interesting butterflies of the Mojave Desert. In the Colorado Desert, too, one will find entirely different species which are well worth knowing.



COLOR-BANDED GULLS GROW TO ADULTS

Mrs. M. C. Sargent, Chairman, Pacific Gull Project, La Jolla

February 20, 1941, I saw on the beach at La Jolla a Western Gull which had been color-banded as a nestling at Coronado Island, Mexico, the summer of 1938. It appeared to be in full adult plumage. So the gull project has now reached a new stage. Heretofore, observers have been able to get records on the movements of immature birds. Now we shall also be able to learn, for a number of the colonies, the movements of the adults. This summer, particularly, we hope to find out for the first time whether the adult banded gulls return to nest at the colony where they were born.

Any Audubon Society member who has a chance to visit a nesting colony of gulls--on any island off the Pacific coast, or the many inland Western lakes--can aid the project a great deal by watching for banded, nesting gulls. But it isn't necessary to travel to get gull records. Any flock of gulls on a pier, or an inland ploughed field, may contain a banded bird.

For instance, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur E. Hutchinson, 316 Prospect Street, La Jolla, first learned of the gull project through the Audubon Society. On February 24, 1941 the Hutchinsons observed on the beach at La Jolla a California gull with the red and yellow bands which showed it to be a 1940 bird from Utah Lake, Utah. The next day, at the same spot, they saw in a flock of about 100 gulls, a 1939 California gull from Mono Lake, and both 1939 and 1940 Western gulls from Coronado Island, Mexico.

Mr. Hutchinson says it's fun watching for banded gulls. Since every careful report on either young or adult helps the project, we hope many Audubon members will agree with him!

THE INDOOR MEETING

The Indoor Meeting of March 20, with Miss Helen S. Pratt and Dr. Henry Smith Williams as speakers, attracted a most appreciative audience of 197 bird students. And with spring just around the corner, what could have been more appropriate than Miss Pratt's motion pictures, in color, of her lovely garden and the birds that find a royal welcome there? Or than Dr. Williams' fascinating story of orioles building their homes in his own sanctuary, and how he cooperated with them by providing soft woolen yarns for their use? Dr. Williams had brought with him a number of abandoned nests, generously permitting examination of them at close hand. One could not have had a more delightful demonstration of the interest and joy which come from attracting birds to one's own dooryard.

THE CALIFORNIA AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers
President

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

April Meetings

THURSDAY, April 10, 7:30 P.M. Central Library, Fifth and Grand, Los Angeles. Symposium on Conservation: "Illegal Feather Traffic", Mrs. J. H. Comby, State Chairman of Nature Study, C.F.W.C.; "Bird Sanctuaries", Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Chairman, Committee on Sanctuaries; "Junior Audubon Work" (Illustrated), Miss Helen S. Pratt, National Audubon Society Representative for Junior Audubon Work. Bird calls by Mrs. Bertha Caroline Stockwell.

SATURDAY, April 26, 8 A.M. Field Day. Fern Dell. Western Avenue entrance to Griffith Park. Leader, Miss Blanche Vignos. Visitors welcome.

MICKEY, WE THANK YOU! To enhance the pleasure of park visitors and provide comfort and joy for the birds, Mickey's fountains were dedicated on "Bird and Arbor Day", which dawned as golden and fair as Mickey himself.



Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers, president of the California Audubon, Miss Laura Greely, president of the Los Angeles Audubon, Mrs. Theresa H. Patterson, past president of the Pasadena Audubon, and Mrs. Alma W. Mason, president of the Southwest Bird Study Club, brought greetings from their organizations to Mickey and the Park Department. Mrs. Fred V. Watson, president of the Board of Park Commissioners, and Mr. R. E. Bullard, Supervisor of Park Maintenance, were there to honor the occasion and accept the fountains in behalf of the Park Department.

Mickey, serene and self-possessed, didn't turn a feather when surrounded by a large group of Audubon friends, but added the "sweet, sweet, sweet" of canary language to the gracious speeches of dedication and acceptance of the fountain in Exposition Park. After the ceremonies there, the group proceeded to the following parks in order, where appropriate and delightful dedications were conducted by Miss Greely, Westlake Park; Mrs. Mason, Echo Park; Mrs. Patterson, Elysian Park; and Mrs. Myers, Sycamore Grove. Fountains in Griffith, Lincoln and Hollenbeck parks will be dedicated at an early date. --- Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Chairman, Sanctuary Committee.

THE DOROTHY MAY TUCKER MEMORIAL BIRD SANCTUARY. Mr. B. F. Tucker reports that the hummingbirds have come back. This is much earlier than usual. The California Audubon Society expects to start soon a concrete-block building at the Sanctuary, which will be fire-proof and practically indestructible.

---Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers

LOPEZ CANYON proved to be an especially "birdy" place for the field trip of 54 members and friends of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, March 6. With Mrs. Daugherty leading one group and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Michael another, the day's bird list amounted to 53, the Varied Thrush and Band-tailed Pigeons proving of special interest. After lunch, Mrs. Maude McKnight, chairman of the Committee on Trees, presented a fine program dedicated to "Bird and Arbor Day" and to Mr. Luther Burbank, in whose honor the day is celebrated in California.

SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALK. Mr. Arthur L. Berry, who has been leading the Sunday morning walks with notable success, has been appointed Chief Writer on the Coast and Geodetic Survey ship "Pioneer", and is on his way to Alaska. The good wishes of his many Audubon friends go with Mr. Berry. In his absence, Mr. Josiah Keely led the walk at Playa Del Rey, March 16, and the report is that he did a fine job.

"BOBBY", the stray Ash-throated Flycatcher who has come every winter for six years to spend his nights on a nail in the ceiling of Mrs. L. W. Lash's porch, in Inglewood, arrived according to schedule September 30, but one morning in December he hid himself forth and has not returned. We hope he at last decided to go on southward with his mates. His absence is easier to bear that way. ---Mrs. Bertha Fuller.