

Western Tanager



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No. 4

BIRDING IN THE ALEUTIANS

Mr. A. L. Berry, Member, Los Angeles Audubon Society.

Many fascinating birds not commonly found in the southland can be seen on a visit to one of the western Aleutian Islands. As the ship approaches the anchorage Glaucus Gulls and Pelagic Cormorants are seen flying to and fro across the face of the cliff. A California Murre dives quickly, showing for a moment its dark head and white underparts. Tufted and Horned Puffins fly unceasingly overhead. These are comical birds, often eating so much they cannot rise and are forced to dive to escape the ship.

Nearing the shore in the small boat we see many Pigeon Guillemots, chunky black birds that fly close to the surface of the water, showing white wing patches as they pass. When the boat beaches on the rocky shore, we see Black Oyster-Catchers running before us, squatting frequently as though covering eggs. This is just a ruse, however, as the nest is usually in the other direction.

If we walk along the beach, we may see a flock of Pacific Eiders or a pair of Harlequins, those fantastically marked ducks of the off lying rocks, always good for a thrill. Among the rocks above the water line we find the Aleutian Song Sparrow as large as a Fox Sparrow, and the tiny Aleutian Wren, a form of the Winter Wren, playing hide and seek in the crevices of the rocky cliff. Climbing up the gentle slope between towering cliffs, we see Aleutian Rosy Finches chasing each other about or perching for a moment on an outcropping rock.

On every side as we strike out across the tundra, we hear the tinkling song of the Alaska Longspur, a beautifully marked sparrow with black face and yellow bill. It seems as though every grass blade has its Longspur. We see them often, too, rising into the air, singing as they glide back to earth. When we reach the snow line we are almost certain to see the dainty white Snow Bunting with his black wing tips. He also sings while on the wing, even in a heavy gale.

If we walk far enough, stay long enough, and are fortunate enough, we will see the most sought after bird in the Aleutians - the Ptarmigan. It is always a pleasant surprise when one of these grouse-like birds bursts from under foot and makes off with a whir of wings and a frog-like croak, gliding to a landing some distance away. Only sharp eyes or a good field glass can find the bird again and note the red comb over the eye as the ptarmigan stands with head upraised, watching the observer, just as always only sharp eyes can find shy birds in any part of the world.

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Membership Dues

Annual \$1.50 Life \$10.00 Patron \$100.00

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Miss Linnian E. Blind
1126 Manhattan Ave. Hermosa Beach.
Miss Margaret S. Grant
1055 No. Kingsley Dr. Los Angeles
Miss Caroline Hakoun
4063 W. 23rd St. Los Angeles
Mrs. Clara Miller
1413 No. Kenmore, Hollywood

WITH PLEASURE we add the following names
to our list of Life Members:

Mrs. Willard Wikoff,
Mr. James M. Brennan

NOTES FROM HEADQUARTERS

On Dec. 2, Mrs. Shearer gave a talk to
a group of D.A.R. members at the Woman's
University Club, using 20 of our mounted
specimens and nests to illustrate.

Plummer Park entertained 105 County
Asst. Playground Supervisors on Dec. 6.
Many visited headquarters and much inter-
est was shown in our exhibits.

Mrs. Edwards brought a number of
National Geographic leaflets.

MEMO FOR JAN. 1

I'll clean the corners of my heart
And sweep out all debris,
Because this time I wish the year
A bright and happy me.
Nellie G. Bourdeaux

JANUARY CALENDAR

FIELD DAY - Thursday, January 8, 1942 - OAK GROVE PARK - a very good birding place,
alongside Devil's Gate Dam and Flintridge Golf Course. Our Tanner Bus will leave
544 South Hill St., Los Angeles, at 8 a.m. and will leave Oak Grove on return trip
at 2 p.m. Round trip fare \$.75. Take lunch. Please make reservations EARLY with
Mrs. Jesse L. Morain, 1041 South Gramercy Drive, L.A. Phone Parkway 0339.

BOARD MEETING - Thursday, January 15, 1942, 9:45 a.m. at the home of Mrs. Holden,
2802 South Western Ave.

PROGRAM MEETING - Thursday, January 15, 1942 - State Bldg. Exposition Park at 2 p.m.
One of our own members, Mr. Howard L. Jones, will show one hour of wild-life movies
in natural color, subjects to be "Hawks," "Birds and Animals of the Sierras," "Life
of the California Gull," "Bald Eagle" and "Birds of an Inland Lake." Mr. Jones's
pictures are always a rare treat so come early and bring a friend.

STUDY CLASS - Thursday, January 29, 1942. Plummer Park Clubhouse, 7377 Santa Monica
Blvd. Take West Hollywood (P.E.) car, Subway Terminal; get off at Fuller Ave.,
walk one block west to Plummer Lane. Bring text books, note books and lunch.
9:30 a.m. BOTANY. Leader, Mr. George T. Hastings. Subject: "Plant Records and
Collections: How to make notes; how and why to collect and mount plants."
10:30 a.m. BIRDS. Leader, Miss Edith Newton. Subject: "Beaks and Feet of Birds
with relation to their Food." Illustrated with photographs by Gayle Pickwell, Ph.D.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Plans are going ahead for the second annual convention of the National Audubon Society to be held at Santa Barbara, January 23-25, 1942. Sessions will start with luncheon Friday, January 23, at the Samarkand Hotel, which is to be headquarters. The afternoon will be given over to reports from officers of the several Audubon Societies in California. Evening dinner and the showing of some exceptional color pictures.

Saturday session at the Museum of Natural History where special exhibits are being arranged. A buffet luncheon and early adjournment to allow a visit to the Art Museum where Mr. Donald Culross Peattie will explain the marvelous exhibit of original Audubon materials and wild-life paintings by other artists. Evening dinner at the Montecito Country Club where unusual wild-life pictures will be shown and Mr. Peattie will be the only speaker.

Convention will close on Sunday with a field trip. Further information concerning activities may be had from our president early in January when the final details have been decided.

THANK YOU, MICKEY BISHOP

Mickey Audubon Bishop's activities have been extended to aiding the Red Cross and to bring cheer to many homes this past Christmas season. In Lafayette Park, a fountain of exceptional beauty has been dedicated to the birds and to everyone who seeks peace and inspiration in this gem of a park. Mickey's former gift to Lafayette Park, a fountain showing Cupid and the Dove, has been moved to South Park. Many birds will lift their heads high on New Years and drink to the health and happiness of Mickey.

----- Alma Stultz

EMBARRASSING SITUATION

The gardener who loves birds is likely to be put in an embarrassing situation when it comes seed planting time.

Seemingly the sparrows of the Yosemite Valley are able to anticipate the seed-planting time in the Museum Wild Flower Garden, for in flocks, juncos and chipping sparrows appear in the garden when fall planting begins. This year during October, the juncos and chipping sparrows were joined by white-crowned sparrows, golden-crowned sparrows, green tailed towhees and fox sparrows.

Fox sparrows are rare on the floor of the valley and I was delighted to see two birds on the morning of October 25. Very nice birds and very tame, but I soon realized that they were gobbling up seeds that had just been sown. I tried to shoo them away, but they were either very bold or very hungry for they refused to be shooed. Perhaps they could read my character and knew that I would not have the heart to run them out of the garden. So confident and so friendly as they scratched beside the path in their peculiar "rocking-horse" fashion they were welcome even at the expense of the next season's bloom.

----- Enid Michael

The California State Fish and Game Commission has cancelled all outstanding bird collecting permits and a committee has been appointed to formulate new rules under which permits will be issued.

MRS. BERTHA FULLER, one of our members, will address the Nature Club at its meeting Tuesday, January 6, at Boos Bros. Cafeteria, 530 South Hill St. Her subject will be "Following the Birds Around the Border of the United States," and will follow a cafeteria dinner from 5:30 to 7:00.

* * * * *

WE REGRET to announce the death of Mrs. Ora K. Sabin on December 19. The sympathy of the Society is extended to her relatives, also to Miss Marguerite Driver who lost her father recently.

NOVEMBER STUDY CLASS

The November outdoor study classes, held at Redondo Beach, proved a successful idea, with fifty members and guests present. Six species of gulls were studied at close range and about twenty-five other varieties of shore and water birds noted. A tree walk through the City Park was conducted by Mr. George Sease, the gardener, and our own Mr. Hastings. Mrs. Burch welcomed the members at Burch Seashell House and presented each visitor with a scientifically labelled shell as a souvenir. Our thanks to her, and to all who helped make the day so pleasant; to Mrs. Hood for bringing the mounted gulls from the museum, to Miss Faddis for her information regarding them, and to the Redondo members for the fine balmy weather they managed to produce.

----- Laura White

DECEMBER PROGRAM MEETING

Thursday, December 4, was a memorable day for the Los Angeles Audubon Society. We were entertained by Allen D. Cruickshank of the National Audubon Society. Mr. Cruickshank gave us remarkable pictures of Gannets, Loons, and Cormorants seen in northern regions, but best of all were the Barn Owls pictured in an old deserted attic in New York City. His bird calls were inimitable. I cannot enough commend his broad-minded, comprehensive view in placing birds in their proper relation to our lives, and to all living things. The grand oneness of Creation cannot be too strongly stressed. We send a Godspeed and a pressing invitation to Mr. Cruickshank to visit us again.

----- Miriam S. Faddis

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Once again the Christmas Party at Plummer Park was voted a huge success, with ninety members and friends in attendance. Tables were gay with Christmas decorations arranged by Miss Gilbert and her committee. At each place were sprigs of rosemary in tiny containers - the gift of Mrs. Hood.

Following luncheon, our President, Miss Greeley, introduced Mrs. Stultz who gave us a preview showing of the Society's own collection of kodachrome slides. Mrs. Bertha Caroline Stockwell presented a version of "Silent Night" with whistling accompaniment. Miss Faddis read two poems composed by Mr. James M. Brennan, and Mrs. Florence Scott delighted us with two surprise skits, after which all present joined in singing "Jingle Bells."

NORTHERN PHALAROPE (Lobipes lobatus)

At Bolsa Chica slough on Dec. 15, 1941 a Northern Phalarope was seen. The bird was very tame and did not take alarm when we stopped the car only ten feet from where it was feeding, on a sandy weed patch beside the highway. The feeding phalarope was apparently picking up weed seeds. It may possibly have been feeding on insects, but if so the insects were very sluggish for the bird was not making hurried jabs with its bill as I have seen it do when spearing leaf-hoppers on a lawn.

Interesting to me was the fact that I had never before seen a phalarope so far north so late in the season.

-----Charles W. Michael