

Western Tanager



Vol. VIII

February, 1942

No. 5

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA "SNOW" BIRDS

By Howard L. Cogswell, Member, Los Angeles Audubon Society

Yes, there is good birding in the snow in Southern California, as four of us found in the San Bernardino mountains last December 28th. The event was Audubon Magazine's 42nd Christmas Bird Count, and our 15 mile diameter area included all of the Big Bear-Baldwin Lake region and well down both slopes of the mountains.

This year, the snowfall was much more widespread than last. Down in Santa Ana Canyon the chaparral was a beautiful sight, all the bushes heavily laden with a white canopy. From one spot there, where I was standing, I could count 12 Fox Sparrows "Tchup"-ing at me from the tops of the bushes. Near Seven Oaks, Band-tailed Pigeons flew over in scores; the Lewis Woodpeckers we counted as we drove along in the car, and when we saw a lonely Dipper dashing in and out of the icy waters of the Santa Ana right at the edge of a foot of snow, we felt well rewarded for the half hour spent with numbed fingers adjusting tire chains to the car on our way up before dawn.

Over on the desert slope, Art Berry and Jim Murdock started below the snow line at Cushenbury Springs, near which they found a flock containing both Sage and Bell Sparrows. Cactus Woodpeckers at Cactus Flat, and Pinon Jays, Slate-colored Juncos, and Red-winged Blackbirds (in the snow) at Baldwin Lake were other "finds" of theirs.

The portions of the lakes that were not frozen over gave refuge to thousands of ducks, mostly Canvas-backs, and many thousands more of Coots. Those who haven't seen the winter Coot population at Big Bear have missed a great sight.

All in all, the four of us had a very enjoyable day. We had sunshine on the snow while it rained in the valley, and drove through a veil of slowly falling snowflakes on the way home. Jim and Art tarried long enough, though, to hear our 65th species of bird, the Horned Owl.

Following is our official list compiled by Arthur L. Berry, James I. Murdock, and Howard and Bessie Cogswell:

Eared Grebe, 700; Great Blue Heron, 2; Baldpate, 200; Pintail, 1; Canvas-back, 2500; Ruddy Duck, 7; American Merganser, 350; Cooper Hawk, 1; Prairie Falcon, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Mountain Quail, 4; Coot, 40,000; Killdeer, 1; Ring-billed Gull, 9; Band-tailed Pigeon, 300; Horned Owl, 1; Red-shafted Flicker, 36; California Woodpecker, 5; Lewis Woodpecker, 63; Hairy Woodpecker, 4; Cactus Woodpecker, 2; Nuttall Woodpecker, 1; White-headed Woodpecker, 6; Steller Jay, 17; California Jay, 13; Pinon Jay, 100; Clarke Nutcracker, 1; Mountain Chickadee, 38; Plain Titmouse, 3; Bush-tit, 20; White-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Pygmy Nuthatch, 34; Creeper, 2; Wren-tit, 11; Dipper, 1; Bewick Wren, 6; Cactus Wren, 13; Canyon Wren, 1; Rock Wren, 2; California Thrasher, 3; Le Conte Thrasher, 1; Robin, 34; Hermit Thrush, 1; Western Bluebird, 17; Townsend Solitaire, 3; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 12; Pipit, 1; California Shrike, 5; Audubon Warbler, 2; English Sparrow, 10; Red-winged Blackbird, 15; Brewer Blackbird, 20; California Purple Finch, 4; House Finch, 46; Pine Siskin, 40; Willow Goldfinch, 1; Green-backed Goldfinch, 5; Spotted Towhee, 44; Bell Sparrow, 2; Sage Sparrow, 5; Slate-colored Junco, 2; Thurber Junco, 300; Gambel Sparrow, 222; Fox Sparrow, 21; Song Sparrow, 3; TOTAL, 65 species; 45,283 individuals.

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Editor.....Mrs. W. T. Shelford

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Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.

OFFICERS

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President.....Miss Laura Greely
904 Kendall Ave., South Pasadena
Treasurer.....Mrs. O. L. Wait
Curator & Librarian-Mrs. Mary B. Salmon
1117 N. Fuller Ave. L. A.

Membership Dues

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

IN MEMORIAM

Charles Michael is enshrined forever in our memories; he whose knowledge was only equaled by his gentle, understanding heart, in whose sight all nature was sublime.

To walk with him along the trail was to search the far horizon, to kneel a moment on the earth and watch some tiny growing thing, or stand entranced by song of bird.

All nature will a little fairer seem for knowing him.

Alma Stultz

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

FIELD TRIP: Thursday, February 5, 1942 - Bolsa Chica Gun Club grounds, just south of Seal Beach and about 34 miles from Los Angeles. A fine opportunity to study shore birds and ducks. Our Tanner Motor Bus will leave 544 South Hill St. at 8 a.m. returning to L. A. about 4 p.m. Round trip fare 90¢. Take lunch. Please make bus reservations EARLY with Mrs. Jesse L. Morain, 1041 So. Gramercy Drive, L.A. Phone PA 0339.

BOARD MEETING - Thursday, February 19, 1942, 9:45 a.m. at the home of Mrs. Shelford, 3315 West 41st Street.

PROGRAM MEETING - Thursday, February 19, 1942, 2:00 p.m., State Bldg. Exposition Park. Dr. & Mrs. T. D. A. Cockerell will show Haselton's Hummingbird Picture. This is a very famous picture and must have been seen by more than half a million people. It is the story of the Anna's Hummingbird. Haselton's new picture, "Crossing the Canadian Rockies," shows us the country described in Mr. Kent's article, "Subspecies", in the December Tanager. This is a remarkable picture.

Hoff's "Life History of the Broadtailed Hummingbird" will also be shown. Dr. Cockerell says, "This is the loveliest nature picture ever made - very interesting biologically and nearly perfect in artistry." The picture has some shots never made before - the hatching of a hummer's egg, the game of the mother with her fledglings, the gathering of spider's webs.

The program will end with Captain Knight's "Golden Eagles." The cartoons in this picture were made by Captain Knight and are suggestive and humorous.

Dr. Cockerell is Prof. Emeritus of State University of Colorado. He was head of Biology many years. Mrs. Cockerell has always worked with him in all his research work, travels, etc.

SPECIAL NOTICE: IF CHAINS ARE ACROSS ROADS LEADING INTO EXPOSITION PARK, LEAVE AUTOMOBILE OUTSIDE AND WALK IN AS PARK IS OPEN TO PEDESTRIANS.

STUDY CLASS - Thursday, February 26, 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: "Our Common Food Plants. Where They Come From and a Little of Their History."

10:30 a.m. BIRDS. Leader, Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer. Subject: "How and Where Birds Build Their Nests."

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Alma Stultz

NOTICE: Field Trip, Thursday, February 5, 1942. Due to last minute plans, Bolso Chica Gun Club grounds have been closed temporarily to everyone. Instead our group will meet in Griffith Park at Picnic Grounds near Zoo at 9:00 a.m. Take lunch. Street car transportation: "V" car connects with Griffith Park Motor Coach at Vermont and Monroe Streets, at 8:35 a.m., 9:35 a.m., etc. - every hour thereafter, running out on Vermont Avenue. Get off motor coach at Zoo Picnic Grounds.

EXTRA SPECIAL: Mr. Charles A. Harwell, California representative of the National Audubon Society, will participate in the program announced herein for February 19th, and will show "Beautiful Birds of California Wild Life Tours" recently taken by Mr. Allan D. Cruickshank.

Mr. Harwell will also accompany us on the Bird Walk in San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary, to be led by Mr. Howard L. Cogswell, Sunday, February 22. See announcement on the last page of this Tanager.

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AUDUBON MAGAZINE'S Forty-second Annual Christmas Bird Count
December 21, 1941

The Los Angeles Bird Count was taken Dec. 21, 1941, by sixteen observers, representing the Los Angeles Audubon Society, Pasadena Audubon Society and Southwest Bird Study Club. Territory: Section of Los Angeles radiating $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from La Cienega and Airdrome Crossing, taking in short stretch of sea shore, sloughs, four city parks, canyons on south and west slopes of Griffith Park, foothills within specified area and vicinities around three city reservoirs. Due to military restrictions, many of our usual observation grounds, including city reservoirs, were closed to observers. Some sloughs have been filled in, on which defense buildings have been built. Weather: Clear A.M. clouding P.M., cold, gusty wind blowing all day, averaging 20 m.p.h. Temperature, 50 degrees at start, 56 degrees at finish.

LOONS: 1 Pacific; 2 Red-throated.

GREBES: 2 Horned; 60 Eared; 40 Western; 15 Pied-billed.

PELICANS and CORMORANTS: 21 California Brown Pelican; 26 Farallon Cormorant.

HERONS, ETC.: 3 California Heron; 25 American Egret; 9 Brewster's Snowy Egret; 1 Anthony's Green Heron; 30 Black-crowned Night Heron; 1 American Bittern.

DUCKS, GEESE, Etc.: 2 Lesser Canada Geese; 4 Mallard; 1 Gadwall; 18 Baldpate; 347 Pintail; 10 Green-winged Teal; 2 Cinnamon Teal; 235 Shoveller; 1 Ring-necked Duck; 5 Canvas-back; 472 Lesser Scaup; 30 White-winged Scoter; 273 Surf Scoter; 179 Ruddy Duck; 57 Red-breasted Merganser.

HAWKS: 4 Sharp-shinned; 1 Cooper's; 10 Western Red-tailed; 4 Marsh; 25 Desert Sparrow.

QUAIL: 63 Valley.

CRANES, RAILS, Etc.: 1 Light-footed Rail; 235 Coot.

SHORE-BIRDS: 43 Snowy Plover; 159 Killdeer; 196 Black-bellied Plover; 5 Black Turnstone; 1 Wilson's Snipe; 2 Long-billed Curlew; 32 Hudsonian Curlew; 1 Spotted Sandpiper; 662 Western Willet; 3 Greater Yellow-legs; 360 Least Sandpiper; 12 Red-backed Sandpiper; 10 Eastern Dowitcher; 206 Long-billed Dowitcher (Intensive close-up study of above two Dowitchers-Kent); 219 Western Sandpiper; 482 Marbled Godwit; 136 Sanderling; 149 Avocet; 27 Glaucous-winged Gull; 34 Western Gull; 1 Herring Gull; 113 California Gull; 366 Ring-billed Gull; 55 Bonaparte's Gull; 40 Heermann's Gull; 11 Forster's Tern.

PIGEONS, DOVES: 1 Band-tailed Pigeon; 28 Western Mourning Dove; 21 Chinese Spotted Dove; 6 Ringed Turtle Dove.

ROADRUNNERS: 1 Roadrunner.

OWLS: 1 Short-eared.

SWIFTS and HUMMINGBIRDS: 10 White-throated Swift; 62 Anna's Hummingbird.

KINGFISHERS: 4 Western Belted.

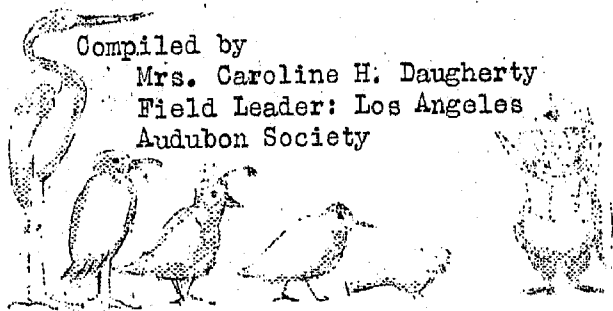
WOODPECKERS: 34 Red-shafted Flicker; 5 California Woodpecker; 1 Nuttall's Woodpecker.

PERCHING BIRDS: 44 Black Phoebe; 5 Say's Phoebe; 43 California Jay; 17 San Diego Titmouse; 201 Coast Bush-Tit; 80 Pallid Wren-Tit; 1 Western House Wren; 29 San Diego Wren; 22 Tule Marsh Wren; 30 Western Mockingbird; 31 California Thrasher; 8 Western Robin; 5 Northern Varied Thrush; 10 Alaska Hermit Thrush; 205 Western Bluebird; 24 Western Gnatcatcher; 42 Western Ruby-crowned Kinglet; 60 American Pipit; 15 California Shrike; 1 Dusky Warbler; 1312 Audubon's Warbler; 19 Tule Yellow-throat; 97 English Sparrow; 67 Western Meadowlark; 27 San Diego Redwing; 727 Brewer's Blackbird; 4 California Purple Finch; 699 House Finch; 31 Willow Goldfinch; 56 Green-backed Goldfinch; 32 San Diego Towhee; 112 California Brown Towhee. Sparrows: 32 Western Savannah; 48 Belding's; 5 Large-billed; 65 Western Lark; 1 Rufous-crowned; 12 Thurber's Junco; 2 Western Chipping; 348 Gambel's; 19 Golden-crowned; 5 Fox; 133 San Diego Song.

TOTAL...Species.....118
TOTAL...Individuals (est).....10,440

Compiled by

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



BIRD NOTES

Oak Grove Park Field Trip on January 8, 1942 found about 45 Audubon students on hand despite war conditions and a cold day. We were rewarded by finding 56 species of birds, outstanding were: Red-throated loon, Ring-necked Duck, American Merganser, Band-tailed Pigeon, Lewis Woodpecker and the Golden-crowned Sparrow.

An interesting bird count was taken in December in Baldwin Hills area by Mr. & Mrs. George T. Hastings and Mrs. Mary Warrick, listing 29 species, 2,303 individuals (est.) and a very rare observation of 4 Ferruginous Rough-leg Hawks. Mr. Hastings recounts a battle between a Desert Sparrow Hawk and one of the Ferruginous, apparently ending with the Sparrow Hawk the victor.

Mrs. Bertha Fuller, of Inglewood, reports the birds being driven away in great numbers in that area because of the intensive building activity and the draining of the sloughs. She also tells us that hundreds of English Sparrows have been killed off this past year by a disease which looks something like chicken pox and which is evidently highly contagious among the sparrows, but from which the House Finches seem to be immune.

Regretfully we announce the passing of Mrs. E. J. Saunders, a life member. Word comes from Miss Helen Pratt of the death of her uncle and from Miss Margaret Grant of the passing of her brother.

SANCTUARY BIRD WALKS

Many members will rejoice over the announcement that there will be regular Sunday Bird Walks in the San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary. Starting at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 8, and every second and fourth Sunday thereafter, with Mr. Arthur L. Berry and Mr. Howard L. Cogswell as leaders. Grayhound buses leave for Whittier about every thirty minutes from 6th and Los Angeles Sts. Get off at Whittier Blvd. and Durfee Road and connect with Pasadena bus. Get off Pasadena bus at Temple School which is one half block from entrance to Sanctuary.

NEW MEMBERS

The following are being welcomed into our ranks: Miss Dena Grein, 650 Glenmore Blvd., Glendale; Mrs. Ann L. O'Donnell, 409 So. Francinea Ave., Redondo Beach; Mr. J. T. Porter, 3131 Pasadena Ave., L.A. and Mrs. H. A. Hinshaw, Box 6, La Canada.

HARBOR VISITOR

Dr. William L. Lloyd, Director of the Cabrillo Marine Museum, reports an Ancient Murrelet seen in San Pedro Harbor the morning of January 4, 1942. "From the Cabrillo Playground Pier it could be seen feeding. It would dive and staying about a foot under water would dart with surprising agility in search of food. It used its wings only in swimming so far as could be seen, steering with its feet. About every thirty seconds it would bob to the surface like a released cork, soon to dive again. When on the surface its ivory colored bill could be clearly seen which helped to identify it as an Ancient Murrelet."

Dr. Lloyd extends a cordial invitation to the members of our Society and all bird lovers to visit the Museum. Many new habitat groups are being developed which show the birds in their natural surroundings, making them more attractive and of more value for study purposes.