

Western Tanager



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No. 8

A Trip with the NATIONAL AUDUBON TOURS - Palm Springs - Salton Sea Region

On March 21 and 22, a group, all members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, including Mr. & Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Mrs. Caroline Daugherty, Mrs. Maud Murphy and the writer, accompanied the one and only Mr. C. A. (Bert) Harwell, outstanding Naturalist and California Representative of the National Audubon Society, on his Palm Springs - Salton Sea tour.

It was a perfect spring day, and the station wagon purred over the stretch of gray road to the songs of the Cactus Wrens, through the fragrance of grapefruit blossoms, past the date gardens and cultivated areas of the one locality in the United States containing not only the greatest number of birds per square mile, but the greatest number of species in a given area. An Audubonite's paradise!

To the north, snow-capped Mt. San Jacinto and Mt. San Geronio stand like giant sentries at the head of the valley, with the blue of the Santa Rosas on the west and the gold of the Orocoapias on the east, like protecting arms enclosing the valley with its precious treasure of wild life.

108 species were observed (a record to date), the outstanding ones being: Sage Thrasher in the chaparral near the oasis of 29 Palms, a "first" for everyone, including Mr. Harwell. A number of Crissal Thrashers also were seen and a nesting pair of Le Conte's. A pair of dainty Verdins building their cozy nest in a budding palo verde thrilled us. The Vermillion Flycatcher dazzled our eyes with his flashing brightness and even performed a short nuptial flight for the benefit of his admiring mate. White-rumped Shrikes, Desert and Bell's Sparrows were numerous. The glossy, black-robed Phainopeplas were nesting everywhere in clumps of desert mistletoe in the mesquite. Near the end of Salton Sea we sighted a flock of Little Brown and Sandhill Cranes, starting their northern migration. They wheeled and circled directly overhead, "talking" the while and giving us a fine sight. They had no sooner disappeared when another mixed flock came over. We counted 107 in all.

We visited the Treganza Heronry along the Alamo River where these great birds were nesting in tall cottonwoods and willows. Some were incubating; others, with young in nests. A Western Horned Owl flew from its nest among a number of abandoned Heron nests. A Florida Gallinule with its bright red bill and flaming forehead was observed swimming shyly close to the reeds in a slough of the Alamo River in the Imperial Wild Life Refuge. A Jack Snipe was flushed from along the same slough and another flushed from the reeds of a canal near Salton Sea. We were rapturous over a find of 17 White-faced Glossy Ibis, feeding in a plowed field and felt that we had experienced the ultimate for two days of birding, when day of days, our joy overflowed at the sight of 150 of these iridescent birds feeding in an alfalfa patch along our road. WHAT A TRIP!

Dorothy E. Groner.

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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or 1156 N. Vista St., L.A.

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Membership Dues

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

PLUMMER PARK NOTES

On April 25, during the ceremonies for the new improvements in the park, there were 25 visitors to Audubon House. Hostesses were Miss Gilbert, Miss Damert, Mrs. Wait, and Mrs. Walker.

A Sora or Carolina Rail was found on the new parking lot. This bird was probably migrating at night and struck a wire and was killed. This makes over 60 different kinds of birds seen there. The Arizona hooded orioles and the black headed grosbeaks have returned.

CALENDAR FOR MAY

FIELD DAY - Thursday, May 7, 1942 - The Dorothy May Tucker Memorial Bird Sanctuary, at "Oakwood" - Modjeska Canyon. Our group is invited by the California Audubon Society to visit this interesting place and those most famous hummingbirds. We shall see many other species of birds there, and along the way, also, wild flowers. Our Tanner Motor bus will leave 544 So. Hill St., L. A. at 8 a.m. sharp, returning about 5 p.m. running via Whittier, Fullerton, Anaheim, Orange & El Modena, through Santiago Canyon to Oakwood. Special round trip fare \$1.35. Take lunch. PLEASE make reservations if possible, not later than Tuesday, May 5, with Mrs. Jesse L. Morain, 1041 Gramercy Drive, Los Angeles, phone PARKway 0339. If you find it necessary to cancel your reservation it must be done 24 hours in advance as a vacant seat in the bus means a deficit, since we have the service at cost.

BIRD WALK - Sunday, May 10, at San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary. Meet at Durfee Road entrance at 9 a.m. Leader, Mr. Howard L. Cogswell. Bring lunch.

BOARD MEETING - Thursday, May 21, at 10 a.m. State Bldg. Exposition Park.

PROGRAM MEETING - Thursday, May 21, 1942 - State Bldg., Exposition Park at 2 p.m. Our spring program is rich indeed with three fine speakers. Mr. George T. Hastings will give a short, illustrated talk on the fascinating subject of "Acacias."

"Little People of the Garden" is the subject of the talk by Charlotte A. Hamilton. In these days of priorities our homes will mean more to us. Let us get acquainted with the animals and insects, as well as the birds which live with us.

In "Adventures in Nature caught by the Color Camera," Mrs. Mary V. Hood will show us some of her latest additions to her grand collection of Kodachrome slides. She has promised to include some new pictures of baby birds as well as lovely flower studies. Election of officers. Be sure to come, and bring a friend.

MRS. MAUD MURPHY has again been asked to act as Nature Adviser to the Glendale Girl Scouts at their camp this summer.

APRIL FIELD TRIP

On April 2, fifty members gathered at the San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary and were greeted by the songs of the Cardinal, Wren, and Black-headed Grosbeak. Three leaders headed different bird study groups and 46 species were identified. One of the greatest treats of the day was the Red-winged Blackbirds who seemed exceptionally brilliant. Birding was confined to the south end of the sanctuary to avoid disturbing nesting birds, the north end being more thickly wooded and better adapted to nesting.

APRIL PROGRAM MEETING

Mere words are inadequate to describe the thrill of viewing Mrs. Laurel Reynolds' pictures "Fun with Birds." In natural color and with close-up views we were privileged to see the intimate home life of many species of birds which are very rare to the average person, and Mrs. Reynolds' delightfully informal remarks made her a speaker long to be remembered.

Mrs. Dorothy Dean Sheldon gave an inspiring talk on John James Audubon, this being the month of his birth, and ended with this quotation from Victor Hugo which many will like to remember:

"Be like the bird who, resting for a moment on a frail branch, feels it breaking beneath him but sings, knowing that he has wings."

MR. HOWARD L. COGSWELL is now compiling the Southern California "Season" report for the National Audubon Society. It was reorganized last year by Mrs. Daugherty and carried on by her in a highly creditable manner until pressure of other activities made it necessary for her to give it up. She has received fine letters of appreciation from the executive director of the National Audubon Society and the editor of the Audubon Magazine.

MRS. JESSIE B. GILL, a teacher at the La Crescenta elementary school is being congratulated on the interesting nature program she is conducting. With birds as their primary interest, the children are also studying trees and flowers. Their art work consists of nature subjects, composition about bird houses and feeding trays and even their music is inspired by songs of birds.

(Calendar for May continued)

BIRD WALK - Sunday, May 24, at San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary. Meet at Durfee Road entrance at 9 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader, Mr. Arthur L. Berry.

STUDY CLASSES - Thursday, May 28, Educational Division, Los Angeles Museum. Located in the southeast corner of the building, ground floor.

9:30 a.m. Committee on Butterflies and Small Wildlife:
Chairman, Miss Charlotte A. Hamilton.

10:30 a.m. Birds. Leader, Mr. George Willett, Senior Curator of Ornithology, Los Angeles Museum. Subject, "Mountain Birds."

On a Missouri farm a male red bird was found shot and very weak. The farmer's wife amputated the wing - fed the bird with a medicine dropper and it lived and sang, but always stayed in a cage. A pair of canaries decided to abandon their four babies and refused to feed or care for them. The visitor saw this male bird taking care of the deserted canaries, feed them, singing low and sweet over them as he covered them with his one wing. This seems a very unbelievable tale but it is true.

Mary B. Salmon

We are happy to add the following names to our list of Life Members:
Miss Cora Bassett -- Mrs. Ann W. Snow -- Mrs. Helen G. Russell.

FIELD DAY: Thursday, June 4, 1942 -- Charlton Flats -- Up Angeles Crest Highway. Our last Field Trip of this season will be up in the beautiful mountains among the mountain birds, wild flowers and pines. Our Tanner Motor Bus will leave 544 South Hill St., Los Angeles, at 8 a.m. stopping for passengers at Glendale Ave. & Los Feliz Road, Glendale, 8:15 -- Honolulu Ave. & Verdugo Blvd., in Montrose, 8:25 and Haskell Ave. & Foothill Blvd. at 8:30. Round trip fare \$1.25. Returning to Los Angeles about 4:30 p.m. Take lunch. Please make reservations EARLY with Mrs. Jesse L. Morain, 1041 South Gramercy Drive, L.A. Phone Parkway 0339.

SCOUT ENTHUSIASTS

Last fall the Scoutmaster of Los Angeles Troop 121 asked me to help organize a class in bird study for the older boys. I agreed and suggested that the class be limited to twelve. It was planned that the boys would have a study evening at my house before each field trip and that we would make four trips followed by an examination. When the course was announced, twenty-one boys signed up and I turned at once to the Los Angeles Audubon Society for extra help. I cannot say enough for the knowledge and enthusiasm of those members who came to my rescue, without which this course never could have been the success it was.

For the study evenings we borrowed from the Museum Extension Service mounted specimens of birds we were apt to see the following Sunday in the field. Mr. Arthur Berry and Mr. Howard Cogswell came over and taught the boys the field identification marks of the birds and something of their habits. Then we gave the boys a short quiz by showing ten or fifteen kodachrome slides of the birds in their natural habitats.

On Sunday morning we were out at our "birding" station by 8 a.m. and here we were joined by our leaders. Mr. Berry and Mr. Cogswell came to all our meetings and Mrs. Shearer and Mrs. Stultz helped at several. Our trips included Griffith Park for city birds and a few of the chaparral, San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary and Charlton Flats, (5000 ft.) in the National Forest and we also visited the marshes and seashore. The leader listed 128 species on the trips and we were able to show the majority of the scouts 76 very well. When planning this course it was suggested that we wait until spring when there would be plenty of birds. However, Mr. Cogswell suggested it was easier to start when there were fewer birds so that when the big spring influx took place the boys would not become confused. The whole course was designed to meet the requirements as set forth in the Boy Scout Handbook. The enthusiasm of the boys added much pleasure to the trips for the leaders. To see the boys still "birding" assiduously at 11:45 a.m. after an 8 a.m. start was stimulating to everyone connected with the enterprise.

Then came the final test on identification. This took place in the Extension Division of the Museum. 119 birds were set out on long tables with numbers replacing their names. Eighteen boys took the final test and all but two got more than the required 40 birds. The top five boys scored 118, 108, 104, 100, and 93 birds. The papers also required them to indicate the habitat of each bird. Besides this each boy became a member of the Junior Audubon. They finished four projects; bird-house, bird-bath, feeding tray (various types) and notebook. We prepared and gave each boy various charts and lists and all bought one or more of the bird books. We were also lucky to have a generous supply of field glasses and fine days on all our trips. Thanks also are extended to the fathers who either joined us or loaned their cars making transportation possible.

It was a most interesting and enjoyable experience and I believe a majority of those who took part will never wholly lose their interest in birds.

Mary V. Hood

"The bird's song is the echo of the morning light back from the earth."