

Western



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NOTES FROM A GRAY LADY

The grounds of the hospital where I work are thickly studded with deodars, pines, acacias, grevilleas, eucalyptus and olive trees. There is a rose garden and a shady retreat with water dripping into pools and many other features to make this place a nature paradise.

Several men in the hospital have for some time been feeding hummingbirds and orioles with special feeders they have designed. Food is put out for other birds although they do not know them, such as Gambel Sparrows, Juncos and Chickadees. In my work on the wards they ask me many questions about these birds, also about flowers and trees. For an hour each week, those that are interested meet with me out of doors for a nature discussion. The Los Angeles County Museum has very generously supplied us with mounted specimens. We have studied most of the uncommon birds as well as the familiar, also bats and other small animals, insects, snakes, lizards, flowers, cones and trees.

They had never heard of a *Phainopepla* until I brought a pair for them to see. The next week the men showed me a pair nesting in a deodar near where we held our class. We watched the raising of the family and after the young had flown, they secured the nest for me to take to the museum.

Nearby we found a bush-tit's nest in an olive tree, an oriole's nest in a banana tree, a hummingbird's nest in a deodar and many mud jugs of the cliff swallows under the eaves.

Great interest was aroused in the cowbird for not long after seeing a specimen they discovered a tiny song sparrow feeding an overgrown baby. As we were talking about it down flew the young cowbird at our feet and tagged us along the path. He was fearless and followed everyone. One of the doctors said he would grow flat-footed as he walked so much.

Insects have been brought to me. Some I had to have identified at the museum. One was a woolly ant, really a variety of wasp, a female without wings. Just recently I have received a tarantula, dead of course; seed pods, mushrooms, twigs of trees and flowers are brought for identification.

We have enjoyed learning the names and histories of the trees and shrubs on the grounds and interesting stories about the flowers. One of the men is an authority on vineyards and orchards and has been a great help to me. Some who have been nervous are finding nature lore of vital interest. Those who have trouble with color are learning to name birds from their form and habits. All are now making good use of the excellent library at the hospital, studying about birds and insects for themselves. This classwork has been over a period of six months and is still going strong. Perhaps the one who has benefited most and certainly the one who has been happiest is-

Charlotte Hamilton--Gray Lady

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Membership Dues: Annual \$1.50, Sustaining
\$5.00 annually, Life \$25, Patron \$100.
DUES NOW PAYABLE. We wish to acknowledge
our appreciation of the prompt payment of
dues by many of our members.

Mrs. Florence Lewis Scott has returned to
her former position as Director at Plum-
mer Park and we welcome her back.

CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

FIELD TRIP: Thursday, November 4, 1943. Sunland Park and Alma Stultz Bird Sanctuary.
Take Sunland Motor Bus in Pacific Electric Station, 6th & Main Sts. Los Angeles,
Sunland Gate #2, 8:15 a.m. Round trip fare 77¢. TAKE LUNCH. Bird walk starts at
9:30 from bus stop in Sunland Park. We will meet for lunch at 12 noon at the Alma
Stultz Bird Sanctuary, 8231 Chapin Way, Tujunga. Coffee will be served by our hosts,
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer. Anyone wishing to go direct to the Sanctuary may do so.

EVENING STUDY MEETING: Thursday, November 11, at Mannings Coffee Shop, 319 W. 5th St.
Los Angeles. Dinner at 6 p.m. Come and join the informal discussion of field observa-
tions and other study projects for the amateur. Mr. J. T. Porter will show Kodachrome
slides of "The Land of Hidden Lakes" and movies of "The Broad-tailed Hummingbird."

SUNDAY FIELD TRIPS:

November 14. San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary, 2578 Durfee Road, El Monte. This will be Boy Scout Day; if you know the birds, come help us to teach them. Meet at 7:15 or 9:00 a.m. at the entrance. After lunch group will proceed to Rio Hondo Scout Camp where a Bird Sanctuary will be dedicated under the auspices of the Los Angeles Audubon Society's Committee on Protection, Miss Dorothy E. Groner, Chairman.

November 28. Area to be decided upon at Evening Meeting November 11.

BOARD MEETING: Thursday, November 18. - 9:30 a.m. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park.

PROGRAM MEETING: Thursday, November 18 - 1:30 p.m., Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. Mr. Guy C. Caldwell, "The Whistling Naturalist," who spent a number of years in the High Sierras, will present "Wild Life in the Rockies" illustrated with colored slides. Mr. Caldwell has given many programs and has broadcast over many stations throughout the United States. His bird imitations are delightfully accurate.

STUDY CLASSES: Tuesday, November 23, Plummer Park. Note the change of date, because of Thanksgiving Day. Bring notebook.

10:00 a.m. "The General Structure of the Bird," by Miss Laura Greely.

Quiz on Birds Topography by Mrs. Mary V. Hood.

11:00 a.m. Tree Walk in the park.

To reach Plummer Park take car at Subway Terminal, 423 S. Hill St. Los Angeles (or on Santa Monica Blvd.) marked "Santa Monica-West Hollywood." Get off at Fuller St. and walk one block west to entrance.

MISS CHARLOTTE C. ELLIS, a member now in Denver, writes: "With the exception of the sparrows and the finches, which of course stay all winter, and the robins and flickers which are still very plentiful on the lawns, most of the birds have gone. I never saw such breast colors on the robins as I have seen on our lawns. All the way from oak-color on a big cock-robin to the reddest of 'Robin-red' on quite a small one. There is one which perches just outside my window with many white feathers.---We have La Brea Pit fossils in our museum. They are wonderfully interesting. One can not but wonder what became of the other 224 species of birds if only 125 exist today."

OUR CLUB YEAR opened auspiciously at our new meeting place in the Los Angeles County Museum Building, Exposition Park, where a large audience warmed to the gracious welcome extended by Mr. Roland J. Kinney, Director, and by Mr. George Willett, Curator of Ornithology at the Museum. The interest and broad knowledge of these two good friends, made available by this change of home, will be invaluable to our Society. The program of the day was especially pertinent at this time of year. Pictures shown through the courtesy of the Santa Monica Mountains Fire Prevention Association in contrast to the beautiful vacation pictures of Sequoia National Park presented by Miss Ruby Curry, vividly portrayed the great necessity of education for fire prevention and the need of adequate water supply in the mountain areas. This is work in which all can help. -----E.H.

MR. GEORGE T. HASTINGS is again conducting a bird study class for Scouts at Santa Monica. Several of the boys have purchased Peterson's "Field Guide." Mr. Hastings reports hundreds of willets, snowy plover, sanderlings, godwits, terns, three kinds of gulls and other species seen on the beach lately.

OUR GRATEFUL THANKS to Mr. & Mrs. Harlan E. Eckler, who have presented the Los Angeles Audubon Society with 101 of their original Kodachromes of birds, to add to our library of slides. Among this choice collection are the Cardinals, Harris Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee and others taken at San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary. A real treat is in store for everyone who sees these fine slides.

THE FIELD GROUP led by Mr. Howard L. Cogswell presented a very successful program at its evening meeting October 14, with an attendance of about 60. Mr. Cogswell, introduced by the president, Mrs. J. H. Comby, presided and gave a highly interesting account of the group's Sunday morning field trips, also of the collection of data for "The Season" and for the breeding census which he sends regularly to the National Audubon Society. Mr. Frank Watson told about field trips at his former home in New Jersey, - how they often start at midnight and cover the state in cross sections. Mrs. Mary V. Hood gave an illustrated talk, with timely emphasis on shore birds. There was a helpful display of text books, thoughtfully brought by Mr. Cogswell. Altogether, the meeting accomplished its purpose in bringing together many persons interested in birds but unable to attend day-time gatherings.

A FIELD DAY AT REDONDO BEACH has always been a red-letter day with the Los Angeles Audubon Society and the trip October 7 fulfilled all expectations. Our members there and from nearby beach cities are so delightfully hospitable! Following a morning on the pier and along the shore, Mrs. T. G. White, chairman of the Nature Study Committee, led a discussion of the gulls which frequent the California beaches, a half dozen or more of the local members participating. Every visiting member voted the day a complete success.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC for July, 1943 contained this interesting item by Arthur A. Allen, Professor of Ornithology, Cornell University:

"We need not feel unpatriotic because of our continued interest in bird study, for every hour spent in the field convinces us of the need of encouraging bird life. The birds are working on the home front just as assiduously for the protection of our forests and our crops as if we had supplied them with hoes and spray guns."

ON A RECENT TRIP to the Arroyo Seco region we were fascinated by the antics of a Lewis Woodpecker. At first, thinking it was a crow, we watched it fly out from the top of a telegraph pole and catch its food on the wing. It would glide gracefully through the air, capture its prey and return to the post where it would tuck the insect into a crevice and return to the lookout. Once or twice he dropped toward the ground but spent most of the time, during the hour that we watched, making flight trips from the top of the pole. --R.L.