

Western Tanager



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No. 3

BIRDING IN OWENS VALLEY

Our first night out seemed just right as Horned Owls hooted us to bed in Red Rock Canyon as they joined the Bats in their search for food. On journeying northward next morning I saw so many ravens I decided to count them for twenty-five miles and the total was thirty-eight.

At Little Lake an hour flew by even faster than the birds. The lake is on a fault and is surrounded by black lava cliffs of recent geologic age. The soil from the lava is rich, there is food for the birds, and the water lies in a migration route, so it is a fine birding spot.

Right before our eyes was the first new find, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and among them Brewer's and Red-wings, too. Besides the ever-present Coots and a few Eared Grebes and Killdeer there were Pintails in eclipse plumage but identified easily by their slender lines and long necks in flight, and "pintail end up" position while feeding. A few common Hawks were in evidence as nature keeps her balance.

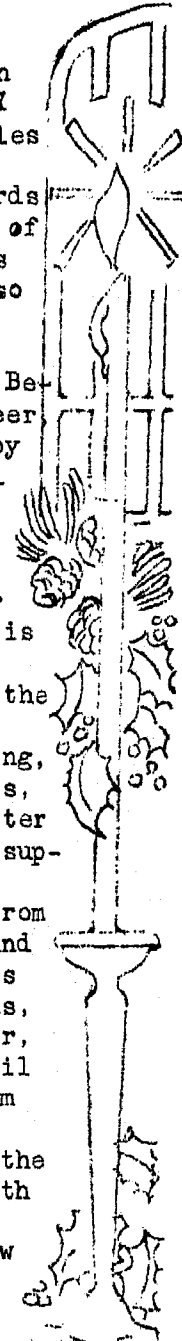
It seemed strange to find a dearth of life on the two small lakes south of Lone Pine, but here there was no food for the birds. Although most of the valley is only desert, there is a wealth of plant and bird life along the Owens River bed and along streams coming from the Sierras. American Magpies made the biggest showing with their flashing black and white wings and long tails, but Traganza's Blue Herons and Egrets were thrilling, too, as was a pair of Pheasants. Red-shafted Flickers, Shrikes, Ravens and Turkey Vultures were everywhere and some of the latter were gathering for migration. The abundance of smaller birds supported more Marsh Hawks than we had ever seen before.

Our camp was made among the oddly eroded Alabama Hills from which could be seen awe-inspiring Mt. Whitney. The hills around camp were of huge boulders tossed one upon the other with caves and crevices abounding. For companions we had Vultures, Ravens, Rock Wrens, Canyon Wrens and Quail. The most beautiful visitor, however, was a Ring-tailed Cat whose fluffy black and white tail hung down over the cliff as he clung to it while we tempted him with food.

Our last morning in Red Rock Canyon was made perfect by the LeConte Thrasher and the Rock Wren awakening us at dawn with their sweet songs.

Our list totalled forty-four and twelve of these were new to us.

--Mrs. W. Scott Lewis



THE WESTERN Tanager

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

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Membership Dues: Annual \$1.50, Sustaining \$5.00 annually, Life \$25, Patron \$100
Members who have not paid their dues by December 31, must be held as delinquent.

Mr. Guy Caldwell recently changed his annual membership status to that of sustaining.

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

THURSDAY, Dec. 2, Reception and tea at home of Mrs. Henry Smith Williams. See fuller announcement on next page.

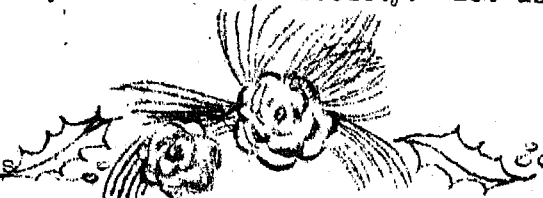
THURSDAY, Dec. 9, EVENING STUDY MEETING at Manning's Coffee Shop, 319 W. 5th St. L.A. Dinner at 6 p.m. Chief discussion topic will be Terns - everyone bring some information on their identification, occurrence, etc. Mr. Darwin Tiemann will show kodachrome slides of Yosemite and of his specialty- insects.

SUNDAY FIELD TRIP - December 12. San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary, 2578 Durfee Road, El Monte. Come get some practice for Christmas Counts, to which the following two Sundays will be devoted.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY. Thursday, December 16, at Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Bring your friends to Audubon House where Mrs. Mary B. Salmon, hostess, will gladly show you our library and exhibits. We are proud of our headquarters. Mrs. Carl Smith, Hospitality Chairman and her committee will arrange picnic tables in the clubhouse for the noon lunch which will be followed by what promises to be an outstanding program. There will be music, games and a lecture. Sarah Ellen Barnes, whose tone poems were so greatly enjoyed last year, will again be at the piano. Pepita LaMone (Mrs. L. Watson) opera singer and radio artist, will sing a group of songs. Mr. C. A. Harwell will give the lecture. This announcement is sufficient to insure the presence of every member of our society. Let us make merry together.

SEASON'S

The GREEN-EST of holly
The RED-EST of berries
The GAY-EST of carols



GREETINGS

The BRIGHT-EST of cheer
The MERRIEST Christmas
The HAPPIEST new Year

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

Nature has once again fulfilled the promise of spring and summer with an abundant harvest. From canyons edged with blazing hued cottonwoods, wending their way from desert floor to foothills to the majesty of snow-covered mountains an autumnal peace prevails. There is fulfillment in the bountiful harvests of fertile valleys that now lie drowsing in the sun, and in the forests that stand silently girding their strength for winter storms. Haunting cries of wild waterfowl bring familiar music to our ears and our hearts are lifted in thanksgiving that although the world is in a state of turmoil, Nature still pursues the even tenor of her ways.

A VERY SPECIAL INVITATION

Mrs. Henry Smith Williams is graciously inviting members of the local Audubon societies, the Bird Study Club and their friends to attend a final showing of the late Dr. Williams' painting and etchings, at her home, 200 North Ave. 66, L.A. from 2 to 5, Thursday afternoon, December 2. Through Mrs. Comby, she has asked the Los Angeles Audubon Society to act as host for the occasion. Entering Mrs. Williams' home is like entering a bird-lover's art gallery. The walls of several rooms are hung with pictures of birds of many species. Nests are depicted which were the result of a ten-year experiment in what Dr. Williams called "co-operative home-building," at Three Brooks, his home in Roxbury, Conn., in which artificial materials, chiefly colored yarns, were supplied and eagerly accepted by orioles, kingbirds, robins, and waxwings. Mrs. Williams' explanatory remarks will add to the pleasure of the day. The nests, paintings and etchings have been on exhibit at both the Museum of Natural History, New York and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington. From downtown Los Angeles, take the "W" car going north on Broadway. Get off at Figueroa St. and York Blvd., walk three blocks east to Avenue 66, then one block north. Mrs. W. J. Holden will be in charge of the tea.

ON NOVEMBER 9, after the devastating three day fire in the Santa Monica Mountains, I determined to start a series of pictures to show the regrowth of the chaparral. Passing through the Topanga area I continued over to Los Virginos Canyon where the second fire had burned out the entire amphitheater.

The thing that impressed itself immediately was the large number of birds. They seemed to have returned and were trying to resume their lives in their own territorial regions. They appeared oblivious to the lack of cover; I particularly noticed a San Diego Wren working along the ashy bank, just as if the charred branches were still green and afforded ample protection. On the other hand a Red-bested Sapsucker seemed disturbed at the blackened trunk of his tree, and of course the California Jays were "talking" the whole matter over as only the Corvidea know how.

All this raises several interesting points. Where did these birds go during the fire? Are they the original inhabitants or just sight-seers from areas that escaped the fire? How long can they stay? What of the nesting period next spring?

I made several inquiries but except for many rabbits in hutches no dead animal bodies have been found.

--Mary V. Hood

MORE THAN EVER Miss Miriam Faddis inspires our respect and admiration as she bears with courage and fortitude the misfortune of a broken leg. She musters up a smile and a cheery word although she faces months of pain and inactivity.

MORE THAN 200 pounds of magazines, contributed by members, has been sent to the U.S.O. at Needles to help alleviate the shortage of reading material there.

WHAT A GLORIOUS DAY our Sunland trip on November 4 proved to be! After a delightful bird walk, we were welcomed to the Shearer gardens to celebrate the first anniversary of the Alma Stultz Bird Sanctuary. Here a group of seventy-eight enjoyed luncheon in the out-of-doors. We shared the huge birthday cake and coffee served by our hosts. There have been 359 visitors to this scenic spot, 70 species of birds have been observed and eight organizations have held meetings there.

A lovely bird bath was dedicated to the sanctuary by our society after Mr. and Mrs. Shearer had given a brief resume of the year's progress in this haven for our feathered friends.

--Lillian G. Conklin

THE SECOND of our EVENING MEETINGS, under the auspices of the Field Group, was held November 11 with 45 members and guests present. Field observations included mention of the recent Santa Monica Mountains fire and its effect on bird life, Duck Hawks at Pasadena City Hall, Hummingbirds becoming intoxicated, and many water birds, including several Common Terns at Carlsbad on October 17. Miss Dorothy Groner was appointed Transportation Chairman for our Sunday field trips. Mr. J. T. Porter, talking with a blended background of music, showed an excellent series of slides depicting the beautiful autumn colors in the High Sierras, and close-up motion pictures in color of the life history of the Broad-tailed Hummingbird. Several projects for the amateur naturalist were mentioned and one was started in operation -- the accumulation of a "place to go birding" file, for use of all Southern Californians, through our society.

--Howard L. Cogswell

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, the Los Angeles Audubon Society formally dedicated the Boy Scout Camp Rio Hondo as a Bird and Wildlife Sanctuary. Ray P. Saxe, Camp Director, was master of ceremonies, welcomed the 125 Scouts and visitors and introduced the speakers. Mrs. Erna Comby expressed the pleasure of the Society in dedicating the sanctuary and of their desire to stand back of the Scouts in their bird study, emphasizing the importance of Scout work in keeping the woods and streams and wildlife safe and protecting all our natural resources, which are the heritage of all Americans. After the unveiling of the sign, Mrs. Mary V. Hood, Special Counsellor on Nature Study for L. A. area, spoke briefly about the importance of starting bird study early and keeping it up throughout the entire Scouting career. Howard L. Cogswell invited Scouts to attend the Sunday conducted bird walks in San Gabriel River Sanctuary and was pleased with the number of birds observed during the ceremonies, mentioning about twelve species. Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, Field Leader, was introduced and expressed her pleasure at working with the Scouts at Rio Hondo in past years. Lieutenant Robert Hoolhorst, U.S.N. home on short leave after hazardous days at sea, spoke with enthusiasm of his days as a Scout. Mr. Saxe closed the ceremonies with an invitation to explore the camp. Credit for the successful dedication ceremonies belongs mainly to Mr. Saxe and to Miss Dorothy Groner, Protection Chairman, who made all the necessary arrangements and provided the new sign.

--Alma Stultz

MISS ELSA SCHWARTZ, whose work at Douglas prevents her from attending many of our meetings, had the pleasure of spending a short vacation at Yosemite and wrote a glowing description of the autumn pageant there.

THE EXTENSION COMMITTEE is attempting this year to keep a record of bird study and all other nature work done by Audubon members in other organizations through Scout work, field trips, lectures given, etc. So don't be bashful about yourselves but let our chairman, Mrs. W. Scott Lewis (2500 Beachwood Drive, Hollywood 28 or phone GRanite 0444) know the dates and attendance of activities in which you were engaged. We feel recognition is due you.