

# Western Tanager



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## "SCOUTING" with the LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY By Mrs. J. H. Comby, President

Alert to the need of Youth Leadership at a time when it is especially important that all normal phases of American life be perpetuated, the Los Angeles Audubon Society initiated in 1943 a nature program for Scouts. With painstaking care, Mrs. Mary V. Hood, Chairman, and her committee, arranged a well-planned course designed to give Scouts an opportunity to become acquainted with birds, through illustrated lectures, supplemented by the use of museum specimens, with qualified leaders from the Society in attendance to answer questions. An average attendance of 143 boys and girls attested the popularity of this course. A later course at Plummer Park for Scouts and their leaders was also very successful with an average attendance of 59 and a request for a similar program for the following year.

Stimulated to further effort by this response the Society officially founded the department of Youth Leadership with Mrs. Hood, well qualified with dynamic energy and keen insight into the problems of teen age youth, as chairman. A course of lectures on birds of the city, parks, shore, mountains and another on bird groups was given on five successive Saturdays at the Los Angeles County Museum. This gave the 162 Scouts who registered a wide opportunity to qualify for the desired badge. The 25 members of the Society who were almost 100% in attendance to assist at the tables are among the most enthusiastic supporters of this venture.

The following attendance records confirm the interest shown:

162 Scouts registered and came 3 or more times.
82 Scouts.....1 or more times
22 Scouts.....5 times (90%)
91 Scouts.....6 times (100%)
9 Scout leaders and 30 visitors.

A final examination netted the following results: Of 125 boys, 6 identified more than 90 birds, 58 from 40 to 90, and 64 more than 40. Two field trips, one at Griffith Park and one at San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary were included in the course and were well attended.

An outgrowth of these Scout courses is the dedication by the Los Angeles Audubon Society of two Boy Scout Camps, Camp Arthur Letts and Camp Rio Hondo as Bird and Wildlife Sanctuaries. Space has also been given in the Boy Scout magazine for a regular column on Nature by Mr. George Hastings.

Parents and leaders have voiced enthusiastic approval of these courses by our Society and have shown their appreciation of the work done by Mrs. Hood by commissioning her as Nature Counselor of the Los Angeles Area for Boy Scouts, which comprises some forty camps.

A word of appreciation from Mr. Roland J. McKinney, Director of the Los Angeles County Museum, and of Mr. George Willett, Curator of Ornithology - "wish to express sincere appreciation of the splendid work of Mrs. Hood and her cooperators of the Los Angeles Audubon Society in promoting the recent bird study classes for the Boy Scouts. It is a source of gratification that the museum has been permitted to cooperate in this worthy project."

Our thanks to Mr. McKinney for the use of the museum facilities, to Mr. Willett for his helpful advice and interest, and to Scout leaders for their splendid

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THE WESTERN Tanager

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

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by

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Mr. C. V. Duff, who for two years conducted the study classes in an extremely interesting manner, has returned to our midst. Welcome back!

JANUARY CALENDAR

FIELD TRIP - Thursday, January 6, 1944 - Playa del Rey. Shore and Back Bay areas for shore birds. Take Redondo Motor Bus - Via Playa del Rey - Olive St. Deck, Pacific Electric Subway Terminal Bldg. 423 South Hill St. L.A. Bus leaves 8 a.m. Get off at Playa del Rey stop and Vista Del Mar St. Round trip fare 40 cents. Take lunch and wear warm clothing. Bird walks will start from bus stop at 9 o'clock. Los Angeles return bus leaves Playa del Rey at 1:07 - 2:07 and 3:07 p.m. Check for Motor Bus possible schedule changes by calling TUCKER 7272 - Information.

BOARD MEETING - Thursday, January 20, 9:30 a.m. Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park.

PROGRAM MEETING - Thursday, January 20, 1:30 p.m. at Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. "Opening the Doors to Nature's Garden" will be the subject of an illustrated lecture by Mr. J. T. Porter. Mr. Porter has been interested in nature camp activities for many years and for ten years was director of a camp at Wawona Grove. He is much in demand as a lecturer and talks on a wide variety of subjects. Come and bring your friends as usual.

STUDY CLASSES - January 27, at Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.

10:00 a.m. Mrs. Alma Mason will talk on the development of bird wings.

11:00 a.m. Mr. George Hastings will display his interesting charts and talk on flower families.

SUNDAY FIELD TRIPS - January 9, at San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary, starting from entrance, 2578 Durfee Road, El Monte at 7:45 and 9:00 a.m. Let's start off the New Year with the longest list ever from our own sanctuary; the goal is 80 species.

January 23, Place to be decided at January 13, evening meeting.

For further details write H. L. Cogswell, 3807 Sierra Grande St. Pasadena 8.

EVENING STUDY MEETING - January 13, at Manning's Coffee Shop, 319 W. 5th St. L. A. Dinner at 6 p.m. We will conclude our discussion of Terns, covering notes on nesting habits, ecology, economic status, and evolution of our common species. Development of a general plan for such symposia will also be in order; plus a review of the Christmas counts and personal lists for the year 1943.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

That which speaks to us of home will be vivid in our hearts this Yuletide. From all over the earth, thoughts will return to homely and familiar things which have acquired new values. Though the world is in turmoil, let us recall old traditions and customs that speak to us of days of peace, and renew our faith in the belief that that time will come again.

"Scouting" (continued from first page.)

cooperation.

Our sincere appreciation of the whole-hearted interest and cooperation of those of the Society who gave so untiringly of their time and effort to make this project a real contribution to the need of the times.

We do not overlook the fine work that is going on in a smaller way in various areas where Audubon members are making themselves responsible for helping Scouts with bird study. It is this awareness of the need that makes the contribution of value in furthering this important phase of American life.

OUR EVENING MEETING of December 9, was chiefly a study of Terns. Mrs. Hood's plywood cut-outs of local species proved very helpful in illustrating field marks and her large world map served to show distribution. Specimens of all Terns occurring in Southern California were loaned for our inspection by Mr. George Willett who was among the 45 present, and who gave us much information from his wide experiences. We also enjoyed some of Mr. Darwin Tiemann's Kodachrome slides of Yosemite.

ANOTHER ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY has passed into history and we are still feeling the warmth of friendship which results from these gatherings. An especially fine program was presented. The Hospitality Committee had decorated the tables in a gay and festive manner which matched the moods of the vast numbers of members and guests present. There was the introduction of guests, the singing of carols, a quiz game in which everyone participated, the singing of a group of songs by Pepita LaMone, talented radio artist and opera singer, and Mr. C. A. Harwell's presentation of his marvelous colored motion pictures of bird life. It was a day long to be remembered.

MISS MIRIAM FADDIS, who is making very favorable progress since her return from the hospital, wishes to thank her friends for the many cheery cards and letters received.

WE HAVE ADDED a specimen of Passenger Pigeon to our collection of mounted birds at Plummer Park.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE to start your notebook at the regular study classes at Plummer Park, although if you have missed the last two lessons your notes will be sadly lacking. Mrs. T. G. White is to be congratulated for the splendid programs she has planned and for obtaining such fine speakers. Mr. Hastings' colorful charts are a joy to behold and his manner of teaching most enjoyable. Mrs. Harlan Eckler's pictures of an eastern autumn brought back fond memories for most of us. Miss Greely's talk on "Bird Structure" showed vast research and Mrs. Hood's quiz on Bird Topography was very well received. A tree walk in the park, led by Miss Ruby Curry, was an inspiration as we were unaware that so many things of interest existed in that small area. Plan on attending the next study classes and bring your friends so that they, too, may enjoy these exceptional opportunities.



"I've got to beat my brains out like that every time I'm hungry?"

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Clara Veatch

Mrs. Mary Gawley

On a recent visit to the middle west I was fortunate to be there in the midst of the fall migration and this astonishing report is what I witnessed.

"30 days hath September" means haste to the migratory birds, for it is the closing days of this month that brings immense numbers of birds into the section where I was visiting.

The Purple Grackle is the common black bird there and is a larger, more aggressive bird than our Brewer. In the late afternoons streams of these birds begin flying into the town from all directions. The neighborhood has many large elms and hard maple trees and thousands of these birds come to roost in them. Their loud, harsh voices make conversation almost impossible. They sound like rusty hinges grating on iron doors! Branches of trees are broken by their weight and ground and walks under these trees are white with their droppings.

In the center of my friend's garden is a hard maple tree planted 30 years ago to commemorate the birth of a son and is known as "Joseph's Tree." For 12 years the Robins have chosen it as their "roost" and this one tree held hundreds of Robins. I was interested one rainy afternoon to see a flock of 25 Starlings feeding on the ground with many Robins, a few Flickers and a pair of Cardinals. The Starlings look somewhat like the Meadowlark and are quite beautiful birds. They kept in a compact flock as they fed and all flew together into a large pine tree for the night. A pair of "hoot" Owls kept up a hooting most of the night and I could imagine they were enjoying a banquet.

My friends were disturbed over this condition, for both spring and fall brings this great influx of birds into this small area of about ten city blocks. They say they must do something about this nuisance, as they call it, but what! Shooting into the trees only cripples and kills a few of the Grackles and is not a remedy. The citizens have made large clappers, which they operate each evening trying to frighten the birds away, but they only rise in a black cloud and return to their roost. Even wiring the trees for electric light, and exploding Roman candles has not driven the birds away.

I also experienced a strange sight of thousands of Swallows resting on an acre or so of ploughed ground. The birds, mostly Barn Swallows sat on the clods of earth making it actually look blue - and the telephone wires for a couple of city blocks were solid with Swallows. They even sat on the fenders of our car. Over on the lake, a half mile away, Swallows flew back and forth, feeding on insects. They kept up a melancholy twitter as though they were sorry to be leaving this part of the world.

On the shore of Big Lake I counted 350 white Pelicans. They would rise in the air, circle in a great cloud and come back and arrange themselves in a long row on the edge of the lake, and on a half submerged dead tree in the water sat an Anhinga or Water Turkey, also called Snake Bird, resembling somewhat our Cormorant.

One of the unsolved mysteries of bird study is the why of migration, and also how and where.

--Mary B. Salmon

To you, whose heart turns eagerly, to gaze  
On Nature, whether flower, or star, or bird;  
Whose ear is tuned to music, faintly heard  
In wind or water, loud in songs of praise  
From feathered brethren, piping love's sweet lays;  
Whose eyes can see God's glory, read His word  
In tree or cloud, His promise, long deferred

That men shall yet walk gladly in His ways;  
-Dear friend, who loves these things that I love most,  
Let us hold fast together, heart and hand.  
Our days are dark and gloomy, and a host  
of shadows hangs above our lovely land.  
Together let us breast the bitter storm,  
Knowing that spring must come, serene and warm.

--Laura C. White