

Western Tanager



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ISLAND BIRDING....A POST-WAR PROJECT

By Howard L. Cogswell, U.S.N., Member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society

With Uncle Sam sending so many young men, among them the usual percentage of bird enthusiasts, to little and big islands throughout the Pacific, there is bound to be a greatly awakened interest in the natural history of this great new world,--Oceania. When peace again prevails and ordinary citizens can fly from island to island, there will be many who want to explore them ornithologically. The first phase of this exploration for birds, the collecting and naming of species, has been done in all but the most remote places, and studies of their life history are already long overdue for the better known species. Perhaps some service men birders will bring back souvenirs of this kind which will be of inestimable value to science and conservation in the new Pacific era.

Birding possibilities are exceedingly varied in the many islands, especially in the Southwest Pacific; but as most post-war visitors will stop first in Hawaii, perhaps a resume of birding as it is there today will be of interest.

The world-famous Laysan and other small islands of the Hawaiian chain still hold great colonies of black-footed and Laysan albatrosses, wedge-tailed shearwaters, various mid-Pacific petrels, boobies, tropic-birds, frigate-birds and oceanic terns. Most of these sites are undamaged directly by war activities, though recent news from Midway indicates that the inadvertent introduction of rats there has caused the rapid disappearance of three birds,-- the Laysan rail, Laysan "finch" and the canary (introduced). The great sea bird colonies will survive; it is hoped, to be enjoyed as one of Hawaii's scenic attractions.

On the larger islands, especially Kauai and Hawaii, many forest birds still occur in fair numbers. Even on populous Oahu, if the observer is a fair hiker, he can readily add to his acquaintance the beautiful scarlet and black honey-creeper, the Apapane, and its sombre, greenish-yellow relative, the Amakihi. A little old-world flycatcher whistles its name, "ele-pa-i'-o", from the undergrowth on the very edge of the city, but other native birds are gone except for two rarities found only in the wettest forest areas, the Iiwi, big, equally red, brother of the Apapane, and the green Creeper, or Alauwaho.

Introduced birds of a few species abound in the lowlands,-- mynahs, barred and Chinese spotted doves, Kentucky and Brazilian cardinals, yes, even California's house finch and, in one place, the mockingbird. From the old world have been brought skylark, ricebird (a tiny weaver-finch resembling a goldfinch in habits but not in color), white-eye (green and yellow and warbler-like) and the songsters,-- hill robin and Chinese thrush. A few other introductions have survived only in limited numbers; e.g., the Japanese varied tit and bush warbler.

A day's list of species on Oahu is never long, for the above mentioned species plus a single owl, the Pueo (a race of our Short-eared), are about all the land birds possible, and some mountaineering is necessary to get some of those.

Summertime finds the shore and marshes practically devoid of birds; black-crowned night herons, stilts, coots and gallinules (all essentially similar to U. S. forms) are the only residents except the nearly extinct Hawaiian duck. In winter, however, pintails come in from the States in flocks of hundreds, and a few shovlers, baldpates, teal, etc., straggle with them. The golden plover is the migrant par excellence, though, as they are found on every bit of open ground on the island,-- mudflats, pastureland, pineapple fields and even roadside mud puddles (Cont. page 28)

THE WESTERN Tanager

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME!

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Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. From downtown Los Angeles take Santa Monica Blvd. car, Subway Terminal, or transfer to it on Sunset Blvd. Get off at Fuller Ave. Walk one block west. Open to members at all times. For appointment, telephone Mrs. Salmon, Granite 9312.

Membership Dues

Student (12 to 18 yrs. of age), 75¢; Annual, \$1.50; Sustaining, \$5; Life, \$25; Patron, \$100. All members receive the "Western Tanager". Joint membership with National Audubon Society, with subscription to "Audubon Magazine", \$5 minimum.

OBSERVATIONS: Ducks reported very scarce this season throughout Los Angeles area. Shore birds number about normal. Golden-crowned sparrows more numerous. Early nesting by resident birds noted, beginning in January. The lowly English sparrow redeeming its unwholesome reputation by cleaning up aphids on citrus trees, shrubs, etc.

WATCH NOW FOR Ashthroated and Western flycatchers, all six swallows, early warblers, orioles, Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak. Mrs. Daugherty

- Mrs. Alice R. Bowersock
139 60th Avenue, Venice
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Miss June Pelham
4592 Ellenwood Dr., Los Angeles 41
Mrs. Pearl Schultz
1248 S. Elden Ave., Los Angeles 6
Miss Anna Thierolf
708 S. Hoover St., Los Angeles 5
Total Membership.....357

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

The following members have been appointed to nominate officers (president, two vice-presidents, two secretaries, treasurer, curator and historian) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1945:

Mrs. W. F. Willis, 4759 Ambrose Ave., Los Angeles 27; Morningside 1-6350, Chairman.

Mrs. Wm. T. Shelford, 3315 W. 41st St., Los Angeles 43; AXminster 0410.

Mrs. Carl P. Smith, 136 S. Roxbury Drive Beverly Hills; CRestview 1-6845.

The committee will present its report at the Program Meeting April 19.

Meanwhile, let every member of the Society take an interest in this important matter and mail or phone his or her suggestions to any member of the Nominating Committee.

THE SUNDAY FIELD TRIP in San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary March 11 was led by Mr. W. D. Quattlebaum, President of the Pasadena Audubon Society. Weather, very foggy and rather cold. Attendance, 23; bird list, 53.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT ---

We are conscious these days of the appropriateness of living memorials that shall in a fitting way perpetuate the efforts of those who have benefitted their fellow man. Such an occasion was celebrated when, in the first week in March, a beautiful bird bath and fountain was dedicated to the memory of Miss Nellie Wicker by her students and co-workers of the Whittier schools, on the grounds of the Lou Henry Hoover School, which is ideally situated at the foot of a brushy hillside at the edge of the city.

Miss Wicker who for most of her life had been a beloved leader of children, had by her enthusiastic interest in Nature and especially by her love of birds, created such an appreciation of the value of a knowledge of the out-of-doors that the entire school has become conscious of this absorbing interest, and bird-watching, field and project work and various kindred activities have a prominent part in the program.

Our Society was happy to have a part in the simple dedication ceremony, and as earnest words of tribute were spoken and as plans for the continuation of Nature programs were touched upon, we joined in the quiet assurance that prevailed, that the work of this beloved woman would be carried on in a far-reaching way, as a living memorial.

....ERNA COMBY

THE DR. HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS exhibit, illustrating some phases of the psychology of birds in their nest building, has been on display in various places in Los Angeles for the past half year. The exhibit consists of forty-five oil paintings by Dr. Williams, well-known physician, artist and author, who lived in or near Los Angeles a considerable part of his life until his death about a year ago. These show the results of an experiment carried on by Dr. and Mrs. Williams in what they called "Co-operative nest-building" to determine the mentality of birds in their selection of building sites and building materials. The project was carried on after the retirement of Dr. Williams at his "Three Brooks" home in Connecticut. To supplement the pictures there is a collection of the birds' nests built during the course of the experiment. The pictures and nests were given to the Los Angeles Audubon Society by Mrs. Williams at Dr. Williams' death.

The exhibit was on display in Long Hall at Plummer Park from October 26 to late in December; in the Hollywood High School during January and February and in the lecture hall of the Los Angeles City Library during the month of March. The exhibit at the library was intended as a tribute to the memory of Dr. Williams, whose birthday was in March. There were added to this exhibit some photographs of Dr. Williams', a great number of his etchings and some of the books of which he was the author. The March exhibit, together with an exhibit in two cases in the main corridor, on the same floor of the library, shown by the Southwest Bird Study Club, was also intended to enhance the significance of "Conservation Week," which is observed in March.

At our meeting of October 26, Mrs. Williams added interest to the exhibit by her explanation of its meaning. At Hollywood High School Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Florence Graves explained the pictures to three large groups of interested and attentive students. At our meeting at the Los Angeles City Library March 8, Mrs. Williams related many interesting incidents occurring during the course of the Three Brooks experiment, which extended over a period of some ten years. Col. Rupert Hughes, Miss Althea Warren, City Librarian, and Miss Dorothy Pinneo, librarian of the Arroyo Seco Branch, all of whom knew Dr. Williams well, gave interesting talks on his life, character and accomplishments. It is the intention of the L. A. Audubon Society to keep the collection on exhibition in such suitable places as may wish to welcome it.

WALTER SCOTT, Chairman of the Picture Committee

The L. A. AUDUBON SOCIETY congratulates the Southwest Bird Study Club on its highly artistic and educational exhibit in the library rotunda, mentioned above by Mr. Scott. A similar contribution to "Conservation Week" has been made by the Club in many previous years.

(Continued from front page) high in the mountains. Ruddy turnstones, sanderlings, and wandering tattlers are common but more restricted. Other shore birds are rare, but the possibilities are unlimited with Alaska, the U.S.A. and Siberia all contributing their share.

Altogether, Oahu, the first stop on all future trans-Pacific air lanes, is well worth birding a bit in, the forest birds themselves being well worth a hike to the hinterland of Honolulu.

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MISS MARGARET S. HOSMER, a member of the Nature Club of Southern California, whose book, "The Wilding Heart", is most pleasantly reviewed in Nature Magazine (March, 1945, p.115) has written the following lines for our Society:

THE BIRD HOUSE

In early spring one little wren came peeping
 Into the bird house where he used to stay
In other summers; and his joyful cheeping
 Showed he remembered many a happy day.
And then he sang. Oh, what a merry singing!
 The house held memories and hopes for him.
Soon might a new young family be winging
 Around that unforgotten doorway's rim.

----Margaret S. Hosmer

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THE VERDUGO COUNCIL OF BOY SCOUTS, about 51 troops participating, put on an interesting Merit Badge Exhibit in Burbank Recreation Center, Sunday, February 4, 1945. Glendale Troop 9, sponsored by Rotary Club of Glendale, Mr. A. A. Barton, Scout Master (also head of the 4-H Club of Southern California), entered with "Bird Study" as their theme, winning for them an "Outstanding" award. This was the only bird study display in all these exhibits. With mounted specimens loaned by the Los Angeles County Museum and the Los Angeles Audubon Society, it showed mountain, chaparral, lowland, marsh and desert birds in their corresponding habitats. All Scouts of Troop 9 participated in the exhibit. It was very ably presided over by Raymond Stofel and Jack Collister, who talked themselves hoarse answering the many bird questions plied them. Both Scouts had attended the Los Angeles Audubon Student Member classes and field trips and had passed their 40-bird merit badge examination with flying colors.

----C.H.D.

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ADDITIONS TO OUR LIBRARY. "Bird Neighbors" (Blanchan), "Western Birds" (Myers) and "Private Lives of Birds" (Williams), presented by Mrs. Nora Heppenstall, a former member who is returning to her home in England. A year's file of "The Condor", official organ of the Cooper Club, from Miss Linian Blind. The Executive Board has purchased a copy of "The Distribution of the Birds of California", by Joseph Grinnell and Alden H. Miller. Published by the Cooper Club, 1944. 608 pages. The Introduction states that the main list of the native birds of California now totals 427 species (644 species and sub-species) and that there is a total of 273 species breeding in the State. For each species listed, the book gives the synonyms, status, geographical range and habitat.

There has also come to us, as a gift from Howard L. Cogswell, U. S. N., now stationed in the Hawaiian Islands, a copy of "Birds of Hawaii", by George C. Munro (1944). The book is profusely illustrated, many of the plates being done in vivid tropical colors. This will be read with special interest in connection with this month's front page story by Mr. Cogswell. Telephone Mrs. Salmon, Granite 9312, if you wish to borrow any book in our library.

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Mrs. W. SCOTT LEWIS, chairman of the Extension Committee, reports that three members of the Society gave talks on "Birds" or other topics to ten different organizations, with audiences totaling 780 people, during March.

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
The Los Angeles Branch of the National Audubon Society
CALENDAR FOR APRIL, 1945

THURSDAY, April 5. Field trip, San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, 2610 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte. From downtown Los Angeles, change at either El Monte or at Pico to the Pasadena-Long Beach bus, which stops at Temple School, directly opposite the Sanctuary entrance. Via El Monte there is frequent train or bus service, over different lines, from the P. E. Station, 6th and Main, Los Angeles. Check with Information, Tucker 7272, for best route and time to leave, to connect at El Monte with the Long Beach bus leaving there at 8:38 A. M. Returning, leave Sanctuary at 4:57 or 6:57 P. M. Via Pico take Whittier bus at P. E. Station, 6th and Main, Los Angeles, at 9:00 A.M. Arrive Pico 9:33; change to Pasadena bus leaving there at 9:50 A.M. Returning, leave Sanctuary at 3:48 or 7:16 P.M. From both Pico and El Monte, it is a ten-minute ride to the Sanctuary. This will be an interesting time in this area; waxblers are migrating and summer visitors are arriving. Take lunch and meet at picnic tables near entrance at 12 noon. Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, leader.

SUNDAY, April 8. Another field trip to San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary. See notice for April 5. Check with Information, Tucker 7272, for possible changes in bus or train schedules.

THURSDAY, April 12. 7:00 P.M. Central Library, Fifth St. and Grand Ave. First floor. Sgt. Robert L. Pyle, of Delaware, will give impressions of Western Birds. Address, "The California Arctic - Two Miles High", by Mrs. Mary V. Hood, Second Vice-President, Los Angeles Audubon Society. Mrs. Hood will give an outline of the life zones of California and will show pictures, her own kodachromes, from below sea-level to the summit of the Sierra Nevada, with certain plants, animals, birds and other creatures peculiar to each of the six life zones. Mr. R. W. Julian will preside.

THURSDAY, April 19. 1:30 P.M. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. Mrs. Holden, Program Chairman, will present Dr. John A. Comstock, Associate Curator of Science, of the County Museum. Dr. Comstock's talk, "Butterflies", will be illustrated with kodachrome slides. Miss Ruby Curry will talk on "Afield with a Nature Lover in Mountain and Valley", illustrating with her own motion pictures.

SATURDAY, April 21. 10:00 A.M., Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. Miss Unterkercher, chairman of the Committee on Youth Leadership, has prepared a program for Student Members and other young people under 18 years of age, which will include studies of mounted specimens of birds likely to be seen on the field trip the following Saturday; also, a talk by Mr. C. V. Duff on some of his many interesting experiences in banding birds.

SUNDAY, April 22. Field trip, Nigger Slough, Figueroa and 190th Streets and vicinity. Reached by Torrance bus, which leaves the station at 1014 S. Hill Street, Los Angeles, at 6:50, 7:50, 8:50 and 10:10 A. M. Get off at 190th Street and walk west to the slough. Take lunch. Mr. R. W. Julian, Leader.

THURSDAY, April 26. Study Class. 10:00 A.M. Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer, chairman. Subject: Migration, illustrated with charts. Discussion of the main flyways by three members of the class. Please bring list of migrants observed during the current spring.

SATURDAY, April 28. Field trip for Student Members and their leaders, and other young people interested in bird observation and study. 9:30 A.M. Fern Dell, - Western Ave. entrance to Griffith Park. Meet at entrance, just off Western Ave. and Los Feliz Blvd. Bring lunch. Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, leader.

VISITORS WELCOME AT ALL MEETINGS