

Western Tanager



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SMALL SANCTUARIES

By HELEN W. SHEARER

A member of our Executive Board asked me to write a few paragraphs about the Alma Stultz Sanctuary and I am happy to comply with the request. Perhaps it may be well to go back to the sanctuary's genesis. An active member of the National Audubon Society, in discussing with us the protection angle of bird life, remarked: "Perhaps the homesite sanctuary is the answer to the problem. Thousands of these scattered over the country would furnish not only protection but publicity for our conservation program." This observation fell upon fertile soil, for we had long cherished a desire to furnish a small refuge for our bird friends, more especially for the valley quail.

After a long search, a secluded spot in the Verdugo Hills was secured which we felt would serve as a beginning. All of these plans cannot be carried out until peace comes, but much is being done in the way of planting shrubs and trees favored by birds of the region. In this work the Los Angeles Audubon Society has been most cooperative, many bringing fruiting shrubs which will augment the natural food supply of acorns, seeds and wild fruit. As a token of appreciation of the work done by our fellow Audubon member in seeking to interest young people in bird study, the little sanctuary was named for her and it was so christened by Mr. C. A. Harwell on one of his visits to the southland.

The rationing of gas has restricted the number of visitors to the refuge, but our avian friends are more fortunate in matters of transportation, and to date we have listed seventy-one species as visitors, some nesting on the place each spring. Coveys of quail come each day for grain, while flocks of Gambel sparrows in winter cover the feeding stations, with a scattering of thrashers, juncos, California woodpeckers and spotted towhees. Four species of hummingbirds - Allen, rufous, Anna's and black-chinned - visit the tobacco trees in springtime, the Anna and the black-chinned remaining to nest here. During the winter flocks of robins feast on the olives at the foot of the hill. As this valley is on the migration route for small birds, we have an exciting number of migrants in the spring: ash-throated and olive-sided flycatchers, tanagers, black-throated gray warblers and rufous hummingbirds, to mention the advance guard.

We hope the little sanctuary will prove useful as a center for nature study for the residents of the district when peace comes, and it will be possible to have teachers and leaders once more. Garden Clubs have visited us, the Nature Club and the Sierra Club of Los Angeles have made use of the picnic ground. When more accommodations are available, we plan for regular meetings of Girl Scouts.

A recent visitor asked for information in regard to founding a sanctuary of several hundred acres; so it seems that the matter of private sanctuaries is simply a matter of education and that we may look forward to the day when much outlying property will be so dedicated. In the meantime, our Los Angeles Audubon Society is in touch with many children, can encourage them to spend their pin-money for bird-baths and bird-houses rather than for cokes and cones, and to plant berry-bearing shrubs in their yards. Young children, once interested in bird study, are quite apt to carry the hobby through life, and to look forward to the purchase of a pair of binoculars rather than to the ownership of a gun. The next few years will be a challenge to every conservationist. Who shall influence the oncoming generation, the gun-bearers or the bird-lovers? Perhaps we can make a beginning by assisting the school children to make every backyard a sanctuary, and in using our influence to bring back the Nature Study program to the public schools.

THE WESTERN Tanager

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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. Get off at Fuller Ave.
Walk one block west. Open to members.
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 subscrip-
tion to "Audubon Magazine," \$5 (minimum).

OBSERVATIONS: Rufous hummingbirds numer-
ous this season; a Myrtle warbler seen in
San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, a
Slate-colored junco near Oak Grove Park,
a large flock of Pine siskins in Fern Dell.
Phainopeplas, three pair, are back lock-
ing over last year's nesting site in Glen-
dale.

WATCH NOW FOR, among returned nesting sum-
mer visitants, Black-necked stilt; --Ash-
throated and Western flycatchers, Russet-
backed thrush, the vireos, Arizona hooded
and Bullock orioles, Black-headed gros-
beaks, House wrens, etc. Western Tanager
migrants should be showing up.

--Mrs. C. H. Daugherty

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME

- Mrs. Edgar Baruch
1222 S. Van Ness Ave., Los Angeles 6
- Miss Margaret Byrkit
3760 Walnut Ave., Long Beach 7
- Mr. Eldridge E. Combs
4120 Cedar Street, Long Beach 7
- Miss Margaret Corbett
1560 S. St. Andrews Pl., Los Angeles 6
- Mr. John V. Frederick
728 S. St. Louis St., Los Angeles 23
- Miss Ruth E. Libby
1141 Arapahoe St., Los Angeles 6
- Don Milliken (Student)
1529 Puebla Dr., Glendale 7
- Mrs. Jennie M. Platner
437 S. Painter, Whittier
- Mrs. Norman Sterry
134 S. Rossmore Ave., Los Angeles 4

Total number of members, 367

DO NOT FAIL to read "Enter (whistling):
Eert Harwell," by Donald Culross Peattie,
in "Audubon Magazine" (Jan.-Feb., 1945,
p. 9-14). You will enjoy all the more
the program Mr. Harwell is giving us
May 25.

HOW THE BIRDS love Plummer Park! Mrs.
Salmon saw a flock of 50 Cedar waxwings
there one day recently, and 16 different
species of birds within a period of two
hours.

HAVE YOU HEARD how Mrs. Carl Schmitt pre-
vents doves from monopolizing her feeding
tray? She covered the tray with a little
tent of wire netting through which small
birds enter freely, but which keeps out
the doves.

AND HAVE YOU HEARD of the adventure of
young Peter Mallard, of Lafayette Park?
Miss Elsa F. Schwartz tells the story.
Peter, it seems, all parental warnings to
the contrary, decided to see the world.
Leaving his home in the lake, he soon
found himself in the middle of busy Wil-
shire Boulevard, a desperately frightened
little duck. Miss Schwartz, a true Audu-
bonite, saw him, stopped her car - and
traffic! picked him up and restored him
to his more appropriate habitat. She as-
sures us that, arriving there, he tweaked
his tiny tail and let out a "Quack, quack,"
which she interpreted as "Thank you!"

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT---

At Spring's soft touch, a verdant carpet unfolds over hills and valleys, and even scarred and jagged surfaces are softly moulded under its silken cover. A recent trip to the San Joaquin Valley shows the Sierra still crowned with winter snows looking down into the foothills and valleys where Nature has spread a bewildering beauty in vistas of Wildflowers. A Red-bud in full bloom, with its rich depth of color, is rather a startling contrast to the pastels in which Spring delights to bask. Birds are singing their mating songs, the air is ringing with their music. Everywhere is promise and beauty as we pause briefly in thankfulness that these things are and will be.

---ERNA COMBY

RADAR. The veil of secrecy surrounding radar has recently been lifted enough to reveal that this instrument will detect the presence of large birds at distances up to three miles. As a result of this discovery, the University of West Virginia plans to install equipment on a mountain-top in that state and to study the speed of the flight of birds and the height of flying birds. Especial attention will be paid to night migrants and it is hoped that much new information will be gained regarding these birds.

---W. Scott Lewis

PERIODS OF CONVALESCING, even of illness, can be lightened by reviewing thrills of past birding experiences, or planning for future ones. Recent enforced days of quiet gave me opportunity of again proving this to be true by recalling last summer's big bird thrill, in Sequoia National Park, - my first observation of the Pileated Woodpecker. And what an observation, - well worth the 2½ hours still-wait and stiff neck! First, "Papa" was heard calling from a distance, the call resembling somewhat the red-shafted flicker's. Closer and closer during this long wait came "Papa's" call, intermittently answered by "Junior," then found well hidden in the top of a tall Fir close by. Suddenly, with a series of strange woodpecker notes, "Papa" Pileated and "Junior" met, high up on the side of a Sugar Pine nearby, and "Papa" began feeding "Junior" by regurgitation. This lasted about two minutes, while we breathlessly clung to our binoculars. Then, after casually glancing down at us, "Papa" and "Junior" hitched around the tree trunk and flew off over the mountain. Later we discovered a large nesting hole near the top of a very high dead pine. "Junior" looked to be about two-thirds grown and perhaps was still hanging around the old home site. What a thrill, even if it did take the rest of the vacation period to get the kink out of my neck! It was worth it, and good to remember. -- C. H. Daugherty

I WAS WALKING around the Rainbow at Long Beach one sunny January day. A Ring-billed gull feeding in the shallow water drew my attention. The gull stirred up the sandy, muddy water of the bay, first with one foot, then with the other, dislodging worms and insects living there. These he eagerly captured by jabbing dextrously with his bill. One catch bagged, he deliberately stirred up another and again fed with enthusiasm. Presently a young Glaucous-winged gull approached the Ring-billed and being larger, easily shouldered him out of the way. "Well," thought I. "is Glaucous-wing wise to this feeding trick?" No sooner thought than demonstrated, for there was Glaucous-wing fairly dancing up and down on his strong rose-red feet and legs, stirring up a veritable cloud of bits of animal life. Through the years Charles and I have observed gulls whenever opportunity offered and we had never seen this feeding trick used by them. Reflecting thus as I strolled alone, my attention was next claimed by a Snowy egret, who is past master at the mud-scratching art. He stepped cautiously along as though walking on egg shells as he deliberately stirred the sandy mud. This method procured him a good meal. Had the gulls learned this trick from the Snowy egret? Why not? Its advantages are plain to see. And gulls are resourceful birds!

--Enid Michael

MISS GEORGIE WARE has been assigned to lookout duty this coming summer on Liebre Mountain. Part of her area is in the Los Padres Forest, taking in the eastern slope of Frazier Mountain.

THURSDAY, May 3. Field trip, Sunland Park and Alma Stultz Bird Sanctuary. Take Sunland bus in P.E. station, 6th & Main, Los Angeles, 8:15 A.M. Round trip, 81¢. Walk starts at 9:30 from bus stop in Sunland Park. Take lunch and meet at noon at the Sanctuary, 8231 Chapin Way. Those desiring to go directly to the Sanctuary, disembark at McVine St. and walk three blocks south. After lunch, Mr. W. D. Quattlebaum, president, Pasadena Audubon Society, will talk on "Wildflowers of the Foot-hill Region." Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, leader.

THURSDAY, May 10. 7 P.M. Central Library, 5th St. and Grand Ave., Los Angeles. First floor. Address Mrs. J. H. Comby, president, - "Haunts of the Hunted," with motion pictures loaned for the occasion by the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service.

SUNDAY, May 13. Field trip, San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, 2610 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte. Go by El Monte train or bus leaving P.E. station, 6th & Main, Los Angeles, in time to connect at El Monte with Long Beach bus leaving there at 8:37 A.M. Or, go by Whittier bus leaving P.E. Station, 6th & Main Sts., at 9 A.M.; change at Pico to Pasadena bus leaving there at 9:50 A.M. Get off at Temple School. Check with Information, Tucker 7272, for possible changes in time. Take lunch.

THURSDAY, May 17. 1:30 P.M. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. Illustrated address by Mrs. J. H. Comby, president, - "In Tune with Nature," based on observations throughout the country over a period of years. As a prologue, Mrs. W. J. Holden, program chairman, plans to recognize the contribution made by the editors of "The Western Tanager" during the eleven years of its existence, having been founded in 1934 during the presidency of Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon. Mrs. Raymond Brennan, Mrs. Maud Murphy, Mrs. Wm. T. Shelford and Miss Laura Greely have served as editors.

SATURDAY, May 19, 10:30 A.M. Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. With Mrs. Salmon as hostess, Miss Unterkircher, Youth Leadership chairman, will present a program for Student Members and other young people. Mrs. Dessa M. Fultz, Recreation Specialist, Director of Storytelling on the Los Angeles City School Playgrounds, will tell bird stories. Mrs. Fultz is a well-known writer of children's stories.

THURSDAY, May 24. 10 A.M. Study Class, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Mrs. Thomas E. Shearer, chairman. Subject: Summer Visitors, - Black-headed grosbeak, Arizona hooded and Bullock's orioles, Western flycatcher, Black-chinned hummingbird. Question box. Bring lunch and spend the afternoon in our headquarters.

FRIDAY, May 25, 7 P.M. Central Library, 5th St. and Grand Ave., Los Angeles. First floor. EXTRA SPECIAL MEETING. Mr. C. A. Harwell, Western Representative of the National Audubon Society, will present one of his unforgettable programs, - "Music of the Out-of-doors," with all-color motion pictures and his own inimitable whistling of bird songs and calls, - a picture of America to bring to all Americans a new appreciation of our land."

SATURDAY, May 26, 9:30 A.M. Field trip for Student Members and other young people interested in bird observation and study. 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.

SUNDAY, May 27. Field trip, Sunland Park. Take Sunland bus, P. E. Station, 6th and Main Sts., Los Angeles, at 8:20 or 8:50 A.M. Bird walk will start from bus stop in Sunland Park. Leader, Arthur L. Berry. Take lunch and meet at noon at picnic tables at Lancaster Lake.

VISITORS WELCOME AT ALL MEETINGS. For desired information, Telephone BL 7-1849