

# Western Tanager



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## THE PROPOSED BIRD SANCTUARY AT PLAYA DEL REY

By Tom D. Cooke, Division Engineer, Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission

Recent steps to bring about the long talked of development of an elaborate yacht harbor at Playa del Rey call for renewed attention on the part of students and champions of birds who realize the importance of this strategic area in the economy of bird life.

The original plan for the Marina del Rey, as propounded by the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission in 1938, designated the marshy area between Ballona Creek, Culver Boulevard and the dunes back of the old mouth of the creek as a recreational area to be developed partly as a lake. While no specific mention is made of it in the official report, it is considered by the Planning Commission staff that this "lake" area was intended to become a refuge particularly for water-fowl.

Subsequent re-study of the harbor and related recreation features have recognized this feature and preserved it. The Master Plan of the Shoreline Development, as amended last year and adopted by both the city and the county specifically designates a somewhat larger area (about 100 acres) as a "Bird Sanctuary," indicating the development of various lagoons and islands. The intent is that these islands would be developed to meet the nesting habits of different species, and planted with the proper grasses and plants to provide the food that will attract such birds.

The fact is, however, that this feature was not retained in the Master Plan without some considerable effort; appearance of members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society at the public hearings to plead for the sanctuary was helpful. There is nevertheless an attitude in some quarters to dismiss the matter as an insignificant detail, with the statement that if the birds don't like it we'll make a park out of the area. Some public officials argue even more positively that it is more necessary to provide recreation area for people than space for the birds.

Moreover, an objection has been heard from yachtsmen who fear that the presence of numerous birds will make their boats dirty.

Altogether, the status of the bird refuge is far from certain and calls for the most tactful efforts to win over public officials of the city and county to a realization of the various values in preserving the rich bird life of this exceptionally favorable area.

The Board of Supervisors of the Los Angeles County is aware of the significance of the changes being contemplated. On July 22, 1946, Supervisor Raymond V. Darby addressed a letter to J. R. Wimmer, Director of Parks and Recreation, calling attention to the need and saying in part, "The development of the Yacht Harbor at Playa del Rey will take away many of their haunts, and I am of the opinion that we should not neglect that part of our natural wild life. Let us make some definite plans toward bird refuges in the vicinity of Gardena and determine that we are going to abide by them and let nothing interfere with their development."

If the most recent move to attack the great problem of shoreline development by creation of a Beach Authority is successful, it is probable that the responsibility for actually creating and improving a bird refuge at del Rey would be lodged in that body. When the Authority is formed it would be altogether proper and desirable for the Audubon Society to create a committee not only to "sell" the Authority on the need for bird refuges, but also to furnish it with data on the landscape development most suited to the species of birds to be sheltered at various points along the shoreline.

THE WESTERN Tanager

Published monthly, October to June, by THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY Headquarters in Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 46

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MEMBERSHIP DUES: Student (12 to 18 yrs. of age), 75¢; Annual, \$1.50; Life, \$25; Patron, \$100. Joint Membership with the National Audubon Society, with "Audubon Magazine," \$5 (minimum). Membership Chairman, Mrs. Wm. T. Shelford, 3315 W. 41st St., Los Angeles 43.

OBSERVATIONS: Shore-birds returning in large numbers. Sept. 22-29, Terns (Forster's Common, Royal, Elegant, Caspian and Black) in Playa del Rey area; also, unusual number of Turnstones (25 Black and 10 Ruddy) and 3 Surf-birds. Over Glendale, migration flights: 50 Turkey Vultures Sept. 23 and 15 Swainson's Hawks Oct. 12. Sept. 9: Allen's (or Rufous) Hummingbirds (14 females and immatures) feeding near Burbank Stough Park. Howard Cogswell reports Bailey's Mountain Chickadees more common each year from July to March through Pasadena's conifer area. Arthur Barry noted one chickadee in Lincoln Park Oct. 8. Warbler migration sparse this fall. Howard Cogswell reports small numbers of Yellow, Lutescent and Pileolated. From Oct. 6 on an occasional Black-throated Gray, but Audubon's Warblers observed in usual common numbers from Sept. 26 on. Gambel's Sparrows arrived in San Fernando Sept. 20 (Georgie Ware), in Alhambra Sept. 26 (Mrs. C. J. Parker) and in Glendale Sept. 29.

WATCH NOW FOR: Wild ducks returning; Hermit thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Pipit, California Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Thurber's Junco and Fox Sparrows.

---CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY

"COMPANY CAME this morning, - Sept. 26. The nice thing about them - they will be with me all winter and I don't have to stay home, or entertain them. Always so glad to see them, and so sorry to have them leave, - my Gambel's Sparrows!"

---Mrs. C. J. Parker

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME !

- Mrs. Samuel Ayres, Jr. 4665 El Camino Corto, La Canada Mrs. A. P. Bell 743 N. Edgemont St., Los Angeles 27 Miss Lilian Drachman 1443 Scott Ave., Los Angeles 26 Mr. Bernard E. Francies 335 W. Kelso St., Inglewood Mr. R. E. Gerke 13951 Bessemer St., Van Nuys Miss Mertie M. Gray 246 N. Dillon St., Los Angeles 26 Mr. Albert Hackett 10664 Bellagio Road, Los Angeles 24 Miss Emma Hagerty 246 N. Dillon St., Los Angeles 26 Mr. Albyn Mackintosh 4376 York Blvd., Los Angeles 41 Dr. Olga McNeile 1401 S. Hope St., Los Angeles 15 Mrs. Elizabeth Burnell Smith 1035 N. Stanley Ave., Los Angeles 46 Mrs. Edward Burr Swinney 238 Lorraine Blvd., Los Angeles 4 Mr. P. G. Winnett c/o Bullocks, Bdy at 7th, Los Angeles Mrs. Charles L. Young Box 74, Orcutt

WELCOME, also, to Mrs. John Q. Burch, 4206 Halldale Ave., Los Angeles 37, - a former member who has renewed her membership after several years in war work.

BOOKS AND CHECKLISTS. The Society recently received a supply of Peterson's "Field Guide to Western Birds" and of Hoffman's "Birds of the Pacific States." They sell at \$2.75 for the Peterson and \$3.50 for the Hoffman, and can be obtained from Miss Clara E. Pflager, 141 N. Berendo St., Los Angeles. What fine Christmas presents they would make! Miss Pflager is prepared to sell, also, the Society's check list (2¢) and the two study-helps of the Committee on Youth Leadership: "Bird Study Guide," by Mrs. C. B. Pratt (50¢ plus 2¢ tax) and "Study List of Common Los Angeles County Birds," arranged according to habitat, by Mrs. Mary V. Hood (2¢).

PROMPTNESS in paying your membership dues and in purchasing your Screen Tours Club membership will be most helpful to the respective treasurers.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT,-

Some time ago we reached the last frontier so far as our country's natural environment is concerned. Where once vast herds were to be seen we now count individuals; where winged masses thronged the airways now only slender lines are stretched against the sky. It is not uncommon to find a prized wildlife area transformed within a few days into a commercial venture that has no semblance of its former character. We know that Nature in her pristine state is almost a relic of the past. To reckon with these changes we shall have to revamp our standard of values and concentrate on the preservation of our natural heritage wherever it still exists, deeming no effort too great for some small success. A bit of shoreline where birds and animals from the sea may feed and linger, an oozy marsh where tidal waters deposit untold riches in food for slender bills to probe, a bushy copse, even a rocky hillside,- all are priceless if under Nature's guiding hand. None is too insignificant to warrant our wholehearted efforts at preservation. The writer agrees with a thought advanced by the late James Moffet at the Audubon Conference in Santa Barbara several years ago: "It would be worth while to make a Sanctuary of even one tree if a red-bellied hawk were nesting there!"

---ERNA COMBY

CONGRATULATIONS to the Oregon Audubon Society. It has received a bequest of \$60,000!

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THE AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS announcements have been mailed. If you, through some mischance, failed to receive one, please notify Miss Laura Greely, 904 Kendall Ave., So. Pasadena; telephone, BLanchard 7-1849. The first lecture in the series of five will be given at 8 P.M., Friday, Nov. 8, in Patriotic Hall, 1816 S. Figueroa St. Admission by membership card only, but cards are transferable. Obtain them from Walter Scott, 967 S. Sydney Dr., Los Angeles 22. Annual club membership, \$2, is open to the public.

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THE PASADENA AUDUBON SOCIETY, Mrs. Marie V. Beals, president, has published a helpful leaflet on the approximate date of arrival, throughout the year, of certain birds of this area. It contains a list of summer visitants, arranged by Mrs. Stephen Burton, and one of fall and winter birds, compiled by Messrs. W. D. Quattlebaum and Howard L. Cogswell. Price, 10¢.

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MRS. ELIZABETH BURNELL SMITH has been elected a Complimentary Member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society in appreciation of her many valuable gifts to the society's library and museum, and in recognition of her fine contributions to the Audubon cause. Mrs. Smith, for many years supervisor of Nature Study in the Los Angeles City schools, was co-author with Luther E. Wyman, then Los Angeles County Museum ornithologist, of "Field Book of Birds of the Southwestern United States," an area recognized as possessing the most varied and interesting avifauna of any part of North America.

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THE TWO MEETINGS on our October Calendar which, at this writing, have taken place, have given the club year 1946-7 a fine start. The field trip to the Maxton Brown Sanctuary, under Mrs. Daugherty's inspiring leadership, proved to be a birders' delight, giving 70 members and guests a day of beautiful scenery, unusual cloud effects and a gorgeous sunset, besides fulfilling the day's chief objective,- the finding of the wood ibis and the white-tailed kite. Altogether, 74 species, including 62 on and around the lagoon, were identified. Mr. Wm. Brown and others spoke briefly concerning the acute need of greater protection for the Sanctuary and plans for creating more interest and support.....The first indoor meeting of the year occurred at the Central Library, with Mr. Kenneth E. Stager, newly appointed ornithologist of the Los Angeles County Museum, giving an intensely interesting account of his war-time birding experiences in Burma and India, where he found a bird students' paradise,- found, also, how his interest in birds made life easier under trying conditions. His kodachromes were obtained under great difficulties,- he wore his camera around his neck constantly, even sleeping with it to protect it from thieves. He showed pictures of colorful jungle wildlife, closing appropriately with one of gaily bedecked natives celebrating the defeat of the Japanese.

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
 Organization for the Year beginning July 1, 1946  
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Mrs. Robert Lewis, 2550 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte

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SUNDAY FIELD TRIPS,

Howard L. Cogswell, 3807 Sierra Grande, Pasadena 8 . . . . . SYcamore 6-5563

TELEPHONE,

Mrs. W. F. Willis, 4759 Ambrose Ave., Los Angeles 27 . . . . . MOorningside 1-6350

KEEP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY . . . . . MRS. J. H. COMBY, President  
CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER, 1946

THURSDAY, Nov. 7. Field Trip, Playa del Rey shore and back bay areas for study of shore birds and gulls. Take Redondo Motor bus via Playa del Rey, Oliva St. deck of P. E. Subway Terminal Bldg., 423 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 8 A.M. Get off at Playa del Rey and Vista del Mat Streets. Round trip, 50¢. Take lunch. Bird walk starts from bus stop at 9. Return bus leaves Playa del Rey at 1:13, 2:13 and 3:13. Check for possible motor bus change by calling Information, TUCKER 7272. Leader, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, chairman, Committee on Birds.

FRIDAY, NOV. 8. 8 P.M. Audubon Screen Tour: "Wilderness Mischief," Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. See special announcement. Call BLanchard 7-1849 for information.

SATURDAY, Nov. 9. 9 A.M. to 12 Noon. San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary Museum. (See notice below for directions.) Program for young people, presented by the Committee on Youth Leadership, Mrs. O. B. Bratt, chairman.

THURSDAY, Nov. 14. 7 P.M. Central Library, Fifth and Grand, Los Angeles; fourth floor. R. W. Julian presiding. Howard L. Cogswell, recently returned from the Audubon Nature Camps in Maine and Connecticut, will talk on "Audubon Nature Schooling 'Way Down East.'" To be illustrated.

THURSDAY, Nov. 21. 1:30 P.M. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. Mrs. Comby presiding; Mrs. O. M. Stultz, program chairman. Under the title "Birds of Tropic Seas," two reels of motion pictures taken on Allan Hancock Pacific Expeditions to the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador and the Bird Islands of Peru will be shown, with Dr. John S. Garth, research associate, Allan Hancock Foundation, as narrator. Included among the more unusual species to be seen will be the Red-billed Tropic Bird, the Frigate Bird or Man-o'-War, the Waved Albatross, the Flightless Cormorant, the Galapagos Fork-tailed Gull, Galapagos and Peruvian penguins, and Red-footed and Masked boobies. Several of the species to be shown range westward to the mid-Pacific islands.

SUNDAY, Nov. 24. Field Trip: Oak Grove Park and adjoining Arroyo Seco and Gould Mesa, Pasadena. Come and get an introduction to our winter land birds in oak woodland, chaparral-covered foothills and shores of Devil's Gate Dam, where we may also have some ducks. Band-tailed pigeons, ruby-crowned kinglets, Hutton's vireos, a variety of woodpeckers, and Gambel's, golden-crowned, fox and chipping sparrows are all regular here in winter. We do not expect any great rarities, but hope for varied thrushes and other erratic visitors. Transportation available by P.E. car leaving 6th & Main, Los Angeles, at 6:54, 7:34 and 8:04 to Pasadena (Colorado and Fair Oaks), thence by local bus #2 going west, then up Lincoln Ave. Get off at Atlantic St. walk one mile west across dam to park. Leader, Howard L. Cogswell; Sycamore 6-5563.

WEDNESDAY, Nov. 27. (Thursday being Thanksgiving.) 10 A.M. to 12 Noon. Study Class, Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. From downtown Los Angeles take Santa Monica Blvd. car, get off at Fuller Ave. and continue on foot one block west to park entrance. Program: Brief studies of one representative of each of the 15 orders of birds of Southern California, to note their distinguishing characteristics. See list distributed at October meeting. Five-minute member contribution on distinguished contemporaneous ornithologists and botanists. Five-minute recorded bird songs. Bring lunch. Walter Scott, chairman Committee on Nature Study; AN 2-4649.

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SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY; owned and operated by the National Audubon Society. Field Trip, Sunday, Nov. 10, starting from the entrance, 2610 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte, at 9 A.M. Leader supplied by the committee, Mrs. J. H. Comby, chairman; telephone, Whittier 41-4236; Sanctuary telephone, Whittier 6-3748. Take lunch. The Pasadena-Long Beach (P.E.) bus, four trips each way daily, stops at Temple School, opposite the Sanctuary entrance. From downtown Los Angeles go to El Monte by P.E. bus or train connecting with Long Beach bus leaving El Monte station at 8:38 A.M. Telephone Information, TUCKER 7272, for best schedule from Los Angeles. If driving go east on Third Street to Beverly Blvd., continue on Beverly to Durfee Ave., thence north to the Sanctuary.

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FOR DESIRED INFORMATION telephone Morningside 1-6350 or BLanchard 7-1849