

Western Tanager



PUBLISHED MONTHLY, OCTOBER TO JUNE
BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOL. 14

December, 1947

NO. 3

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON ANNUAL MEETING

By Alma J. Stultz, Past President, Los Angeles Audubon Society

It was my privilege to attend, as a delegate from the Los Angeles Audubon Society, the 43rd annual meeting of the National Audubon Society, held in New York Oct. 18-21. Attending such a convention is an experience replete with thrills, especially when one flies from ocean to ocean in twelve hours, gaining new and vivid impressions of the magnificence of our country in the rapidly changing panorama beneath. At the airport in New York Mr. Stultz and I were met by Bert Harwell, and immediately that great city, which we were visiting for the first time, became a friendly place!

It is impossible in this brief space to give a detailed account of the convention program or of the delightful courtesies extended the delegates. There were inspiring addresses, beautiful motion pictures, a highly prized opportunity to browse around Audubon House and meet the staff of loyal workers there. There was an all-day meeting at Greenwich Nature Center, where we were conducted through richly varied habitats, the director explaining the different activities. There was a 260-mile round trip to Montauk Point, Long Island, for a day of birding with such leaders as Allen Cruickshank, Carl Buchheister, Richard Pough, Robert Allen and Roger Tory Peterson, whose names are so familiar to all of us. The day was dark and the bird list was not long, but your delegate was enchanted with the woods ablaze with autumn colors, and thrilled with the sight of birds new to her.

At Audubon House round table discussions of societies' activities, with delegates from many states participating, brought out a highly practical exchange of ideas. At the Museum of Natural History an extremely important forum on waterfowl was held, with government and other personnel discussing the considerations which enter into decisions as to each year's hunting regulations, and such serious conditions affecting the duck population as the enormous increase in the number of hunters, the draining of breeding grounds and the let-down in public conduct. Constructive work in Canada was reported.

Highly interesting were reports on Audubon Screen Tours, - 107 in 104 different cities; on Branch Societies, - the number has now reached 15; on successful wildlife tours in Florida and the great enthusiasm for conservation in that state; on concern in Minnesota for the protection of hawks and owls; on the work of the National Audubon Society in furthering nature study in the school; on advancement in plans for establishing nature camps, with at least one in every state in the Union as the ultimate goal; on the whooping crane project, and on Canadian cooperation in preserving what is left of this magnificent bird.

Several hundred people attended the annual dinner in the Roosevelt Hotel, when the new Audubon conservation medal was presented to Dr. H.E. Bennett, head of the United States Soil Conservation Committee. In his response, Dr. Bennett gave an inspiring report on the help given other countries as well as our own in modern methods of soil conservation.

One cannot attend a convention such as this without being deeply impressed with the value of what is being done for the protection of bird life and the importance and urgency of what remains to be undertaken; most favorably impressed, too, with the far-reaching conservation program of the National Audubon Society and the opportunity offered local societies to participate in it.

GREETINGS FROM OUR PRESIDENT.

The Season of reunion has come again. Families try to gogather around the Christmas tree. When that cannot be done we delight in sending messages of cheer and goodwill to one another. It is now the privilege of the President to extend such greetings, on behalf of the Executive Board and members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, to all those interested in the great outdoors. May Christmas bring you inspiration to continue to promote the aims and objects for which Audubon societies are striving.

-----MARY V. HOOD

MISS ZULEMA PARCELL, one of our life members, a member also of the American Forestry Association, has given us a file of "American Forests," the monthly publication of that organization. This is a most valuable addition to our library.

IT WAS PLEASING to receive from our member, Mrs. Harry F. Kibler, State Conservation Chairman, California D.A.R., a request for 50 copies of Mr. Hastings' article, "Conservation in General," in the October Tanager, for distribution among the regents of the Southern California chapters. Mrs. Kibler writes: "It is a splendid contribution to the cause."

MRS. SIDNEY S. DONER, of Escondido, a visitor on the field trip to Carlsbad Nov. 6, sends an interesting report of a Louisiana heron which she saw in the Mission Bay area, San Diego. "He was not more than twenty feet from me," she writes. "Startled, he took to the air. The sun was shining directly upon him, and for one brief moment the purple feathers on his neck shone like a flash of light. He dropped down in the water and stood there, his long thin neck drawn back against his body. He is small, not much larger than a snowy egret. Dawson's description of the L. heron in winter plumage tallies exactly. It was a thrill of a lifetime indeed! Although it seems to appear almost every year in San Diego, usually only one heron is seen (two records of two together) during the winter season. San Diego seems to be its furthestmost stopping point north."

THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT is being organized this year by J.H. Comby, succeeding Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, resigned, who has been in charge of this activity for the past ten years, and who certainly has done her bit in that capacity. It has not been an easy task, but Mrs. Daugherty has given it unselfish devotion and the skill that comes from a superior knowledge of the subject.

From her voluminous records Mrs. Daugherty, on request, supplied some interesting facts regarding the ten Christmas counts. They were taken always in an area, fifteen miles in diameter, radiating $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Alvira Street and Pico Boulevard, in Los Angeles, which includes a large variety of habitats.

So far as possible, observers were allotted the same territory from year to year. A steadily growing interest brought out more observers. It is to their good work that Mrs. Daugherty modestly attributes the fact that in the past three years, according to reports from the National Audubon Society, the Los Angeles count has held first place in this nation-wide activity. "We have the species here," says Mrs. Daugherty, "but it takes experienced observers to hunt them out." This is emphasized by the records: in 1937, 22 observers in 10 parties reported 103 species and an estimated 10,435 individual birds; in 1946, 41 observers in 17 parties found 151 species and an estimated 30,713 individuals. This great increase in the total estimate appears to have been rather generally distributed among the species, but it is significant that in spite of the greater number of observers, fewer pintail and shoveller ducks, black-bellied plover and Hudsonian curlew and, among the land birds, valley quail, western mockingbird, English sparrow and San Diego song sparrows appear in the count.

Mrs. Daugherty asks permission to express, through The Tanager, her appreciation of the cooperation she has received through the years. She is confident that Mr. Comby will receive the same help and will do an outstanding job.

----- MARY V. HOOD

OBSERVATIONS

Prolonged dry weather, affecting vegetation, insect life, etc., and great building activity everywhere are robbing our birds of both food and sanctuary and causing them a severe struggle to exist. This was proven on our field trip to Buena Vista Lagoon, Carlsbad, Nov. 6. While we saw 68 species of birds, the number of individuals was small and hard to find. Similar conditions elsewhere are reported.

In early October, along the Sand Canyon road, near Dillon's Ranch, were numbers of hermit thrush, feeding on Toyon berries, and many Fox sparrows singing; Nov. 2, in Sand Canyon, western bluebirds and several flocks of band-tailed pigeons and Lewis's woodpeckers. (Georgie Ware.)

In San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary Oct. 5, -5 Florida gallinules, 3 Wilson's snipe; Oct. 6, -130 cedar waxwings, one phainopepla, 15 dwarf cowbirds; Oct. 12, -2 Townsend's warblers, 3 western tanagers, 15 cardinals; Oct. 13, one osprey; Oct. 24, one male wood duck flying over. (Howard L. Cogswell.)

Point Mugu area, Oct. 15, - 20,000 pintails. (H.L.C.) We are happy to know there are that many pintails somewhere. A few have been reported in different sections. The 200 seen early in October in the settling basins, Griffith Park, have been shot at so often in early dawn, before the watchman arrives, that only a scared few remain.

Rare visitors: A red-breasted nuthatch, a bird of the higher mountains, Griffith Park, Oct. 20. (Mrs. Hoffman.) A fulvous tree duck, Playa del Rey, Oct. 26. (H.L.C.) This was the day of the Sunday field trip at the beach. A thick fog prevailed. Only a few birds could be seen.

Gambel's sparrows finally arrived in good numbers. In the Burbank area, Oct. 19, Thurber's juncos; Nov. 3, golden-crown sparrows and ruby-crowned kinglets, a western robin feeding on the lawn and California thrashers singing.

WATCH NOW FOR: Slender-billed nuthatch, black-throated gray and Townsend's warblers; California purple finch, pine siskin, Fox and chipping sparrows.

-----CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY

NATIONAL AUDUBON NEWS

Presaging an expanding program at the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary (about which you will hear more next month), a supply of educational and nature study leaflets, Christmas cards and other literature is now on hand there for sale at the same prices as at Audubon headquarters in New York. Eventually a complete line of nature books will be carried and orders taken for all other merchandise offered by the Service Department of the society. Our supply at S.G.R.W.S. at present includes:

Audubon Christmas cards, bearing a simple greeting and a print of the original Audubon "Cedar Bird," (waxwing" plate: 15¢ each; 10 or more, 10¢ each; or with a picture of excellent Yuletide spirit, a Roger Tory Peterson painting of the cardinal on a holly sprig: 25¢ each; 10 for \$2.00; 25 for \$4.50. Mail orders accepted, but include in payment 3¢ per 3 cards, or less, to cover postage.

Bird Leaflets, of many common species, each leaflet including 4 pages of text with line drawings, a colored plate of the bird and a duplicate line drawing for coloring: 10¢ each; 6 or more at a time, 5¢ each.

School Nature League Bulletin. This best general nature study periodical for teachers covers such items as insects, snakes, owls, deer, forests, soil, rocks, weather, nature craft, etc. A variety of back numbers available at 10¢ each.

Nature Study for Schools Series. Basic conservation principles and their application to many a school or children's club situation; bird houses, electric games, how to watch birds, swamps, forests, grasslands, etc., and their meaning: 5¢ each; small nature museums, bird migration and bird photography, 10¢.

Audubon Bird Cards. Colored plates with information on habits, range, etc., on back of card. In sets of 50 spring, summer or winter birds of Eastern North America, but including many species found here: \$1.50 per set of 50.

For any of the above, contact me at 2610 S. Durfee Avenue, El Monte.

----HOWARD L. COGSWELL

THE WESTERN Tanager

Published by the Los Angeles Audubon Socy. Free to Members. Non-members, 75¢ annually. Editor..... Miss Laura Greely 904 Kendall Ave., South Pasadena Telephone: Blanchard 7-1849

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME!

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MEMBERSHIP DUES: Students (12 18 yrs.), 75¢; Annual, \$1.50; Life, \$25; Patron, \$100. Joint membership, Los Angeles and National Audubon Societies, with Audubon Magazine \$5 (minimum). Send applications for membership to the Treasurer, at the above address.

THE DECEMBER CALENDAR

In December everything gives way to the Christmas party and the annual Christmas bird count. The party will be held, as usual, in the assembly hall in Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., starting at 1:30 P.M., Thursday, Dec. 4. Mrs. H.E. Eckler, chairman of the Program Committee, will present George Hamilton Main, baritone, director of the Cosmopolitan Opera Company, of the Schubert Choralists of Pasadena and of the music at St. Edmond's Episcopal Church, San Marino. He will sing two groups of songs written by Mr. and Mrs. George Cossitt White, Mrs. White accompanist. Mrs. J. H. Comby will read a Christmas story. Tea will be served by the Hospitality Committee, Mrs. Ada E. Mangson, chairman. The House Committee, Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods, chairman, will keep open house at our headquarters, and she hopes the members will not fail to bring the usual Christmas gift for the birds of Plummer Park -- raisins, seeds, dry bread, etc. Your friends will be welcome.

THURSDAY, Dec. 11. 7:00 P.M. Central Library, Fifth St. and Grand Ave., Los Angeles. Howard L. Cogswell presiding. The meeting will be devoted to plans for the Christmas counts, - Los Angeles and Pasadena. Anyone interested in participating in this nationwide cooperative bird count on the chosen 15-mile diameter areas is urged to attend and join in the discussion. Even though it may not be possible for you to participate in the actual counts, come and see how we plan to top last year's lists. Proposed dates: Los Angeles count (Santa Monica and Playa del Rey to Griffith Park), Dec. 21; Pasadena count (San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary to Eagle Rock, Monrovia and Mt. Wilson), Dec. 27. And for those who will brave snow and ice and a real "wintry" count: Big Bear Lake (Barton Flats, Bear Valley in San Bernardino Mts. and desert slope to Box S Springs), Dec. 20.

WANTED! A bookcase for our headquarters in Plummer Park. Any kind acceptable, but one that can be locked is preferred. Write the chairman, Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods, 672 S. Rampart Blvd., Los Angeles 5, if you have a case to give the society.

WITH SINCERE REGRET we learn of the death of one of our members, Mrs. Sadie D. Anderson, formerly of Redondo Beach.