

Western Tanager



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OUR LIBRARY

By MARY BARNES SALMON, Librarian

The Library of the Los Angeles Audubon Society - 191 volumes and a large number of bulletins on various scientific subjects - is housed in the Society's headquarters in Plummer Park.

In the space available here only a few of the books can be mentioned. Among them are several of a popular style, - Teattie's "Road of a Naturalist," Boston's "Outermost House," Sally Carrighar's "One Day on Beetle Rock," Govan's "Wings at my Window," Jacques' "Birds Across the Sky." Most of the library, however, is designed for serious nature study, and so it is that one may find here text books on trees, wildflowers, butterflies, mammals and general conservation, as well as on birds. For the latter there is a wealth of material, including the story of John James Audubon himself. We have several biographies, including Teattie's "Singing in the Wilderness" and his "Audubon's America" and Constance Rourke's "Audubon."

To facilitate study of birds nearest home we have Dawson's "Birds of California." In connection with it consult our extremely valuable reference book, "The Distribution of the Birds of California," by Joseph Grinnell and Alden Miller, published in 1944 by the Cooper Ornithological Club. We have two earlier books by Grinnell, - "Birds of Southern California" and "Game Birds of California."

For a larger territory there is Ralph Hoffman's "Birds of the Pacific States," - the favorite text book of West coast bird students. A different area is covered by "Field Book of Birds of the Southwestern United States," by Luther E. Wyman and Elizabeth Burnell. The territory considered includes southern California, all of Arizona and part of Nevada, an area which is said to possess the most varied and interesting avifauna of any part of North America.

For nation-wide study we have such books as Audubon's "Birds of America," the National Geographic "Book of Birds," Hausman's "Encyclopedia of American Birds," and Coues' "Key to North American Birds," to mention only a few. And of course we have Roger Tory Peterson's two field guides, one for Eastern, the other for Western birds.

There are books about particular birds, such as Ritter's "The California Woodpecker and I," May's "Hawks of North America," and several volumes of those invaluable "Life Histories of North American Birds," by Bent. The latest addition to this group is his "Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers and Their Allies." There are books about particular places, such as Yosemite National Park, Death Valley, the High Sierra, the Grand Canyon, Hawaii. Increasingly valuable are our files of such magazines as "American Forests" and "Audubon Magazine" (formerly "Bird Lore"). Of the latter we have the issues for the past twenty-nine years.

The idea has been launched recently of having a separate section for books placed in our library honoring members, as we did for Mrs. Comby on her retirement as president, for Mr. Geo. T. Hastings for his important work in the society, and for the late Mrs. Holden and Mrs. Saunders. Gifts could be made as a friendly gesture or tribute to one another. This should prove a popular way to add valuable books to our list.

This necessarily brief sketch mentions only a few of our nearly 200 books. As librarian I would urge our members to make more use of them. With the exception of certain text books, they may be borrowed, or members who come to headquarters will find there a pleasant reading room. First, however, telephone the librarian, as the rooms are not open all the time. (Granite 9312.) For your information there are still available a few copies of the catalogue of May 1, 1943.

THE WESTERN Tanager

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MEMBERSHIP DUES: Student (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 membership applications with the dues, to the Treasurer, at the address given above.

FOR THIS YEAR'S STUDY CLASS Mr. George T. Hastings, chairman, has arranged a program which promises to be highly instructive without being too technical. If the first class, Oct. 28, may be taken as a criterion we are going to enjoy it.

At this class Mr. E. P. Terry discussed fossil birds, reviewing for us what is known about those reptile-like creatures that flourished millions upon millions of years ago, - ancestors of the birds that are now the source of so much pleasure and benefit.

Mr. Hastings followed with the story of the development of the bird from the egg showing by successive layers of a chart, his own design, the changes that take place from day to day until a minute bit of protoplasm becomes a bird, - as impossible to understand, said he, as it is to understand how the reptile developed into a bird.

"The egg," said Mr. Hastings, "is a remarkable thing, to be regarded with reverence."

Future programs will deal with the place of birds in the animal kingdom, their structure and their classification into orders and families. A similar program will be devoted to plants.

At the class on Oct. 28 the latter part of the morning was devoted to the reading of poems about birds, trees and water, several members taking part.

SEVERAL beautiful specimens of a cassia, brought to the Study Class by Bonnie C. Green, aroused much interest. They came from the English Exploratory Co.'s place (formerly the Hagerty estate) in Palos Verdes. Dr. Samuel Ayres, Jr., president of the Southern California Horticultural Institute, and Mrs. Maria Wilkes have now classified the specimens as Cassia splendens, a native of South America.

OBSERVATIONS

ALL NATURE eagerly awaits the rains. Vegetation not artificially watered is dying because of the drought, which also affects many species of wild birds.

BIRDS now found on city park lakes, reservoirs and grounds:

General MacArthur Park, - Eared and pied-billed grebes, Farallon cormorants, pintail, ring-necked, lesser scaup and ruddy ducks and, hidden under the north side tules, a flock of tiny ducklings. Here is a good spot to study gulls, - glaucous-winged, herring, California and ring-billed and you may find the short-billed.

Echo Park, - Eared and pied-billed grebes, Farallon cormorants, the little cackling goose, pintail ducks.

Silver Lake Reservoir, - Eight avocets stopped here on migration Oct. 22. Nov. 1: Eared and pied-billed grebes, great blue herons, American egrets, lesser scaup and ruddy ducks, and along the water's edge several spotted sandpipers.

Lincoln Park, - Nov. 4. Mrs. Lila Mann reports dredging operations here, but the small remaining pond teemed with minnows and a field day was on for American Egrets, and pintail, ring-necked and ruddy ducks.

Also in the above areas, hermit thrush, Audubon's warblers, Gambel's and song sparrows, etc.

Griffith Park, - Justin Russell reports Audubon's warblers, Gambel's and Fox sparrows common from October 3 on. Hermit thrush, robins and ruby-crowned kinglets increasing by October 31. Golden-crowned sparrows, cedar waxwings, one male red-naped sapsucker October 24. Lewis's woodpeckers noted October 10. On October 31 (very erratic migrants this far south), two male golden-crowned kinglets, singing; observed at close range. On the west side Settling Basins are many water and land birds.

San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, - Lewis's woodpeckers, slender-billed nuthatches, hermit thrush, many robins and cedar waxwings, ruby-crowned kinglets, pipits and many more species there now, plus the cardinals. Oct. 29 Gertrude Woods watched six white-tailed kites hovering over fields, area near Anaheim and Telegraph Road.

WATCH NOW FOR: Red-head and canvas-back ducks, Lewis's woodpeckers, chickadees,

slender-billed and red-breasted nuthatches, the rare southland visitors, - golden-crowned kinglets, purple finches, pine siskins and chipping sparrows.

---CAROLINE E. DAUGHERTY

OUR FIRST AFTERNOON PROGRAM this year, Oct. 21, brought us one treat after another. First, Mrs. Willis displayed a gift to the society from Walter Scott, who in the course of extensive summer travels visited various Audubon shrines. The gift is a picture of the Audubon Memorial at Henderson, Ky. It now hangs on the wall at headquarters.

Mrs. Daugherty, our Field Leader, gave an informative account of her experiences at the Audubon Nature Camp at Norden, where she was a "camper" at the first two-week session last summer.

Kenneth E. Stager, the County Museum Curator of Ornithology, reported being called to Santa Monica to identify a strange bird. He found it to be a dickcissel, a bird of the mid-west which he thought was probably blown off its regular migration route by a severe storm. This is the first record of this bird in California. One is reminded of a paragraph in that fascinating book, "Birds Over America" (p. 18), by Roger Tory Peterson, which reads: "Every state in the Union has its quota of rarities, stray birds out of their normal range. Joseph Grinnell once remarked that, given enough time, every North American species would be recorded in California."

Dr. R. T. Congdon, of Wenatchee, Wash., an unexpected but very welcome guest, showed extremely interesting motion pictures of Washington birds. Mrs. Hood then showed two groups of her own exceptionally beautiful kodachromes, one of Coronado Island birds, the other giving highlights of her summer in Yosemite, touching on the geology of that region.

THE SUNDAY FIELD TRIP to San Dimas County Park and vicinity Oct. 24, led by C. J. Parker, found 35 species of birds. The more interesting were red-breasted sapsuckers, sharp-shinned and red-tailed hawks, hermit thrush, many robins and waxwings, ruby-crowned kinglets and golden-crowned sparrows.

GOD bless the little things this Christmastide,
All the little wild things that live outside.
Little cold robins and rabbits in the snow
Give them good faring and a warm place to go.
All the little young things for His sake Who died
Who was a Little Thing at Christmastide.

-----Margaret Murray

(A Washington Cathedral card)

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY was the scene of a delightful party November 6, when Mrs. O. M. Stultz, the director, entertained at a luncheon the executive boards of the four local organizations which are branches of or affiliated with the National Audubon Society, - the California, Los Angeles, Pasadena and Whittier Audubon societies.

At a mid-morning round table there was a general discussion of the Audubon program in this vicinity, of hopes for its expansion, and the part the sanctuary may take in that expansion. The early history of the sanctuary movement here, the dedication in November, 1939, of this wooded area along the banks of the San Gabriel River, the National Audubon Society's eventual connection with it and the development to its present status, - all were related, while Mrs. Stultz expressed her earnest desire for the cooperation of the local organizations in creating here an educational center of the highest practical value. All agreed that a great need here is more active participation of the schools, particularly the elementary grades, in nature study. Possible ways of bringing this about were suggested.

Luncheon was served at beautifully decorated tables in the picnic area. There followed a fine report by Mr. Floyd Brown of the annual meeting of the National Audubon Society, in New York, from which he had just returned. Of special interest was his announcement that next summer will see another session of the Audubon Nature Camp at Norden. Again there will be five two-week sessions. Those who had the privilege of attending the 1948 camp will be happy to learn that Mr. Brown will again be in charge as director.

ONE OF MANY INTERESTING THINGS seen at Playa del Rey on the Nov. 4 field trip was a number of butterflies over a patch of wild radish, sweet clover and Australian salt bush. A West coast painted lady, a cabbage white, a tinted cabbage white, a field skipper, a pygmy blue and a dwarf pygmy blue were identified by Mrs. W. L. Humphreys.

THE DECEMBER CALENDAR

TUESDAY, Nov. 30 and SATURDAY, Dec. 4. Screen Tour: "This Curious World of Nature," by William Ferguson. See special announcement distributed by Wm. K. DeFue, Business Manager, Audubon Screen Tours Club, 6055 Fair Ave., North Hollywood.

THURSDAY, Dec. 2. 1:30 P.M. Flummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. This is to be the annual Christmas party, the Standing Committees on Hospitality, House and Program joining in what it is safe to predict will be a joyous occasion. The program: "Nature Legends," and whistling solos, Miss Charlotte A. Hamilton, past president of the Society, piano numbers by Miss Sarah Ellen Barnes, and a song festival, with community singing, led by Miss Ann C. Woolf, director of the Griffith Park Girls Camp. Refreshments will be served. Friends of members will be very welcome.

THURSDAY, Dec. 9. 7:00 P.M. Los Angeles Central Library, Fifth St. and Grand Ave. First floor. Mrs. Elizabeth B. Goolden, First Vice-President, presiding. Mrs. J. H. Comby, Southern California Representative, National Audubon Society, Whittier, will talk on "Down Texas Way," describing what she and Mr. Comby saw on a recent trip. Pictures of some of the birds seen will be shown. There will follow a discussion, led by Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, of plans for the annual Christmas bird count.