

Western Tanager



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STATE AND FEDERAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

By DOROTHY E. GEORNER

Every Audubon member in California should plan at some time to visit the state and federal wildlife refuges located in the Sacramento River Valley,- wintering grounds for numerous ducks and geese. This proved to be the year for Mrs. Caroline Daugherty and myself.

Upon arrival at the Sacramento Federal Wildlife Refuge near Norman on Highway 99-W, administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, we learned that the majority of the ducks had left the refuge. Even so, an estimated 50,000 geese and 100,000 ducks remained on the marshes. This refuge contains 10,500 acres, and Mr. A. Vernon Ekedahl, superintendent, said that a quarter of a million birds had been present during the hunting season when, at the first shot, the birds rush pell-mell to the refuge during the days of shooting, flying out at night to feed.

The geese present were lesser snow, lesser Canada, cackling, white-fronted and Ross's. Two whistling swans were seen, but there had been a maximum of between 500 and 600 this year, with a peak of 2000 in the most favorable year. The ducks present during our stay in mid-November were mainly mallards. The pintails, which comprise 90% of the wintering ducks, together with the baldpates, had scattered to the numerous ponds adjacent over the countryside. Four million wintering birds is the highest number ever recorded at this refuge during the annual January census. We learned also that here ducks were at least as numerous as last year.

Mr. Ekedahl administers three refuges: the Sacramento, Colusa and Sutter. In addition to Mr. Ekedahl and his secretary, there are eleven deputies, nine of whom are resident on the Sacramento and two on the Colusa. A pilot-biologist is also assigned to the area. Operation of the refuge is financed by duck stamp money.

This year, to help feed the ducks and reduce damage to local farm crops, the Sacramento refuge raised 600 acres of rice, 450 acres of barley and 500 acres of millet, while Colusa raised 600 acres of rice and 240 acres of barley. Sutter produced 250 acres of milo maize.

Mrs. Wehr, wife of one of the deputies on Colusa, told us that her most thrilling moment of the year comes when the first large flight of ducks arrives in the fall. This year it came at 6 A.M. Breakfast preparations were forgotten when, with binoculars in hand, she rushed out and stood in the cold on the dike for more than an hour, even as you and I, to drink in the sight of 50,000 or 60,000 pintails and baldpates feeding in their barley field in such close formation that no space could be seen between the bodies of the birds. The sound of their eating was like the heaviest downpour of rain.

It was a grand trip and we yearn to return during a hunting season to see the real concentration. We saw 125 species of birds on the whole trip. On the way home, in the canyon at Big Sur, we heard a pair of horned owls in conversation!

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

President Mrs. Mary V. Hood
Executive Secretary, Mrs. Bess M. Hoffman, 1112½ S. Orange Grove Dr., Los Angeles 35
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CALENDAR FOR JANUARY, 1949

THURSDAY, Jan. 6. Field trip to the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, 2594 South Durfee Ave., El Monte. The Pasadena-Long Beach P. E. bus, four trips each way daily, stops, on signal, at Temple School, opposite the Sanctuary entrance. From downtown Los Angeles go to El Monte by P. E. bus or train. (Telephone Information Tucker 7272 for best schedule.) At El Monte Station change to Long Beach bus leaving there at 8:37 A.M. If driving, go east on 6th St. to Whittier Blvd., continue on Whittier to Durfee Ave., thence north to Sanctuary. Bird walk will start from the Museum at 9:30. Take lunch. Eat at picnic tables if the weather is good; otherwise inside the Museum, at 12 Noon. Leader, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty; CHARleston 6-1747.

THURSDAY, Jan. 13. 7:00 P.M. Los Angeles Central Library, Fifth St. and Grand Ave. First floor. Mrs. Elizabeth B. Gooden, First Vice-President, presiding. Mr. Charles C. Ayres, Jr., of Ottumwa, Iowa, president of Iowa Ornithological Union (for the third year), founder and president of the Ottumwa Bird Club, and member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, will talk on "Only Seven Wonders of the World?". To be illustrated with kodachrome slides.

THURSDAY, Jan. 20. 1:30 P. M. Los Angeles County Museum, in Exposition Park. Mrs. Mary V. Hood, president, presiding. Mr. W. Scott Lewis, member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Southern California Academy of Science, and other organizations, will be the speaker. He will present a unique full-color motion picture, "Mysterious Nature," designed to summarize scientific teachings regarding the natural sciences, to show how everything in nature is woven together and how life could not exist if thousands of natural laws were not exactly what they are. Mr. Kenneth E. Stager, Curator of Ornithology and Mammalogy, Los Angeles County Museum, will present "the bird of the month."

SUNDAY, Jan. 23. Field trip to Sherwood Lake. Drive out Ventura Blvd. to the first turn-off to the left after crossing the Ventura County line. Meet at that intersection at 8:30 A.M. Bring lunch. Leader, C. J. Parker; ATLantic 1-2490.

THURSDAY, Jan. 27. Study Class, 10 A.M. to 12 Noon. Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., on the Pacific Electric Santa Monica Blvd.-West Hollywood line. First Hour: The structure of birds, - skeleton, circulation, bills and feet, senses, feathers. Second Hour: The family tree of flowers: classes and sub-classes. Bring lunch and spend the afternoon at headquarters. Leader, Mr. George T. Hastings.

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

2594 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte. Telephone: Whittier 6-3748
Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director. Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods, Assistant Director
C. W. Hamilton, Warden

Maintained by the National Audubon Society, with the cooperation of its Southern California affiliated societies. Regularly scheduled field trip the second Sunday of each month, starting from the entrance at 9 A.M.

Advisory Committee: Chairman, Mrs. J. H. Comby, Southern California Representative, National Audubon Society, 200 Kratt Lane, Whittier. Telephone: Whittier 41-4236
Members: Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, Mrs. Anna B. Young, Mr. Otto J. Zahn, Mr. Harlan Cate and Mrs. F. F. Fellissier.

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, through its Youth Leadership Committee, will conduct a bird study course for girls and boys, 12 years old and over, at the County Museum in Exposition Park, beginning Jan. 8, 1949. The course will be given on five consecutive Saturday mornings, from 10 to 12 o'clock. It will include illustrated lectures by the president, Mrs. Hood, with studies in identification of birds in the Museum Bird Hall and later in the field. Enrollment will be limited to 200. For desired information, telephone Mrs. Neil H. Lewis, Gladstone 3335, chairman of the committee. The course for boys and girls will close Feb. 12 and will be followed by one for leaders of youth groups, this second course to be given on Wednesday nights Feb. 16 to Mar. 26.

THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION. The enclosed wildlife stamps were sent us on an offer from our Executive Board to cooperate with the Federation in its effort to arouse an enlightened opinion in the perpetuation of the natural resources of this continent. Price of the stamps, \$1. Purchase is not compulsory. You may keep them, or give them away, if you do not buy them. If you do not care to do either, return them to the Federation, which donates returned stamps to children's homes and institutions.

MEMBERS (non-member husbands and wives, too) are cordially invited to the home of our president, Mrs. Hood, Sunday, Jan. 16, at 4 P.M. (#138 S. Wilton Dr., Los Angeles.) Mr. Walter Scott, who followed the footsteps of John James Audubon over many of the eastern states last summer, will talk about what he saw.
R. S. V. P. to Mrs. Albert W. Knox, 344 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles 5 (Exposition 3555) or Miss Laura Greely, 904 Kendall Avenue, South Pasadena (Cleveland 7-1849).

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME :

Mrs. Kathlyn W. Davis
1228 Arlington Ave., Torrance
Mr. Walter Grant Powell
8430 E. 6th St., Downey
Mrs. Genevieve A. Feister
334 N. Normandie Ave., Los Angeles 4
Mr. Julius Evans
7440 Woodrow Wilson Dr., Hollywood 46
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1741 Coolidge Ave., Altadena
Mrs. Russell E. Wilson
4548 Farmdale Ave., North Hollywood
Mrs. Ella E. Post
1447 W. 101st St., Los Angeles 44

OPPORTUNITY is knocking at your door, - opportunity to serve your Society as a member of one of its Standing Committees.. Birds, Extension, Hospitality, House, Membership, Nature Study, Publicity, Youth Leadership .. All the chairmen need help to carry on their activities. See their names, addresses and telephone numbers in The Tanager, October, 1948, and get in touch with the one you may prefer.

OBSERVATIONS

DUCKS. The flow of the Los Angeles River is so low that only a portion of the Hollingsworth Blvd. settling basins can be even partly filled. But these shallow ponds are hosts now to hundreds of canvas-backs, several ring-necked and ruddy ducks, eared and pied-billed grebes, herons, gulls, coots, etc., - that is, until a trigger-happy finger frightens away all except coots. Mrs. Lila Mann saw several dead coots Nov. 29 after such shooting. Gradually the ducks drift back. She found 5 gadwall there that day. There were 5 red-head ducks among the canvas-backs Nov. 24. Redheads are rarely found in the Los Angeles area the last few years. These were seen just that one day (C.H.D.).

RARITIES. Frederick Blunt found an immature little blue heron at Bolsa Chica Nov. 14 and again Nov. 21. This is an eastern species, only occasional in California. In the immature stage it is similar to our snowy egret, but it has a tinge of blue in the primaries, legs dull greenish, bill bluish, tipped with black and thicker, and it lacks the shuffling foot motions. Mr. Blunt also found two golden-crowned kinglets in the Long Beach vicinity the latter part of November. Alma Stultz found a Holboell's grebe and 5 female buffle-heads at Bolsa Chica Nov. 15. Arnold Small found an immature whistling swan in San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary Nov. 14.

LAND BIRDS. Justin Russell reports Western robins, ruby-crowned kinglets and pine siskins in Griffith Park Nov. 14 and chipping sparrows Nov. 21. Dorothy Getz reports great flocks of robins and cedar waxwings. These two species are reported numerous in many areas, especially in San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, where also hundreds of American pipits, phainopeplas wintering over, red-breasted sapsuckers and a slender-billed nuthatch. Varied thrush in Elysian Park Nov. 10 (L. Mann) and Brookside Park Dec. 2 (M. Parker).

WATCH NOW FOR: Horned grebes, redhead ducks, red-naped and red-breasted sapsuckers, slender-billed and red-breasted nuthatches, Sierra creepers, varied thrush, golden-crowned kinglets, purple finch, pine siskins, chipping, Lincoln and Fox sparrows.

-----CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY
Field Leader.

THE SUNDAY FIELD TRIP to Newport Beach Back Bay and Bolsa Chica areas, led by C. J. Parker Nov. 28, proved to be a wonderful day, with a bird list of 58 species. Outstanding: 9 red-throated loons, 4 white pelicans, 10 bufflehead ducks, 15 red-breasted mergansers, 1 white-tailed kite, 1 long-billed curlew, 100 avocets, 6 species of gulls.

A SIERRA CLUB FIELD TRIP. Sunday, Nov. 28, twenty-five members of the Nature Study group of the Sierra Club met in Griffith Park for a bird walk. We were very capably led by Mrs. Caroline Daugherty and Miss Dorothy Groner, of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. We identified in all about 38 species of birds. In the settling basins in the park we were fortunate enough to see about 200 ducks of five different species, great blue herons, black-crowned night herons and American egrets. We thank our Audubon friends for a delightful early morning bird walk.

---LOIS LASLEY, Member, Sierra Club

MR. AND MRS. R. N. SHUART, Redondo Beach, report an immature bald eagle along Palos Verdes shores. They first saw it last spring, Feb. 27, and again Mar. 27. On April 25 they observed it high in the air, soaring in circles with two vultures, while lower down were many gulls, all circling, giving them a fine chance to see the difference in manner of soaring and of flight. They watched the bird for several hours, noting its yellow bill and feet. It was not very prepossessing; its plumage was mottled and ragged, with scarcely any white. Seen again Nov. 7, it had a nice white head and the tail showed partly white in flight. Grinnell and Miller, in "Distribution of Birds of California," p. 106, say the bald eagle, formerly common, is now either gone or limited to vagrants or to scattered nesting pairs.

MRS. ADA E. MANGSON, Hospitality Chairman, wishes to express her appreciation for the members' loyal support in the benefit-luncheon at Helms' in November.

IMPORTANT BUSINESS at the meeting of Jan. 20: Nomination from the floor of one member of the Committee on Nominations; also, the first reading of some proposed changes in the By-laws.