

Western



Tanager

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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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THIS NUMBER OF THE WESTERN Tanager IS DEDICATED TO MISS LAURA GREEELY

Few members of the society have served in so many ways and for so long a period of time. She was our president from 1939 to 1942, Corresponding or Executive Secretary in 1938-'39 and from 1942 to 1945, Editor of the Tanager in 1940-'41 and from 1944 to 1949. For one year she was both President and Editor, and later for one year Secretary and Editor. The founding of our Educational Fund in 1943 was at the instigation of Miss Greeely. This is one of the most constructive projects of our society in the cause of conservation. (More about the fund will be found on page 19). Miss Greeely's unflinching thoughtfulness for friends and members during illness or misfortune is known to comparatively few, but has been deeply appreciated by those who benefited by it. In the Tanager of June 1942 there was published a poem by the late Mrs. Warren Holden on the occasion of Miss Greeely's retirement as President; from this we quote two stanzas.

A TRIBUTE TO OUR OWN LAURA GREEELY

Faithful in the smallest detail
With tact you've sped us on our way,
While our club has grown and prospered
Through your work from day to day.

Ever kind and truly courteous
Our loving loyalty you have won.
On Memory's Scroll will be forever
By your name the words - "Well Done."

ADVENTURE ---- SAN GABRIEL WILD LIFE SANCTUARY

Alma Stultz and I stand on the bank of a little stream. Tall grass stems mask the opposite stream bank, forming a miniature jungle into which it is difficult to see. A strange piping sound issues from the maze of grass stems. The pipings come in pairs, a loud emphasized tone followed by a soft tone on the same pitch, this given over and over in a low pitched, rather harsh tone.

This unusual sound intrigues us and we speculate as to the author. Two fluffy Song Sparrows perch in the willows above the stream, a blue Western Gnatcatcher poses for our admiration. The thin squeezed-out note of the Hutton's Vireo sound from the willows.

"Suppose we sit down and give the piper a chance to come out," I suggest.

This we try, and crouching on the leafy bank, probe the grass jungle with our binoculars. At length Alma's excited voice, "I see a streaked breast that vibrates up and down with the pipings, and now I see a head and a long bill -- it must be the Virginia Rail!"

Now the piping has ceased, but I hope the bird is still in the vicinity. My suspense is short for directly in front of me the rail slips from cover and swims across the dark pool, then dips from sight into a bed of watercress.

My adventure seems over and for a moment my eyes leave the stream as I reach for my note book. When I glance up the Virginia Rail stands at the edge of the watercress looking at me with his red eye. His thoughtful detachment softens his outline, his bright being wavers and gives place to a spiritual semblance. In a flash he moves back into reality as he swims towards and into his grassy retreat. As he swims the sun illumines his long cinnamon-red bill, the bright streakings of his gay attire. Although the cool shadow closes over him I can still see the bright streakings of his breast.

Enid R. Michael

 THE WESTERN TANGER

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Betty Atwater,
 2245 Park Dr., Los Angeles 26
 Mr. Harold Bartron,
 4590 8th St., Riverside, Calif.
 Mr. Fred Butler,
 Lebec Oaks Ranch, Lebec, Calif.
 Miss Lena A. Wadleigh,
 1467-C E. California Ave.,
 Glendale, Calif.
 Dr. Telford Work,
 920 Illiff St., Pacific Palisades

WITH OUR NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

On December 3 presidents and one or two additional representatives from each of eight of our ten southland Audubon groups braved the early morning fog to meet in San Diego for a workshop conference. The meeting was held in the assembly room of the Educational Building of the San Diego Zoo, by courtesy of Mrs. Belle Benchley, Director, and of the San Diego Audubon Society, Mr. Peter Snyder, President.

Sparked by several key talks, lively discussions, and interchange of ideas for promotion of a more vigorous and an expanded Audubon program, interested the assembly for a two and a half hour session.

To enter Balboa Park is to be in a world apart, and to this was added the pleasure of a guided trip around the zoo by invitation of Mrs. Benchley and our host society.

Every one felt that it was a day well spent, and an experience that could be repeated and further developed with profit to the societies.

Our thanks to the San Diego branch.
 Erna Comby

In the December number of The Whittier Observer it is noted that all forest wilderness areas are now closed to vehicle travel. Jeep tracks, especially on steep slopes are potential erosion gullies. Also jeeps enable hunters and tourists to reach previously untravelled back country, posing a problem in sanitation and fire control.

OUR EDUCATIONAL FUND

Audubon people, as a group, are perhaps the most zealous of all when it comes to converting their fellow men and making them mend their ways. We need but the slightest excuse to start expounding enlightened thought on modern day conservation and the pleasures derived from an interest in natural history. This, in itself, falls into the category of education. However our society makes a more organized instructive effort through the Education Fund, created for the purpose of disseminating the principles and aims of the Audubon Society in general. The chief use of what money there has been in the past has been to grant scholarships to organized nature camps. These scholarships have gone to youth leaders, or those planning to enter this field. The possibilities of spreading the "gospel" among young people are unlimited, but actually we are limited to operating within the scope of the fund. If enough small donations were made to it, together with a few larger ones, it would enable us to broaden our activities to an extent worth of our increasingly important Los Angeles Society. To what better purpose could we, as individuals, direct a part of our "deductible items" each year.

R. W. Julian
 Chairman, Educational Fund

FROM OUR EXCHANGES

The October Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society describes the Lockhart Gaddy Wild Goose Refuge at Ansonville, N. C. where from 5,000 to 6,000 Canada Geese with a few Snow Geese and Blue Geese and various ducks spend the winter. Begun in 1934 when 9 geese visited a one acre fish pond, the numbers have increased yearly and the pond has been enlarged to three times its original size. The State of North Carolina has closed the region within half a mile of the refuge to all hunting. Beyond that limit the geese are fair game for hunters.

An article in the Audubon Warbler of the Oregon Society asks all interested in conservation to remember that hunting under rules administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service may actually help in conservation.

LET'S CLIMB MOUNT WHITNEY

On September 9, two nature lovers and I hit the trail about 3 a.m. at Whitney Portal, carrying 50-60 lb. packs apiece with the top of Mount Whitney as our goal. At Lone Pine Lake at 7:20 (elevation 8,371 feet) we enjoyed a campfire breakfast. The first sign of life on the trail was a Clark's Nutcracker who greeted us at dawn, 5:15.

At 4 p.m. we arrived at Mirror Lake where we made camp. The wind was blowing very hard. We were tired - my feet, legs, and knees especially were bothering as my only recent exercise had been a "hike" around Rainbow Pier in Long Beach, near my law office, once or twice a week. At 6:30 we were in our sleeping bags and glad for the rest.

At midnight we awakened and after a conference decided to continue the climb immediately because of possible snow problems, besides we would like to take pictures of the sunrise from the top of Mount Whitney. My diary states, "1 a.m., started on the trail. It's cold up here and windy. I'll not climb it again. Every step is painful!"

Our next point of interest was Consultation Lake (elevation 11,780 feet). At 5:15 we photographed the sunrise - but not from the top. At the Crest we viewed Sequoia National Park to the west and Inyo National Forest to the east. We also observed small fuzzy grasshoppers, chipmunks and an unidentified bird in this area, which is above timberline.

Birds seen on the trail included Clark's Nutcracker, Yellow Warbler, Junco, Mountain Chickadee, Calaveras Warbler, Red-shafted Flicker, Western Chipping Sparrow, Stephen's Fox Sparrow, and Mountain Blue Bird.

Flowers included Indian Paint Brush, Panstemon, Mint, Corn Flower, Gooseberry, and Thistle.

At 2:30 we arrived on top, yes, at the highest point in the United States (outside of Alaska), 14,496 feet above sea level. We stayed on top 30 minutes, then started down the long, l-o-n-g trail, arriving at our Mirror Lake camp about 10.

The following afternoon we arrived back at our station wagon, (home-sweet-home), at Whitney Portal. Then a dash to Death Valley to visit Bad Water, the lowest point in the U. S. where we took some interesting pictures. Home, then, via Baker and Barstow.

Roland Truman

OBSERVATIONS

Now through the cold, wet winter months is the time the birds most depend on you for daily food supplies with your feeders. Sugar-water for Hummingbirds, suet for Warblers, etc., raisins for Mockingbirds and Thrush, crumbs, scratch-feed, peanut hearts, yellow cornmeal, quick rolled oats for Quail, Wren-tits, Towhees, Sparrows.

We hope the rains will bring more Audubon's Warblers, Gambel's Sparrows, and Hermit Thrush. Dorothy Getz of Glendale, and many other observers report the scarcity of the above up to Dec. 17.

GEESE-DUCKS & SHOREBIRDS: Point Mugu Area, Dec. 3, observations by Wm. Lasky: 15 Canada Geese, 1 Snow Goose, approximately 5000 Pintail, 50 Green-winged Teal, 1000 Shovellers, 800 Ruddys...and many shorebirds, including 500 Avocets.

Reports from several other So. Calif. areas show no geese and very few ducks up to Dec. 15. Nov. 26, Hansen Dam Reservoir, a few each-Baldpate, Pintail, Lesser Scaup, 5 Buffle-head, and a few Ruddys were found (D). On the Los Angeles River Settling Basins, west end of Griffith Park, a few Baldpate and Pintail and several Greater Yellow-legs remain as of Dec. 17. Nov. 29 in Playa del Rey marsh, 2 Horned Grebes observed (H).

SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY: Mrs. Stultz reports, Dec. 19, Egrets, American Bittern, Virginia and Sora Rails...and the Wilson's Snipe are there again this year. A pair of Calif. Woodpeckers have taken residence, first on record. Two Phainopeplas are wintering over and Robins and Fox Sparrows are there.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK, a male, is wintering over in Mrs. Thomas Shearer's Sunland yard.

SPARROWS: Golden-crowned and Thurber's Juncos arriving in October in Burbank yard are daily visitors.

WATCH NOW FOR: American and Red-breasted Mergansers, Chickadees, Nuthatches, Varied and Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings, Purple Finch. In sunflower and weed patches along out-of-town highways, you may find Pine Siskin, all three Goldfinches-Willow, Green-back, and Lawrence's feeding together. Look for Rufous-crowned Sparrows (now rarely found) and Fox Sparrows.

Caroline Daugherty

 THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers - 1949-1950

President Emeritus Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon
 Junior Past President Mrs. Mary V. Hood
 President Mrs. Neil H. Lewis, 212 N. Wilton Pl., L. A. 4
 Secretary Mrs. Bess M. Hoffman, 1112½ S. Orange Dr., L. A. 35
 Treasurer Mrs. C. J. Parker, 821 N. Garfield Ave., Alhambra

CALENDAR FOR JANUARY, 1950

Thursday, January 5. Field Trip to the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, 2594 So. 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 Street to Whittier Blvd., continue on Whittier to Durfee Ave., thence north to the Sanctuary. Bird walk starts at the Museum at 9:30. Bring lunch, eat at noon at picnic tables if weather is good, otherwise in Museum building.

Leader, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, CHarlston 6-1747.

Thursday, January 12. Evening Program Meeting, 7 p.m. at Echo Park Branch Library, 520 Glendale Blvd., Los Angeles.

Take Temple St. bus (No. 11) or red car on Glendale Blvd. Use outside door to lecture room on north side of building.

First half hour, - announcements, reports, etc.

At 7:30 moving pictures of the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, showing trees, flowers, and birds, visits of schools and nature groups. Shown by Mr. George T. Hastings.

Thursday, January 19. Afternoon Program Meeting at the Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park at 1:30.

Mr. Kenneth Stager, Curator of Birds at the museum will present "the bird of the month." Moving pictures of the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary taken by Mr. Bert Harwell and Mr. Hastings.

A short talk illustrated by kodachrome slides on Some Curious Names of Plants and Birds by Mr. Hastings.

Sunday, January 22. Field Trip to the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary. Directions the same as for the trip of January 5.

Thursday, January 26. Study Class at Plummer Park at 10 a.m.

Take P.E. Trolley - Santa Monica-West Hollywood line, get off at Fuller Ave, walk one block west.

Continuing the year's theme of The Balance of Nature.

The first hour, - birds as eaters of seed and fruit and their relation to the farmer; the second hour, - insects as destroyers of man's food and as food for man. Mr. Thomas F. Parker will be in charge of the class.

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

2594 South Durfee Ave., El Monte - Telephone FOrest 0-1872

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 and branches. Regularly scheduled field trip, the second Sunday of each month, starting from the entrance at 9 a.m.

SIXTH ANNUAL NATURE STUDY WORKSHOP
 A Special Course for Camp Counsellors and other Leaders of Youth Groups
 under the sponsorship of the
 LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
 to be held at
 THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM

Ten Wednesday evenings, seven to nine-thirty. January 25th through March 29th, 1950
 Entrance through Museum parking lot, Exposition Boulevard.

We are happy to announce the following list of speakers, each an expert in his field.

- January 25th "Nature Guards Her Own". Mrs. Mary V. Hood
 Here we learn that Nature did it first: Camouflage - Gas-attack -
 Smoke-screen - Sonar - .
- February 1st "The Value of Forests". Mr. Lesley Cammack
 Trees are more than beautiful, they are the protectors of our
 watersheds; hence they are one of our most vital natural resources.
- February 8th "Rocks and Rockhounds". Mr. W. J. Rodekohr
 Let us see what we can do with those pretty stones we all love to
 bring home from our trips.
- February 15th "The Value of Birds". Mr. Kenneth E. Stager
 Birds as a control of the insect hordes are of immense economic
 value to mankind, but do we realize their other values?
- February 22 "Life Along the Shore". Mrs. Harry C. Lindsley
 Here is a chance to learn how many and varied are the habitats
 between high and low tide.
- March 1st "Life Zones in California". Dr. Sarah Atsadi
 It is important that all students of natural history know
 something of this concept, best illustrated in California.
- March 8th "The Value of Insects" Mr. Scott Lew.
 Not all insects are our enemies, many need our protection. A
 miniature world of infinite variety and beauty.
- March 15 "Real and Fancied Outdoor Hazards". Dr. Raymond B. Cowles
 Snakes - scorpions - spiders - poison-oak - which should we fear;
 which avoid; where do they live?
- March 22nd "Setting up a Camp Museum". Mrs. Gertrude M. Woods
 Simple cages, display boxes, etc. that can be made to house the
 critters brought into camp.
- March 29th "Tracks and Trailsign" Mrs. Mary V. Hood
 Often the wilderness seems deserted, learn to read the trails and be
 amazed how many creatures may be watching you.

Each student will receive a set of notes outlining the evening lecture. To cover the
 cost of this set of notes a fee of \$1.00 will be charged.

EXHIBITS: A series of exhibits will be arranged to further supplement each lecture.
 Many will be changed each meeting, so that those wishing to "major in birds
 etc. may do so before and after the program.

HANDICRAFTS: It is with special pleasure that we announce that Mrs. George Shepphird
 has promised to have a table each evening where she will demonstrate Nature
 Handicrafts and Games that can be related to the subject of the evening.

REGISTRATION: The class will be limited to 75 students. Please register in advance.
 For this, or further information, write or phone:-

MRS. MARY V. HOOD, 138 South Wilton Drive, Los Angeles 4 - HEmpstead 0974