

T H E

Western Tanager



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SOME TERNS ARE INDEED ELEGANT

Bird watchers everywhere know the terns as beautiful and graceful birds whose skill and grace in flight is matched by few other members of the avian tribe. There are some fifty species of terns in the world, with nine in California, including a few that only appear irregularly within our borders. One of the finest of this latter group is the Elegant Tern, about which A.C. Bent writes in his well-known Life History series: "This beautiful tern well deserves its name, for in color, form, and behavior it is certainly one of the most elegant of our sea birds, the most exquisite member of the charming group of "sea swallows". Unfortunately, owing to its remote habitat, it has been seen in life by very few ornithologists".

Elegant Terns confine their breeding activity to various sandy islands along the Pacific coast of Mexico and in the Gulf of California, but late in summer when the young are raised the birds spread out along the coast, working their way southward as far as Peru and Chile. Curiously enough, some move northward first, and occasionally bird watchers along the southern California coast have had the thrill of seeing one or two individuals in summer or early fall. Thus it was a great event in 1950 when eight of these wanderers were discovered at the Venice marshes on August 27, increasing to the unprecedented number of 48 on September 6. Most of them remained throughout the month, with smaller numbers seen at other spots from Malibu south. The last record was of two at Morro Bay, on November 26.

And so the huge influx of these birds this year has made last year's "unprecedented" invasion seem insignificant. The following counts were made by the writer with the help of Arnold Small and others: (- indicates the area was not covered)

1951	Venice-Playa del Rey Los Angeles Co.	Bolsa Chica Orange Co.	Upper Newport Bay, Orange Co.	Santa Margarita Inlet San Diego Co.
July 29	-	2	0	1
Aug. 5	18	16	0	0
Aug. 8	58	-	-	-
Aug. 11	156	79(10A.M.)	113 (7P.M.)	0
Aug. 14	-	224	0	103
Aug. 16	524	-	-	-
Aug. 19	1100 (est)	109	-	-
Aug. 31	450 (est.)	-	-	-
Sept. 9	75	-	-	-
Sept. 16	26	458	600 (est)	52
Sept. 23	few on Santa Monica beach	-	-	-
Sept. 27	-	49	18	-
Oct. 7	0	41	55	-

Other counts are 26 at Malibu Inlet, August 18, and 97 near Carpinteria, Aug. 24

Many other observers have taken advantage of the unparalleled opportunity to study these exciting visitors, many of which showed the lovely rosy color of the lower parts when they first arrived. The birds tend to congregate in close noisy flocks, sometimes exhibiting residual mating antics in the form of strutting, begging by juveniles and

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OUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our Society is very fortunate in the
number of well informed people in our
ranks. We have specialists in many
fields of science and a wide variety of
interests among our members.

Many of us have been absorbing know-
ledge from our leaders for years, and
have learned many short-cuts to bird
identification. But we really never
learn a subject thoroughly till we have
tried to share our knowledge.

This year will give us an opportunity
to share our knowledge with beginning
students, and we will need many begin-
ning teachers to make the program a
success. So, I would like to invite
our experienced birders and our many
hobbyists to try their hands on the
teaching team. I can guarantee that
you will learn even more than the stu-
dents and have a good time doing it.

The Leadership Training chairman, Mr.
Rolland Truman, the Outdoor chairman,
Mrs. Dorothy Bush, or the Study Class
with Mrs. Mary B. Salmon will be glad
to hear from you and to give you a place
on the staff. Please give them your
support. Maybelle DeMay

It is with sincere regret that we
have learned of the death of Mr. James
Brennan, a life member of the Society
and at one time our Poet Laureate.

Cont. from first page
subsequent feeding by adults. Besides
the field marks detailed in the Septem-
ber Western Tanager, Elegant Terns may
be distinguished at some distance by
their call, described by Arnold Small
as of the same quality as that of the
Least Tern, "a nasal 'karreek, karreek",
but not as high in pitch. The call is
loud but it is unlike the calls of the
Caspian and Royal Terns. The Royal
sounds somewhat like a high-pitched
Caspian. The Elegant sounds like a low-
pitched Least Tern. The call is repeated
often, both while on the ground and in
the air. It may be given as a single
note, a double note or two or more dou-
ble notes.

Robert Pyle

"WE LOOK BEFORE AND AFTER"

AUDUBON CAMP OF TEXAS

Our program for the 1951-1952 season is now well under way. We appreciate the enthusiasm with which our new officers have begun their work. But we also look back with appreciation of the work of those who for years have served so loyally and efficiently and have now retired from their positions of leadership, but not from interest in and help to the Society.

First in length of service, Mrs. Caroline Daugherty was for fourteen years our field leader. She was not only a peerless planner and leader of field trips, but developed and compiled the column of Observations for the Tanager and took charge of the Christmas Bird Count. Mrs. Bess Hoffman served for four years as secretary, doing much more for the Society than called for by her official position. And of course, Mrs. Alice Lewis, our president for the past two years. Her efficiency we took for granted, we have become accustomed to that in our presidents, but her graciousness in all that she has done, her constant consideration of others, her desire to give credit to others and seek none for herself, have endeared her to us all. So we look back with gratitude to these and others who have served so well, and forward with the confident expectation that their successors will maintain the work of the Society on the same high plane to which the former leaders have raised it, and pledge them our hearty support.

A WHITE FINCH has been visiting the feeding shelves in Mrs. Hazel Lewis's yard at El Monte at infrequent intervals since October of last year. The bird is all white except for dark eyes and a pale yellow bill. It feeds in association with normal finches on walnut meats on the shelf.

AN EASTERN KINGBIRD was seen on the last day of August by Mrs. May Wait and Mrs. Caroline Daugherty near Little Lake, Inyo County. It seemed quite at home and fearless and was watched for over an hour.

ROSEATE SPOONBILLS, of Florida and east coast of Mexico, seen at Salton Sea the first week of October by Jack Bechtel.

Almost everyone pictures Texas as a place to avoid in summer, but the Audubon Camp is located "high in the cool hill country of south central Texas on the Edwards Plateau. This camp occupies part of the Schreiner Institute campus at the edge of Kerrville, a fascinating region for exploration and study - where eastern and western forms of plant and animal life overlap - where beautiful Guadalupe River and its tributaries cut valleys and canyons through beds of fossil-bearing limestones".

The friendly interest and cooperation of the community in the Audubon Camp was evident on every hand. Special permission was granted to visit the famous Bat Caves, Indian Cave, the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster experimental station and many private ranches.

The trip to the Bat Caves was taken the first week of the session, which we missed. Dinosaur tracks are a special feature on that trip, and the flight of millions of bats in the late afternoon, with hawks gathering for a feast is a great spectacle.

The Indian Cave was an afternoon trip. There were Indian hieroglyphics inside the large but shallow cave. Cliff swallows nests containing young, framed the entrance. A canyon wren investigating some of the nests caused considerable speculation and breathless interest when he paused to sing. Sunset's bright colors were reflected in the cool waters of the stream as we finished our picnic supper, and our caravan of nine cars started gaily to count the white-tailed deer. One car in the lead for five minutes, then "leap-frogging" until dark. This gave everyone an equal chance to tabulate the number seen. We were elated with a count of 132, but the winners had 154. Rio Grande turkeys and Bob Whites in that wild stretch of country added to the excitement and interest.

The long trip to the Enchanted Rock started at 5:00 A.M. The 4:00 A.M. "early risers" had gone ahead to prepare fruit, hot coffee, bacon and cinnamon rolls which filled the woods with fragrance. Our keen appetites and gaiety proved our appreciation of this feast. Enchanted Rock is a large pink granite dome that

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Audubon Camp of Texas...continued

dominates the landscape. After a leisurely half hour climb we reached the top. Vegetation was sparse after leaving the woods and river where we had breakfasted. Turkey and Black Vultures circled above and below us, a fine opportunity to observe the difference in pattern and flight. A Killdeer was nesting beside a small pool near the top. Crested flycatchers were "singing" and Rock sparrows were common. Geology was one of the main objectives of this trip. Returning to the woods along the stream we found numerous flowers, insects and birds, and a delicious lunch appeared like magic.

One of the best trips was a visit to the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster preserve, 6343 acres where intensive study is being made on control of Mexican Cedar in relation to wildlife population and agriculture. Many birds and animals are in that section. A rare find was the Golden-cheeked warbler. We waded the beautiful Guadalupe River and with nets captured some of the interesting fish and a few gruesome objects such as leeches. We drove through great fields of Gaillardias and the spectacular "Mexican hats" and found a few late Blue-bonnets.

Meals were super-fine. The teaching staff superb. Instructors supplied us with mimeographed keys, experiments to perform and excellent bibliographies for source material. On every field trip, as in our class rooms the interdependence of all forms of living and non-living things became more and more impressed on our minds. Class study with Alex Sprunt inspired us to do future research. He stressed the fact that the study of bird behavior has been barely scratched. Our neighbors on the campus were Gray-tailed cardinals, Painted buntings, Carolina wrens, Orchard orioles, Scissor-tailed flycatchers, Yellow-billed cuckoos, Inca doves, Summer tanagers and many others.

I cannot tell which I enjoyed most, - the 5:00 A.M. bird chorus or the twilight call of the Chuckwills-widow when every tree and bush sparkled with fireflies.

So many things are left untold, - you must go and see for yourself next year.

Alma Stultz

OBSERVATIONS

SHORE AND WATER BIRDS - White-faced Glossy Ibis, Del Rey, Sept. 6 (Hoffman); 7 White Pelicans, Big Bear, Oct. 7, (Pyle); Baird Sandpiper, 200 and more Northern and 2 Wilson Phalaropes, Newport Back Bay, Sept. 27 (Stultz); Red Phalaropes Point Mugu, Oct. 4 (Lasky).

DUCKS - Approximately 10,000 Pintails, with a few Mallards, Shovellers, Cinnamon Teal, Point Mugu, Oct. 4, about 80 Pintails dead or dying from botulism (L); 10,000 ducks and-coots, Big Bear Lake, Oct. 7 (Hawkins, Gould, Fisher and Esterbrush)

HAWKS - 3 Red-bellied, Sanctuary daily, Sept. and Oct. (S); 1 Osprey, 5 Red-tailed, 7 Marsh, 6 Sparrow, 3 White-tailed Kites, 10 Black Vultures, Point Mugu, Oct. 4, (L); 2 Ferruginous Rough-leg, Big Bear, Oct. 7, observed at close range (Hawkins and others)

SWIFTS AND SWALLOWS - 11 Vaux's Swifts, Sept. 22, more than 25, Sept. 28; 50 Cliff and 100-plus Violet-green Swallows, Sanctuary, Sept. 29 (S); 8 Barn Swallows, Point Mugu, Oct. 4 (L); Ash-throated Flycatcher, Sept. 29 and Oct. 5. Sanctuary (S), Venice marshes Oct 6 (H).

ROBINS - Bob Pyle reports abundant dogwood berries at Lake Arrowhead, with many Robins, Blue-birds and Band-tailed Pigeons feeding, Oct. 7; Robin, Hollywood, Oct. 1 (Myfannwy Lewis), El Monte, Oct. 1 (Hazel Lewis).

VIREOS, etc. - Hatton's Vireo, Eagle Rock, Sept. 27 (Curry); Audubon's Warbler, Santa Monica, Aug. 28, (L); Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Sanctuary, Oct. 5, (S); White-breasted Nuthatch, El Monte, Sept. 26 (H Lewis).

TANAGERS, etc. - 1 Western Tanager, Sanctuary, Oct. 2 (S), 4 Tanager, females, Santa Monica, Oct. 7, (H); Yellow-headed Blackbird, male, in bird bath, El Monte, last of Sept., (H. Lewis); Black-headed Grosbeak, W. Hollywood, Sept. 11, (Wait); 300-plus Cowbirds, El Monte, Sept. 27 (S). SPARROWS - Gambel's Sept. 14, Hollywood, (Hoffman), W. Hollywood, Sept. 21, (Wait); at Eagle Rock Miss Curry saw adults on Sept. 23, immature which usually arrive first, two weeks later; Golden-crowned, Eagle Rock, Oct. 13 (C)

WHEAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY

The first meeting of the 1951-52 year of the Society was opened at 1:30 on October 4th by Miss Bessie Pope, Vice-president, in the absence of the president. About seventy-five members and friends were in attendance.

Mrs. Comby announced the workshop for Audubon Societies of southern California at Laguna Beach on the 20th.

Mrs. Salmon gave the good news that the Study Class would meet at Plummer Park on the 25th, and urged all members to take part and help in these classes.

Mr. Hastings asked for contributions to, and suggestions for, the Tanager. Changes of address should be reported promptly.

A motion was made and passed unanimously that we join with Col. Osterman of San Diego in his effort to have all national cemeteries made bird sanctuaries.

The afternoon program by Mrs. Mary Hood stressed conservation. Her pictures from the vicinity of Placerville, the Calaveras Grove and Yosemite Valley were very beautiful. Among them were a series of the Little Spotted Bat, which had been found only about ten times previously. She had visited two areas where Big Trees (Sequoias) were being cut for shakes and stakes. In the first, all material from the logs, even the sawdust, was utilized and the forest kept in excellent condition; in the second there was much waste and serious fire hazards were created. Her remarks served to emphasize that the more one knows, the more one sees and enjoys on a trip.

Mr. Rolland Truman presided very ably at the evening meeting on October 10th. About thirty were in attendance. It was interesting to find, when they had introduced themselves and told where they

lived, that most were from outlying districts.

For the program, Mr. and Mrs. Hood showed two series of pictures from Yosemite National Park, the first taken between 20 and 30 years ago by Francois Matthes in his study of the geology of the region, especially of the work of glaciers. The second series were kodachromes taken by the Hoods as they followed ON MATTHES' TRAIL to find the exact spots where the earlier pictures had been taken. In places the companion pictures showed that a lapse of twenty years had produced no noticeable change, in others small trees of the 1920s had increased greatly in size. Incidentally, the Hoods found evidence of glacial action at higher elevations than had been known before and discovered large glacial potholes of which the park rangers knew nothing.

For the first field trip of the season some thirty members met in Palisades Park, Santa Monica. The morning was spent in studying the thirty and more kinds of trees in the park. Besides Blue Gums, four other kinds of Eucalyptus. Of especial interest were the common and Abyssinian bananas, in the Miramar Hotel grounds across from the park, and the Moreton-bay Fig, the largest tree in the city. On our way two Ravens flew over, one even perched for a minute on the trunk of a palm close to us.

After lunch eaten at picnic tables near Inspiration Point the party went down to the beach where Ring-billed, California and Heermann's Gulls were seen, a few Willets and Godwits along the water's edge and Eared Grebes just off shore, but the close views of Forester's and Elegant Terns was the high point of the afternoon.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

You have probably joined the Screen Tours Club for this year. If not do not fail to attend the first meeting and join then. And urge your friends and neighbors to come.

Tuesday, Oct. 30	- Saturday, Nov. 3	HOWARD ORIENS - Lake Lore
Tuesday, Nov. 27	- Saturday, Dec. 1	LAUREL REYNOLDS - Western Discovery
Tuesday, Jan. 22	- Saturday, Jan. 26	LEONARD HALL - Our National Parks
Tuesday, Mar. 25	- Saturday, Mar. 29	OLIN PETTINGILL - In the Hills Of Gold
Tuesday, Apr. 29	- Saturday, May 3	BERT HARWELL - Canada North

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
Officers - 1951 - 1952

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Calendar for NOVEMBER, 1951

Thursday, November 1. Afternoon Program Meeting - 1:30 P.M. in the Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. William Lasky will talk on Birds of Prey, their Place in Nature and How to Identify Them. Bill has been specializing in Hawks and Eagles for some years and is also much interested in falconry. He will give us something unusual and of great interest. He will also show his moving picture, - The Boy and the Eagle.

Wednesday, November 14. Evening Meeting, 7 P.M. in the County Museum, enter at the south west corner of the building. George Hastings will talk on Birds in Order, explaining how and why birds are classified and the reasons for associating in the same family birds that appear very different. The talk will be illustrated with kodachrome slides.

Thursday, November 15. Field Trip to Arroyo Seco Park. Meet at Sycamore Grove, 4700 N. Figueroa Street at 9 A.M. Mrs. Enid Michael will lead the bird walks. Mr. Lawrence will lead a walk for the study of trees. Take bus number 25 on Spring Street to the park. Bring lunch.

Sunday, November 18. Field Trip to Chatsworth Reservoir. Note that this is the 3rd Sunday of the month instead of the usual 4th. The change has been made to avoid the Thanksgiving Day week end. We hope to see White-tailed Kites, Lewis' Woodpeckers, Band-tailed Pigeons, Western and Mountain Bluebirds and various ducks and geese among other birds. Lunch at the picnic grounds at the end of the reservoir gate which will be opened for us at 9:30.

Thursday, November 29. Study Class, Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., at 10 A.M. The first hour there will be a review of Donald Culross Peattie's CUP OF SKY, followed by a class study of Swallows and Swifts and their Migration. The second hour, nature pictures shown by Mr. W. Scott Lewis. Take P. E. Trolley, Santa Monica-West Hollywood line to Fuller Ave., walk west one block.

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

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Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director Mrs. E. Gertrude Woods, Assistant Director
Maintained by the National Audubon Society, with the cooperation of the Southern California affiliated societies and branches.
Regularly scheduled field trips the second Sunday of each month, starting from the entrance at 9 A.M.