

Western  TanagerPUBLISHED MONTHLY, SEPTEMBER TO MAY
BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOLUME XVIII

APRIL, 1952

NUMBER 8

WEATHER AND WILDLIFE NOTES FROM JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING
Grace Sharritt Nelson

This has been a winter of deeper snow than usual. Drifts eight to ten feet high wall us in from the outside world. The mountain slopes, plains, and my immediate surroundings are all the same color - white.

After five and one half months of this continuous color, it is almost unbelievable how one searches for anything that has a different shade or tint; a green pine bough above a slope of white, a tiny speck of bare ground near the porch, a brown stalk sticking above the ice in the swamp, the blue patch of sky (when it isn't clouded), the pink afterglow of a winter sunset on the Teton mountain peaks.

About March 15-18 the first mountain bluebird arrives! Its color fairly dazzles my snow-plagued eyes. But that is nothing when compared to the yellow vest of the first western meadowlark singing from a ranchyard fence.

This spring, it is doubtful if even these birds will arrive so early. For there is no food to attract them. This snow of 1952 will take time to evaporate, to fill the rivers and streams.

On the creek near my home, which is the National Elk Refuge, I have observed within the past month four pairs of Buffleheads. They are a bright addition to the small flock of Canada geese, pintails, mallards, American mergansers, blue-winged teal and golden eye ducks. But of all the waterfowl which use this creek as soon as the ice breaks, the most interesting, if only because of their rarity, are the trumpeter swans. This winter we fed barley and wheat to eleven swans, - nine adults and two cygnets - at the warm springs of the refuge.

The 25,000 acre refuge was established primarily for the winter feeding of the large herds of elk which drift to our valley in the fall from the Yellowstone area. We are feeding about 30 tons of hay a day to 7200 head of elk this winter. The entire elk population of Jackson Hole, which was polled by snowplane and sleighs in February is about 15,000 head.

But like all Federal game refuges, birds are also protected, and when feeding is necessary for their survival, as in the case of the trumpeter swans, this is done through the winter.

However, as soon as the creek opens up, the swans desert the locality of the springs for the fresh tubers and underwater plants of the stream. They dive and swim, and sit for long hours upon the snow-covered banks with necks and heads curved under white wings, almost invisible at times against the snow.

Towards evening the swans begin to fly about, and I never tire of listening to their wild trumpet-like calls. They fly low. Later in the season, near nesting time, usually late in May, they act belligerent, and will furiously chase the Canada geese.

On the other extreme, I have seen a red-winged blackbird fly ungrily at a nesting swan: irritating her like a small gnat, pecking at her, but never driving her off, while the swan would stretch her long neck and talk back.

Continued on page 37

THE WESTERN MANAGER

Published monthly, September-May, by the Los Angeles Audubon Society, Inc. \$1.00 per year, free to members. Editor - George T. Hastings, 517 Euclid, Santa Monica. Phone - EXbrook 5-1137. Associate Editor - Lecti Fisher.

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Membership

Joint with the National Audubon Society
 Regular \$5.00, Sustaining \$10.00
 Active \$25.00. Includes subscription to Audubon Magazine.
 Local, Student \$1.00, Annual \$2.00
 Life \$25.00, Patron \$100.00

OFFICERS FOR 1951-1952

President Mrs. Maybelle DeMay
 Vice-Pres..... Miss Bessie Pope
 Exec. Sec. Miss Elizabeth Patterson
 Recording Sec.. Miss Elsa Schwartz
 Treasurer Miss Treva Russell
 Registrar of Members - Mrs. T.H. Fulton
 Curator Miss Clara Pflager
 Historian Mrs. Ruth McCune

WE ARE GLAD TO WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS -

Mrs. J. H. Skidmore,
 2212 Via Guadaluana,
 Palos Verdes Estates
 Mr. Donald Constans,
 3856 Vista Court, La Crescenta

We welcome as an Honorary Member, Mr. Jean Delacour, Director of the Los Angeles County Museum.

At his home in Normandy, Mr. Delacour maintained a large collection of living rare birds and mammals. This with his library was destroyed during World War II. In 1942 he became a Research Associate at the American Museum of Natural History, New York. He is a member of many scientific societies and the author of numerous books and articles relating to ornithology.

A Memorial to a Robin. High on an arch in the recently completed St. Martin's Church at Niagara Falls is sculptured a robin in its nest. It is on the spot where a robin built its nest during the construction of the church. Workmen carefully worked around the nest till the young were hatched and left.

AUDUBON CONVENTION. This will be held at Asilomar, April 5-8. There will be panel discussions on Enriching the Lives of our Young People, Audubon Programs in California, and Work of Branch and affiliated Societies. There will be demonstrations of Visual Aids and the presentation of a film on the Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary in Louisiana by our national president, John H. Baker. Field trips will take part of each day. All Audubon members are invited to attend the convention.

The Nominating Committee will report, according to the requirements of our constitution - at all regular meetings in April. Additional candidates for any elective office may be nominated from the floor, provided such nominations are supported by written petitions signed by at least fifteen members of the Society.

The Chairman of our Laura Greely Educational Fund suggests that in order that our interest in Conservation and Nature Education may be permanently continued, we remember the Los Angeles Audubon Society in our wills.

From the Bulletin of the Santa Clara Valley, Audubon Society for January 1952. Very large flock (hundreds) of Robins at Mt. Hermon, Dec. 1. A thousand and more Robins feeding on toyon, pyracantha and cotoneaster berries in the Los Gatos area in early February. An estimated 1,000 Cedar Waxwings eating madrone berries on Dec. 15, at Santa Cruz. The history of the American Egret is a lesson in the value of bird protection. Before 1880 egrets were common in the San Francisco Bay region. Due to plume hunting they declined to the verge of extinction and not a single one was seen in the area from 1880 to 1928. Since 1928 they have increased rapidly and now are the most abundant of the heron family in the area. Plume hunting was stopped in 1911 by the Lacey Act, prohibiting traffic in the plumage of wild North American birds.

Another absorbing winter interest of mine is the golden eagle which perches on a rock of Swann Butte near our large living-room window. One winter, when the snowfall was not as heavy as this year's, I knew the time of day without looking at the clock. For at 5 o'clock each afternoon the golden eagle would hunt for its supper where large flocks of mallards and pintails were feeding in the grain field.

The short-eared owl also hunts at this time of day. Often when we are sitting at our evening meal, we will see the owl fly by the window with its mouse-supper firmly grasped in its talons.

Usually each winter, the Townsend's solitaire will visit briefly at our porch where the cotoneasters make a border. The evening grossbeaks come also for a day or two, feeding on the berries. But this winter, snow covers the shrubs.

Two winters ago I fed a flock of 50 gray-crowned rosy finches at the window feeding shelf. Some mornings the snow would be half way up the window, usually with a little finch huddled on top. My tools for clearing the shelf were simple, and the birds seemed to know them. I used a whisk broom, a big kitchen measuring spoon, and a pancake turner. They would flutter and whisper, sitting on the snow, patiently waiting for breakfast of oats and seeds which had been gleaned from our threshing machine. Fenweed seed was their favorite.

This winter the Clark's nutcrackers are my only boarders, save for an occasional magpie who will swoop down for a chunk of meat or suet.

However, the magpies and ravens are kept busy on the elk-feeding grounds acting as scavengers. With the coyotes and the eagles, these birds help keep the refuge clean. With so many animals, there is always the dead, for which nature provides scavengers.

When you live in wilderness country, close to the earth and its elements, you know the grim reality of living and dying. You often see things you wish you could forget. But you do realize a pertinent fact, one which most of us like to gloss over with the music of bird song, the beauty of feathers, or the rhythmic flight of wings: that the very existence of life

SOLILOQUY

Oh! look down by the river
And tell me what you see,
Show me your vision
Of what life seems to be!

A mighty river bank
With papers strewn around,
An old beer can, a paper cup,
Was that all that you found?

Oh! look down by the river
And tell me, -don't you see
The things that make life pleasant,
And that we, too, are free!

Don't you sense the joy of life,
The vibrance and the sound,
And the fact that we were born
in life

To swim in life, or drown?
Pat Gould.

At the February Study Class, mention was made of the Bobolink, its gradual extension of range from the east to the northwest and of the migration routes of the western birds. This prompted Mrs. Salmon to reminisce - "Driving along a country road one wonderful spring day in Missouri, I suddenly was aware of a large flock of birds new to me. I crawled under a barbed wire fence and sat among the buckbrush for three happy hours, getting acquainted with "the world's most accomplished mirth maker," "the merriest madcaps of spring," Bobolinks. What a precious day that was when I met this flight of migrating Bobolinks."

BIRDS IN GRIFFITH PARK

Seen during the past month in the Park; Cooper's Hawk; Sharp-shinned Hawk; Lestrel, mating; Red-tailed Hawk; Mourning Dove; Downey and California Woodpeckers; Flicker; Hermit Thrush; Thrasher; Mocking-bird; Shrike, setting up territory; San Diego Titmouse; Audubon's Warbler; Hutton's Vireo; Gambel's Sparrow; Golden-crowned Sparrow (numerous).

Bill Lasky

is due to the primitive law of the survival of the fit.

You feel that fundamental law strongly in the deep of winter in the white solitude of Jackson Hole.

OBSERVATIONS

DUCKS, GEESE: On Sunday Field trip to Playa del Rey, Feb. 24, Black Brant, Pintail, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Shoveller, Canvas-back, Red-head, Lesser Scaup, Surf and White-winged Scoters, Ruddy, Red-breasted Merganser. A pair of American Golden-eyes, Newport Back Bay, Feb. 23 and several times since (A. Small, Pyle)

HAWKS, EAGLES: Golden Eagle, Sierra Madre (Mr. & Mrs. C.G. Willis), Chatsworth Reservoir, Feb. 25 (Kent); White-tailed Kite, Venice marsh, Mar. 9 (Cunningham), bathing in river, Sanctuary, Feb. 10 (Stultz); 3 Red-bellied Hawks, Ferruginous Roughleg, Sanctuary, Mar. 9 (Gould, Hawkins)

RAILS: Virginia and Sora, Playa del Rey, at close range, Feb. 19 (M.S. Dunlap)

SHORE BIRDS: In Venice marsh, Semi-palmated & Black-bellied Plovers, Western, Least & Baird's Sandpipers, Avocets, many in summer plumage, Feb. 26 (Cunningham); Surf Birds, both Turnstones, and 3 Wandering Tattlers Balloch Creek jetty, Mar. 9 (Cunningham).

GULLS, TERNS: 8 Herring Gulls, Santa Monica, Mar. 11 (Cunningham); Short-billed, Santa Monica, Feb. 16 (Hast.); Sabine, at close range, unmistakable, Playa del Rey Feb. 19 (Dunlap); Royal Terns, Santa Monica, Feb. 16 (Hastings)

POORWILL: Mar. 5-8, calling in evening, as usual a few days before full moon, heard other years in Feb. (Curry)

HUMMINGBIRDS: Allen's feeding on Aloe blossoms, Eagle Rock, Mar. 11 (Curry), at feeders, Sanctuary, Mar. 12 (Stultz)

SWIFTS: more than 100, Sanct. Feb. 19 (S)

JAYS, CROWS: Crows carrying nesting material, Sanct. Feb. 17 (S); Jay nesting Hollywood, Mar. 9 (M. Lewis).

SWALLOWS: Violet-green and Bank, Sanct. Mar. 9 (G,H); Violet-green and Barn, Venice marsh, Mar. 9 (Cunningham)

WRENS, BUSH TIT: House and Bewick Wrens, Sanct. Mar. 9 (G,H); Long-billed Marsh, Venice Marsh Feb. 26 (Cunningham): flocks of Bush-Tits, totalling over 1200, Riviera Country Club, Santa Monica, Mar. 8 (Cunningham)

THRUSHES, ETC. Hermit and Varied Thrush, Sierra Madre (Mr. & Mrs. C.G. Willis); 2 Alaska and 1 Dwarf Hermit Thrushes close together on lawn, Eagle Rock, the Dwarf smaller, browner, darker breast spots, Feb. 21 (Curry); large

numbers of Robins reported from many areas, Townsend's Solitaire, eating pyracantha berries, Chevy Chase, Canyon, Feb. 20 (Dunlap)

WAXWINGS: Mrs. Shearer reports a flock of over 700 at Sunland; over 200 eating Toyon Berries, Santa Monica, Feb. 24, (May Warrick)

WARBLERS: Dusky, Audubon's and 3 Pileolated, Sanct. Mar. 9 (G,H); Lutescent, Griffith Park, Mar. 9 (M. Lewis); Yellow-throat, Santa Monica, Mar. 13 (Cunningham)

SPARROWS: Lincoln's still at Sanct. Mar. 19 (Stultz, G,H)

 REPORT FROM THE SAN GABRIEL
 WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

With the snow-capped mountains in the distance, eighty visitors left in three groups for nature instruction at the Sanctuary on Sunday morning, March 9th. In the group were teachers wanting credit for In-service Training, several family groups, two Girl Scout troops who came to do their requirements for the Bird Study Badge and several Explorer Scouts to work on the new Nature Badge for which the sanctuary staff have become counselors. Noticable among the birds seen were the Cardinals, which since February have been singing their spring songs.

The first swallows reported from the Sanctuary for the season were seen flying in a small flock low over the tree tops. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo excited everyone with its exceptionally early appearance. Later a small flock of Turkey Vultures put in their appearance, and with them a partially albino hawk of undetermined species.

The Fuchsia-flowering Geeseberries are now coming into full bloom, in preparation for the coming of the migrating hummingbirds.

Bees are gathering around the flowers on the Crab Apple Trees, and in the hive in the museum their supply of honey is mounting.

Everyone at the Sanctuary is anticipating the coming of the spring migration which will be upon us soon. We would like to invite all of you to come on the second Sundays of the coming months.

Bill Hawkins and Pat Gould

WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY

Spring weather favored the field trips in February. Twenty-two members attended each. We are grateful to Mr. Bush for planning these trips and to those who led them. On Thursday, the 21st, a delightful trip to Cabrillo Beach was led by Miss Blind of Redondo Beach. Fifty-one species of birds were seen. The highlight was one pond on which the White-fronted Goose, Cinnamon, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal were seen.

On Sunday, the 24th, the trip was to Playa del Rey. The enthusiasm and friendliness of the Sunday Group is such that you are missing something if you do not join these Sunday "Observers". Bob Pyle's knowledge of the water birds and his ability to impart that knowledge makes him an outstanding leader. By noon thirty-seven species had been seen. Lesser Scaup were much in evidence. A Blue-winged Teal was the most prized observation.

On Thursday, the 28th of February, the Study Group met in Plummer Park. The increasing attendance at these classes show that we are becoming aware of our opportunity to listen to men who can speak with authority. Mr. Scott Lewis went on with his series of forest trees and their relation to conservation. He dealt particularly with the firs and spruces.

Mr. Hastings talked about Blackbirds, Orioles and Meadowlarks, illustrating his talk with cardboard models and prepared skins of the birds in question.

Mr. Wentz gave an enjoyable review of "Son of the Wilderness" and a short "over-look" of our Plummer Park Library. As usual, some members enjoyed lunching together on the grounds afterwards.

At the Program Meeting on Thursday, Mar. 6, at the County Museum, Mr. Terry showed kodachrome pictures taken on his trip of last summer to Europe. There were general views of landscapes and cities, but of especial interest and beauty were the pictures of gardens in England, Holland, France, Italy and other countries.

Mr. Roland Truman presided at the Evening Program meeting, Mar. 12.

Mrs. DeMay spoke on Denizens of the Desert. She had pictures of our deserts showing the general appearance, but especially the plants and reptiles. Mrs. Hood had a challenging series of objects arranged on one of the tables as "What is it?" Also, in cages were a live Rattle Snake and an Indigo Snake. The group of ninety were greatly pleased at the opportunity of meeting Dr. Delacour, Director of the museum.

"BACK OF THE SCENES"

The work that makes our organization function is done at the meetings of the Executive Board on the second Thursday evenings of each month. Members are all welcome as observers at these meetings. Some of the items taken up at the Feb. board meeting were:

The Society, because of insufficient funds, was forced to give up plans for a booth at the International Flower Show. A report was made on the Santa Ana meeting attended by delegates of all the Audubon Societies in Southern California to discuss forming a federation for joint action on important local matters. A report was made on the kinds and prices of picture projectors. The Society needs a slide and a motion picture projector to carry on its work. Mrs. DeMay has started a fund with a contribution of \$100.

Mrs. Gulden, Chairman of the Educational Fund, made suggestions for raising money necessary for the functioning of her committee.

It was voted to allot \$75 to Mr. Oliver for scholarships for teachers to Norden and \$50 for furthering nature study in the schools.

It was voted to present an honorary membership in our society to Dr. Jean Delacour, Director of the Museum.

Mention was made of the reception and tea at Audubon House following the next Saturday afternoon Screen Tour.

Mrs. Salmon mentioned the opening of the new Moore Hall at Occidental College which will house 60,000 zoological specimens. This exhibit includes 45,000 specimens of birds, among them the finest collection of the birds of Mexico, in the world.

Ruth McCune, Historian

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
Officers - 1951 - 1952

President Mrs. Maybelle DeMay, 504 E. Oak Street, El Segundo, El Segundo 317-J
Secretary Miss Elizabeth Patterson, 6040 W. 76th Pl., L.A. 45, Oregon 8-4567
Treasurer Miss Treva Russell, 5641 Fountain Ave., L.A. 28, Hempstead 1060
Registrar of Members ... Mrs. T. H. Fulton, 3603 Tacoma Ave., L.A. 65, Capitol 4093

CALENDAR FOR APRIL, 1952

The public is invited to the following meetings and trips.
For further information regarding them call the numbers given.

THURSDAY, April 3 - Afternoon Program Meeting, Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, 1:30. Mrs. J. H. Comby will talk on SOME OF MY EXPERIENCES IN MEXICO, describing her recent visit to Mexico with special reference to the birds seen. Whitney 5946

WEDNESDAY, April 9. Evening Program Meeting, County Museum, entrance at south-east corner, 7:30 (doors will be open at 7). Mr. Miller Brockett will talk on FOLLOW THE TRAIL. Mr. Brockett is a leader of church youth groups, is an outstanding photographer and has travelled widely. His talk will be illustrated with his pictures taken while following the trails and will give advice not only on hiking but on nature photography. Hempstead 0974

THURSDAY, April 17. Field Trip to Eaton Canyon County Park. If driving go out East Orange Grove Ave., to Martelo, turn left (north), and continue to end of Avenue. Meet at park entrance at 9:30. Bring lunch. Leader Howard Cogswell. If interested in going by bus send a card to, or call Mrs. Henry Bush, 3631 W. 60th St., L.A. 43, AXminster 1-7855 by April 3. The bus fare will be \$1.40 each if 35 go, for fewer people the cost will be higher. If the bus is engaged no refunds will be made unless the trip is cancelled. AXminster 1-7855

THURSDAY, April 24, Study Class, Plummer Park, 10 A.M. Mr. W. Scott Lewis will continue his talks on TREES AND CONSERVATION, showing more of his beautiful slides. Miss Patterson will review a book, BIRDS OF THE BIBLE, by Porter. Mrs. Neil Lewis will conduct a discussion on CURRENT NEWS from our National Audubon Magazines. Members are asked to take part with comments on articles that have appeared in late magazines.

SUNDAY, APRIL 27. Field Trip to Chatsworth Reservoir. This is the return spring trip requested by members who went on the fall trip to this interesting place. Bring lunch. Leader Mrs. Alma Stultz. Go out Ventura Boulevard to Topanga Canyon Road, turn right (north) and go to Roscoe, turn left (west) to Fallbrook, turn right (north) and go to the gate. Meet at entrance at 9:30.

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY
664 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte - Telephone FOrrrest 0-1872

Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director. . . . Mrs. E. Gertrude Woods, Assistant Director
Maintained by the National Audubon Society, with the cooperation of the Southern California branches and affiliated societies.
Regular field trips the second Sunday of each month, starting from the entrance at 9 A.M., led by Pat Gould and Bill Hawkins. Come and bring your friends. For information call CRestview 6-1990.