

## Western



## Tanager

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BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE  
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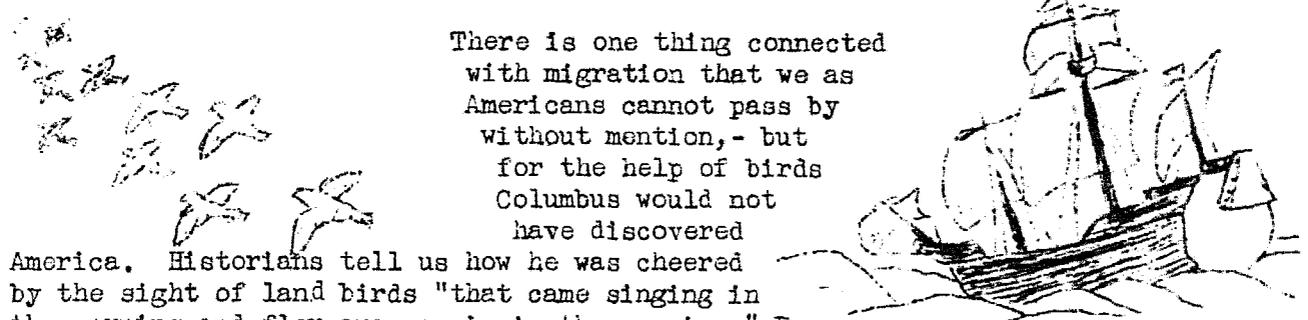
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## MIGRATING BIRDS AND COLUMBUS

There is one thing connected  
with migration that we as  
Americans cannot pass by  
without mention, - but  
for the help of birds  
Columbus would not  
have discovered



America. Historians tell us how he was cheered by the sight of land birds "that came singing in the morning and flew away again in the evening." For more than three weeks before they sighted land they were thus visited by land birds; "some of them such as sing in fields, came flying about the ships, and then continued towards the southwest, and others were heard also by night." A week before they came to land Columbus, persuaded that the birds knew whither they were going, turned his course also to the southwest, taking them as his pilots. And just as he had predicted, they did lead him to land - two hundred and fifteen miles nearer (according to the historian Fisk) than the coast of Florida for which he had been steering. That he could ever have held his mutinous sailors in check long enough to cross so great a distance is hardly possible. He was well guided and happy in trusting his heaven-sent pilots.

But we do not yet understand how almost by miracle it was that he fell in with these flights of birds. Mr. Frank Chapman was the first to point out to us the real significance of the event. The Bermuda Islands are one of the "stations" on the way of the migrating armies, and the Bahamas, where Columbus landed are another. All the land birds that touch at the Bermudas take a southwest course to the Bahamas, so that Columbus was running across the line of their annual flight before he changed his course and followed them. But this migration though it carries myriads of birds, lasts but a short season. Had Columbus come too early, he would have seen no birds, and a few weeks later the hosts would have been already in their Southern homes. As Mr. Chapman says, after nearly twenty years of disappointment a delay of ten days at Palos would not have seemed of much importance. But if Columbus had sailed September 16 he would have seen few migratory birds, or none. Whether in their absence, he would have had sufficient influence over his men to force them to continue a westward course is an open question; but we can clearly see, that without the presence of birds his efforts to allay their fears would have been seconded by no really conclusive signs of land.

And so all good Americans must be thankful to the birds. Had it not been for their guidance the whole course of American history would have been changed.

-- From the BIRD BOOK by Fannie H. Eckstorm  
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### THE WESTERN Tanager

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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Regular \$5.00, Sustaining \$10.00,  
Active \$25.00. All include subscrip-  
tion to Audubon Magazine.  
Local membership \$2.00, Student \$1.00  
Life \$25.00, Patron \$10.00.

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#### CALIFORNIA OFFICE - NATIONAL AUDUBON

693 Sutter St., San Francisco  
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We Welcome the following New Members:

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Mr. A. Eugene Fritsche,  
1939 W. 76th St., L.A. 47  
Miss Mignon Hausser,  
529 S. Harvard Blvd. L.A. 5  
Mrs. Bonita Root,  
1216 Hill Drive, L.A. 41  
Miss Mignon E. Rothstein,  
108 No. Sycamore Ave., L.A. 36  
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5035 Echo St., L.A. 42  
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206 N. Carolwood Drive, L.A. 24  
Mrs. Ann Tillery,  
1441-1/2 51st St., L.A. 52  
Mrs. Eunice F. Trainor,  
158 So. Dillon St., L.A. 4  
Mrs. A. M. Tweedie,  
5157 Hillcrest Drive, L.A. 43  
Mr. H. F. Woodley,  
1250 N. Eundy Drive, L.A. 49

With deep regret we learn of the death  
in early January of Mrs. Mary K. Haymond.  
She had been a member of the Society for  
nearly eleven years. Mr. Haymond will  
carry on her membership. His address in  
R.F.D. 1, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

### WHY NOT?

Each one of us get at least one new  
member of the Society?  
Stress the following advantages of join-  
ing:

Membership helps the important con-  
servation work of the National and local  
Societies.

Helps in the educational work of both.  
Receive the Western Tanager, joint  
members also receive Audubon Magazine.

Interesting programs for all nature  
lovers at our monthly afternoon and  
evening meetings.

A monthly study class.

One Thursday and one Sunday field  
trip each month.

Fellowship with others interested in  
nature and conservation.

Proposed Amendments to the By-Laws  
To be voted on at the May meeting.

ARTICLE III Officers and Elections

Section 1. Add to the list of of-  
ficers 2nd Vice-President.

Section 7. To the last sentence add,  
Treasurer and Registrar of Members, to  
read "with the exception of the Executive  
Secretary, Treasurer and Registrar of  
Members.

ARTICLE V. Standing Committees

Section 2. Eliminate Indoor Program  
Committee and add three additional:--  
Morning Study Class, Afternoon Program  
and Hospitality.

ARTICLE VI General Finances

Section 2. Change the first sentence  
to read-The Treasurer shall pay all bills  
approved by the Executive Board. (This  
will eliminate duplication of effort in  
issuing warrants).

The National Audubon Society conducts  
three summer camps for instruction in  
all phases of nature and conservation;  
one in Maine, one in Connecticut, and  
our California camp at Norden. All who  
have been at camp are enthusiastic about  
the good times and inspiration, the ex-  
cellent leadership and the wonderful  
surroundings. We hope that this summer  
others of our members will attend and  
bring back renewed enthusiasm for our  
work. Those who wish it may receive two  
college credits from Sacramento State  
College.

WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY  
Grace H. Phillips

FIELD TRIP of February 19 to Cabrillo Beach. In spite of a cold wind 19 members had an enjoyable day with Mrs. Margueritte Parker as leader. A large gathering of gulls sat in the sun at the Bay's north curve, among them a Royal Tern; and a few Black-bellied and Snowy Plovers were among the Sanderlings. In the Park near the Ocean where lunch was eaten, an Audubon Warbler and a Wren Tit were seen and later on Alaska Hermit Thrush.

Most of the party spent some time in the Marine Museum after lunch.

FIELD TRIP of February 22 to Hanson Dam. Western Bluebirds, Say's Phoebe, Goldfinches, Towhees and a Costa's Hummingbird-which perched for close observation, greeted us on the north slope. The dam's top fill of large rocks is a natural habitat for Rock Wrens, which were abundant. Mr. DeMay flushed a Kingfisher and the wooded and brushy sections of the ponds were sanctuary for Baldpate, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal and many shorebirds. Flocks of Meadowlarks sang while we lunched in the picnic area. Mrs. Ruth McCune gave a talk on the Sanctuary Project. The bird count for the day was 45 species.

STUDY CLASS, February 26, at Plummer Park. Mr. W. Scott Lewis spoke of the shrubs of our chaparral, "The Elfin Forest", showing unusual and beautiful slides to illustrate the habits and value of these shrubs. The second hour was Audience Participation. Mrs. Neil Lewis held up the latest copy of Audubon Magazine to show its new format and spoke of some of the articles. There were reports of migrants seen, of birds that summer here and anecdotes about them. A short report was given of the book about Charles Broley, "The Eagle Man", who has banded many eagles, often at considerable risk.

EVENING PROGRAM MEETING, February 26, at the museum. Among the fifty-five present were playgound and

camp employees, preparing to handle large groups of young people in the coming vacation. Mrs. Dorothy Bush explained and demonstrated several instructive nature games appealing to youngsters. Her Nature Quiz: PANDORA'S BOX, was played with enthusiasm.

A large snake, a Mexican Boa, had been brought from the Griffith Park Zoo. And as always there were many exhibits on the table

AFTERNOON MEETING, March 5, at the County Museum. Our former president, Mrs. Mary V. Hood gave a splendid talk on Flowers and Plants and their Uses, illustrated by many beautiful kodachrome slides. Plant life with its flowers and fruits was considered functionally: as providing food, clothing and shelter for the Indians and early settlers, and now for new products and as conservers of soil and water. And some of the inter-relations of plants and insects and other things in Nature were shown.

THE IDYLLWILD SCHOOL OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL SCIENCES

The school will be located on a 250 acre campus in the San Jacinto Mountains. The region is a biologist's paradise; many plants, birds, mammals and reptiles to be studied and many important phases of geology to be seen. The results of good deer herd management are illustrated; good and bad effects of fire, problems connected with beaver, turkey, deer and fish planning, the value of quail guzzlers can be studied at first hand.

The first session-Conservation Workshop-carrying two units of credit from the Long Beach State College-will be from June 22 to July 3; the second session-Teaching Aids in Conservation Education, July 6 to 10; and the two sessions on Enjoyment of the Out-of-Doors, July 13-17 and Aug. 3-7. Registration in each session is limited to 24, and can be made by mail, to Idyllwild School of Conservation and Natural History, Idyllwild, Riverside County, Calif.

To give opportunity to see what the school offers all Audubon members are invited to a picnic on Sunday, May 10, on the Idyllwild campus.

It is difficult to think of a pleasanter or more rewarding way for any lover of nature to spend a week or two this summer.

## A RESCUED BIRD

Virginia M. Simkins

About the middle of September as a friend left our house at dusk, he saw a good-sized bird floundering about in the street. Rather than let it get run over, he caught it and put it in our outdoor bird cage.

Apparently it had not been seriously hurt, though it couldn't stand up without help. My little boy, Larry, was intrigued with its long bright green legs and long narrow feet. Its bill was a little over an inch long, dark and strong, and it certainly knew how to use it effectively the whole time we had the bird. It fought with feet, bill and wings every time we held it for feeding and watering. It would drink when helped but never ate when it thought we were watching.

We fed it canned cat food, bird seed, fish, Kix, Pep, Corn Pops, etc., a little of each every day for variety.

After we had had the bird about a month, we were surprised by finding it walking rather wobbly about the cage and feeding and drinking all by itself.

Larry tried his best to make friends with it, but in spite of everything, the moment any one came to the cage and looked at it the bird would tear at the sides of the cage, beat its wings, and emit a pitiful cry—you'd think it was being tortured. Consequently after having the bird a little over two and a half months, we 'phoned the National Audubon Society at El Monte to find out what kind of bird we had and what to do with it. They told us to bring it to the Sanctuary and they would tell us and release it in a natural setting in the Sanctuary.

It turned out to be a Florida Gallinule. They held it a few days before banding and releasing it. We were surprised at the bird's sudden lack of fright as soon as Larry turned it loose. It walked slowly from us towards a pool edged with overhanging vines and bushes, stopping to pick at this and that, apparently not concerned with the group of us watching it. We left the bird standing on a floating log,

preening itself and acting perfectly at ease and contented. (The Gallinule reported at the Sanctuary on the Christmas Count was in all probability this same bird).

## OBSERVATIONS

The highlight of the Field Trip on March 8, was the discovery by Ralph Mall and Herb Clarks of the Yellow Palm Warbler in the Sanctuary, probably the same one reported on the Christmas Count.

Early Monday morning I was searching the area where the bird was seen and was finding Townsend's, Lutescent, Black-throated Gray, Yellow-throat and Audubon's Warblers and many Cardinals. Suddenly there he was! Bright golden yellow underneath with rufous striping on the sides of the breast, red cap and yellow line over the eye. His tail was moving up and down constantly and now and then he gave soft little chirps as he fed contentedly in the low willows. Alma Stultz.

Patrick Gould and Bill Hawkins found a Say's Phoebe on February 24 building a nest under the eaves of one of the buildings at Mount San Antonio Junior College near Pomona. When seen on March 6 the birds were incubating.

At Playa del Rey on March 3 they counted 48 Black Turnstones, 1 Ruddy, 1 Surf Bird in breeding plumage and 11 Short-eared Owls, the last apparently on migration.

Near El Monte on March 6 Bill observed closely a flock of some 400 Cowbirds.

On March 7 in ponds near El Monte, 9 Cinnamon Teal, 6 Canvasbacks, a Gallinule, Sora Rail, Green Heron and a Pied-billed Grebe with young.

The names of certain birds are associated with human traits. Can you match the birds and traits below?

- |                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Black as a --   | a. Hawk    |
| 2. Crazy as a --   | b. Swallow |
| 3. Gentle as a     | c. Owl     |
| 4. Elegant as a -- | d. Loon    |
| 5. Fierce as a --  | e. Goose   |
| 6. Happy as a --   | f. Dove    |
| 7. Stupid as a --  | g. Crow    |
| 8. Vain as a --    | h. Swan    |
| 9. Wise as a --    | i. Lark    |
| 10. Swift as a --  | j. Peacock |
- (Answers on the bottom of page 38)

## OBSERVATIONS ON MIGRATION

Mary B. Salmon

The fact of bird migration was well known over 2,500 years ago when the Prophet Jeremiah wrote "Even the stork in the heavens knows her time and the turtle-dove, swallow and crane keep the time of their coming". But the why and how are still somewhat unanswered questions.

Following are some observations of mine made over many years and in many places. One spring morning I walked from the La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe across the park. In the maple trees, just past blooming with clusters of their wing-shaped samaras drooping from every branch, were hundred of birds feeding. As they opened the green "keys" the strings of seed covers fell to the ground and the chatter of the birds drew my attention. They were Evening and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Wherever there was a hose running or a wet grass plot the birds were eagerly drinking.

Another day in the north western Missouri I was driving along a country road and heard a great commotion on a brushy hill-side. I stopped and crawled under a barbed-wire fence and sat quietly for four hours in the midst of hundreds of Bobolinks. They were singing and eating the berries of the buck bushes. As William Cullen Bryant interprets their song, saying "Bobolink, spink, spank, spink, chee, chee, chee." Bobolinks do not breed in this section, and this was a great migration wave on its way north.

One autumn morning I was at Big Lake in Missouri as a wave of swallows, Barn and Bank, arrived. Every telephone wire for blocks was solid with swallows, a plot of freshly plowed ground was alive with them sitting on the clods of earth. The lake was covered with them flying over and around it. A dead cottonwood tree lying in the water had every branch covered with swallows. They flew on our car, sitting on the fenders, running boards and top.

Another migration wave of swallows was their spring arrival at Norcona Club house near Riverside: on a small lake back of the club house there were hundreds of swallows over the water.

This was three days before they were due, according to legend, at Capistrano on March 19. As it was near the old mission they were probably part of the many seen there each year.

In Washington one spring morning I waited for an hour to go up in the elevator in the Washington monument. While I stood there I noticed the bodies of many small birds on the pavement. They were warblers of many kinds; their little bodies broken by flying against the monument in their migration flight the night before. I could imagine the great wave of these birds passing over in the night. One spring in Missouri a wave of Tennessee Warblers passed through our neighborhood and for several hours my yard was alive with small green and gray birds.

In Apple Valley in the fall the Vultures gather in great numbers. Hundreds sail about high over the desert, but at night they rest in the willows along the Mojave River. The trees are black with buzzards, the trees breaking under their weight. As the sun rose they would raise one wing to warm themselves, then turn and raise the other wing, repeating this many times. Then take off into the air in great clouds.

Often at night when the moon was full, I have seen and heard the ducks and geese flying and occasionally could see their outlines as they crossed between me and the moon. Some poet sings:  
"I hold to my heart when the geese are flying.

I tighten my lips to keep from crying;  
Beautiful bird let me go with you."

These powers of migration excite our wonder, - What guide posts do the birds have? What instinct compels this strange movement at the same time each year? Here in Plummer Park Lane the Hooded Oriole is back. For twelve years he has greeted me with his "Peek, Peek" and then begun his (or her) nest in the Washingtonia Palm in our Audubon House grounds.

Answers to the matching lists of page 37; ---1 - g; 2 - d; 3 - f; 4 - h; 5 - a; 6 - i; 7 - e; 8 - j; 9 - c; 10 - b.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

Officers ----1952-1953

President.....Mrs. Maybelle DeMay      504 E. Oak Street, El Segundo, El Segundo 517.  
Vice President..Miss Bessie Pope      Secretary...Miss Elizabeth Patterson  
Treasurer.....Miss Treva Russell      Registrar...Mrs. T. H. Fulton

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CALENDAR FOR APRIL, 1953

Thursday, April 2. **AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING.** Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, 1:30. Dr. Jean Delacour, Director of the Museum, an international authority on ornithology, and officer of the International Committee for Nature Preservation, will speak on **INTERNATIONAL BIRD CONSERVATION.** As Dr. Delacour has attended sessions of the International Committee in Italy and in South America this year his talk will be both interesting and authoritative. Short reports from the Audubon Convention at Asilomar. Members are invited to have lunch in the museum cafeteria at 12, then spend the time before the meeting in informal study of museum exhibits.

Thursday, April 9. **EVENING PROGRAM MEETING.** Los Angeles Museum, 7 p.m. - enter at southeast corner of the museum. A joint meeting with the Leadership Training Workshop. Mrs. Mary Hood will tell about Southern California Wild Flowers, showing some of her beautiful kodachrome slides.

Thursday, April 16. **FIELD TRIP TO OJAI.** A scenic trip for wild flowers and birds. Out Tanner bus will leave 603 So. Olive Street promptly at 8, stopping for passengers at the corner of Hollywood and Cahuenga Blvds. (north side by bank) at 8:15. Round trip \$3.00, please have exact change. Make reservations early with Miss Edith Crane, 4925-1/2 Cimarron St., Los Angeles 62, Phone AXminster 2-8458. Bring lunch. Leader Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty.

Thursday, April 23. **STUDY CLASS.** Plummer Park. The first hour more of Mr. Scott Lewis' pictures and a continuation of his nature and conservation talks. Second hour, Mr. Vaughn McCaughey, Pacific Coast Representative of the National Audubon Society will talk on The Expanding Program of the National Audubon Society in California. Take Pacific Electric, Santa Monica-West Hollywood car, to Fuller Ave., walk one block west.

Sunday, April 26. **FIELD TRIP TO TAPIA PARK.** A fine place for birds and plants. Among the birds that will probably be seen are Lawrence Goldfinch, Lark Sparrow, Long-tailed Chat, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Western Tanager. Go out Ventura Boulevard to Brent's Junction (approximately 34 miles from Los Angeles), turn left to the picnic area at Tapia Park, about five miles further: or go north along the Coast Highway to back of Malibu Beach, turn right to Tapia. Bring lunch. Leader Miss Dorothy Groner.

Visitors are welcome at all these meetings and trips.

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SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

664 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte      Phone Forrest 0-1872

Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director - Mrs. E. Gertrude Woods, Assistant Director

Nature museum open daily, 2-5, except Sundays and Mondays.

Guided field trips second Sunday of each month, starting at 9 a.m. led by Pat Gould and Bill Hawkins.