

# Western Tanager



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## BIRD'S TONGUES

George T. Hastings

Some time ago walking along the beach I found close together a dead Ruddy Duck and a dead Pelican. Opening the bills I could at first find no trace of a tongue in the Pelican, then noticed a small hard protuberance less than an inch long near the middle of the bottom of the pouch, but in the duck the tongue was large, almost filling the bill.

Generally we will find no mention of the tongue in descriptions of birds, except possibly of hummingbirds and woodpeckers. The reason of course is that compared to the beak the tongue is an unimportant organ. It is a hard, horny structure with no muscles in it, it cannot be "stuck out" and is moved only by the supporting bones, the hyoid apparatus.

It does not help in getting food and not much in swallowing, has nothing to do with the voice (the old idea that crows could be taught to talk if their tongues were slit was quite foolish), but does help somewhat in tasting as there are a few taste buds near the base.

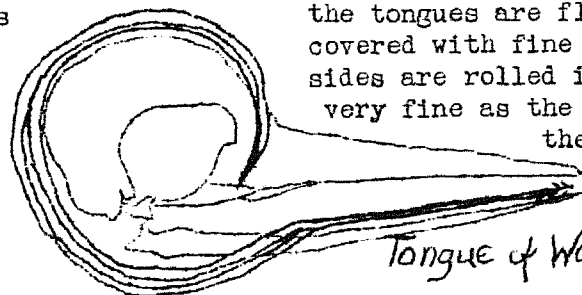
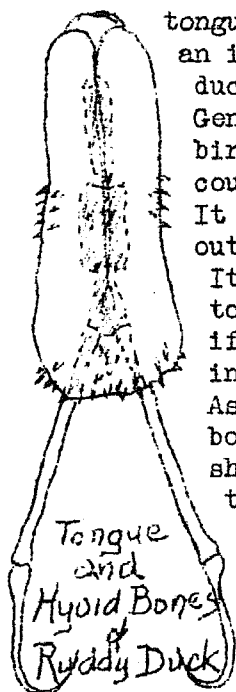
As with all vertebrates, the tongue is supported by a series of small bones, six or seven of them usually, forming the hyoid apparatus, shaped like the letter Y with the base extending into the tongue, the two arms going around the windpipe and gullet, usually to lie against the base of the skull, but not attached to it. But in the pelican these are very short and lie in the flesh of the pouch. These "horns" of the hyoid are surrounded by specialized muscles which move the bones and so the tongue.

Woodpeckers and Hummingbirds are exceptions to the rule and have tongues that can be extended a long ways, with the horns of the

hyoid curving around the skull and ending in front of and below the eyes, or, in the case of Flickers passing through one nostril to the tip of the beak. These "horns" are covered with specialized muscles. By straightening out these long curves the tongues can be shot out suddenly. In the woodpeckers the tongues are rigid, barbed at the tip, serving as spears to impale and withdraw grubs found in the burrows opened up by the chisel-like bills. But Sapsuckers have the tips of the tongues bushy with soft projections to pick up drops of sap and the hyoid bones reach only to the back of the skull.

In Hummingbirds tips which are while the naturally dar. Through

the tongues are flexible, two parted at the covered with fine filaments to pick up insects sides are rolled inward to form two tubes, very fine as the tongue itself is very slen- these tubes nectar is sucked up.



### THE WESTERN Tanager

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### LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

"For the protection of birds, other animals, and plant life."

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Welcome to the following New Members

Mrs. Amelia M. Evans,  
522 N. Wilton Pl., L.A. 4  
Mrs. Charles Mackintosh,  
9238 Lime Orchard Rd., Beverly Hills  
Mrs. Audrey Panabaker,  
11728 Chaparral St., L. A. 49.  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Sandmeyer,  
355 W. Elm Ave., Burbank

#### CONGRATULATIONS:

All of her friends, which include all members of the Los Angeles Audubon Soc. were delighted to read of the appointment of Dorothy Groner as Deputy Clerk in the L.A. Municipal Court, the first woman to hold the position. In the County Civil Service examination taken by 58 court employees Dorothy placed highest. So, again, congratulations and our very best wishes.

### PROPOSED CHANGES IN OUR BY-LAWS

In addition to the changes to Article III-Officers and Elections; Article V, Standing Committees, and Article VI, General finances, it is proposed to rewrite Article I, to read as follows:-  
Section 1. Any person desiring to become a member, in order to promote its stated purpose, shall make application to the Executive Board on forms obtainable from the Registrar of Members. The Board shall have the power to elect members, under such regulations as it may adopt.

Section 2. Membership may be of several classes, as established by the National Audubon Society.

Section 3. On recommendation of the Executive Board, the Society may elect any person as a Complimentary member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society Inc. for the period of one year in recognition of some special service to the Society.

Section 4. On recommendation of the Executive Board, the Society may elect as Honorary member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society Inc. for a period of five years, any person it deems entitled to such honor.

Section 5. On recommendation of the Executive Board, the Society may elect as President-Emeritus any past-president it deems entitled to the honor who shall hold this status for life and and who may attend any meeting of the Executive Board to offer suggestions or give advice.

#### AN INVITATION TO A PICNIC

In the April Tanager there was a brief account of the new School of Conservation and Outdoor Living at Idyllwild this summer, and mentioned the picnic planned for May 10. Now we have a special invitation from the Associated Audubon Societies of Southern California to join in this picnic on the campus of the Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts and Conservation. Bird and Plant walks will start at 10 A.M.

## WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY

Grace H. Phillips

Field trip on March 19 to IRVINE PARK. The day was sunny, fragrant and tuneful with the spring songs of many birds. The Park is a wild, delightful area with wonderful spreading California Live Oaks in full bloom at this time. The hum of bees gathering pollen was constant. Forty-five species of birds were noted, among them the Varied Thrush gave the greatest thrill.

The spring song of the Plain Titmouse rang through the forest. Another song was that of the Slender-billed Nuthatch. A pair of California Quail and one of Western Bluebirds interested the group. The most common birds were California Woodpeckers. Their storage tree was usually the sycamore. The bark of two of these was pockmarked as far up the trunk as one could see.

The sky was interesting. The Red-bellied Hawks went screaming by; Turkey Vultures, Marsh Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and Cooper's Hawk were seen from time to time. Enid Michael, leader.

A visitor from Milwaukee, Mrs. Mary Decker was with us and at the luncheon table spoke of her work writing the Nature Column for a newspaper, formerly done by Edwin Way Teale. A letter received from Mrs. Decker after she left expressed thanks for attending the meeting and told of seeing 12 Whooping Cranes in the Arkansas Refuge in Texas.

Field trip of Sunday, March 22 to Chantry Flats. Miss Dorothy Groner reports that the group had a good scramble on the mountain trails. The high light of the bird watching was a sight of the Varied Thrush.

Study Class of March 26. Mr. Scott Lewis showed slides of wild flowers generally to be seen this season. Mrs. Florence Hamer led a discussion of swifts and swallows, describing the species found in our area. She referred to the article in the World Almanac for 1950 - "Tradition that swallows arrive on St. Joseph Day, March 19, at San Juan Capistrano and leave on St. John's Day,

October 23, is verified with few exceptions." This year the article was not reprinted.

On Thursday afternoon, April 2, at the County Museum, the Director, Dr. Delacour, addressed us on the work of the International Bird Conservation Committee, of which he is President. Meetings in foreign countries with publicity and proposed legislation carefully planned have increased interest in wild life and in the birds that know no political or geographic boundaries.

Proposed changes in the By-Laws of the Society were read. The Nominating Comm. reported the names of those proposed for officers for next year.

A short film - "Birds in Slow Motion," rounded out the program.

At the Evening Meeting and workshop March 26, Mrs. Henry Dush demonstrated making a Nature Trail in a city park or a wild area. First, study of the area, then marking the site of things of interest with a number painted in white, corresponding to a card with the same number describing or commenting on the object. Thus a marked mossy place where water dripped, would have on the card the names and something about the mosses found there and of the birds of the vicinity. Then if the park plumber repaired the break in the pipe, mosses dried and birds went elsewhere to drink, the painted number would remain, but the card have new material - possibly of a tree, shrub or rock formation. Students with a set of these cards would, even if alone, be on a personally conducted tour.

The Field Trip of Thursday, April 16 to Camp Comfort, Ojai. A bright, breezy day, and a long bus ride through the hills, returning via Ventura and the seashore with its birds.

Mrs. Caroline Daugherty, our leader, had the group of 68 form into several bands for Bird-Walks. Birds were numerous in the large oaks and sycamores, and along the stream: 47 varieties were recognized, among them the Long-tailed Chat. There were many wild flowers, including yellow violets. A very rewarding day.

## NOTES FROM THE SANCTUARY

Alma Stultz

White-tailed Kites have not been seen since last November. Red-bellied Hawks somewhat more numerous, also an increase in Mourning Doves, Mockingbirds, Flickers, Song Sparrows, House Wrens and Red-wings. Only one Robin in the Sanctuary this winter and spring, compared to over 2000 last year. Cedar Waxwings in 3 or 4 flocks of 25 to 30, last year about twice as many flocks each twice as large.

Birds nesting, March 1 to April 15:--

|                     |       |                    |   |
|---------------------|-------|--------------------|---|
| Hutton's Vireo      | 1 pr. | Downy Woodpecker   | 2 |
| Sparrow Hawk        | 2     | Nuttall's "        | 1 |
| Crows               | 3     | Calif. Jay         | 4 |
| Bewick's Wren       | 2     | Yellowthroat       | 3 |
| House "             | 3     | Mockingbird        | 6 |
| Calif. Thrasher     | 2     | Black Phoebe       | 2 |
| Red-shafted Flicker | 6     | also Cardinals,    |   |
|                     |       | Brown and Spotted, |   |
|                     |       | Towhees.           |   |

The following have young out of the nest, Bushtits, Mockingbirds, Cardinals, House Finch.

Observed daily from Feb. 1 to April 12, Cardinals, Song Sparrows, Gambel's Sparrows, Cowbirds, 2 Red-bellied Hawks, Turkey Vultures migrating, Pheasants crowing near museum, Screech Owl calling just before dawn.

March 9, a small wave of Warblers; Black-throated Gray, Calaveras, Yellow, Townsend's, Pileolated, Lutescent.

March 22, Over 20 Black Swifts, more than 100 White-throated and some 200 Swallows; Tree and Cliff.

March 23, Male Hooded Oriole, a female on the 26, and 10 males on the same day.

April 1, Black-chinned Hummingbird

April 3, Male Bullock's Oriole

April 5, thousands of Swallows, mostly Cliff and Violet-green

April 6, small wave of Warblers, 3 male Rufus Hummingbirds

April 9, Long-tailed Chat

April 12, the Palm Warbler, reported at times since the Christmas count, seen by Pat Gould.

April 15, Ash-throated Flycatcher.

## OBSERVATIONS

SHORE AND WATER BIRDS: 100 or more

Surf Birds, Ballona Creek Jetty, Mar. 15 and to date (R. Julian)

Eared Grebes, summer plumage, Venice marsh, April 8 (Hastings)

Black-bellied Plovers, Avocets, most in winter, some in summer plumage, marsh, April 8 (H)

At Morro Bay, March 28 Dorothy and Harold Baxter saw Black Brant by the hundreds, Horned and Eared Grebes in summer plumage, Common Loon, also in summer plumage.

Curlew, Long-billed, over 100 on a hillside near Santa Monica, Mar. 28, (Baxters)

Albino Killdeer, a beautiful pure white bird seen at Northridge, in the San Fernando Valley by Sam Fraser.

Miss Ruby Curry reports a Band-tailed Pigeon at her feeding tray on Mar. 26. It drove away the Jay but tolerated the Mourning Doves, and smaller birds. It returned daily till Apr. 9, sometimes with a second bird. Gambel's and Golden-crowned Sparrows more numerous in April than during the winter. Bush-tits carrying small green caterpillars to a nest in an Oak Tree, Mar. 26. Rufous Hummingbirds feeding on Fuschia-flowered Gooseberry in Glen Oaks Canyon, March 26.

GROSSBEAK, Black-headed, in Los Angeles yard, April 1, (McCune).

BEWICK'S WREN, a pair started carrying twigs into a nesting box in Santa Monica, Mar. 21. For some time on that and the following days the pair of birds were making two trips a minute with twigs. On the 24th were carrying in feathers and bits of cotton. On the 23rd and 24th a pair of Plain Titmice examined the box and entered for a few seconds. The Wrens were back next day, then left and have not used the nest which is a beautifully made cup set in a layer of twigs about four inches deep in the bottom of the box (Hastings).

Keep record of the Gambel's Sparrows and Audubon's Warbler to find the last date.

## IMPRESSIONS OF A NATURE HOBBYIST

William L. Lloyd

The regulations stated that no children, dogs, cats, or other dumb animals would be allowed in the apartment. I began at once to study my 12 little rainbow guppies to see if they would be classed as dumb animals, and decided they were anything but dumb. Any animal that knows what is good for it to eat, is active, keeps well and is able to carry on the species is not stupid or dumb.

There are four males, six females and two infants that are too young for me to say whether they are boys or girls.

The largest male is very long and slim and bright colored. He has a stately self-assurance that makes him a leader. Besides his bright many hued body he has a bright blue dorsal fin that proves to be very long and silky when raised. I have named him Rainbow Slim.

The next largest male is very alert and active, sports a light blue tail, and is constantly raising and lowering its dorsal fin in a nervous manner. I call him Left Spot because of a dark spot on the left side near the tail.

The youngest male is the Teen Ager, and is just beginning to show a little color. He is a plump bodied little fellow with a dark spot on each side. The other males all heckle him.

One female is much larger than any of the others, well over an inch in length. She is heavy bodied, but with no sign of embryo. These fish produce eggs which they retain within their bodies until hatched, giving birth to their young alive. This female leaves no doubt that she is boss, darting the length of the aquarium at times, to chastise one who earned her displeasure.

It was several days before I discovered the two infants. They were the size of half grown mosquito wigglers. They have grown as big again in the two weeks they have been here. How they escaped the hundry adults who love mosquito larva I do not know. Perhaps they hid among the moon stone pebbles in the aquarium.

When one studies the habits of the wild, how they live, how they act, as well as how to determine the species, then does one begin to understand ones little wild neighbors and learns to love them.

## FROM OUR EXCHANGES

In the Bulletin of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is an article by Dr. Charles Sibley on Spring Migration. Of the Cliff Swallows he states that they arrive, on the average, at the southern border of California on March 10. By the 15th they will have appeared in Monterey, by the 20th in Eureka, by the 30th in southern Oregon, by April 20 in Portland, and by the 20th of April in Seattle. (March 19 is the supposed arrival date in San Juan Capistrano).

Then the Bulletin announces that Dr. Sibley, their Editor, is leaving for Ithaca, N.Y. to become Associated Prof. of Ornithology, succeeding Dr. Arthur Allen who is retiring.

The Audubon Warbler of the Oregon Audubon Society, has an article on the spraying of DDT. This year a half million acres of forest in Oregon will be sprayed by the State Forestry Board to kill spruce bud worms. The statement is made that spraying as done over forests, using 1 to 2 pounds of DDT per acre has no measurable effect on bird life. Beginning with 1945 DDT has been used extensively to control forest insects, almost universally using 1 pound per acre. Careful study by the Fish and Wildlife Service has shown no killing of birds. Spraying of orchards where larger amounts are used and the spraying repeated during the season may have some detrimental effects on birds.

The Sanderling of the Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society in an article on the Condor and the effort of the San Diego Zoo to secure a pair for breeding in captivity expresses unreserved condemnation of the project. It quotes from an article published in the San Francisco Chronicle that advanced the idea that if ranchers in the Condor area should shoot the birds then the rich oil lands in the district could be developed.

Another proposal has been made to allow hunting in the Condor breeding area, so that the birds could feed on the game that had been wounded by the hunters and escaped to die.

We understand that the effort to capture the Condors has so far failed.

BOAT TRIP TO ANACAPA AND SANTA CRUZ  
ISLANDS

Mrs. Helen Doyle

There were 37 of us aboard the little fishing craft "Hawk" when it left Port Huene Sunday morning, March 15. Overhead the sky was bright and clear, a delightful day for a pelagic bird viewing. Mrs. Maybelle DeMay, who arranged the trip, was on hand with a supply of suet tidbits for the gulls, and soon we had a lively following. The majority were Western, but we also had Glaucous-winged, Herring, Ring-billed, Herrmann's and Kittiwakes.

The craggy outline of Anacapa Island loomed against the blue sky, and in a short time we were browsing along in the shelter of her high cliffs, with all binoculars focussed on the nuptial antics of the Cormorants (Double-crested, Brandt's and Pelagic). Overhead Brown Pelicans glided in their magnificent formations, and hundreds of them perched up and down the face of the island. One fellow was seen flying along with a huge shrub for his nest, and there was some speculation as to whether he was really very industrious or merely employing a lazy man's method.

Sea lions began to poke their noses out of the water, and others were sunning themselves in the coves. By careful viewing, a few Oyster-catchers with their vivid red bills could be seen low on the rocks. The trill of a Canyon Wren wafted from a distant crevice: now and then a Kingfisher darted out and plunged into the water for his prey; a lone Great Blue Heron flew low along the cliffs and lighted on a rocky promontory; a pair of Ravens soared over the island; a Sparrow Hawk perched on a tip-top branch; a Duck Hawk in swift flight excited our admiration.

Everyone was hopefully scanning the heights for a Bald Eagle, and at last a handsome one was sighted, sitting on a lofty point. Later we saw others in flight, majestic and inspiring. A total of eleven was counted.

Cruising along a portion of Santa Cruz Island, the home of the Jay of that name, a larger, brighter bird than our California variety, some of our group were able to catch a brief view of what was, for them a "life Bird".

Thanks to our skipper we were within fairly close range of small numbers of the following off-shore birds: Murrelet (Xanthus), Auklet (Rhinoceros), Merganser (Red-breasted), Shearwater (Sooty and Pink-footed), Fulmar, Surf Scoter and Loon.

The trip was made more meaningful by the gracious leadership of Mrs. Alma Stultz. Those of us for whom this represented our initial voyage into the realm of pelagic birds will always remember and cherish the inspiration of her generous knowledge.

GREATER SNOW GEESE AND CONSERVATION

Mrs. Shearer has sent a letter from a friend telling of a trip to Fortesque Island near the mouth of the Delaware. There 15 to 20 thousand of the birds spend the winter. A note in the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society for April states that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that the Snow Geese wintering along the Atlantic shores of our southeastern states was in 1900, 2 to 3,000; in 1908, 3 to 4,000; in 1940, 18,000; in 1951, 45,000 and this last year, 55,400.

SOME THINGS WE SHOULD DO

Mrs. Ruth McCune, Chairman of our Conservation Committee, says "Our Society is pledged to Conservation. You must decide if the following measures do not call for YOUR letters to your State Senator or Assemblyman. Address them at the Capitol Annex, Sacramento.

Assembly bills 1245, 2854 and 581 would vest authority to take mackerel, anchovies and sardines in the Marine Research Commission. This Commission is made up largely of representatives of the commercial fishing industry which has prevented any regulation of sardine fishing. The catch of sardines on the California coast was in 1936-37 over 800,000 tons, this last year 3,320 tons. A commercial sardine fishery no longer exists. If these bills are passed the other food and game fish may go the way of the sardines.

Senate bills 733 and 734 and Assembly bills 3335 and 7150 take control of posting signs along highways from local authorities. Senate bill 69 and Assembly bill 2570 permit cutting of redwoods back 30 feet on each side of the Redwood Highway. None of these bills should pass.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

Officers .... 1952-1953

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

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CALENDAR FOR MAY, 1953

- Thursday, May 7. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING. Los Angeles County Museum. Exposition Park, 1:30. Mr. Vaughn McCaughey, California Representative of the National Audubon Society will tell of the plans for the Audubon Camp at Norden, of which he will be again the Director. He will show the motion pictures taken at camp last summer. Proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-laws will be voted on and officers elected for the coming year.
- Thursday, May 14. EVENING PROGRAM MEETING. Los Angeles County Museum, 7:00 P.M. An illustrated lecture - Insects, Living Jewels - by W. Scott Lewis. A showing of Mr. Lewis's pictures is always worth while, his descriptions show an intimate acquaintance with the life histories and economic importance of the forms described. A joint meeting with the Leadership Training Workshop. Exhibits of nature materials before and after the lecture.
- Thursday, May 21. FIELD TRIP TO TAPIA PARK. For birds and wild flowers. Lark Sparrows, Long-tailed Chat, Black-headed Grosbeak, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Tanager, and many others may be seen. Our Tanner bus will leave 603 So. Olive Street at 8:30, stopping for passengers at Hollywood and Cahuenga Blvd. at 8:40. Returning by way of the shore. Fare \$1.60, please have exact fare. Make reservations early with Miss Edith Crane, 4925 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cimarron St., Los Angeles 62, Phone AXminster 2-8458. Bring lunch. Leader, Mrs. Scott Lewis.
- Sunday, May 24. FIELD TRIP TO CHARLTON AND BUCKHORN FLATS. 9:00 A.M. For mountain birds. White-headed Woodpecker, Nuthatches, Brown Creeper, Mountain Quail, Green-tailed Towhee and Foxsparrows. Take Angeles Crest Highway past the desert cut-off and the Mt. Wilson turnoff, and proceed to Charlton Flats. Bring lunch and friends. Leader ... Dorothy Groner.
- Thursday, May 28. STUDY CLASS. Plummer Park, 10:00 A.M. First hour: more of Mr. Scott Lewis's fine pictures and a continuation of his nature and conservation talks. Second hour: Miss Pope will give a short talk on Condors. This will be followed by a reading of her own nature poems by Miss Ann Zucer. Members are asked to bring favorite short poems or give some of their nature experiences. Take Pacific Electric, Santa Monica-West Hollywood car to Fuller Ave., walk one half block west.
- Thursday, June 4. ANNUAL MEETING FOR THE INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS, CHARLTON FLATS. Our last meeting for the season, and always one of the most delightful. Bird walks before lunch. Our Tanner bus will leave 603 So. Olive St. at 8:30. Fare \$1.60. Make reservations early with Miss Edith Crane, 4925 $\frac{1}{2}$  Cimarron St., Los Angeles 62. Phone AXminster 2-8458.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT ALL OF THESE MEETINGS