

# Western Tanager



PUBLISHED MONTHLY, SEPTEMBER TO MAY  
BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 20

November 1953

Number 3

## FALCO PEREGRINUS Enid Michael



In a tower, overlooking the marsh land, lives Peregrinus, a handsome falcon, proud and bold, with the speed of a bullet, he is monarch of the feathered community that dwells in the marshland.

In the shallow pools at high tide swim ducks of several species, Baldpate, Shoveller, Pintail, Bluebill, Ruddy, and Green-winged Teal. The Ruddys take a morning nap. In a neighboring pool an American Egret and several Snowys feed or rest with a Great Blue Heron and some Avocets. On a mud bank close at hand, Herring, California and Western Gulls doze peacefully, with a group of Terns a little to one side. Bonaparte's Gulls fly overhead, Belding and Savannah Sparrows

gaze at one from the grass tops.

Now Peregrinus dashes out to drive away a pair of Marsh Hawks. A little later he makes a lightning swoop and grabs an Avocet for his noon-day meal.

"Why could he not have taken a coot, but not a beautiful Avocet?" moans a bird lover.

When death strikes, a flutter endures for a moment, then life closes in again. The marsh community is accustomed to these minor tragedies. Peregrinus must carry on according to his way of life, and what if he seizes a bird now and then? He has been doing so through the centuries and his activities have not made a dent in the multitude of feathered folk that thronged the marshes before the advent of white men.

This feathered community lives in a marsh owned by a gun club. The club protects the birds; but are apt to go after the Duck Hawk with hue and cry. They feel that the birds are their property, they would save them all so that in the open season the slaughter may be greater.

Will the time come when all the marsh lands will be made into bird sanctuaries by the state? Why not? Surely the bird belongs to all the people and not to a few with fat pocketbooks and a lust to kill.

In the same marsh one day in early spring a group of Boy Scouts stood watching a small flock of Ruddy Ducks paddling in a stream. From one side there was a flash as Peregrinus - the Duck Hawk - swooped over the flock and without checking his speed grasped a Ruddy and rose with it in his talons to a perch on one of the oil well derricks. With a shout the troop of scouts dashed toward the derrick, frightening Peregrinus, who dropped the duck and flew away cheated of his meal. The duck was alive and seemingly not greatly injured. The boys examined him, then put him back in the stream, where he swam off to rejoin his companions.



### THE WESTERN Tanager

Published monthly, Sept.-May, by the  
Los Angeles Audubon Society.  
\$1.00 per year, free to all members.  
George T. Hastings, Editor, 517 Euclid  
St., Santa Monica. Phone : EXbrook 51137

### LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Organized 1910 - Incorporated 1951  
"To promote the study and protection of  
birds and other wildlife, plants, soil,  
and water."

#### MEMBERSHIP

Joint with the National Audubon Society,  
including subscription to Audubon Maga-  
zine;- Regular \$5.00, Sustaining \$10.00,  
Active \$25.00, Supporting \$50.00.

#### OFFICERS - 1953-1954

President.....Miss Bessie Pope  
1st Vice-Pres.....Mrs. J. E. P. Dunn  
2nd Vice-Pres.....Mr. Hiram Beebe  
Exec. Sec'y....Miss Elizabeth Patterson  
Treasurer.....Miss Treva Russell

#### WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

The Burbank Bird Watchers Club  
166 W. Olive St., Burbank  
Mr. Dennis Bates,  
4117 Via Larga Vista,  
Palos Verdes Estates  
Miss Edna Burt,  
1317 Magnolia Ave., L. A. 16  
Mrs. Torrence Dodds,  
5339 New Castle Ave., Encino  
Mr. James Egbert,  
801 S. Amalfi Dr., Pacific Palisades  
Miss Sophie K. Hiss  
1100 S. Carmelina Ave., L. A. 49  
Mr. Milton B. Marks,  
416 Beruit Ave., Pacific Palisades  
Mrs. Mabel Ong,  
6614 S. Menlo Ave., L. A. 44  
Mr. Ira Petker,  
1134-1/2 S. Menlo Ave., L. A. 6  
Mrs. Thomas Phillips,  
635 Ashland Ave., Santa Monica

#### CALIFORNIA OFFICE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

639 Sutter Street, San Francisco  
William N. Goodall, Pacific Coast Repre-  
sentative.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bessie Pope

November - the month in which, as a  
nation, we stop and thank God for all  
our blessings.

We stood, four Audubon folk, one eve-  
ning last summer among the giant redwoods,  
and, just at twilight listened to the  
song of a thrush. Well might he give  
forth his song of praise for no enemy  
bombs had destroyed the groves which  
were his home. Neither had he to fear  
us, for thanks to societies such as ours,  
no hunter's gun could still his song  
just for the joy of killing. So the  
thrush continued to sing and we, like  
the bird, may well pause and give thanks  
too.

Our Treasurer, Miss Treva Russell, at  
the last meeting of the Executive Board  
reported that from two bequests received  
last year, one of \$250 from the estate  
of Mrs. Carrie H. Seward, the other of  
\$887.42 from the estate of Dr. and Mrs.  
Sumner E. Warner, two \$500 bank certifi-  
cates had been purchased and added to  
our endowment fund.

Last year our Society gave scholarships  
to the Audubon Camp at Norden to two  
young men. Mr. William Goodall, Direc-  
tor of the Camp, has written thanking us  
for our interest in and support of the  
Camp, adding "The entire staff feels  
that your choice of participants was ex-  
cellent. You may be sure that both Mr.  
Bird and Mr. Shroyer will bring to their  
teaching many new thoughts and ideas  
that they are so busily gathering here."  
And Mr. Bird writes that his B6-A6 class  
has formed a Junior Audubon Club and are  
looking forward to a very interesting  
semester.

We wish to express our sympathy to Mrs.  
H. W. Anderson whose husband died re-  
cently. Mr. Anderson was keenly inter-  
ested in birds and with his wife enjoyed  
contacts with our Society.

If you want to know when and where to  
look for any bird in southern California  
you should have the little book by Robert  
Pyle- Annotated Field List of the Birds,  
35¢ from our Society at any meeting.

## IMPRESSIONS OF A NATURE HOBBYIST

William L. Lloyd

The ebb and flow of the tide between the rocks, in and out of the tide-pool, was like the slumbering of some giant; Father Neptune perhaps.

The seaweed swayed to and fro, covering and uncovering a number of tiny fish, like a mother lifting the covers to peek at her babies. Along the rock several turban shells crawled; those lovely little sea snails. One which hitherto had not moved suddenly scurried to the edge of the rock and tumbled off to the sand below, lit on its back, righted itself and hurried off across the pool. This fast movement revealed the fact that it was not a snail at all. The creature had legs, and was really a hermit crab living in a turban shell, left empty when the owner died.

Across the pool a much smaller lady crab was living in another borrowed shell. When the little lady saw the larger crab advancing toward her she coyly drew back within her house, closing the door by filling the opening with her pinching claws. Behind this array of armor her bright little eyes watched her gentleman visitor.

Seeing that he intended no harm she relaxed whereupon he seized her hand-like front claw and they marched off hand in hand like lovers the world over.

The Hermit Crab has a soft body unprotected by shell. All other crabs and lobsters have hard shells. In fact the hermit is in some respects more like the lobsters than like the crabs, but there are marked differences from either.

The hermit's soft body is covered by a very thin membrane which if torn is likely to result in death, so for protection he lives in an empty shell. The head, claws and thorax are heavily armored so that when in danger he can fill the opening to his house with this array of protecting armor.

## SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

In order to denote more accurately the character of the program carried on there with more than 10,000 school children coming in bus loads by appointment annually, and the maintenance of a nature museum and nature trails, the name AUDUBON CENTER OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA has now been adopted.

Notes from the New Home of the  
"Cardinal Lady"  
Hazel Lewis

During the summer at our new location near Five Points, El Monte, interesting birds were seen. From April through May many Western Tanager were attracted to the fruits of the loquat trees. Also Bullock's Orioles enjoyed this fruit. A mother oriole brought her young to feed and there was much chattering as they sipped the sweet juice. During August and early September the plaintive calls of young Black-headed Grosbeaks were heard from large sunflowers where seeds were ripening, and from time to time the adults were seen. Black-chinned and Anna's Hummingbirds came to the tobacco trees. Although the Black-chinned have migrated and the tobacco trees are no longer in flower, the Anna's Hummers still prefer these trees to the syrup feeder close by. Regular boarders here are Brown Towhees, House Finches, Mockingbirds, California Jays, Chinese Spotted Doves and English Sparrows. A Shrike has been eyeing the tool house roof where daily the Mockers are fed raisins. Next door a Red-shafted Flicker is busy exterminating red ants. Perhaps soon, en route to the Sanctuary, some Gambel's Sparrows will fly into our yard and, seeing the feeding tray, also recognize me as their former landlady.

On August 16th while I was stumbling around among the debris on our old Durfee Avenue place, a rather tame White Finch was seen. It must have been the same one about which observations were reported during the past two years. If I had gone into the little picnic woods, through the jungle of weeds, no doubt the Cardinals and other bird friends would have responded to my call. Now I seldom see any birds of bygone days, or the friends who came to see the birds, but I still have pleasant memories of you all.

## ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

Through grants from the Charles Lathrop Pack Foundation and the American Nature Association this museum has been established with William H. Carr as director. Its purpose is essentially the same as that of the Audubon Center of Southern California. Any Audubonite visiting Tucson will want to visit this museum.

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

The field trip of September 19 and 20 was a great success from the viewpoint of the 6 persons who remained at the Thorn Point Lookout until 3:10 P.M. - 4 Condors were seen for a period of 15 minutes. Two Red-tailed Hawks circled in the sky at the same time giving a fine contrast in size of the birds. One immature and one mature Condor were close enough for the feather texture to be distinguished. The immature bird flew so close to the other that the mature one seemed to reach up and peck at the youngster. R. W. Julian led the trip and reported he will never forget the sight of these large birds soaring in the grandeur of their wilderness. The ranger told the group he had seen a bear on the trail the day before, and showed them the boulder on which a wild-cat had been sitting that morning.

During the night on Saturday we listened to the intermittent conversation of a pair of horned owls, and pocrwills made themselves known when darkness came and before the pink dawn showed over the hill.

--Dorothy Groner

At the afternoon meeting of October 1 there were short reports of Vacation High Lights from Miss Patterson and Mrs. Neil Lewis, describing the trip they took with our president and Miss Fife through the Redwoods to Oregon and Washington, with lots of birds seen all along the way.

Mrs. McCune told of the outcome of some state and national legislation that had a bearing on conservation and of the defeat of the worst of these bills.

The colorful film "Power Behind the Nation" was somewhat different from our usual showings but was well received.

We all enjoyed the treat given us by Mr. Kenneth Stager in a pre-preview of the exhibition of paintings and color photographs of birds, - an exhibition prepared because of the pending meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union this month. There are in the exhibit, that will be open all month, 75 original paintings by Andrew Jackson Grayson loaned by the University of California. These exquisite paintings of Mexican birds were given after the death of Grayson in 1869

by his widow to the Bancroft Library of the University together with the manuscript notes and journals. At some early date these were packed up and put away and forgotten and only rediscovered when on moving to their new building the bundles were opened.

There is in the current exhibit a beautiful set of large color photographs of birds by Mr. Don Bleitz. These have been enlarged from 4 x 5 kodachromes to 8 x 12 or larger and we are sure no more beautiful pictures of birds have ever been made. There are also series of bird paintings by two young artists that excite admiration by their realistic appearance.

On the field trip of October 15 the 26 members of the Society who met at Playa del Rey saw some 37 species of shore and water birds under the leadership of Miss Linnean Blind. Eared, Pied-billed and Western Grebes were in the creek. On the jetty, as always during the late fall and winter, we saw Black and Ruddy Turnstones and Surfbirds. A flock of over 500 Willets on the bank of Ballona Creek exhibited their wing pattern as they flew, with shrill cries, across the creek at the approach of the party. A Brown Pelican diving in the ocean found a group of hungry Heerman Gulls waiting for him every time he came up with a fish, how many were stolen from him we could not tell. On the beach a flock of small birds was made up of Snowy and Semi-palmated Plovers and Sanderlings, giving opportunity for close comparison. After lunch at the picnic tables the list of birds seen was reviewed, notices given and a few short stories told.

Two New Books of Interest

Those who have enjoyed Sally Carrighar's interesting accounts of animals in One Day on Beetle Rock and One Day at Teton Marsh have a treat in store in her Icebound Summer. Many of the birds we see in the marsh in winter are referred to in their Alaskan summer home, along with a variety of northern mammals.

A Guide to Bird Watching West of the Mississippi by Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. will be of great value to all who travel through the west and are aware of birds.

## OBSERVATIONS

Ruby Curry

SHORE AND WATER BIRDS: Lake Los Angeles and Playa del Rey, Oct. 12 (S.W.B.S. Club) Grebes, 6 Western, 1 Horned, 2 Pied-billed. Over 100 Godwits and more than 200 Willets, 20 Black-bellied Plovers, 3 Hudsonian Curlews, 1 California Heron and several Snowy and American Egrets in marsh; 11 Black-crowned Night Herons in Eucalyptus trees; 1000 Pintail and 25 Ruddy Ducks in Ballona Creek. On the jetty Black and Ruddy Turnstones and 1 Surf-bird and many Least Sandpipers. On the broad sandy beach 50 Heermann's Gulls and a few Ring-billed, standing among them the unusual sight of 2 Farallon Cormorants. A group of over 50 Semipalmated and Snowy Plovers with a few Sanderlings.

A large number of Farallon Cormorants, over 100, coming in late every afternoon to roost in Cypress trees in Palisades Park, Santa Monica, Oct. 10 to date. (Hastings)

CONDORS: 5 seen on Thorn Meadow trip, Sept. 20 (Groner).

QUAIL: A covey of 20 Valley Quail, Eagle Rock, Oct. 3 to 17 (Curry).

PIGEONS: 15 Bandtail, Mt. Washington, Sept. 20 (McCune).

POORWILL: Calling at about 6 P.M. from Oct. 3 to 17 (C).

SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS: Vaux Swift, Oct. 12, Playa del Rey (Hoffman): Anna's Hummer feeding on blossoms of Arbutus unedo, while Bush-tits fed on insects in same bush, Oct. 12 (C).

KINGFISHER: 2 at Lake Los Angeles, Oct. 12 (Dunn).

WOODPECKERS: Sept. 20-27, Nuttall's and Red-shafted Flicker, the latter devouring ants, Sherman Oaks (E. Anderson)

FLYCATCHER: Vermillion, Maxon Brown Sanctuary, Oct. 12 (Hazel Lewis)

CHICKADEES, TITS: Bailey's Chickadee, Mt. Washington, Oct. 4, (McC)

Titmouse close to my hand full of peanuts as it rested on a table, tested the end of each finger, hopped to the side and made a few pecks at my palm then decided to forego the nuts. (C).

WRENS, THRUSHES: Sept. 28, House Wren at East 41st St. (K. Hardt); Sept. 20-27, Bewick Wren and Hermit Thrush (E.A.)

Robins, a flock of 30 on a lawn, Santa Monica, Oct. 18 (H)

WARBLERS, VIREO: Yellow, Lutescent, Pileolated, female Redstart and Warbling Vireo, Sept. 29 (K.H.); Calaveras, Sept. 20 (E.A.)

BLACKBIRDS: Mrs. Anderson at Sherman Oaks writes that many hundreds of Brewers in large and small flocks fly over to roosting grounds every evening between 6 and dusk. Hazel Lewis saw a Yellow-headed at Maxon Brown Sanctuary, Oct. 12.

SPARROWS, TOWHEE: Eagle Rock, Sept. 26, 6 adult and 1 immature Gambels, 1 Golden crowned (C); At Playa Del Rey, Oct. 12, many Savannah, few Beldings and 1 Large-billed (S.W.B.S. Club); San Diego Towhee very active for past month in hill regions of Eagle Rock (C).

## CHEEPS AND CHIRPS

Last May we offered congratulations to Miss Dorothy Groner on her appointment as Deputy clerk in the Los Angeles Municipal Court, the first woman to be appointed to the position. Again Dorothy is in the news with the announcement of her appointment as Court Clerk for Judge John Aiso, the first Nelai jurist in the Los Angeles jurisdiction. The paper had a good picture of Dorothy and the judge.

David Gray who organized and directs the Ferndale Museum in Griffith Park has been given a Complimentary Membership in our Society. Mr. Gray has helped in our Nature Leaders' Workshop for several years and will be in charge of this now that it has been taken over by the City Park and Recreation Department.

Probably the most faithful member of our Society in attendance at meetings, classes, and field trips during the past twelve years is Miss Dorothy Croft. We can always count on having some comments on what she has seen or questions about birds and plants.

Miss Pope advises that if you want a good instructor in the art of pitching a tent, see our Executive Secretary, Beth Patterson. So efficient did her pupils, Alice Lewis, Kathleen Fife and Bess Pope become on their summer camping trip that the two tents rose with such rapidity that even the experienced rangers marvelled.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY INCORPORATED  
OFFICERS, 1953-1954

President, Miss Bessie Pope. . . . . 912 Victoria Avenue, L. A. 19  
1st Vice-Pres., Mrs. J. E. P. Dunn                      Secretary.....Miss Elizabeth Patterson  
2nd Vice-Pres., Mr. Hiram Beebe                      Treasurer.....Miss Treva Russell  
Registrar of Members...Mrs. Tracy H. Fulton, 3603 Tacoma Ave., L. A. 65

---

CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER 1953

Thursday, November 5. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING. At the Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park at 1:30. Mr. Kenneth Stager will present The Bird of the Month. Mrs. Mary Hood will give a talk on "Experiences of a Collaborator - and What One Is." There will also be the showing of a color film - The Living Earth.  
Members and friends are invited to meet for lunch in the museum cafeteria at 12, and then spend the time till the meeting in informal study in the museum.

Thursday, November 12. MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD. At the home of the president, 912 Victoria Ave. Any member of the Society is welcome at this business meeting.

Thursday, November 19. FIELD TRIP. To the Griffith Park Zoo to study native birds that visit there in numbers as well as some that are in the large cages. Meet at the Zoo Cafe at 9:30 where a car "ferry service" will transfer the group to the upper end of the zoo canyon. The walk will then be mostly downhill. Bring lunch. There will be a short program following lunch at 11:45. Leader Mrs. Mary Hood. To reach the Zoo take the Vermont bus to Monroe Street, transfer to the bus marked Field House or Picnic Grounds. This bus leaves once an hour, at 8:20, 9:20, etc.

Sunday, November 22. FIELD TRIP. To Upper Balboa Bay and sloughs along the coast, for study of shore and water birds. Meet at 9 A.M. at the first wide spot in the road after turning off the Coast Highway. Look for Audubon sign. Bring lunch. Leader Dorothy Groner.

Tuesday, November 24. STUDY CLASS. At Plummer Park at 10:00 A.M. Note change of day because of Thanksgiving. First hour a continuation of the subject Water and Life, by Mr. W. Scott Lewis, with more of his beautiful slides. Second hour, Birds of the City and Foothills, by Miss Clara Pflager. Take Pacific Electric, West Hollywood bus to Fuller Avenue, walk one block west to Park entrance.

---

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Muri Deusing will present OUTLAWS IN NATURE, a study of predators and the struggle for existence.

Tuesday, November 17. Virgil Junior High School, 152 N. Vermont Ave. at 7:45.

Saturday, November 21. John Burroughs Junior High School, 600 S. McCadden Place.

---

AUDUBON CENTER OF CALIFORNIA

664 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte                      Phone: Forrest 0-1872  
Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director                      Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods, Assistant  
Nature Museum open daily 2-5, except Sundays and Mondays.

Guided Field Trips second Sunday of each month, starting at 9 A.M. at the entrance gate. Led by Pat Gould and Bill Hawkins.