

Western



Tanager

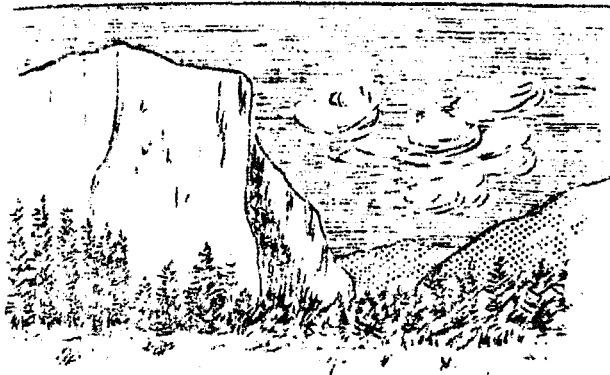
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Number 5



BIRDING IN YOSEMITE

Ruth and Harlan Eckler

One afternoon Don Bleitz told Harlan he was going to Yosemite to try for pictures of the Great Grey Owl and the Pileated Woodpecker. So we decided to go at the same time. We had a strenuous but delightful week birding with Don and Mrs. Edward Corder, a resident of the Valley. We did not see the owl, but we did locate a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers, though

we were unable to find a nest.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Morton were spending some time in the Valley and told us where we might find a Red-breasted Nuthatch nesting, with a Slender-billed not far away. When we reached the meadow up the Glacier Point Road we had no trouble locating them as they were busy feeding young. We obtained pictures of both. The Slender-billed in a dead stub about ten feet up was easy, but the Red-breasted some thirty feet up in a red fir was much more difficult. But with our 40 inch lens we were able to get some satisfactory pictures.

At Peragoye Meadows we found nests of White-crowned Sparrows, Red-shafted Flicker, Hairy Woodpecker, innumerable Juncos and several of Chickadees.

Badger Pass also contained many birds. We found a Chickadee's nest in a most unusual place, - on the ground in the root cavity of a pine. We saw several others in the vicinity also, one of a White-headed Woodpecker. A Red-breasted Sapsucker and a McGillivary Warbler were around constantly while we were taking pictures.

We took a trip up to Siesta Lake on the Tioga Road and there Don found the nest of a Williamson's Sapsucker and Mrs. Corder one of the Sierra Creeper. So we had fun taking pictures of both.

When Don left we camped at White Wolf. By our camp was the nest of a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Harlan cut out the bark in front of the nest and found it empty, but every afternoon for several days the young would return to the nest and remain until morning; a thing we had never observed before.

While there we found several more junco nests and two more of the Williamson's Sapsuckers, one containing four young males, another unusual observation as there are usually both males and females in a nest.

At Harden's Lake we found a Townsend Solitaire nest, but the young left before we could obtain pictures. Some forty feet above it was an Audubon Warbler's nest with young and not far away the nest of a Chipping Sparrow, an unusual one as it was some thirty feet from the ground.

At the opposite side of the lake we found a Hairy Woodpecker nesting five feet from the ground in a live aspen. At Porcupine Flat we found a Pine Grosbeak nesting.

Birds we observed beside those nesting were many Steller's Jays, Black-headed and Evening Grosbeaks, California Woodpeckers, Canada Geese, Peewee, probably Hammond's Flycatcher, Allen's Hummingbird, Sierra Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Western Tanager, Sierra Hermit Thrush, Lincoln Sparrow, California Quail, Western Bluebird, Calaveras Warbler, and Coast Pygmy Owl.

We observed several nest holes of the Arctic Tree-toed Woodpecker with their peculiar platform entrances. Several looked as though they had been used this year, but we found none occupied, nor did we see the birds.

THE WESTERN Tanager

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"To promote the study and protection of birds and other wildlife, plants, soil and water".

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Joint with the National Audubon Society, includes subscription to Audubon Magazine: Regular - \$5.00; Sustaining - \$10 Active - \$25.00; Supporting - \$50.00

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It fell to my lot a few weeks ago to be "foster mother" for a short time, to a very small and very lame English sparrow. His temporary home was a paper carton, which had, it seemed to him, very high and unsurmountable walls. So, in spite of the fact that he dined most sumptuously on expensive canary bird fare, and was surrounded by all affection, he was still a most unhappy little Bird. For he objected most strenuously to being "fenced in".

Now I wonder if some of you sometimes, like the sparrow, feel that you are being just a bit walled in by your home or your work, pleasant and satisfactory though they may be. If you do, your Society furnishes you the "wings" to fly over the top by having three field trips a month. Even if you don't see a rare bird or flower you will have a day in God's out-of-doors with friends of like interests and a chance to forget the work-a-day world for a few hours and fill your soul with inspiration.

Of course if you would like to travel a bit further from home you may do so via the Silver Screen. If you have not attended the Screen Tours to see the pictures and hear the lectures you have missed a great treat. Come to the first one this month and I am confident you will want to attend the other four.

Last month I wondered when we would turn the seven hundred mark in our membership. Now I can say hurrah, we have passed the hump and are headed for the next hundred. Perhaps I should say, now soon can we turn the one thousand mark? With the help of all you loyal folk it shouldn't take too long.

A happy Thanksgiving to you all.

and may we say with the Psalmist --
I will give thanks unto God with my whole heart. I will show forth all His marvelous works.

Bessie Pope

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WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY
Olive Alvey

Afternoon Program Meeting of October 7.

Miss Bessie Pope, President announced our new check list arranged by families and alphabetically; that Audubon House has a new bird bath; and that our membership is now 700, 128 having joined last year.

Mrs. Paul Dodds, Hospitality Chairman, introduced several new members and guests. Mrs. Irma Hecht, Curator, requested more nature and bird books for our library.

Mrs. Mary Hood showed some very fine color slides of Mount Ranier and her summer camp there. She had shots of some of the native residents who came to call at the camp;--Rosy Finches, Clark's Crows, Hoary Marmots, Squirrels and Chipmunks.

Mr. Kenneth Stager told of his travels in the forests and tropical jungles of Australia, where he collected birds and mammals and materials to represent their habitats for the museum. He showed skins of some colorful South American birds, such as Parrots, Cockatoos, Parakeets, Macaws, Toucans, Troupials, many hued Tanagers and unusual Hummingbirds.

Mrs. Samuel Ayers, Jr. who went with Dr. Ayers to South America to look for colorful flowering trees suitable for our area showed pictures they took in cities where many of the streets are lined by beautiful flowering trees. They collected seeds of many of these and they have been planted at the Arboretum and the trees may be used to beautify our parks and streets. One of the rare shrubs is Fink Tibouchina, among the trees are Flame Tree, a tree Bougainvillea, Coral Trees of several kinds, Catalpa, Jacarande and others. Her pictures represented scenes in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Ecuador.

Field Trip of Saturday, October 9. The weather at Playa del Rey was extremely foggy, with visibility low. Not many birds were in sight and few were feeding. Nevertheless the 19 members listed 21 species of birds; among them Curlews, Western and Heermann Gulls, Semi-palmated Plovers, White Herons, Kestrel and Shrike.

"Flowers have an expression of countenance as much as man. Some seem to smile; some have a sad expression; some are pensive and different; others are plain honest and upright."

Henry Ward Beecher

THE BLUE FOOTED BOOBY VISITS CALIFORNIA.

Great excitement was caused by the discovery of an immature Booby at Palomar St. and No. Foothill Blvd. in Pasadena on the night of September 17. Fortunately Mrs. Roberta Rumble, Naturalist on the staff of the Audubon Center of Southern California, found and rescued the bird. It was exhausted and apparently in a dying condition from a blow on its head. She took the bird home and revived it with water and one of her husband's choice trout.

The Booby had many visitors at the Audubon Center, where he promptly perched on the back of a large desert tortoise, and rode around contentedly all day, only slipping off to refresh himself with a dip in a large tub of water and a nibble of the tortoise's favorite food, lettuce. He accepted a half cup of mosquito fish, which he captured himself from the water dish. "Birds of the Ocean" mentions the Booby's liking to rest on the backs of sea turtles.

A photographer from the Los Angeles Times took a picture of him on the tortoise which was published with a description in the Times.

All available books were consulted to determine the species to which our bird belonged. The final decision was made by Kenneth Stager of the Los Angeles County Museum.

Jim Clements had the thrill of releasing the Booby near Playa del Rey, and his observations ended with the bird settling on the water a quarter of a mile from shore, on the evening of September 19. But before setting the bird free, Jim appeared with it on television. Our hope is that it will keep flying for many years bearing its official government band, number 527-8969, given it by Pat Gould, an authorized bird banding agent.

Several reports of Boobies have been received since the item was published in the Times, but most referred to Cormorants. "Rare vagrant to Southern Calif. section. The three recorded instances have been for late autumn. Nearest breeding stations are on islands in the Gulf of Calif. Habitat- normally the open sea not far off shore. Distribution from the Gulf of Calif. southward along the Pac. Coast to the Galapagos Islands and Chile." Quoted from Distribution of the Birds of Calif. Alma Stultz, Director, Audubon Center of California.

OBSERVATIONS

Ruby Curry

SHORE AND WATER BIRDS: At San Clemente on Oct. 2 and 3 Mrs. R. Wilson saw 7 Royal Terns, 22 Black-bellied Plovers, 1 Great Blue Heron and other birds; and at Carlsbad lagoon 50 Avocets, 16 Black-necked Stilts, 7 American and 16 Snowy Egrets, 1 Anthony's Green Heron, 1 Pied-billed and 1 Eared Grebe, 4 Florida Gallinules and 1 Lesser Yellow-legs. September 19 on the joint trip of the Los Angeles Audubon Society and the Santa Barbara Museum Group at Stowe Lake, Great Blue, Anthony's Green and Black-crowned Night Herons, American and Snowy Egrets.

DUCKS: Pintails, Ruddies and Shovellers at San Clemente Beach, Oct. 2 (Mrs. R.W.)

HAWKS: An Osprey flying over and a White-tailed Kite perched for a long time at Stowe Lake, Sept. 19 (L.A.A.S. and Santa Barbara Group). A family of five White-tailed Kites, 2 adult and 3 young circling over home at Palos Verdes Estates, Sept. 30, (Charlotte McBride). Marsh Hawk? Prado Dam, Sept. 10 (N. Dunn).

QUAIL: Large covey of Gambel's, Morengo Valley, Oct. 9 (N.D.)

ROADRUNNER: on San Marcos Road, Los Angeles, Sept. 19 (L.A.A.S.)

NIGHTHAWKS: 11 by ponds in the Hansen Dam area, late afternoon in September, (Mrs. R.W.)

SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS: Vaux Swift, Palos Verdes, Sept. 26 (Mrs. C.McB.); 7 Black-chinned and 1 Allen's Hummingbird again at Mt. Washington, L.A., Oct. 7, (Ruth McCune).

WOODPECKERS: Cactus, Oct. 9, Morengo Valley, (N.D.); White-headed, 6 near Chileo, Oct. 17 (Southwest Bird Club).

FLYCATCHERS: Western Wood Pewee, Say's Phoebe, Palos Verdes, Sept. 28 (C.McB.); Vermillion, 2 male and 2 female, Oct. 9, Morengo Valley (N.D.)

WRENS, THRUSHES: Bewick Wren sleeping in a gourd where it nested during the summer (J. West); Bonnie Green reports the return of 4 Western Bluebirds on Oct. 2, which left on Apr. 24 after spending 8-1/2 months about her home, again are enjoying the bird bath, preening on the trellis back of it and eating pyracantha berries.

KINGLETS: 3 Ruby-crowned, Oct. 3, Palos Verdes, (C.McB.)

PHAINOPEPLAS: 6 in Morengo Valley, Oct. 7 (N.D.)

VIREOS, WARBLERS: Warbling Vireo, 2 Townsend Warblers, Sept. 23, (C.McB.); Fileolated feeding on insects on guava bush, Oct. 4 (Mrs. R.W.); flocks of Audubon Warblers, Oct. 9, Morengo Valley, (N.D.); Long-tailed Chat, near Ave. 41, Los Angeles, Oct. 11, (K. Hardt).

ORIOLES, TANAGERS: Hooded Oriole in flowering maple, Sept. 28 (Mrs. R. McC); 2 Western Tanagers, Palos Verdes, Sept. 23 (Mrs. C. McB.)

FINCHES, SPARROWS: Black-headed Grossbeak, Mabel Dunn reports that the adults which fed during the summer on their feeding table have left but that two young ones have remained and are at the feeding table every day; the first report of Gambel's Sparrows for the season was by Mrs. McBride, on Sept. 21 at Palos Verdes, others report seeing them during the following weeks; Golden-crowned, October 2, Eagle Rock (R. Curry).

Mrs. Hardt reports that the Snowy Egret found at Crystal Springs in Griffith Park and reported in our Sept. Tanager was banded as a nestling on June 3 of this year at the Salton Sea Refuge.

WATCH NOW for Loons, Grebes, Snow Geese, Pipits, Cedar Waxwings, Dusky Warblers.

OSPREY VISITS A SHRINE

On the 11th of October the Reverend Stanley of the S.R.F., Lakeside Shrine on Sunset Boulevard telephoned that an Osprey was perched on the windmill by their lake. Driving over we found the Osprey exactly where reported. It stayed about the lake for over a week, plunging into the water and below the surface to come up with a blue-gill sunfish, or snatching one from the surface, then going to the top of a tall pole or to one of the gilded domes of the shrine to tear it to pieces and eat it. It usually returned to the top of the windmill where it had an unobstructed view over the lake. At first the ducks in the lake seemed much disturbed when the osprey plunged down, but after a few times paid no attention to it.

CURRENT CONSERVATION NEWS

Robert E. Blackstone

Activities of conservationists during the last congress were of necessity mostly defensive in nature. We were successful in forestalling various attempted inroads on our public lands and our national parks. The "Stockmen's Grazing Bill" and the Upper Colorado Water Storage Project are two examples. Let us hope, however, that during next congress, in addition to holding what we have already won, we shall see some needed legislation of a positive kind passed. The National Wildlife Federation lists the following measures that are needed:--

1. Adequate financing for recreational and wildlife habitat improvement in the National Forests. (The Baker Bill, designed to accomplish this was defeated).
 2. Revision of the Coordination Act (Public Law 732, 79th Congress) which is supposed to insure adequate consideration of wildlife resources in the planning of federal reservoirs and water diversion projects.
 3. Extension and revision of the Water Pollution Control program.
 4. Revision of the antiquated 1872 mining laws to eliminate spurious mining claims in the national forests.
 5. Appropriation of the unused parts of Pittman-Robertson Wildlife funds.
 6. Revision of the laws regulating grazing on the public lands and guarantee of multiple-use management of the national forests.
 7. Amendment of the Duck Stamp Act to make sure more of the receipts will be used to acquire waterfowl refuges.
- Numbers 1, 2, and 4 of the above would appear to be especially important.

We hear that an organization is being formed for the protection of our desert areas, their immediate purpose being opposition to the proposed road through Joshua Tree National Monument, agitation for which is being renewed. We wish them well.

From Denver it was announced on Oct. 15 that the sum of \$25,000 will be spent in advertising to convince the next congress that the 1,000,000,000 dollar Upper Colorado River Development project, including the dam in Dinosaur National Monument, should be approved. The advertising and publicity campaign is approved by the Upper Colorado River Commission.

A CHURCH'S STAND ON CONSERVATION

Conservation and development of Natural Resources, a pronouncement of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church at the meeting held in Detroit last July.

Great natural resources have been entrusted to our nation by Almighty God. (Psalm 24:1). We call upon the Christian conscience to recognize that our stewardship of the earth and water involves both a land use program which recognizes the interdependence of soil, water and man and the development of a responsible public policy which will resist the exploitation of land water and other natural resources, including forests, for selfish purposes and maintain intelligent conservation for the sustenance of all living creatures through future generations.

In the Sept.-Oct. number of Audubon Magazine is a short article on the Whooping Crane. There is a paragraph about them in Donald Culross Peattie's article on the Audubon Society in the October number of "Holiday". A newspaper article the last of September reported 17 of these great birds sighted in Saskatchewan province of Canada on the start of their long migration to the east coast of Texas where they spend the winter. We hope to hear that all 24 that went north last spring have reached Texas and with a few young.

Population-wise Southern California is one of the fastest growing areas in the nation. Climate, oil, and certain other natural resources have affected this growth in a positive way. Water is a perennial problem. The security and stability of human life in this area will be determined to a large extent by man's relationship to the natural resources available here. From the announcement of courses in conservation at Claremont Summer Session, taught by Dr. Walter P. Taylor.

CHRISTMAS is coming - and with it the annual Audubon Bird Count. Jim Clements who will take charge for our Society this year announces that the count in our area will be on Sunday, December 26. Last year 122 of our members took part in the count, and all had a fine time as well as helping in this really important undertaking. So, - mark the date on your calendar and plan to help.

JIM SMITH
Kathleen Smith

AN OLD LATH-HOUSE
Olive Alvey

Jim is a crow, and is a character in every sense of the word.

He arrived in this world in West Covina, and not aspiring to be a mere prosaic crow he scrutinized terra firma from a little too far over the rim of his nest, then landed with speed and force on said terra firma.

He was brought to me so that he could have access to a wooded area, but he promptly adopted us and would not soar off into the woods.

Jim has six kittens for companions. He ignores our chickens, ducks, peacocks and pigeons and shows no interest in the wild crows that call in the woods. When the kittens receive their milk he promptly pulls each kitten by its tail away from the dish, until all have scampered to their own haven. He then drinks some of the milk, and when satisfied he tosses dish and remaining milk into the air with one flip of his bill. If the kittens, having had experience of his methods, tuck their tails between their legs, he grasps them by an ear. Then, having shown his defiance he goes in search of the kittens to see what they are doing.

Jim enjoys raw meat, and prefers to have me hand him small bits. He also loves bread, which he dips first into his bath water. He takes at least one bath a day, splashing water several feet in all directions. He dislikes corn, contrary to the eating habits of the crows I was familiar with on the east coast? The crows living in our woods, in the tops of tall pines, ravaged our corn fields constantly.

This crow will deal anything that isn't attached, and what is too large or too heavy, he drags away. In exchange for these articles, I am brought old pieces of paper, sticks, bottle caps, and pieces of bright glass.

Jim remains within a short radius of home and is never out of sight of the house. At night he roosts in a willow tree, having deserted the elm he first chose as it was too illuminated by a night light. One close scrutiny by an owl on its nightly journey, helped Jim decide to move to a darker roost.

As I said in the beginning, Jim is a character - but we really love him.

Our old lath house, with a couple of slats missing on top, is not used for plants any more. The birds have appropriated it to their own use now, and make a better job of it than I ever did.

On fine sunny days it is a perfect sun-deck, where the birds lie on their sides with their feathers all fluffed out, soaking up the welcome warmth. On a pleasant rainy day the mockers perch there with wings fluttering, enjoying a shower. We have seen injured birds resting there because they could find a position in which the injured part could be more comfortable.

It is in late spring and summer, though, when the old shade-house serves its most useful purpose. It is a perfect nursery and play-pen for baby birds. It is high enough so that the cat cannot reach them, and the laths are wide enough for good perches. While mamma and papa are busy gathering food they can be sure of the children's safety.

The young ones sit quietly, if very small, or frisk around if they are older, enjoying the company of each other. Baby mockers are the most playful. They have a cute game of "tag" they play through the broken slats. In and out they fly, some inside, some outside the house, chirping and peeping in glee. Or they peck at each other through the slats, and that is fun too. Sometimes another bird or two will join in the game with the mocker; a young jay, a towhee, or some linnets.

So no matter what the season or the weather, we know our old lath-house is an important part of our wild birds' life.

It is true there are sermons in stones, but our ears are too deaf to hear them. There is wonderful beauty all around us but our eyes are too dim to see it.

Every child has a right to the key to Nature's world so that her peace and beauty can become a part of his life. Then he can find interest wherever he goes; the wider his range of interests the broader his mental horizon the more he will get out of life. All children seem to have a natural interest in Nature, and this should be stimulated in every way possible.-W. Scott Lewis

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER, 1954

Thursday, November 4. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING, Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, 1:30. Mr. Kenneth Stager, Curator of Ornithology at the Museum, will take us on a tour of the BIRD HALL. Speaker, Mrs. Harlan C. Eckler, who will show some of the beautiful color slides they took this summer of BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF THE YOSEMITE. We are fortunate in securing this treat as the Ecklers are traveling much of the time.
Meet for lunch at the Museum Cafeteria at noon to visit with friends.

Saturday, November 13. FIELD TRIP TO MOUNT WILSON. The Out-of-Doors with Friends group will meet in front of the Mt. Wilson Hotel from 9 to 10 a.m. Bring some bird food, field glasses and your lunch. Western Blue Birds, Steller's Jays, Chickadees and others should be at the feeders. We will look for chaparral birds on the return trip.
Leader, Miss Ethel Craig

Thursday, November 18. FIELD TRIP TO CABRILLO BEACH. Also visit the sloughs along the way. The trip will start at 8:45 at end of the car line on Vermont Avenue where automobiles will pick up any who need transportation. Take "F" car to 116th Street.
Leaders, Mrs. Marguerite Parker

Tuesday, November 23. STUDY CLASS. At Plummer Park at 10 a.m. (Note change of date because of Thanksgiving). First hour: "Birding in the Blue Mountains of Washington", by Mr. C. V. Duff, Business Manager and past President of the Cooper Ornithological Society. He will tell us particularly of the Blue Grouse in these mountains. Second hour, Bird Study, conducted by our President Emeritus, Mrs. Mary B. Salmon. A profitable hour with bird skins and mounted birds to study.

Sunday, November 28. FIELD TRIP TO UPPER NEWPORT BAY, for the study of shore and water birds. Meet at 9 a.m. on the corner of Coast Highway and the road running along the south shore of Upper Bay. Bring friends, lunch and binoculars.
Leader, Miss Dorothy Groner

Visitors are welcome at all these meetings and trips

First SCREEN TOUR of the Season WILLIAM H. WAGONER -- Wanderland.
Tuesday, Nov. 16 at 7:45 P.M. at Virgil Jr. High School, 152 N. Vermont Ave.
Saturday, Nov. 20 at 2:00 P.M. at John Burroughs Jr. High, 600 McCadden Place

Membership in the Audubon Screen Tours Club with admission to the whole series of Tours can be secured at the door,
\$3.00 for adults, \$1.00 for juniors.

AUDUBON CENTER OF CALIFORNIA

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