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THE AUDUBON CONVENTION AT ASILOMAR

Robert Blackstone

This year's Pacific Coast Audubon Convention at Asilomar was my first; I have no intention of letting it be my last. My object in attending had been to get some fresh ideas on conservation, and to become acquainted with more conservation-minded people. This objective I accomplished very satisfactorily indeed, but in addition my wife and I had a perfectly wonderful time while we were there; we thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it.

We left Los Angeles Friday afternoon and drove to Morro Bay where we camped at Morro Bay State Park. Next morning we did some birding in the vicinity before setting out for Asilomar via State Highway 1. Among the birds we turned up were American and snowy egrets, a great blue heron, green-winged and cinnamon teal, baldpate, some 200 avocets and an estimated 500 black brant. The drive up Highway 1 clinging to the seaward slopes of the Santa Lucia Mountains, was unforgettable. The whole countryside was beautifully green and many species of wildflowers were in bloom, bush lupine being one of the most conspicuous along the highway. We stopped near Lime Kiln Creek to eat lunch, and there we saw our first sea otter.

We arrived at Asilomar about 2 in the afternoon, and after registering, attended the first event on the program - a Convention Roundtable conducted by the California Conservation Council. I had to forego the Tidal Pools trip in order to attend this, but found it well worth it. I gained a better understanding of several of California's conservation problems at this meeting. Afterwards the Dept. of Fish and Game film "The Sardine Story", was shown, and Mr. C. Edward Graves, Pacific Coast Representative of the National Parks Association, showed some beautiful color slides of some of our National Parks which are currently in the news.

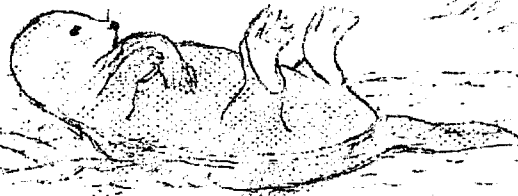
Sunday morning was devoted to field trips. We took one to Point Lobos, led by Arnold Small and Sam Smoker. Here we saw hundreds of cormorants nesting on the small rocky islands just off shore. We also saw surf birds, black turnstones, spotted sandpipers, and black oyster-catchers, as well as western, California, ring-billed, herring and glaucous-winged gulls. In the kelp beds just off Pelican Point we observed a group of eight or ten sea otters. Then as we were returning to our cars we saw a lone otter at comparatively close range, just below the cliff on which we stood.

In the afternoon Mrs. Blackstone attended the session on Nature Photography presented by Mr. and Mrs. Hood of our own society while I took in the alternate offering where I learned some useful slants on teaching nature study and presented by Mrs. Stultz, Mrs. Bullion, and

conservation, Sam Smoker. Afterwards we compared notes. Then, in the evening we enjoyed the banquet, followed by the address by Kenneth D. Morrison, editor of AUDUBON MAGAZINE, on "Audubon in the Spotlight - a Conservation Opportunity". Wanda Elvin, Director of the Research Dept. of Disney Studios, then concluded the program with her talk, "True Life Adventures and HOW WE DO THEM, demonstrating with scenes from "Natures Half Acre".

State and Federal conservation issues were discussed at length in an all-morning session Monday by Edward F. Dolder, Chief, Conservation

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THE WESTERN Tanager

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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the following new members:

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Miss Nora G. Pelton,
Box 1472, 1200 N. State St., L.A. 33

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I went to the garden for an inspira-
tion for my final message and I said to
the linnets - What shall I write? They
were so busy scrambling for food that
they couldn't bother to answer. I then
turned to Mr. Mocker, when he came for
his raisins and put the same question
to him. He cocked his head this way
and that, gave his tail a flip, then
said to tell you that he liked Audubon-
ites because they gave him nice tidbits.
For thanks, he said, he would give you a
special song. Of course, his favorite
time for choral work was the wee hours
of the morning and he hoped you didn't
object to being awakened so early.

I then asked myself - what is "the most
unforgettable character" of this year?
Is it the flock of robins, seen by so
many this winter or is it the grosbeak
that sat on a top limb in Fern Dell and
gave us his spring song? Perhaps it is
the albatross that put on such a good
show, spreading his wings for us while
we were on the boat trip at the Asilomar
convention. Each and all of these have
added zest to life.

However as I think of our Society two
words stand out in bold letters. They
are COOPERATION and GROWTH.

As to the growth you have but to look
at the list of new members each month in
the Tanager. At the time of my writing
our total is 762 and steadily going up.

The cooperation is what gives it power.
The work is not done by one or two, but
by many working in harmony. Whether the
job be dramatic or merely routine, it is
done with enthusiasm and, like the forty
mule team of early Death Valley days,
each is pulling his share of the load.

So now we have come close to the end
of another Audubon year, and, if I may
change the simile, I feel like the relay
runner who has almost reached his goal
and is about to hand the stick to the
next sprinter to carry on for the next
lap. But just as soon as I get my
breath you'll find me on the rooting
section cheering.

A happy summer to you all.

Bessie Pope

In the annual Christmas Bird Count of
the National Audubon Society this year
7,384 observers counted 9,480,000 birds
of 469 species.

FIRE IN THE SANCTUARY

On April 13 fire broke out in the woodlands of the Audubon Nature Center at El Monte and spread rapidly through the tangle of wild grape and black berry that furnished food and shelter for hundreds of birds and small mammals. Fire blazed to the tops of the cottonwood trees and the willows along the river bank. Fortunately it did not reach the buildings - the museum and homes and a few bits of green were spared. Also the Whittier woodlands just west of the sanctuary were not burned. While the fire was still blazing, plans were being made for rebuilding the destroyed area. No cancellations have been made for the school classes and young peoples groups that visit there daily, though the burned area will be used as a demonstration of the effects of fire and the necessity of care to prevent it.

It has been suggested by our Executive Board that if every member would send one dollar to our treasurer, Miss Leoti Fisher, 4416 Downing Ave., Baldwin Park it would provide an appreciable sum to help in the work of rebuilding. Money for food for the birds and mammals that escaped the fire, for young trees and shrubs, for clearing the ground and the work of replanting and other purposes is needed at once. A contribution of \$100 from the Society and donations from board members was delivered to the sanctuary the second day after the fire. Donations will be turned over as rapidly as received.

New Members - continued

Mr. A. E. Powell,
6121 Hazelhurst Pl., No. Hollywood
Mrs. Laveta Raymond,
1234 No. Bonnie Pl., L. A. 63
Mrs. H. Schwalenberg,
834 16th St., Santa Monica
Miss Electa Silvey,
White Memorial Hospital, L. A. 33
Mrs. Mary E. Sherwood,
44280 Carolside Ave., Lancaster
Mr. Arnold Small,
5838-1/2 W. 88th St., L. A. 5
Mr. Gerald Solomon,
6650 West 86th Pl., L. A. 45
Miss Ethel M. Todd,
3546 Olympiad Dr., L. A. 43
Miss Ezza Twyman,
934 Fourth St., Santa Monica

With this issue the Tanager completes its 21st year. By error several of this year's numbers were marked Volume 25. With the exception of the Gull published by the Golden Gate Audubon Society we think ours is the oldest Audubon publication in the state.

We trust that the Tanager will continue to be of interest to our members and help in spreading our ideals of protection and conservation of all Natural resources.

His many friends in our Society will be interested in knowing that the president of the Hawaiian Audubon Society is Robert Pyle. We congratulate the Hawaiian Society, they could not have a better leader than Bob.

For years the Richfield Oil Company has published for free distribution a Wild Flower Book with colored illustrations of our native spring flowers, directions for reaching places where they may be found in large numbers, and a note on conservation, - "And remember that preserving the natural beauty of our countryside is the duty of everyone. Help safeguard our lovely flowers by discouraging their wasteful picking and thoughtless molestation." In this year's book, probably the best so far, fifteen of the pictures were taken by Bill and Mary Hood and one of those on the cover by W. Scott Lewis.

Teachers interested in "Free and inexpensive materials for teaching conservation and resource-use" may obtain a 32-page list prepared by the national association of biology teachers by sending 10¢ to Dr. Richard L. Weaver, Box 2073, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

With great regret we note the death of one of our most prominent members, Mr. Harvy S. Mudd. An editorial in the Los Angeles Times entitled, "A Life of Service", concludes "His life was lived on the basis of performing good works for the greatest number and the greatest number represented the whole community." We extend our sympathy to Mrs. Mudd.

WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY

Olive Alvey

Field Trip of Thursday, March 17 to Rancho Santa Anna Botanic Gardens.

This was a very pleasant trip in the spring sunshine through fragrant citrus groves. Our road lay along the foothills with ever-changing views of the snowy peaks along the way.

Thirty years ago Mrs. Bryant dedicated eighty acres as an experimental garden in memory of her father. The gardens, now moved to Claremont, are privately endowed but associated with colleges and others interested in our native plants. According to plan, the experimental work began with trees, then shrubs, perennials and annuals. One part of the grounds is a flat mesa with clay soil and a small stream (in which we saw pipits bathing), while the other is a dry sandy wash, also with a stream. Whole plant colonies were transplanted from the wild and replanted here in natural surroundings for study by students. Much hybridizing is done, so valuable plants are perfected to beautify our gardens.

After our rambles through the gardens all forty of us were ready for lunch in Community Center Park in Claremont, after which we went birding in the beautiful campus of Scripps College. Then home again with the memory of a profitable day spent with good friends.

Study Class of March 24 in Plummer Park. For the first hour Mrs. Mary V. Hood gave an informative and timely talk on Do's and Dont's for camping. If, she said, your trip is to be in the high mountains the best time to go is August. By then the snow and mosquitos have gone. There are more birds then as food conditions are better for them than earlier. Keep on the trails when hiking. Do not handle poison oak, insects or creatures such as toads. Do not feed wild animals. By being ordinarily careful accidents can be avoided so that the trip can be looked back on with pleasure.

One more precaution offered by Mrs. Hood was - Do not go camping with a photographer. She has. She ought to know!

The second hour was a question and answer session. Mrs. Grace H. Phillips acted as moderator and three experts, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Hastings and Mr. Duff answered the questions of the members.

The Field Trip of March 27 to the Audubon Nature Center at El Monte. Mr. James W. Huffman, the leader for the day reports that sixteen members listed thirty-nine species of birds. The highlights of the day were the White-tailed Kites, Anthony's Green Heron, Nuttall's Woodpecker and Red-bellied Hawks. A House Wren, making her home in a hole in a dead tree looked out from a few feet above the watching group of birders and gave a concert that lasted for several minutes.

Meeting of Thursday, April 7, at the County Museum. Mrs. Catherine Freeman gave a lecture on "The Desert, Flowering or Bare".

As we watched these pictures the beauties of our deserts seemed to come to life. Close-ups of flowers were particularly beautiful. We saw how the native palms grow in the desert canyons because of the underground water, while the brilliant carpets of wild flowers come to life only if there has been rain.

We saw the nest of a cactus wren built among the thorns of a cholla, and a woodpecker's nest taken intact from a decaying sahuaro.

There were other marvellous slides, some from a teeming colony of gannets on Gaspé peninsula.

We wish to thank Mrs. Freeman for this fine program. We also thank her for giving us Miss Pope, as it was she who induced Miss Pope to join the Audubon Society.

Mrs. Grace Phillips read an article on the praying mantis, an odd appearing insect first brought here from China. In the eastern states there is a native mantis, also one introduced from Europe. The oriental species is the largest. In some countries it is considered as sacred. The egg masses are sometimes gathered and sold to gardeners as the mantis is useful in destroying harmful insects.

In the Audubon Warbler published by the Oregon Audubon Society we note that in the Christmas Count at Medford 21,000 robins were listed, these from a mammoth roost. At Eugene 11,347 starlings are reported, adding "The black rascals are here in uncountable numbers. To date they have offered no serious problem as they scatter out over the countryside by day, then near sunset come swirling in from every direction to roost in a cattail marsh.

(The Audubon Convention - Continued)
 Education, State Department of Natural Resources; by Woodbridge Metcalf, Extension Forester, University of Calif., and by Kenneth D. Morrison. To me, this was the most important session of the convention; I found it very instructive and interesting. That afternoon a field trip to Moss Landing and Elkhorn Slough was highlighted by the discovery of several White pelicans, an osprey (first sighted by Mrs. McBride), and three red-necked (Hogbel) grebes (one for my life list). Then in the evening we enjoyed a talk by Arnold Small, "Accent on Birds", followed by a showing of Disney's "Living Desert".

The Conference was very pleasantly concluded for us by a trip Tuesday morning to the Hatton Ranch, a very lovely spot ornamented by the presence of, among others, fox sparrows, Allen hummingbirds, lutescent warblers, red-tailed and red-shouldered (red-bellied) hawks. After eating our lunches at the ranch, we headed home. Those who took the boat trip had an equally enjoyable time, and were fortunate enough to see several albatross.

The Los Angeles Audubon Society was well represented; our official delegate was Mrs. Grace Phillips. Miss Pope, our president, was also there as were Mrs. Hood, Mrs. McBride and Miss Pepke of the executive board, and about a dozen other members of the Society.

We wouldn't have missed the convention this year for anything. We were sorry Mr. Goodall was prevented by his doctor's orders from being with us. It was he who was responsible for the planning which made it such a success. In his absence Miss Mary Jefferds, Office Manager of the Audubon Society Pacific Coast Office did a fine job of superintending operations. We want to thank them and the others who helped for the instructive and enjoyable time we had there. We felt that the theme of the convention "Focus On Nature" was well presented.

Why don't YOU plan to attend next year?

The House Sparrow - Outlaw or Farmer's Helper?

This is the title of an article by Dr. McGregor in the March number of the

WHITTIER OBSERVER.

Dr. McGregor begins by suggesting that some people would spell the specific name of Passer domesticus - Domestic Cuss. Some local observers feel that the presence

of sparrows attract other birds to their feeders, while others blame the sparrows for keeping other birds away. On the beneficial side of the ledger it is reported that in Utah in 1952 a colony of 100 pairs of sparrows ate 500,000 Alfalfa Weevils and saved the alfalfa crop. Also that in the east sparrows are among the few birds that eat Japanese beetles. But on the other side of the ledger is the fact that sparrows harbor an internal parasite to which they are immune, but which if passed on to turkeys produce a fatal disease of the liver. Also that poultry raisers find the sparrows gather in great numbers and feed on the poultry feed.

Winter Waterfowl Census Shows
 5,297,000 Ducks, Geese, Swans and
 Coots in State.

A survey made by the California Department of Fish and Game and the regional Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service made this past winter showed over 5,000,000 waterfowl in the state. The survey was made by experienced observers using four airplanes and a helicopter; photographing large concentrations of birds and estimating the population of scattered groups. The total number of ducks was 4,045,000 just slightly less than the count a year ago. Of the ducks the most numerous were pintails, with widgeon, mallards, shovelers, green-winged teal, scaup and ruddy in decreasing numbers. 702,000 geese, mostly snow, were counted. The number of swans was 25,000. And coots made a total of 534,000.

Results of these winter surveys are among the important factors in setting the annual waterfowl hunting regulations.

CONSERVATION - What is it?
 From Outdoor California, March 1955

Conservation is the efficient management and wise use of natural resources for the best interests of the largest number for the longest time.

All natural resources are vitally necessary in the everyday existence of every one of us, and to those who come after us.

CONSERVATION NOTES

Robert Blackstone

The U. S. Senate Sub-committee on Irrigation and Reclamation has approved the Upper Colorado Storage Project, including Echo Park Dam. It is expected that the Senate will follow the recommendation of its committee and pass the bill. At Asilomar the opinion of those "in the know" was that the House would not approve the project as long as the dam at Echo Park is included. The Hoover Commission, whose report has not yet been published, is said to regard the project as a whole "an economic mistake". Conservationists, led by the Sierra Club, are urging that legislative action be postponed until these findings are made public.

In California alone between 3 and 4 billion feet of timber are tied up by questionable mining claims in national forests. The Hope Bill, H.R. 110, would correct abuses rampant under our 1872 vintage mining laws. Write to House Committee on Agriculture in regard to this issue.

Letters in support of S. 73 and H.R. 1823 - Wildlife and Recreation in National Forests - should be sent to the Senate Comm. on Agriculture and Forestry and to the House Comm. on Agriculture. And, of course, don't fail to ask your own Senators and Representatives to support these bills. This issue is very important.

In the California Legislature the Tramway Repeal Bill has been scheduled for hearing on April 27.

Passed by the Senate was S.B. 1560, providing for open seasons on the Tule Elk.

I have been advised by a representative of the Game Improvement Association that this bill is objectionable in that it requires hearings on a proposed hunt to be held in Bishop, normally such hearings would be held in Los Angeles. The Stockmen's Association which would like to see the elk eradicated or removed from Owen's Valley are strong in the Bishop area. The Tule Elk ranges on lands owned by the city of Los Angeles. This bill can be defeated in the Assembly if enough of us voice our objections at once.

OBSERVATIONS

Ruby Curry

PELICANS: White, a long line flying over the San Gabriel Mts. Apr. 12 (L. Marston)

GULLS: 60 Bonaparts, mostly in breeding plumage, Santa Monica, Apr. 11 (G.T.H.)

SHORE BIRDS: Black Turnstones on mudflat Venice marsh, Apr. 8, small flock feeding by masses of kelp, Santa Monica, beach, Apr. 11. Avocets, 14, all in summer plumage, Venice, Apr. 9 (G.T.H.)

PIGEONS: 3 Band-tailed, Eagle Rock, Apr. 13 (R.C.)

OWLS: Great Horned calling about 8 P.M. later flying over, Eagle Rock, (R.C.)

QUAIL: Valley, paired off now, coming to feeding tray, Eagle Rock, (R.C.), pair in yard, Emerald Bay, Laguna Beach, Apr. 9 (Mrs. P. Dodds)

FLYCATCHERS: Ash-throated, Western and Black Phoebe, San Dimas Canyon, Apr. 11.

WREN: Bewick, made a nest on a sack of peat moss in a lath house, Eagle Rock, Apr. 12 (Mrs. A. West)

SOLITAIRE: Townsend, San Dimas Canyon, Apr. 11 (S.W.B.S.C.)

WAXWINGS: Cedar, about 150 on wires, Emerald Bay, Laguna Beach (Mrs. P.D.), 50 on one television aerial, as many more on telephone wires, Santa Monica, Apr. 14 (Fred Seward), a flock after stripping a pyracantha bush of all berries, cleaned the ground below of fallen berries.

WARBLERS: Lutescent, Yellow and Audubon, San Dimas Canyon, Apr. 11 (Bess H. Hoffman)

TANAGER: Western, pair at Emerald Bay, Apr. 9 (Mrs. P. D.)

GROSEBEAK: Black-headed, singing and perched on tree top, Fern Dell, Apr. 9, (Bessie Pope), San Dimas Canyon, Apr. 11 (S.W.B.S.C.), Santa Monica, Apr. 14 (G.T.H.)

From Audubon Center, April 9 (before the fire)

Among our nesting birds, a pair of White-tailed Kites. Cardinals, Mockingbirds, Jays, Black Phoebes and California Thrashers have nested much earlier than usual. (Alma Stultz)

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers - 1954-1955

President . . Miss Bessie Pope, 912 Victoria Avenue, Los Angeles 19, Whitney 5946
1st Vice-Pres. Mrs. J.E.F. Dunn Secretary - Miss Elizabeth Patterson
2nd Vice-Pres. Mr. Herbert Clarke Treasurer - Miss Leoti Fisher
Registrar of Members - Mrs. J. L. McBride, 2224 Via Guadalupe, Palos Verdes Estates

CALENDAR FOR MAY

Thursday, May 5. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING - Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, 1:30. Talk by Mrs. Mary Hood illustrated with her superb kodachrome slides; "LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK". This is the only park in the United States proper with a volcano that has been active recently. Mr. and Mrs. Hood vacationed there last summer and studied the Park's Interpretative Program.

Thursday, May 12. Meeting of the EXECUTIVE BOARD at the home of the president, 912 Victoria Avenue, at 7:30.

Saturday, May 14. FIELD TRIP TO TAPIA PARK. Go out Ventura Boulevard to Brent's Junction (about 34 miles from L.A.), turn left about 5 miles to Tapia Park. Or, go out the Coast Highway from Santa Monica to just beyond the Malibu Lagoon, turn right to Tapia Park. Meet at the picnic area at 9 A.M. Bring lunch and binoculars. Leader, Miss Ethel Craig

Thursday, May 19. FIELD TRIP TO O'NEILL PARK, Orange County, for birding and lunch, leaving there at 1:30 for the TUCKER HUMMINGBIRD SANCTUARY in Modjeska Canyon for more birding. We should find White-tailed Kites and Blue Grosbeaks plus other species along the way. Our Tanner Motor Bus will leave from the Grand Avenue entrance to the Biltmore Hotel between 5th and 6th Streets at 8:30. Round trip fare \$3.00, please have exact amount. Bring lunch and binoculars. Those driving:- take Santa Ana Freeway to Orange, east on Chapman Avenue to Santiago Rd. Turn right, go 8 miles to Silverado Canyon Fork. Turn right 5 miles to Modjeska Canyon Fork - but keep on right over hills to O'Neill Park, left up Trabuco Canyon, per road signs.

For Bus reservations call DU 8-7935 or HO 5-3335. Leader - Caroline Daugherty.

Sunday, May 22. PELAGIC TRIP AROUND ANACAPA ISLAND. \$5.50. Leave Port Hueneme 8 A.M. promptly. Make reservations by May 13 with Jim Clements, 7915 Dalen, Downey, Calif. Bring lunch.

Thursday, May 26. Study Class, Plummer Park, 10 A.M.
First Hour; "PICTURES OF THE HOLY LAND AND MENTION OF SOME OF ITS BIRDS", Mr. E. P. Terry, who with his wife made a trip there two years ago.
Second Hour; BIRD STUDY with skins of birds named in Mr. Terry's talk, presented by Mrs. May Wait.

Thursday, June 2. ANNUAL MEETING AT CHARLTON FLATS. For bus reservations call DU 8-7935, HO 5-3335 or WH 5946. Bus fare - \$1.75.
The Public is cordially invited to all Audubon Society Meetings.

THE AUDUBON CENTER OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

(San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary)

644 North Durfee Avenue, El Monte Phone FOrest 0-1872

Director Mrs. Alma Stultz

Asst. Director Mrs. Gertrude Woods

Nature Museum open daily except Sunday, 2 to 5 P. M.