

Western



Tanager

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NAVIGATING BY THE STARS

By George T. Hastings

Migration of birds has long posed intriguing and difficult problems - problems that probably will not be all solved for a very long time. Why, how, where, when? Much has been learned from migration routes that have been mapped in detail for some species, based on the results of banding. The influence of seasonal development of glands and their secretions and on the changes in the length of daylight in different seasons on starting the migrations. As to how they find their way, especially when adult birds leave several weeks ahead of the young, so that the latter must find their way alone, there have been many suggested explanations:- that they are guided by major features of the landscape, that they are sensitive to magnetic lines of force, that the earth's rotation produces a force as one moves north or south, that they have an inherited "geographic sense," and others.

Another explanation is given in a recent article in the Scientific American (August 1958). The author, E. G. F. Sauer, is sure he has proved that certain birds at least find their way by observing the stars. He states that it has been proved by experiments in England and Germany that homing pigeons and some wind birds use the sun as a compass and have a time sense that enables them to take account of the sun's motion across the sky.

In testing the idea that birds use the stars Dr. Sauer used several species of European warblers (not related to our American wood warblers) that were hatched and raised in closed, sound-proof chambers where a constant summer temperature was maintained. He found that at the time migration of the species began in the fall and again in the spring, the birds became restless, flitted about all night in their cages; and that this kept up for several weeks, about the time it would take the species to travel from the home in northern Europe to central Africa. After that they settled down and slept all night. Then the cages were placed so that they were open at the top, giving a view of the sky, but of nothing else. At night the warblers that normally migrated south-eastward towards Turkey and Greece, then south to the Nile valley all turned to face the southeast, keeping that position even if the perches were rotated. At the same time the species that migrated to the southwest to Spain and crossed the Mediterranean near Gibraltar turned to face the southwest.

The cages were placed in a planetarium. When the same was illuminated with a diffuse light the warblers were unable to choose a desired direction, but when the planetarium sky showed stars matching the sky outside, the birds at once headed in the proper direction for migration flight and kept that position as the planetarium sky gradually shifted as did the sky outside. By shifting the planetarium sky to show the stars visible far to the east in central Asia the birds were confused for a few minutes and then turned to face west. If the sky was gradually shifted towards the west, the birds began to point southwest, when the stars reached what would be seen over the Balkans the birds that migrated down the Nile valley headed directly south.

(Continued on Page 15)

THE WESTERN TANGER

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 Editor.....Fern Shelford
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THE 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 National Audubon Society in-
 cludes subscription to Audubon Magazine.
 Regular - \$6.50, Husband & wife - \$10.,
 Sustaining - \$12.50, Sustaining-Husband
 & wife - \$20., Active - \$25., Support-
 ing - \$50., Contributing -\$100., Life -
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AUDUBON HOUSE -- Headquarters of the
 Los Angeles Audubon Society, 7377 Santa
 Monica Blvd....HO 7-9495. Open Wednesday,
 Thursday and Saturday - 2-4 p.m., 3rd
 Wednesday - 7:30-8 p.m.; 4th Thursday,
 (members only) 9-10 a.m. - 1-4 p.m.

Groups by appointment.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The subject of sanctuaries is one
 that these days occupies the thoughts of
 all who are concerned with wildlife con-
 servation. Here in southern California,
 as is well known, the problems of our rap-
 idly shrinking coastal lagoon and marsh
 areas is most critical. No opportunity
 to save even a very small part of this
 type of habitat should be allowed to pass.

The cost of any of this kind of land
 is probably much too high for us even to
 hope to acquire it ourselves for sanctu-
 ary purposes. Some lagoons and marshes,
 however, are already in public ownership,
 and here we must strive to convince the
 administrators and the public that sanctu-
 ary use is the best use for at least a
 part of any such area.

Fortunately, the Los Angeles City
 Recreation and Parks Dept. does not need
 to be convinced. They have, from the
 start, contemplated a bird sanctuary as
 part of the development at Harbor Park
 (Bixby Slough). Mrs. McBride, my pre-
 decessor in office, was much interested
 in this, and still is. During her term
 of office, she met with officials of the
 Dept. to help plan it. The Los Angeles
 Audubon Society is pledged to aid the Re-
 creation and Parks Dept. to the utmost
 in developing a bird sanctuary at Harbor
 Park.

Though we are most concerned about
 sanctuaries for water birds, we are, of
 course, interested in other kinds as well.
 Recognition of this Society's quickening
 interest in the development of sanctu-
 aries was evidenced, when our by-laws
 were recently amended, by the creation
 of a new standing committee, Sanctuaries.
 The present chairman, Mr. David R. Wil-
 liams, is the first to serve as such.
 He is intensely interested in the sub-
 ject, and is making a start toward put-
 ting this Society in the "sanctuary busi-
 ness." He would, I am sure, welcome
 ideas and help from other members.

Robert E. Blackstone

NAVIGATING - Continued.

By repeatedly changing the planetarium to show the stars of different latitudes and longitudes the birds responded every time by heading in the direction they would have taken in migrating from the region of the given latitude and longitude. Similar experiments were conducted at the time of spring migration. All confirmed the idea "that the warblers have a remarkable hereditary mechanism for orienting themselves by the stars...having a detailed image of the starry configuration of the sky coupled with a precise time sense which related the heavenly canopy to the geography of the earth at every time and season." "Without benefit of previous experience, with no one except the stars, the birds are able to locate themselves in time and space and find their way to their destined homes."

In these carefully conducted experiments, Dr. Sauer takes it for granted that the direction the bird heads on its perch is the direction it would take if out of its cage and able to migrate.

In this case, as often as others, finding a solution to a problem creates other and often more difficult ones. How can the tiny brain of a little bird contain a map of the night sky and know its appearance at different times of night and in different latitudes and longitudes? And how can it have one map of the northern skies to guide it in the fall, a different one for spring? It all seems quite incredible, but how else can the experiments be explained?

Our fellow member, Mr. Robert Sandmeyer, has again put his talents to work for the Society. Bob designed and set up the Audubon Societies' booth at the Los Angeles County Fair this year. He put in a lot of work on this exhibit, and all who saw it agreed that it was beautifully done. We are indeed fortunate in having a member like Bob who is so generous with his time and talents. He certainly deserves the thanks of all of us.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

- Mr. Roger Batte,
143 W. 118 Pl., Los Angeles 61.
- Mr. Ned Dobson,
6112 Alcott St., Los Angeles 35.
- Mrs. Muriel France,
5016 Petit Ave., Encino, Calif.
- Mrs. Nancy L. French,
1312 Pine Ave., Manhattan Beach.
- Mrs. Marguerite Halass,
14336 Dickens St., Sherman Oaks, Cal.
- Mr. Wm. C. Hamilton,
858 - 3rd Ave., Los Angeles 5.
- Mr. Allen M. Hardt,
207 E. Avenue 41, Los Angeles 31.
- Mrs. Lillis Johnson,
1234 - 10th St.-Apt. 6, Santa Monica.
- Miss Patricia Lindquist,
3533 Mentone Ave., Los Angeles 34.
- Miss Sara L. Sawyer,
10576 Kinnard Ave., Los Angeles 26.
- Miss Helen K. Silva,
440 No. Coronado Terrace, L.A. 26.
- Mrs. Mildred Vandenburg,
5501 Penfield Ave., Woodland Hills.
- Mrs. D. M. Vaughn,
1686 W. 26th St., Harbor City, Cal.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SALON ANNOUNCED

From Mr. William N. Goodall, National Audubon Society West Coast Representative, we have received an announcement of the WESTERN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHIC SALON, to be held in connection with the West Coast Convention at Asilomar, March 21-24, 1959. Each Branch and Affiliate on the West Coast is invited to submit one BLACK & WHITE print in each of ten designated categories. A panel of three Judges (including Roger Tory Peterson) will select the winners.

Prints must be at least 5" x 7" (preferably larger), mounted on cardboard backing to facilitate display, and must depict WESTERN WILDLIFE or PLANT LIFE.

All members interested in participating, please contact Mr. Robert Blackstone, or call our headquarters at Plummer Park for further information.

CONSERVATION
By Otis Wade

Foes of billboards have a staunch friend in gubernatorial candidate Edmund "Pat" Brown running on the Democratic ticket, even when billboards display his own smiling face to the voters. "Pat" Brown recently told a gathering of supporters that the state must enact an anti-billboard law quickly if California is to qualify for all possible federal money under the new Federal Highway Construction Act.

The first forest conservation stamp in history went on sale October 27. This 4-cent issue commemorates the 100th anniversary of the birth of Theodore Roosevelt, one of our country's earliest forest conservationists. Previous stamps in the Post Office Department's conservation series have had as their subjects, the Whooping Crane, Wild Turkey, Pronghorn Antelope and King Salmon.

A recent release of a National Park Service report urges the establishment of a seashore recreation area along the coast of Point Reyes Peninsula in Marin County, we read in the September Sierra Club Bulletin. The project is presently in preliminary outline form - Federal and State agencies must come up with specific proposals for land acquisition, development, etc. There will be an intensive fight over the plan; opposition for the most part may be expected to come from the dairy ranchers in the area.

The Point Reyes Peninsula, because of its ancient land forms - it was once a long land mass connected with the Farallone Islands when most of California had not yet arisen from the sea - its rare plants and its historic associations has been described as an island in time. The remarkable thing is that it lies within thirty miles of San Francisco and is still a near-wilderness. Three million people live within easy driving distance, yet it remains little changed since the days of Drake. It is an area which is certainly worth saving, particularly against the time when by calculations California will

be jammed with nearly four times its present population.

One of four western hearings on the Wilderness Bill will be held in San Francisco November 10 - Senator Richard L. Neuberger presiding. After field hearings this fall it is hoped that the bill will be reintroduced early in the 86th Congress.

To be regretted is Producer Budd Schulberg's "Wind Across the Everglades" which has, inevitably, brought a derisive "for the birds" reaction from all the reviewers. Nevertheless, it has a strong conservation message, if a silly story, and some outstanding bird photographs. The birds are for us and perhaps some of the message rubs off on the suffering moviegoer.

"In theory, the ultimate goal of any wildlife agency is to educate the public so well in the conservation concepts that enforcement of laws and regulations will be unnecessary."

Conservation News, Sept. 15, 1958

"Surely our people do not understand even yet the rich heritage that is theirs. There can be nothing in the world more beautiful than the Yosemite, the groves of giant sequoias and redwoods, the Canyon of the Colorado, the Canyon of the Yellowstone, the Three Tetons - and our people should see to it that they are preserved for their children and their children's children forever, with their majestic beauty all unmarred."

Theodore Roosevelt.

Audubon Center regretfully reports the death of staff member Neil V. Bullion, who was identified with out-of-door education and conservation activities for many years.

Some members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society will remember the dedication of the Bar V Ranch School near Nuevo as a sanctuary when he and his wife Doris, also a naturalist at the Center, headed that institution.

WHOOPING CRANE FLOCK STARTS LONG
MIGRATION
(National Audubon News Release)

Members of the sole surviving flock of whooping cranes are about to begin their perilous fall migration from Canada to Texas. All along the narrow flight corridor that traverses six of the United States and two provinces of Canada hunters once again are being urged, "don't shoot any large white birds."

The cranes make their southward trek each year during the water-fowl and upland game bird hunting season. As in the past, the man with the gun represents the greatest threat to the whooper's survival. Intense public interest in the cranes, spurred by private and governmental conservation organizations, has in recent years resulted in a sharp decline in losses along the flyway, however.

But even a single such loss may be a serious setback to the wild flock's remarkable comeback from the verge of extinction, according to the National Audubon Society. In 1941 only 15 whooping cranes remained in the Texas flock. The flock numbered 26 birds when it left Texas last spring to fly to its remote wilderness nesting area in Canada's Northwest Territories.

During the summer two pairs of cranes, one with "twins", the other with a single youngster, have been spotted by aerial surveys. Two other pairs have also been seen. The rest of the birds have remained out of sight in the trackless, uninhabited muskeg and forest country north of the 60th parallel.

What kind of nesting season the cranes may have had this year will probably not be known until the last family group has completed its 2500-mile flight back to the Aransas National Wildlife refuge along the Gulf Coast of Texas some time around the middle of November.

Although whooping cranes are fully protected, they apparently have often been mistaken for other birds by gunners. A record loss of whoopers occurred

in 1941 when 13 failed to return. As recently as 1956 four birds were lost. Yet the virtually all-white whooper is unmistakable in appearance, according to the Society. During flight its neck and legs are outstretched in a straight line fore and aft, its powerful seven-foot wings have large patches of black at the tips visible only in flight. On the ground it stands well over 4 feet tall.

Other relatively large white birds that might be seen along the whooping crane flyway are the whistling swan, the white pelican and the American egret. All are fully protected. Young whooping cranes are brownish in hue and resemble Sandhill cranes, another protected species.

The snow goose, which may be hunted, is a much smaller bird with shorter legs and wings, a heavier neck and normally travels in larger flocks. The whoopers on the southern trip travel as family groups, pairs and single birds. They stop off to rest and feed in areas frequented by waterfowl and wading birds. They are usually sighted along river banks and sandbars, on the fringes of ponds, and in marshes.

People along the flyway, which extends through North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, are asked to report to their game wardens or conservation departments if they see what appear to be whooping cranes, and they are requested to refrain from shooting in the area.

The ANNUAL AUDUBON TEA was enjoyed by about fifty members at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Dodds. It was a pleasure to see several friends and members who do not get out to the meetings often because of the distance they have to travel. Among these were: Mr. & Mrs. William Goodall, Mr. & Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Mr. George T. Hastings and Mr. & Mrs. Oliver. Hostesses responsible for preparing delicious refreshments were: Mrs. Alice Lewis, Mrs. Delight Dodds, Mrs. Olive Alvey and Mrs. Nurtha Dunn with helpful suggestions offered by Mr. Dodds.

LECTURE SERIES

Dr. Thomas R. Howell, of the Department of Zoology at U.C.L.A., has extended an invitation to all L. A. Audubon Society members to attend a series of Lida Scott Brown lectures in ornithology to be given by the distinguished British ornithologist, Dr. W. H. Thorpe, under the general title, "Recent Advances in Ornithology." Dr. Thorpe is a Professor of Zoology at Cambridge University and is president of the British Ornithologists' Union.

The dates and titles of the lectures are as follows:

- Oct. 28 - The Study of Song
- Nov. 6 - Territory
- Nov. 13 - Migration and Homing
- Nov. 25 - Imprinting and Other Forms of Learning
- Dec. 4 - Recent Work on Bird Behavior at the Madingley Ornithological Field Station (Motion picture)

All lectures will be at 8:00 p.m. in Room 2147, Life Sciences Bldg., U.C.L.A.

AUDUBON HOUSE NOTES

Every member should have the decal of the Audubon emblem showing on his car, and on his field coat the matching shoulder patch. The decals are 20¢ and the shoulder patch \$1.00. They may be obtained from Audubon House and while there you might look over the library of bird, animal and nature books, second to none in the city. There are new as well as old books and magazines. Take a book and bring it back at the end of thirty days! The House will be open after the evening meetings in the future so those who wish to shop and/or borrow may do so.

Many items will suggest themselves as Christmas gifts. Ask about a good buy in binoculars - we can get them for you. Or perhaps you would find a solution to a difficult problem in gift-giving from one of our catalogues offering various types of feeders, bird baths, etc. There are, of course, guide books on sale, as well as cards, games, etc. Finally may we suggest that as a gift for your birds a 50 pound sack of wild bird mix as put up by our good friends (who donate the feed for

the station at Audubon House) at Frank's Garden Supplies, 1226 No. La Brea is the best you could possibly do. At \$3.75, how could you do better?

Otis Wade - Sales Chairman

NATURE WORKSHOP FOR YOUTH LEADERS
Audubon Center of Southern California
1000 No. Durfee Ave., El Monte, Calif.

Date: Saturday, November 1, 1958

Duplicate Sessions: 9:30-11:30 a.m.
1:00- 3:00 p.m.

Ideas and techniques for integrating nature into your program. Activity and project demonstrations for youth groups. Nature study, aids, books, pamphlets, cards, pictures, charts, etc. Field Techniques: How to take a field trip-learning from the real thing-Interrelationships in habitats-Using what you have-Games.

Display Area: Plant and animal "eye openers, terrariums, aquariums, edible plants, insect motels, feeders, bugscoping and bushwhacking, stalking tech., track craft, timely tips; Rock and soil, sun and stars, flannel boards, elec. games, tricks of the trade; simple crafts, memory sticks, etc.

Register by mail or call Gilbert-4-1872. Indicate morning or afternoon session. Cancelled in case of rain.

CONSERVATION WORKSHOP FOR TEACHERS

Date: Saturday, November 15, 1958

Morning Session: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Aim: To help teachers develop a better understanding of the broad principles of conservation.

Field Trip Experiments

Ideas

Activities

Resource Materials: Books, leaflets, bulletins, charts, maps, cards, pamphlets, games, etc. Display of conservation materials from outside conservation agencies.

Register by mail or call Gilbert-4-1872. Registration fee for both classes 25¢. Cancelled in case of rain.

SUPPORT THE SCREEN TOURS

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

President Mr. Robert E. Blackstone, 10363 Calvin Ave., Los Angeles 25

Registrar of Members Miss Iola R. Moore, 278 Bronwood Ave., Los Angeles 49

CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER 1958

November 8, SATURDAY FIELD TRIP to Bixby Slough. Drive down Vermont to Pacific Coast Highway. Across highway about one block, turn into parking lot on left hand side of road. Meet at 9 a.m. Bring lunch and binoculars.

Leader - Betty Meyerfeld

November 13, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. at 10363 Calvin Avenue.

November 19, EVENING MEETING - Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. sharp in Great Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Kenneth E. Stager, Curator of Ornithology at the Los Angeles County Museum will present an illustrated account of his recent expedition to Clipperton Island. This is the easternmost coral atoll in the Pacific Ocean and represents a unique habitat for bird and other wildlife. Mr. Stager, a world-renowned ornithologist and explorer has wide experience with birds of the Pacific world. Don't miss the highlight of our 1958-1959 season.

Chairman - Arnold Small

November 20, THURSDAY FIELD TRIP to the new Los Angeles County Park - the William S. Hart Ranch, 24151 Newhall Ave., Newhall, Calif., a 200 acre ranch, operated as a museum by County Department of History, Science and Art. Picnic tables in shady nooks, rest rooms, trails through the property. We will travel by Tanner Motor bus, leaving Los Angeles from Grand Ave. entrance of Biltmore Hotel at 9:00 a.m. sharp. Fare \$1.75. Please have exact change. We will travel San Fernando Road through San Fernando, - Highway 6 - our destination just this side of Newhall. Please make reservations 1 week ahead.

Leader - Edna Burt
PL 5-1044

November 20, THURSDAY MORNING MEETING at Great Hall, Plummer Park, 7477 Santa Monica Blvd. at 9:45 a.m. We are fortunate in having Dr. Richard Boolootian for a second time. He will show two of his Kodachrome Nature Studies. The first an hour long movie, "Life in the Tidepools" and a remade "Life of the Sea Otter." Dr. Boolootian, Professor of Zoology at UCLA does most of his research at Hopkins Marine Station in Pacific Grove. Besides preparing a monograph on sea otters this past summer, he has been working on the biology of a deep sea echinoid or sea urchin. Recently Dr. Boolootian was quoted as an authority in two unusual happenings here. One was the red tide at Palos Verdes and the other was the unusual appearance of killer whales at Zuma Beach. For this last, some of his films were shown on TV.

Chairman - Olive Alvey

November 23, SUNDAY FIELD TRIP to Chatsworth Reservoir in the San Fernando Valley, to see wintering ducks and geese. Group will meet at the corner of Reseda and Roscoe Blvd.* at 8:00 a.m.

Leader - Reg Julian - POplar 1-8517

* in Northridge