

T H E

Western



Tanager

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Number 3

A BIRD TRIP  
from  
LOS ANGELES TO MICHIGAN  
and Return  
by  
Earle R. Greene

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.  
PLUMMER PARK  
7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

Since every birder likes to talk or write about trips he has made, the birds he has recorded and the interesting people he has met along the way, I also will try to describe my latest trip which carried me through parts of 16 states by automobile, a total of 7268 miles. I did not attempt to record all the birds seen; but there were certain species I did not have on my Life List. Before leaving I contacted certain people who were familiar with these birds and lived in the area where they might be found. This is a wise thing to do when rare or local birds are involved. Since the trip covered about 45 days I will not attempt to give all the details but confine this narrative to those birds and people of particular interest.

From Flagstaff I made a short trip into the Walnut Canyon National Monument - a beautiful area where a number of birds were seen. Reaching St. Louis I called on Richard Anderson and that afternoon he, Mrs. Anderson and I made a trip about the area seeing a number of birds and finally locating four or five European Tree Sparrows. This bird is only found around St. Louis and certain spots nearby. It was one of the birds I particularly wished to see.

Crossing the Mississippi into Illinois, then into Indiana, I turned northward into Michigan to Grayling and called on people there. After a search in the jackpines we failed to find the bird we wanted to see. So driving east to Mio I looked up Verne Dockham and together we searched in the jackpines and also in the red pines without success on our first day. However, on the next day a more thorough search was made and we were able to see the rare Kirtland's Warbler. As the pines were thick, the birds without song or any audible notes at this time of year, we were never certain whether we saw one bird or three, but we did have close and excellent observations.

The annual meeting of The American Ornithologists' Union in Ann Arbor was another successful one, the lectures being very interesting. The meeting of bird people from many parts of the country and abroad added to the fellowship.

Near the little town of Plainfield, Wisconsin, lives the Fred Hamerstrom family - Fred, his wife, daughter and son. Also a young Great Horned Owl, a pet having

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## THE WESTERN Tanager

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Free to members...Others \$1.50 annually  
 Editor Emeritus.....George T. Hastings  
 Editor.....Hubert H. Weiser  
 3749 Shannon Road, L.A. 27....NO 4-2753

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

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Joint with National Audubon Society in-  
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 & Wife - \$20., Active - \$25.00, Support-  
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the privilege of flying about inside the  
 house and exercising his right to the  
 full. Although all the family are in-  
 terested in wildlife, banding and the  
 study of the Greater Prairie Chicken  
 take up most of their time, especially  
 Mrs. Hamerstrom's. They were unable to  
 show me any "chickens" although we  
 searched for two days. We were success-  
 ful in trapping and banding a Red-Tailed  
 Hawk, using a mouse and trap dropped in  
 the road. The mouse recovered from its  
 fright and the bird was banded and re-  
 leased.

Arriving at Burwell, Nebraska, I  
 looked up Marvin Schwilling, a state  
 biologist, and we located one Greater  
 Prairie Chicken near the side of a high-  
 way. Driving westward the next day, 8  
 of these birds flew up in front of my  
 car.

In South Dakota, where I saw a  
 number of Sharp-tailed Grouse, I turned  
 west reaching the Badlands National  
 Monument and then Rapid City in the  
 Black Hills. Here I looked up Dr. N. R.  
 Whitney, Jr. We drove deep into the hills  
 to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Barrows.  
 They have a charming place and are a  
 very hospitable couple. Here a flock of  
 White-winged Juncos was feeding and  
 bathing in a small stream. This species  
 is also confined in its breeding season  
 to the Black Hills and surrounding area.  
 Of course, I made a trip to that monu-  
 ment carved on the mountain side by  
 Borglum showing four of our great presi-  
 dents. I was sorry not to have more time  
 in the Black Hills as they are interest-  
 ing and beautiful; but having to leave I  
 drove westward into Wyoming, to Colorado  
 then into New Mexico. I thoroughly  
 enjoyed the Cimarron Mountains and the  
 Rio Grande Gorge and river before  
 reaching Santa Fe.

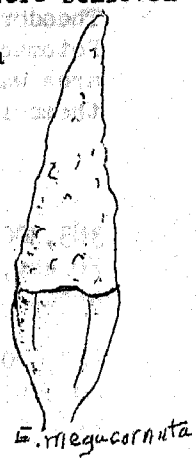
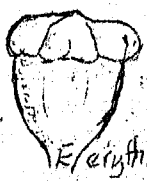
A few miles from Santa Fe is the  
 castle home of the late Ernest Thomp-  
 son Seton, presided over by his wife.  
 I am sure many of you have read "Two  
 Little Savages", "Wild Animals I have  
 Known", "Biography of a Grizzly" and  
 many other interesting stories by this

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TREES OF THE BEAUTIFUL CAPS  
by George T. Hastings

Probably it would be better to say of good caps or well-covered, as the name eucalyptus is from the Greek eu meaning good or well, and calyptra, meaning a cap or cover. Botanists use the term calyptra for two very different kinds of plants: with mosses the calyptra is the delicate cap covering the spore case; in Eucalyptus it is the lid or cap that covers the flower bud. This latter is formed of the fused sepals and petals, a structure unique in the plant world. The many kinds of Eucalyptus, 600 or more, are distinguished as much by the shape of the calyptra as by any other character. It may be a little flat cap, as in the Scarlet-flowered Gum; a jaunty little peaked pixie cap, as in the Red Gum; a slender horn in the Yate; a knobby dunce cap in the large-horned Eucalyptus, (*E. megacornuta*); an irregular peaked cap in the familiar Blue Gum; a showy, bright-red beret in the Illyria. The last is the Australian name for *E. erythrocorya*, and of course there are other shapes and much variation in size. When the flower is ready to open the cap separates from

calyx below and the stamens straightening up and expanding push the cap off, its usefulness ended. If one cuts one of the buds lengthwise, he will find it interesting to see how the many stamens - over 2000 - in the Blue Gum are folded over and packed under the cap, or in forms



like the Yate with long caps, extended straight up to the tip of the cap.

There being no petals with the opened flower, the stamens make the showy parts. Usually white or cream color, they are pink in the Red Iron-bark, bright red in the Scarlet-flowered Gum, light green in the Yate, brilliant yellow in the Illyria.

A considerable amount of nectar is secreted in the flower, so that most species of Eucalyptus are good bee trees. Humming birds enjoy the nectar too, and at times dozens of them may be seen hovering over the blossoms, though the shallow saucers of eucalyptus flowers are so different from the long tubular flowers adapted to the slender bills and tongues of these birds.

Following the flowers hard, woody capsules develop containing a small number of seeds and a large amount of "chaff" made of hundreds of undeveloped ovules. These capsules vary in size from tiny ones not over an eighth of an inch across to ones over three inches, almost the size of a teacup, in *Eucalyptus macrocarpa*, which is more vine-like than a tree. In fact, many species of the genus are only bushes, while the largest are very tall trees, at one time thought to be the tallest trees in the world. The story of one tree estimated to be over 500 feet high (which when measured proved to be only 219 feet) was reported in serious botanical works and for years Eucalypts were believed to be the tallest trees in the world. The Encyclopedia Brittanica says the

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tallest known Eucalypt is 329 feet high.

Seeds of Eucalyptus trees were brought to San Francisco early in the 1850's by sailing ships from Australia and the trees soon spread up and down the coast. Seeds of other species have been brought here since and even now new kinds are introduced as new species are discovered in less well-known parts of Australia. All the many kinds are natives of Australia, with a very few from East Indian Islands to the north (but none native to New Zealand). Here the species of Eucalyptus have become so much a part of the landscape that it is hard to think of them as foreigners not natives of the land.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### CHRISTMAS PARTY.

Do not forget the Christmas Party and Bazaar December 1st. (See calendar sheet)

#### FIELD DAY AT EL MONTE

Saturday, November 5th, Special Seasonal Tour for members only. 8:30 A.M. guided field and birding tour, soil erosion demonstration and museum lecture. Hot soup for lunch; but bring your own lunch and thermos.

#### CONSERVATION PLUS MONUMENTS

No automobiles nor parking lots for Theodore Roosevelt Island in the Potomac. The charm of this nature area was saved by Roosevelt descendants themselves, along with Audubon groups.

\* \* \* \* \*

383,300 acres of Bridgen National Forest, Wyoming, now a wilderness area.

283,000 acres of Tongass National Forest, Alaska, now a scenic area, with substantially the same protection.

#### HOOTS, COOTS & GALLINULES

Earle Greene reports a white-faced Ibis at Malibu Lagoon Tuesday, October 4th.

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great author.

His books had more influence on many people, young and old, than dozens of others dealing with study and protection of wild life. Mrs. Seton showed me through this marvelous house. It contains 68,000 books, Seton's paintings and drawings, an Indian Museum, and a natural history collection of 3,000 bird and mammal skins. The area surrounding the house is well wooded and I noted hundreds of Pinon Jays flying about uttering their peculiar call notes.

Reaching Route 66 and again turning west I made a short stop in the Painted Desert where I located a few birds and chatted with one of the Park Naturalists who had compiled quite an excellent list of the birds there.

Arriving home on September 16 I felt that the trip was a success. I had seen and studied the four birds I was particularly interested in: European Tree Sparrow, Kirkland's Warbler, Greater Prairie Chicken and White-winged Junco.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

Second Nature Photography Salon for Audubon Branches and Affiliates in the West - Asilomar, March 25-28, 1961.

Those who enter must have pictures in hands of Board members before Feb. 1st. For details, please contact Audubon House.

#### OCTOBER 1 - JUNIOR ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

At this meeting John Peebles led a field trip through Griffith Park; and dealt with conservation. Later an election was held at which the following new officers were elected:

President	Jodean Cerv
Vice President	Patty Trevor
Secretary-Treasurer	Walter Mann

ALLEN HUMMINGBIRDS  
NESTING AND RAISING OF YOUNG  
By Dorothy F. Lilly

(Continued from last month)

It was a gay little family party and the only time I ever closely observed such a reunion. The young would go on exploratory trips in pairs. They would perch together and spar with their bills. As for the domineering of the older ones, they certainly showed an overbearing attitude about which limb the younger ones had a right to use for a perch.

Late in the day the male made his handsome appearance. What for? Once he did a small pendulum swing. Afterward his attention lit on an older fledgling and an idea must have struck him; he flew in a tight circle over its head and it immediately followed him out of sight in the direction of a pink flowering eucalyptus.

Something disturbed them next day and the mother and youngest pair changed their feeding station to an Acacia tree ten feet to the right and around the south corner of the house. Leaves of the Guava, no longer tinted with colors to match the baby hummers, were now a clear and definite green. The Acacia was more concealing with its seed pods turning a delicate bronze and hanging lush throughout the feathery grey-green foliage. The male was nowhere to be seen. Neither were the two older young and that pair I never saw again.

Another window was situated conveniently to serve me as a blind back of the Acacia. I watched her, on May 29, 8:30 P.M. DST, as the young perched where they would roost that night. She left to find her own roost. The wind blew. One baby came up to where its twin was settling for the night and begged to sit alongside where it would be warmer. The answer was plain "NO". Emphasized by vibration of wings. And obviously, "Furthermore, you can scram. I like to sleep alone." So back to a lower limb the poor little thing went to make the best of a cold night.

At 5:30 in the morning they were still up there and getting their first feeding. They roosted on those same twigs for six nights after that.

In a few days I began to hear their sputtering and see them more often in a tall dense Italian Cypress tree thirty feet to the east of the nesting site. Other birds had been using that tree for this season's nesting - house finches, towhees, chickadees and bushtits. On June 11, while watching the female fiercely chasing two transient blackbirds away, I located her new nest on the south side of the Cypress, thirteen feet from the ground and facing the street. Her third brood had already hatched. She had stopped feeding the older ones but they hung around. On June 25 brood number three left the nest.

Two days later a male showed himself for a short time. After that neither he nor the two older pairs were seen again. Since this happened many times during the three years I watched them, I feel justified in theorizing that he may lead them to a distant feeding ground or perhaps with the last pair of the season start a leisurely southward migration. Maybe he only tells them all to "get lost".

On the third pair of young, the mother used a different system of care and attention. Whereas, with the first two pairs she seldom had had time for any companionship, on this last she could and did sit by the hour with one or the other between those comparatively strenuous mealtimes. It was obvious that her quota of offspring was reached for that year. For the first few days after the nest was vacated they all sat near each other and scratched themselves vigorously and constantly. Cooperation on the neck feathers would have been helpful but these are independent little creatures.

Another difference, while the first pairs were left to enjoy each other's company with their racing and chasing games, she tried to keep these last ones in separate trees, one in the Guava and the other in a small Pine tree, north of and next to the Cypress.

(To be continued)

## BIRDING IN TEXAS

By Arnold Small - continued

From Austin a fine expressway runs south to San Antonio and from there we bore due south roughly following the 100th meridian through Alice, Edinburg and finally Pharr, where we turned east for a short drive to the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in the heart of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

We had been seeing Golden-fronted Woodpeckers for a hundred miles, but the Scissor-tails were still with us. The country had changed considerably from the rolling low hills south of San Antonio to the mesquite infested prairie lowlands of the valley. The Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge so called "gem of the Federal refuge system", contains primeval river forest much akin to that found along the watercourses in Mexico, and represents one of the very few such stands still existant in this country. This growth is chiefly a jungle-like forest of native trees such as elm, ebony, hackberry, ash, anaqua, tepeguaje, guayacan, huisache, retama and even native bougainvillea. In places the tall trees are garbed with Spanish Moss, among which nest the Olive-backed Warblers. One is immediately impressed with the constant noise of birds. Most abundant group of birds was the pigeon tribe. The trees literally swarmed with Mourning, White-winged and White-fronted Doves, as well as Red-billed Pigeons and Ground and Inca Doves. This chorus was swelled in the early mornings by the chattering of the Golden-fronted Woodpeckers and the raucous noise of the abundant Chachalacas. Groove-billed Anis skulked in the underbrush and each of the ponds had its population of Black-bellied and Fulvous Tree-ducks, Anhingas, Least Grebes, and Wood Ibis. White Ibis and Yellow-crowned Night Herons added interest. Other species whose extreme northern limit of distribution is the Lower Rio Grande Valley included the Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Derby Flycatcher, Green Jay, Longbilled Thrasher, Olive Sparrow, White-collared Seedeater, Jacana, and Black-headed Oriole. The phenomenal Alta Mira Oriole (an orange giant among Orioles) had built a three foot-long nest in a tall ebony and was easily the most outstanding bird of the trip. Wied's Crested Flycatchers

were common and competed with the Tropical Kingbirds for desirable feeding perches. The rare Rose-throated Becard was there, as well as Gray Hawks and Black-crested Titmice. The least attractive, but easily the rarest bird on the refuge, was the Yellow-green Vireo. This Red-eye-like vireo with a greenish wash on the back and yellow washes on the flanks and under-tail coverts deserves the title of one of North America's rarest birds; and although having seen it once before in Mexico, it was a great thrill to find them north of the border. At night we saw the Pauragues leaping from the road like giant moths in their quest for insects. Mid-day heat made life unpleasant but birding in such a place more than made one forget discomfort.

Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge was not too far away, but we chose instead to forego this wonderful place and visit South Padre Island on the Gulf of Mexico. This island (the longest for its width of any island in the world) guards the coast from Galveston to Brownsville - more than 150 miles of the most beautiful beach in North America. South Padre Island is reached by the Queen Isabella Causeway from Port Isabel, and in the coastal lagoons near there we found Reddish Egrets performing their absurd antics while seeking little fish in the shallows, Tricolored (Louisiana) Herons, and shorebirds of all descriptions including the Wilson's Plover. The bird however, which most excited me was the Black Skimmer. Hundreds of these birds patrolled the lagoons and estuaries in military formation flying with their red and black mandibles just beneath the surface in their search for marine life. I have seen many thousands of skimmers, but I never fail to be thrilled by these big black and white terns which sound so much like barking dogs. Laughing Gulls, Royal, Gull-billed, Least Black, and Sandwich (Cabot's) Terns crowded the waters in search of fish also. We walked out on the long jetties from South Padre Island hoping for Frigate Birds which sometimes appeared there, but we were too early in the year as the Caribbean hurricanes of late summer usually bring them north.

(To be continued next month.)

President:  
Registrar of Members

Mr. James W. Huffman 2912 Manhattan Ave. Manhattan  
Mrs. Robert Sandmeyer 355 Elm Street, Burbank

#### CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER, 1960

- November 3 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:30 P. M. Audubon House
- November 5 Saturday, Junior Zoological Society. Discussion of birds by John Peebles 9:45 A. M. Griffith Park Zoo in front of eagle cage.
- November 5 Saturday. El Monte Field Day for Members only. (See article on Page 16)
- November 8 Tuesday Evening Meeting - cancelled due to Election Day.
- November 12 Saturday Field Trip - Sespe Condor Refuge. Meet at Second Tip's Restaurant, junction of U. S. Highway 99 and State Highway 126 Will leave from there at 8:30 A. M. Bring lunch and binoculars. Bob Blackstone, Leader - CR 6-3879
- November 17 3rd Thursday. Bus trip to Will Rogers State Park, Pacific Palisades City Park for lunch and Malibu Lagoon. Bus leaves Biltmore Hotel Grand Ave. entrance at 8:30 A. M. sharp. Fare \$2.50 Exact change, please. 25¢ per person if touring the Will Rogers Ranch House. Make reservations Nov. 13-16 Edna Burt - PL 5-1044.
- November 27 Sunday Field Trip to Maxton Brown Sanctuary in Oceanside. Group will cover Bolsa Chica Lagoon on the way south. Meet at 7:00 A.M. on Highway 101, just south of traffic circle in Long Beach. Jim Huffman, Leader - FR 2-7124.
- December 1 CHRISTMAS PARTY AND BAZAAR 1 to 4 P.M. Great Hall, Plummer Park. Olive Alvey, Chairman NO 1-8036.
- December 1 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 7:30 P.M. Audubon House

#### HARBOR PARK

Bixby Slough field trip October 8th found few ducks in the area but a representative variety of shore birds. Actually it was almost shrike day with the plumage of those birds quite as brilliant in the sunlight as that of the avocets. The several vocal yellow legs were most encouraging; and the birders who lingered were rewarded by good looks at a Least Bittern.

Mr. Anacker of City Recreation and Parks honored us with his presence. And we mean honored. This man with the quiet sense of humor has moved mountains. He has done so with thought, tact, foresight and a dream coming true. Every member of L. A. Audubon should ask for a briefing on Harbor Park. He will then once more find Aldo Leopold's philosophy of years ago still valid. No true conservationist can exist without a deep love of nature. Mr. Anacker has this and then some.