



WHY BEAUTY?

by George T. Hastings

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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

On a recent visit to the Marine Museum at Cabrillo Beach I was impressed, as I have been before, by the beauty of form, color and texture of many of the shells, characters that have made them favorite objects for collections. The mollusks that formed and lived in the shells had no eyes and could not see the beauty of their homes nor appreciate what they had wrought. In earlier days the explanation would have been simple and satisfactory - the world was made for man, all things were for his use or enjoyment and so were made beautiful to please him. It did not matter that so much of beauty was in places where the chances of man ever seeing it was extremely remote - beautiful shells in ocean depths, brilliant orchids high on the branches of jungle trees, showy moths fluttering about only after dark, birds of paradise in inaccessible forests of fairylands. Now, in more sophisticated days when science is enthroned, we must try for some scientific explanation of everything in nature. Beauty is but an accidental accompaniment of adaptations for survival, the result of natural selection. The bright colors of birds is to attract mates or warn off competitors for territory while the duller colors of the females is to render them inconspicuous on the nests. Of course, this implies some recognition of beauty by the birds and there is ample evidence that birds notice bright colors and are attracted by them, though apparently a bird is affected only by the bright colors of others of its own species. The dull browns and grays of a male sparrow may be as beautiful in the eyes of its mate as the brilliant red, yellow and black of a male tanager to its partner. The sparrow apparently does not notice the bright colors of the oriole or tanager. The lovely colors of bird eggs that only recently caused boys to hunt nests to get eggs for their collections are supposed to render the eggs less noticeable in the nest, though it is something of a strain on the imagination to believe that the blue of a robin's egg or the mottled and streaked egg of the oriole would fool a marauding jay or crow once it had located the nest.

The beauty of flowers is to be understood as an advertisement of the nectar developed for insects, to attract them for the sake of pollinating the blossoms and so securing seeds. And the bright colors of butterflies and moths may be warning signals to enemies, or may even help in concealment as the wings open and close.

Continued on Page 32

### THE WESTERN Tanager

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 Editor Emeritus.....George T. Hastings  
 Editor.....Hubert H. Weiser  
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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 - \$25.00, Support-  
 ing \$50., Contributing-\$100., Life \$300.

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### AUDUBON HOUSE

Headquarters, Library and Nature Museum  
 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 46  
 HO 7-9495. Hours: 2-4 p.m. Monday, Wed-  
 nesday, Thursday and Saturday. Groups  
 by appointment. Open for members and  
 guests before and after each meeting.

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Coming back to shells, we can under-  
 stand the glossy luster of the interior  
 of shells as a protection for the soft  
 bodies of the inhabitants. But why bright  
 color or luster on the outside? In the  
 museum I overheard a visitor explaining  
 that some of the shells had been polished  
 for exhibition, though these shells were  
 just as lustrous when picked up on the  
 beach as in the museum cases. Of course,  
 polishing of many shells brings out  
 beauties not seen before, as the bril-  
 liant colors of an abalone. The museum  
 at Cabrillo Beach was started and largely  
 developed by Dr. William Lloyd who be-  
 came the first director and was respon-  
 sible for most of the exhibits. Dr. Lloyd  
 is remembered by many of us as an active  
 member of our Society. Our little museum  
 in Audubon House has a collection of  
 bird eggs carefully mounted in glass  
 topped boxes and of shells, all properly  
 labeled, given by Dr. Lloyd. He also  
 wrote frequently for the Tanager, his  
 articles showing an interest in many  
 fields of nature.

But to come back to the question,  
 Why Beauty? We may be able to find rea-  
 sons for the beauty of plants and ani-  
 mals. Why the beauty of the line of  
 breakers where the blue of ocean meets  
 the gray of sand, of a mass of fleecy  
 clouds against the blue sky, the spread-  
 ing tree in the open, or the slender tall  
 trunks in the forest, masses of green  
 foliage in summer, autumn colors, the  
 tracery of twigs against a winter sky?  
 Is this beauty only subjective, only in  
 the mind of the observer? This much is  
 certain, an appreciation of beauty can  
 be fostered, we can learn to see beauty  
 that at first we overlooked and our en-  
 joyment of the world we live in will be  
 increased as we develop our powers of ob-  
 servation and look for details of beauty  
 in all things.

John Ruskin wrote "Remember that the  
 most beautiful things in the world are  
 the most useless, peacocks and lilies,  
 for example." Personally I prefer  
 Emerson's lines:

"Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why  
 This charm is wasted on the earth and  
 sky

Tell them, dear, that if eyes were  
 made for seeing,

Then beauty is its own excuse for being

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THEN AND NOW  
Second Installment

The monthly publication, THE WESTERN Tanager, came into being September 13, 1934. In October, 1937, headquarters for the Society were established in Plummer Park in the old home of Capt. Eugene R. Plummer. Known as the oldest frame house in Hollywood, it is now "Historical Landmark No. 160" of the California State Park Commission.

The Los Angeles Audubon Society was really "in business" now!

Morning study groups were organized and more field trips were held, including trips for young people, such as Boy Scouts. More areas were dedicated as sanctuaries, such as San Gabriel, 320 acres, and reservoirs, such as Chatsworth, 600 acres. Permission was received to dedicate many of the larger city parks as bird sanctuaries. Bird fountains, many gifts of Micky Bishop, were placed in some of the city parks. Extension committees provided hostesses to talk at the L. A. County Museum on Bird Life and Conservation of Wildlife, and to lead bird walks out of doors there.

Membership began climbing steadily as more people became interested in the great and pressing need for conservation of all our natural treasures.

The Los Angeles Audubon Society Inc., now has an enrollment of 700 members.

All legislation concerning conservation matters is carefully studied and action by the Society is taken where indicated.

Outstanding speakers address various meetings. A fine program of lectures and films, the Audubon Screen Tours, has brought top-notch speakers and nature photographers to the Society for fourteen years. An excellent

lending library is available to members of the Society in Audubon House, in Plummer Park. Many interesting items may be purchased there also. The Museum is open to visitors at specified hours several days a week, with hostesses in attendance. Youth groups, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Brownies, etc., come to the House for help in earning merit badges.

Well informed member speakers are available to talk to school groups and others, by calling the Audubon House. A Leadership Training Program for adults is available and the Society participates in nature workshops given by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

The Society has a busy calendar of events. The monthly Board Meeting, (which is open to members who wish to visit it), three field trips each month, some of them over-night trips, one morning program and one evening program, both of which may have speakers who are experts in certain fields, and member participation. Films, slides, and related materials, such as birdskins, plant specimens, etc., are used for illustrations. Five Audubon Screen Tours are offered each year.

Two very popular "special events" are: the Annual Tea, held in October, and the Annual Dinner, held in May.

As in the beginning years of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, there is a dedicated little group of men and women who give freely of their time and efforts to "promote the study and protection of birds and other wildlife, plants, soil, and water", that those who come after them will be the richer in having these treasures of nature which once lost, might be gone forever.

Gudrun E. Pepke

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## ALLEN HUMMINGBIRDS

by

Dorothy Lilly

(Continued from last month)

The mother's habit of working was too strong to stop there and soon she was building another nest. She laid eggs and sat two days over the full time but they would not hatch. She lost interest and abandoned the project. It was time to migrate anyhow. She would forget this rather unhappy season when out of four and a half nests she had only reared three young. Where were those three?

I watched for her the next year. A female did come but only stayed a day. I believe she nested that year in a neighbor's yard.

The following winter I moved to Los Angeles where a nesting Allen would be a rarity. If I spied one I would drop everything but my binoculars.

I found that these young spend 23 to 25 days as nestlings before it occurs to them that they might as well be flying. On the edge or by the side of the nest one practices a while and soon finds it has the knack. Away it goes. The other one may enjoy the comfort of the nest all to itself for a day or more before following.

Did I ever hold a baby hummer in my hand? No, I never did. One time, when the second pair in the Toyon were three weeks old and looked very appealing side by side in the nest with their heads up and eyes bright and alert, my husband and I thought we should try taking their picture. The background was too dark so we fastened white cardboard to a long stick. I slowly eased that in behind the nest but not slowly enough. Both little birds took off at once, falling on the ground in different directions. My husband rescued one and put it back in the nest. The other I could not find. I sat down feeling remorseful with the hope that it might have been able to fly up into a tree. Very soon I saw the

mother come and feed it on a limb ten feet above my head.

All afternoon she stayed within sight of it, somehow finding enough food there to satisfy requirements. She watched the fledgling as it put out every effort to learn to fly well the quick way. It had to have courage to start out and when it arrived had to reach for a foothold. When bedtime came it was on an insulated house wire eighteen inches from the wall. The mother urged it to go to a tree but it stayed right where it was out in the open. Leaving it there she herself flew into a tree to roost. I looked late that night and again at dawn and that tiny bird was still perched on the wire in the same place.

Did I ever try suspending a hummingbird feeder near these birds? Yes, the first year. On April 18, 1955 there was rain and a hailstorm. The hummers did not seem bothered in the least but in case nectar and insects might be hard to obtain I hung a honey and water syrup-filled glass feeder on a Guava branch. The young hummers found it right away and sipped from it many times a day. The mother did not appear to approve and would not touch it herself but could not stop them once they had tasted its wonderful sweetness and felt no ill effects. It is doubtful if it did any good except provide entertainment for window bird watchers. Sequoia Audubon members made it the occasion of an unscheduled field trip.

Later I hung the feeder in the Acacia but they never touched it. I suspect the mother told them it was forbidden fruit before they had time to taste it and, if there had been the slightest shortage of natural foods, she might not have been so strict.

THE END

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CONSERVATION EXPECTED IN NEW CONGRESS

Representatives of the National Audubon Society and a dozen other national conservation organizations met in Washington Dec. 6 at the invitation of the National Wildlife Federation to discuss legislative matters likely to be active in the 87th Congress, which convened for its first session early in January. President Carl Buchheister and Charles H. Callison, staff assistant, were on hand for the Society. The following legislative proposals or problems were considered:

1. THE WILDERNESS BILL. This important conservation measure is expected to be re-introduced promptly by prominent members of both the House and Senate. Early committee action is hoped for.

2. WATER POLLUTION CONTROL LEGISLATION. Measures similar to, some perhaps stronger than, the vetoed Blatnik bill of the last session certainly will be among the most important conservation goals.

3. A PESTICIDES COORDINATION BILL. H.R. 12419 and S. 3473 of the 86th Congress will probably be reintroduced, perhaps in revised form and, of course, with new numbers. This measure would require federal pestcontrol agencies to consult with fish and wildlife authorities before launching pesticide-spraying programs.

4. THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION for the prevention of oil pollution of the seas will be resubmitted to the Senate for ratification, according to information obtained by the National Audubon Society. Two thirds vote of the Senate is required to put this conservation program into effect in offshore waters of the United States. Canada, Mexico, and most European countries have already ratified the treaty.

5. NATIONAL SEASHORE AREAS. The last Congress did a lot of talking about proposed seashore areas under National Park Service on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, Padre Island in Texas, Point Reyes in California and Oregon Dunes in Oregon--but never voted on any of them. Other areas where unspoiled seashore may be saved for future use are under study.

6. WETLANDS ACQUISITION. A bill reported to be in draft form in the Department of the Interior, would authorize a treasury advance or "revolving fund" of \$150 million to speed up the acquisition and preservation of vital wetlands-habitat for wildlife. Such a "crash program" has been advocated by the National Audubon Society.

A number of other conservation problems likely to come to the attention of Congress were explored at the conference. Among these were proposals to make permanent the status of wildlife refuges in the upper Klamath basin of California and Oregon, improve the administration of public grazing lands in the Western states, establish the Salmon River in Idaho as a spawning sanctuary for migratory fishes. The wildlife aspects of any land-retirement program, likely to be offered as a cure for crop surpluses, was considered a probable opportunity.

The above is an excerpt from the National Audubon Society's NEWS AND VIEWS AND LEADERS CONSERVATION GUIDE which is being sent to each branch every two weeks. Watch the newspapers and conservation publications for progress on these proposals and problems.

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AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Do not forget Robert C. Hermes Thursday Evening, February 16th, "Animals at Home and Afield", as only Mr. Hermes can show them and tell about them. Birds, too, of course.

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A FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BIRDS

Be sure to order Roger Tory Peterson's new edition due March 1st. Send your order in early to:

Esther Johnson, at Audubon House, to be sure there are enough on hand for immediate delivery. \$4.50 plus tax; 36 color plates; 24 black and whites. Complete cross-indexing between text and illustrations.

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Bill Lehmann, who was our excellent field trip chairman until the U. S. Navy transferred him to sea duty last summer, wrote to tell of his experiences birding in Japan and the Philippines. He said "Birding in Japan (or at least in Kyushu) is rather frustrating. Ken Stager is right. Any bird that is readily seen is caught and caged. The remaining birds are extremely secretive! In spite of this and other difficulties, Bill managed to add a few 'life birds' to his list such as: Great tit, Carrion crow, Tree sparrow, (European), Long-tailed tit, Red-rumped swallow, White-rumped swift, Black-eared kite and Black-tailed gull.

Later Bill wrote from Subic Bay in the Philippines. "The first bird I saw as we entered the bay was the White and red eagle-kite. This is a really beautiful bird. The head, nape, throat and breast are white. Back, wings, tail and belly chestnut red. It is a very graceful flyer. The large-billed crow looks very much like our Crow. The Brown shrike....its voice has much the same quality as our Loggerhead shrike. The Crested mynah....has a beautiful pure whistle. The Gray-Breasted sand swallow....a rather plain little bird....with bat-like flight. The White-breasted wood-swallow is not a swallow at all....it is.... a beautiful shade of gray on the upper parts and throat and pure white on the rump and rest of the under parts.... the Pacific swallow is quite similar to the Barn swallow....they travelled at such speed and changed directions so suddenly, it was like trying to follow a hummingbird."

I know Bill would rather be home with his family, but as you can see from the above, sea duty had its compensations.

Bob Blackstone

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#### Break on the D.D.T. Front

City Forester Joseph A. Sweeney of Toledo, Ohio discards D.D.T. spraying

after seven years. Elms in surrounding Lucas County having gone unsprayed are less affected by Dutch Elm Disease than D.D.T. treated city trees.

National Audubon Society  
"News and Views"

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Hoots, Coos and Gallinules

Stephanie and Bill Daywalt report 8 Whistling Swans at Little Lake, Highway 395 Christmas Day; and approximately 30 of them at the lake fed by old Benton Hot Springs on Highway 120. Otis Wade tells of a male Costa Hummer which put in an appearance at his feeder on Jan. 6th and has been a regular since. Very nearly an early record!

\* \* \* \* \*

Tuesday Evening Meeting  
January 10th

The very large crowd at this meeting was amply rewarded. Herb Clarke was the highly entertaining speaker with beautiful slides while wife Olga was the unusually adept projectionist. Arnold Spall, batting for Bob Blackstone, read an amusing letter from Mrs. Roger Peterson; and called on both Jim Huffman and Russ Wilson for a brief run-down of their marvelous birding trip, with others, to the great state of Texas.

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Nancy Burns Killgore

It is with deep regret we learn of the passing of this fine birder. Born in Glendale in 1910 she was a graduate of Principia High School in St. Louis as well as U.S.C. after attending Holmby College. At the time of her death, Dec. 23, 1960 she was a teacher in the L.A. City Schools. Miss Killgore was a contributing member of the National and L.A. Audubon Society. Her aunt, Mrs. Paul W. Sampsell and several friends have sent donations to the L. A. Society in Nancy's memory. Others wishing to do so may make their checks payable to the L.A. Audubon Society & mail them to Mr. Don Adams, Treasurer, 705 20th St. Manhattan Beach.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY a branch of the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, New York  
Headquarters, Nature Museum, Library located in Audubon House in Plummer Park  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 46 HO 7-9495  
President: Mr. James W. Huffman Registrar of Members: Mrs. Robert Sandmeyer  
2912 Manhattan Ave., Manhattan Beach 355 W. Elm Ave., Burbank

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 1961

- February 2 Thursday, 7:30 P.M., EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, Audubon House
- February 4 Saturday, 9:45-11:15 A.M., JUNIOR ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Griffith Park Boys Camp. Los Feliz and Riverside Dr. entrance. Drive to Golfcourse Club House parking lot, take road across from parking lot to Boys Camp. The program will be on "DESERT WILDLIFE" by Mary V. Hood. Colored slides. Children 8-12 years and parents welcome. Director: John Peebles, HO 7-1661
- February 11 Saturday, FIELD TRIP to Malibu Lagoon and Point Dume. Take Pacific Coast Highway past Malibu pier, across bridge over Malibu creek. Park on ocean side of highway north of bridge. 8:30 A.M. Leader: Dave Robison, PO 1-0217
- February 14 Tuesday, 8:00 P.M., EVENING MEETING, Great Hall, Plummer Park. Program will be devoted to Elk. Two excellent films will be presented--"NORTH AMERICAN ELK", general survey; and "OLYMPIC ELK", one of the finest, "truest" of Disney's TRUE LIFE ADVENTURES. Gerhard Bakker will give a short talk on the Tule Elk. Chairman: Bob Blackstone, CR 6-3879
- February 16 Thursday, FIELD TRIP, to Mt. Monrovia in Monrovia Canyon. This park has its own Nature Museum. Bus leaves Biltmore Hotel Grand Ave. entrance at 8:30 A.M. sharp. Fare \$2.50. Please have exact change. Food for the birds and wildflower seeds to plant, please. Reservations Feb. 13,14,15. Leader: Edna Burt, PL 5-1044
- February 16 Thursday, SCREEN TOUR, "ANIMALS AT HOME AND AFIELD", Robert C. Hermes. Mr. Hermes of Homestead, Florida, has made friends with many wilderness creatures, both at home and in his extensive travels. Animals in the broader sense, birds, mammal and other forms of wildlife, are the star performers in an all color motion picture. Come and bring a friend. Ticket at the door.
- February 23 Thursday, MORNING STUDY CLASS, Long Hall, Plummer Park. "LIFE ZONE CONCEPT", Part II: "UPPER SONORAN ZONE--Fields and Chaparral", Mary V. Hood and her colored slides. Everyone interested in the wildlife habitats of California, the birds, animals and plants will enjoy this series. Chairman: Olive Alvey, NO 1-8036
- February 26 Sunday, FIELD TRIP, Boat trip to Santa Cruz Island. Cards have been sent to persons who have attended boat trips or have sent their name to the Headquarters in Plummer Park. These trips are limited to a certain number and reservations are taken in the order received. Anyone wishing his name on this list please send it to Headquarters for future trips.
- March 11 This second Saturday field trip has been set up to the first Saturday in March--March 4. The Audubon Center of California has invited the branches to visit the Center on this day. Watch for details in the March schedule.

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Persons interested in conservation, birding, the out-of-doors and meeting with people of like interest, are cordially invited to attend the above activities. For further information call HO 7-9495 between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, or PO 1-7635 on Tuesdays, Fridays and evenings.