

Los Angeles Audubon Society

The Western Tanager

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NUMBER 5



ADVENTURES IN THE DESERT

By Paul and Violet Orr

In grade school geography we got the impression that deserts were dry, hot regions of great shifting sand dunes. Later we learned that they were areas of small precipitation -- only ten inches of rain and snow in a year, or less, like Nevada and southeastern Oregon where Violet spent six of her childhood years. And, finally, Prof. Jaeger in "The California Deserts" pointed out that deserts occur in the regions of the world where winds are almost constant due to the rotation of the earth.

If the region is sandy one finds dunes, as in the northern end of both the Coachella Valley and Death Valley. But always the winds take the moisture from the ground. So plants and shrubs which grow there must be hardy and especially adapted to conserve moisture.

On our travels in the Mohave and Colorado Deserts we always greet the dark green creosote bush, with its graceful gray-lavender wands which bow to the winds but rarely break. It

grows from 3 to 8 feet high. It has a deep tap root but also many small roots near the surface to absorb any drop of moisture. This it conserves by having very tiny hard green leaves.

In April, and longer if there are late rains, the creosote bush is adorned with little yellow flowers which shortly turn into tiny gray cotton balls of seed. Like most of the other desert plants it keeps on flowering as long as there is moisture, so it is usual to find flowers, seeds, and empty pods on the same shrub. The Papago Indians of southern Arizona still use it to make many home remedies. It has been their "corner drugstore."

In both of these deserts there is water near the surface in certain places. Often this is under the desert washes which carry surface water only after the infrequent rains. But there is a charm which lures one along these dry washes akin to the pleasure of following a singing stream.

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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER



TUESDAY,

See the enclosed Special Reservation Form

FEBRUARY 11



ADVENTURES in the DESERT

Continued

Sauntering down the Morongo Wash one early spring morning, we were angling over to the west side where a large creosote bush hung out its yellow flowers atop the high bank. Suddenly three birds flew across in front of us, so we stopped. One ran gracefully over the sand and rocks, stopped under a bush, and circled toward us. It had a faint pinkish flush along its flanks. As it came nearer we could see the long insect-catching bill. Then it began to "bob" and curtsy -- surely a wren!

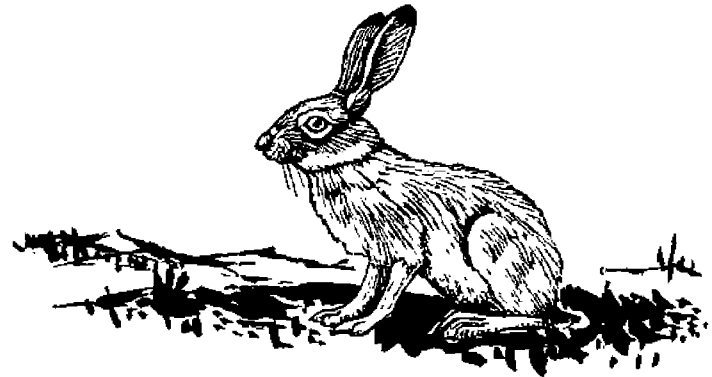
As we stood still it ran up to within three feet and examined us with interest, which we returned, for a couple of seconds -- head slightly cocked to one side. The eyes, with their dark irises, were so guileless and trusting that we wondered if it were a young adult. Then, perhaps deciding that discretion was the better part of valor, and having partially satisfied its curiosity, it ran nimbly off. But not before we had marvelled at its delicately streaked pale breast and the fine brown barrings on wings and tail. As we watched, it flew up the bank and into the yellow-flowered creosote bush, pausing there to pour forth a cascade of pure wren notes. This was the rock wren -- and a daintier bird we have never seen.

In the "low desert" along the washes the desert willow tree, with its graceful lavender waving branches and narrow olive green leaves, shows the presence of water. Last September we found it blooming -- and again this May -- with its little orchid-like flowers an inch and a half in length of white or lavender -- but all of them with tiny yellow lines inside the goblet-shaped flower. Such a feast for the hummingbirds! In one of these willows -- more accurately catalpas -- an amethyst throated Costa's hummingbird lit and poured forth a concert of real musical notes -- the only time we have ever heard one sing.

Later, in the middle of March, we had gone over to the same large desert catalpa tree to examine the narrow and long new green leaves when a riot of color almost exploded in our faces. As it settled on a nearby tree -- scolding all the while -- we recognized the cactus or Ladder-backed Woodpecker with its black and white bars across the back. We returned the next day and saw her fly from a hole in the trunk. She did not approve of our guessing the secret of her nest, so after that we did not disturb her. But in the middle of May we stopped by and found just a touch of gray down

on the rim of the well-worn hole showing where the young had perched before being led away by their parents. Next March we hope to look again.

Another sure indication of underground water is the presence of mesquite bushes with their fine yellow-green leaves protected by sharp thorns. Holding the sand, they often build hills with the bushes continuing to top the sand. Near one of our favorite washes we climb into the low mesquite "hills" where rabbits love to hide and where Paul saw one of the most handsome of the fly-catchers -- the silky black, and crested -- Phainopepla. It is about the size of a mockingbird and with similar white spots under the wings which flash as it flies. But it is shining black and not gray.



The desert provides not only a home to its full-time resident birds but is host to many others in their spring and fall migrations. It is part of the great Pacific Flyway. One day, late in March, in the Mohave Desert, we noticed a few swallows flying low over the shrubs in a northwest direction. They flew singly, but for over two hours we watched them go by, so hundreds must have passed.

Also in early March, in the northern part of the Colorado Desert, we saw some large black birds soaring in the sky with great sweeping wings. A few came close enough so we could see the beautiful underside of the great wings -- black on the front edge but the rest a dazzling white. These were Turkey Vultures -- sometimes called buzzards -- the valuable scavengers of desert areas. As we watched, more than 75 filled the sky, and we marvelled as we had seen only 5 or 6 together before. Where were they going? How did such a large flock find enough to eat as they traveled?

To our surprise, one day we saw approaching us a line of light brown water birds a little smaller than gulls. They came in low and lit on the asphalt in front of our car. Did they mistake the paved road for water or a shoreline? We could see they were wading birds with bills 4 to 5 inches long turned down at the end. Then we

Continued on page 43

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR



HEADQUARTERS, NATURE MUSEUM AND LIBRARY LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE,
PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 46, 876-0202

ARNOLD SMALL, *President*
MRS RUSSELL WILSON, *Executive Secretary*

JANUARY 1964

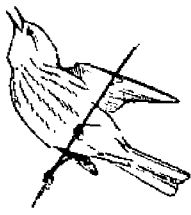
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January

Open Mon., Wed., Thurs., Sat. 2-4 P.M.
Youth groups by appointment 3-5 P.M.
Open before and after each meeting

- Jan. 2 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.
- Jan. 11 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS - Fern Dell Nature Museum, Griffith Park.
(Western Avenue Entrance) 9:45-11:15 A.M. Program on the "Chaparral".
- For information call: Ed Anacker HO 7-1661
- Jan. 11 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Carrizo Plain. Meet at 8:30 A.M. in Mari-
Jan. 12 copa at the junction of State Highway 166 and U. S. 399. (Take U. S. 99 north from Los
Angeles to junction with State Highway 166 about four miles north of Wheeler Ridge, go
west on 166 about 25 miles to Maricopa) Last year we saw LeConte's Thrashers,
Vesper Sparrows, Short-eared Owls, Prairie Falcons, Ferruginous Hawks and Sand-
hill Cranes. Bring lunch and drinking water and wear warm clothing. Saturday night
will be spent in Bakersfield and Sunday morning we will visit the Kern National Wild-
life Refuge, which is located 19 miles west of Delano on Garces Avenue.
- Leader: Arnold Small VE 7-2272.
- Jan. 13 MONDAY - EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. WEST HOLLYWOOD PARK, 647 N. San
Vicente Blvd. Ernest J. Willoughby will present a program on "Alaska - Birds of the
Arctic". Mr. Willoughby has been a member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society since
his high-school days. He is now doing post-graduate work at the University of Califor-
nia at Los Angeles. For the past several summers he has been engaged in biological
investigations in Alaska and the Bering Sea.
- Program Chairman: Don Adams - FR 2-5536
- Jan. 23 THURSDAY WILDLIFE FILM - 7:45 P.M. John Burroughs Junior High School, 600
S. McCadden Pl., Los Angeles. John Taft of Camarillo, California will present "Land
That I Love" a dramatization of the impact of man on the land and the wildlife. Single
admission \$1.00, students 50¢.
- Wildlife Films Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner RI 8-7510
- Jan. 26 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP Birding in the City Parks. Meet at Fern Dell in Griffith
Park at 8:00 A.M. for birding here and in Echo Park, McArthur Park and Elysian
Park. Bring picnic lunch. Please note that the traditional trip to Chatsworth Reservoir
on this date is not possible due to the reservoir being drained for construction work.
- Leader: Bill Watson - 876-0202
- Feb. 6 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.
- Feb. 8 SATURDAY-SUNDAY FIELD TRIP - Ramer Lake and Salton Sea area. Meet at
Feb. 9 8:00 A.M. at the Headquarters of the Imperial State Waterfowl Management Area at
Ramer Lake, about one and one half miles south of Calipatria on State Highway 111.
Those wishing to camp Friday and/or Saturday night may do so at Finney Lake (bring
your own water). For others there are good motels in Brawley. Two years ago our
trip list here exceeded one hundred species.
- Leader: Jim Huffman FR 2-7124
- Feb. 11 TUESDAY ANNUAL DINNER - 6:30 P.M. Raffels Restaurant, 4310 Degnan Avenue,
Los Angeles (Leimert Park). Dr. James E. Crouch will present the after-dinner pro-
gram, "Florida", a 16 mm motion picture produced by Dr. Crouch. See announcement
and reservation form enclosed with this issue.

Program Chairman: Don Adams FR 2-5536



AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

By ELIZABETH ROSE

THE WESTERN TANGER
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

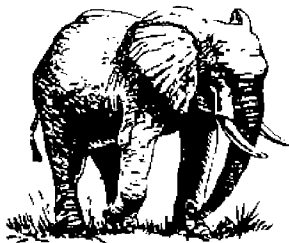
7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

FREE TO MEMBERS OTHERS \$1.50 ANNUALLY



Editor Robert E. Blackstone, 10363 Calvin Ave., LA 25
Art Editor Bob Sandmeyer
Field Notes Arnold Small
Audubon Activities Elizabeth Rose
Typing Helen Sandmeyer - Caroline Adams
Folding & Mailing Marion Wilson

The "Monday, Tuesday evening meeting", as presiding officer Jim Huffman called it, was well attended. More than 175 people came to West Hollywood Park for the December 9th program featuring President Arnold Small's African slides. After being introduced by Program Chairman Don Adams, Arnold introduced us to his Safari party and oriented us as to places on maps. One of the first points that Arnold made was that the "forest tracts are disappearing faster than you can imagine" and that the indigenous forests so necessary for the preservation of habitat are being cut. Using colorful Swahili terms from time to time during his talk, Arnold then proceeded to explain something of the geography of the area. He illustrated the eastern "rift" and western "rift", cracks in the earth's surfaces, which resulted in the mountains, lakes and savannahs which they covered. He divided his talk into several sections, starting at the city of Nairobi. In Nairobi National Park he explained, "the animals are free to roam while the humans are kept in cages, (taxis, that is). With the section on Amboseli, we began to see his many beautiful bird photographs. Of course, there had to be pictures of lions, elephants and rhinos as well, as this was



Africa! Outstanding in the bird group was a flying flock of Sacred Ibis. Pictures such as that of the Long-crested Hawk Eagles were interspersed with pictures of the party enjoying all the comforts of home, daily freshly baked bread, for instance. Arnold gave the scientific explanation for the flat topped trees he showed in this country. He spoke of forty species of Weaver birds and many, many other birds, some just "plain" birds, as larks, too numerous to identify. They added the Ostrich to the bird list although they wanted to add it to the mammal list! Arnold had set up the long sequence of pictures so cleverly that he had a moment of suspense built up before each change of cartridge. Pictures of strange and exotic birds passed by in rapid succession: African Stilt, Red-bellied Duck, Lily-trotter, Knob-billed Stork, South African Crowned Cranes. In the animal kingdom, Arnold was most impressed by the well-adapted Giraffe. He showed the Secretary Bird, "a family unto itself", and the ubiquitous White-necked Raven. The slides were selected to give a well rounded picture of his trip. (This reporter took 20 pages of notes!) At the end, Arnold

Executive Secretary Marion Wilson requests that all members inform her, by phone or mail, of their Zip Code number. This will greatly facilitate mail handling and ensure speedier delivery of important Society news.

AUDUBON CAMP

A reminder from Bill Goodall, National Audubon Society Western Representative and Director of the Audubon Camp of the West, not to delay any longer sending in your applications for one of the three two-week sessions next summer. University credit is available in the Camp in the Wind River region of Wyoming. For information address P.O. Box 3666, El Monte, California.

explained the title of his program, "M'zuri Sana", WONDERFUL, and it was, indeed, a WONDERFUL program!



Sunday, November 24th, it was evident that many people had to get out-of-doors and away from the TV, for this field trip to Lake Norcoian was well attended. It was good to see the Lehmanns, father and son, Earle Greene, the visiting Woods, and Arnold Small's guest, Mr. Slaus, from New York in addition to nearly fifty regular attenders. Lil Venatta started off the good day's birding by spotting a Burrowing Owl in a nearby field. On the reservation, there were the promised wintering ducks: Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, American Widgeon, Shoveler, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Canvas-back, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and Ruddy Duck. A Red-bellied Hawk was spotted and the six or seven immature Black-crowned Night Herons in one tree aroused much interest. The lunch time species count was sixty-five. Afterward, a long car caravan toured the surrounding country-side.



The month's report must not fail to take notice of the Annual Christmas Bazaar. There were many unique items for sale. Bob Sandmeyer's painted stones were the most "fun" item; Olga Clarke's textile painted bird prints on aprons one of the most attractive. The whole affair showed off many a birder's versatility.

THE AUDUBON SCENE

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

The Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society, reporting on the Sea Otter-Abalone hearing before the State Senate fact-finding committee of Senator Farr, November 19, noted that their own Society was well represented, as well as The Point Lobos League, the Sierra Club and other Audubon branches. They stated, "Senator Farr and Senator Sturgeon of Paso Robles both expressed the opinion that there was little possibility that state legislation protecting the otter would be changed. The full day's testimony left little doubt in the minds of all except those whose livelihood was tied up with the abalone fishing, that there were too many fishermen in the business."

THE SANDERLING - December 1963.



The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society reports passing a resolution on November 4 commending the Palo Alto Mayor's Citizens' Advisory Committee on Parks and Recreation and its sub-committee on Palo Alto Baylands for "their zeal in resisting plans for the use of baylands incompatible with the preservation of these lands in their natural state" and supporting the "recommendation (of the above group) to create Wildlife Sanctuary of a portion of the baylands area..."

THE AVOCET - December 1963.



The Whittier Audubon Society reports, "Mrs. J. H. Comby, our Editor, was recently honored by the California Conservation Council when she was presented with an honor award for her work in promoting nature centers. The award was made during the three day conference held by the Council in Pasadena when over 1000 Federal, State, County and local conservation leaders met." Mrs. Comby has been active in the Los Angeles and Whittier Audubon Societies for many years. The report continues, "She was instrumental in establishing the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Museum, which later became the Audubon Center, the Sierra Madre Villa Nature Museum, which has just been replaced by the McCurdy Nature Study Center in Eaton Canyon, the San Dimas Canyon Museum and our own Trailside Museum in Sycamore Canyon..."

THE WHITTIER OBSERVER - December 1963.



CONSERVATION

CORNER

By DAVID DU VAL

Whooping Cranes "Whoop It Up"

We are always pleased to see our conservation efforts rewarded by an increase in population of one of our rare avian species. Such is the case with the most recent report on the whooping crane. By November 6 thirty-three cranes were reported on their wintering grounds in Texas. In 1962 the number was thirty-two. However the big news this year is that seven of the thirty-three are "young-of-the-year" birds, the largest number of young birds since 1958. While six adults were missing at the time of this report (which would raise the total population of wild whoopers to thirty-nine) it is hoped that these stragglers will have arrived by the time you are reading this.

Preying On Predators "Endangered"

A much needed Predatory Mammals Bill (H. R. 9037) has been introduced by Rep. J. D. Dingell (Mich.). This bill would serve to provide better conservation and control of such wild carnivores as the coyote, bobcat, and mountain lion. It would reduce the army of some 600 government trappers who are still using mass-killing methods such as poisons to reduce wild animal populations. This bill would provide one or two "trapper-instructors" to show ranchers how to eliminate individual predators that cause damage to their livestock. This system has already been successfully used in Kansas and Missouri. While supported by most conservation groups, it will undoubtedly be attacked by the sheep men who are being stirred up by the government trappers.

The Wealthiest Goose in the World

A bill now in the Senate Commerce Committee (S. 266) would extend and enlarge the restoration program in Hawaii of the Nene Goose. The present federal assistance (\$15,000 per year) will expire next year. S. 266 would extend this to \$25,000 per year for the next five years. Articles about this bird and the programs to save it from extinction can be found in a recent issue of the San Diego Zoo's ZooNooz.

Make Way for Progress (?)

The Save-The-Redwoods League in San Francisco reports that Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park is being threatened by plans for construction of a four-lane highway. The routes being considered by the State Division of Highways would either slice through this 2000 year old forest of 300 foot tall redwoods or mar the nearby Gold Bluffs Seashore.

Southern California

BIRDS

BY ARNOLD SMALL

Above-normal rainfall during early November raised hopes that the winter rainy season was off to a good start. However, despite these encouraging beginnings, no worthwhile precipitation was recorded during the latter part of November and the first half of December. Even though temperatures in mountain areas often fell below freezing, and some snow lay in drifts upon the ground, the influx of mountain species was slight. Of course, the excellent flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches which occurred earlier in the fall was still noticeable, although the total numbers of these birds did not appear to increase very much after mid-November. The fall and winter flight of robins was very poor, while, as for the Cedar Waxwings, only a few flocks were found.

A nice mixed flock of Black Turnstones and Surf-birds could usually be seen clinging to the hulls of small boats anchored in Santa Monica Harbor, while smaller numbers together with what may have been another Rock Sandpiper could occasionally be seen at the Playa del Rey breakwaters. Wintering waterfowl numbers were slow in building up, and are still somewhat below normal.

Most interesting was the report of a male Harlequin Duck by Ray Shumake at Malibu Lake. Cattle Egrets apparently have indeed arrived in California although the first actual specimen has not yet been secured. You may recall that single individual was recorded from near El

SPECIAL REPORT

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Audubon members who did not attend the Society's Annual Christmas Bazaar Saturday, December 7 missed an event of considerable note. The fine handcraft items numbered in the hundreds. Members and guests who visited during the afternoon expressed their interest in, and appreciation of, the articles for sale by purchases that totaled \$400.00 gross.

It should be impressively noted that many hands worked long and hard toward the success of this event. The list would be very long if each person were individually named, but grateful thanks are due each and everyone. An exception must be made in order to thank two individuals, however, whose labors were really monumental--Olive Alvey for the quality and quantity of her creations, which are actually the base on which the Bazaar is built; and Bob Sandmeyer whose artistic talents vitalized the Bazaar with publicity, posters, and numerous other professional touches.

Toro during the Christmas Census of 1962--and this constituted the first sight record for the state. Three more were found at the south end of the Salton Sea along the road leading to the headquarters of the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge early in November this year. Now another has been sighted--this time near the city of Industry (in the San Gabriel Valley). It was first seen by Paul Howard during the second week of December, and was seen (as were the others) to be feeding among cattle. It should not be necessary to remind everyone afield from now on to be alert to the possibilities of Cattle Egrets, especially among cattle. We must be careful to examine any suspicious white bird seen in cattle feed lots and pastures.

A lone Snow Goose appeared at Malibu Lagoon in early December and was noted as late as Dec. 15. An Eastern Phoebe was found by Russ and Marion Wilson Nov. 17 in North Hollywood Park; it was seen there again Dec. 4. Small numbers of Red Phalaropes came ashore to coastal lagoons during November, but most had departed by the end of the month. Small flocks of Golden-crowned Kinglets were noted at a few lowland areas as well as small flocks of Pine Siskins.

Watch now for incoming flocks of Cedar Waxwings which should be arriving in this area during January. Also, visits to waterfowl refuges should be profitable especially after the closing of the hunting season in mid-January. No reports were received of Lewis' Woodpeckers, but they should be watched for among the oaks in canyons. Careful attention to coastal waters, especially in the vicinity of piers should produce such birds as Old Squaws, alcids, Common Scoters, and possibly Fulmars during January.



ADVENTURES *in the* DESERT

Continued

knew they were Whimbrels which we had first seen the year before at Capitola along the seashore. After a minute they rose swiftly, circled low over the shrubs, and then rose on powerful wings against a 40 mph wind and quickly disappeared in the direction of the San Geronio Wild Area.

We had a delightful experience one day as we drove along a graded desert road enroute to a favorite canyon. A large brown bird flew ahead of us and into the bushes. Coming to the spot we then saw a similar but light grey bird -- about 10 inches long -- on the high tip of a shrub. Examining it through the glasses showed a round owl head with no tufts but with a white line above the eye. These and its long legs suggested the Burrowing Owl. In a short time the brown one joined the grey and they flew ahead of us, perhaps wanting to draw us from the spot. Not succeeding, they returned to their original perch where the brown one gave a chattering or chuckling call something like the flicker's. Was she warning her young to "lie low"?

The brown one, which we took to be the mother, then flew down on the ground a little ahead of our car and "bowed" as the water ouzel "dips". This was a further sign of her agitation and of her attempt to distract our attention.

When she flew back to her mate he welcomed her with a single low note which seemed to say, "Don't worry so much, maybe they will go away. As the pair stayed so near we thought their nest must be close by. Getting out of the car we examined a couple of small holes as we knew these owls enlarged the holes of rodents, or in loose soil dug their own. Not more than 25 feet ahead and to the right of the car we came to two large openings -- each 8 inches across and 6 inches high -- which seemed to converge about a foot down. On the mound in front were many three-toed prints of the owls' feet. So this was their burrow!

We did not further alarm the solicitous parents by trying to follow the burrow back 7 to 10 feet to the actual nest. But rather saluted these members of a hardy and widespread species which eats all kinds of insects and rodents, many of which it catches in the daytime. They breed on the treeless plains from British Columbia in the north down to Patagonia in South America. As we drove on we looked back to see the relieved mother owl fly down to the burrow. Her mate had been right -- "they did go away."

Probably our crowning desert adventure was our "hunt" for the desert bighorn sheep. It began one April when our hiking club went to the (Anza) Borrego State Park in the lower Colorado Desert. Lingered after the others had gone we were able to go up the desert Coyote Creek -- following workmen in a truck -- and actually driving in our '49 Plymouth through the shallow waters of the creek itself.

Passing the famous Santa Catarina Springs, we went through a valley and explored in Cougar Canyon on foot, where we managed to spy the head and shoulders of a lone lookout ram high on the rim of the canyon. This whetted our appetite and returning to the ranger headquarters we inquired how we might really see some of these magnificent desert bighorn sheep.

Following the ranger's suggestion, we returned in the heat of the following September -- before the campers came back in October and while the sheep had to come down lower for water. Shouldering our packs in the afternoon heat of 103 (in the shade!) we toiled up Palm Canyon, stopping to rest gratefully in the shade of some five groups of native California fan palms. After hiking two miles we found the creek running above ground. Another mile up, where the canyon turned south, we made our camp on its west shoulder. We had seen sheep signs in the last mile, and also had a fine view of the large Chukars (quail) with their black necklaces, barred sides, and red legs as they climbed nimbly up a bank.

Just after we got up at six the next morning we saw a young ram come over the opposite slope of the canyon. He browsed and then took the familiar stance with his forefeet on a rock, and looked at us. He had fine horns but they were not curved completely around.

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"It's a life bird for me too, you know!"

ADVENTURES in the DESERT

Continued . . .

A little later two kids came over, followed by a ewe with spike horns. They all grazed, on the shaded side of the canyon slope, and did not seem to mind us, for over an hour. Then an old ram, whose magnificent horns came full curve, crossed over the rim. When we made some noise, though no quick movement, he herded them off across the shoulder of the hill to the south. It was wonderful how the light grey-brown of their pelts blended into the color of the vegetation on the hillside.

Beginners' luck! We were thrilled! And happy to learn that there are some 250 bighorn sheep in the Santa Rosa Mountains south from San Jacinto to the Borrego (sheep in Spanish) State Park. But these fine desert sheep are threatened with extinction by the shortage of water holes, although the State Fish and Game Commission has improved a number for their use.

The sheep are also feeling keen competition from burros gone wild and multiplying fast. These not only use the same range but foul the water holes so that the sheep will not drink. The Fish and Game Commission has found no way to meet this threat. Do we need a state law to protect the waterholes for our native desert bighorns?

How does one have adventures in the desert? Well, we never had any while whizzing along the freeway at 65 miles an hour. We usually go by highway to some spot which is off on a side road, macadam or graded. In this vicinity we drive slowly and stop when we see anything of interest. Then from where we are staying in camp, cabin, or motel, we walk a mile or two in the morning and

evening -- going quietly without talking if we want to see birds.

And what of rattle snakes? There are some in the desert, and one should be alert, but in ten years of camping and hiking there we have seen only one and it was asleep. One is less likely to meet a rattler in the desert than a drunken driver on the highway.

One of our first nights in the "high desert," the Mojave, we made our bed on the ground, and during the night a sandstorm came up. We slept warm, but in the morning had to shake sand out of everything -- including our ears and hair! Now, we have our car fixed so we can sleep in it. Sometimes we go to the desert for just a day, but it is more restful and interesting to spend a weekend. The main thing is to go -- and then look and listen. Nature will provide a wealth of interesting experiences.

We have said nothing about the beauty of the clear blue sky, the piled white clouds, or the dark stormy ones. And the endless delight of the changing colors on the foothills and mountains.

In April of this year, as a rain storm was abating, we witnessed a magnificent rainbow spanning the pass east of Banning, and arching from the foot of San Jacinto up to high above its 10,800 ft. summit across to and above even higher San Gorgonio, and then coming to rest at the base of this highest mountain in Southern California. Both mountains were crowned with newly fallen snow -- white on their dark bulks. The beauty of the many colors of this splendid rainbow held a promise for us -- a pot of gold of many more adventures with the birds, the animals, the flowers, and the shrubs in the unspoiled parts of the desert where Nature can still achieve her miracle of ever new creation of beauty.

About the Authors...

★ ★ ★

We graduated from Stanford ('25), Paul in Biology and Violet in History. We have taught-- Paul in high school and Violet in elementary, but now have a small business which enables us to spend three or four days every few weeks out in the desert or in the mountains.

Should you like to use some parts of this account which we have enclosed with a personal annual letter to some 300 of our friends? Only two of them, unfortunately, are members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

Paul and Violet Orr

The Orrs are members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society; we hope that they will become better acquainted in the Society in the future. We felt that their letter was worthy of publishing in its entirety.

Editor

JUNIOR NATURALISTS

This organization, sponsored by the Los Angeles Audubon Society, is in need of support. The group is open to boys and girls from the age of 8 to 12. A group such as this can be a wonderful means of introducing young people to nature. If you have a youngster, in this age group, or know of one, contact Mr. Ed. Anacker, at the Fern Dell Nature Museum HO 7-1661.

ATTENTION

YOU ARE INVITED

Los Angeles
AUDUBON
Society

6:30 P.M.

**8th ANNUAL
DINNER**

**TUESDAY
FEBRUARY
11, 1964**

**\$ 4 PER PERSON
INCLUDING TAX & TIP**

**RAFFELS RESTAURANT
4310 DEGNAN BLVD.
LOS ANGELES**



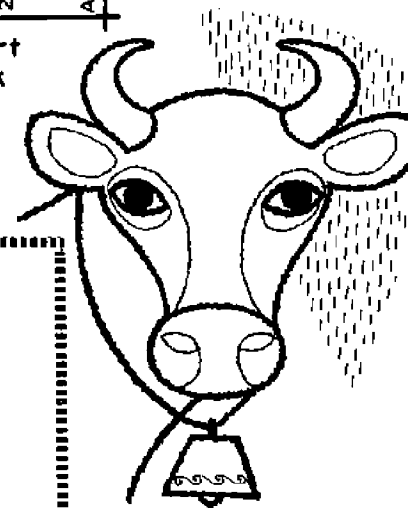
PROGRAM



DR. JAMES CROUCH

Florida

FLORIDA



PRIME RIB

CUT ON DOTTED LINE

Mr. Hugh Weiser
3749 Shannon Road
Los Angeles, California
90027

Please reserve _____ places for me
at the Annual Dinner, Feb. 11, 1964.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP CODE _____

I enclose my check or money order for \$ _____

Important

Reservations must be made by Thursday, Feb. 6, 1964.