

THE WESTERN TANAGER

VOL 1

OCTOBER

NO 1

WHAT IS "THE TANAGER?"

Conceived with the idea of stimulating interest in our feathered friends, THE WESTERN TANAGER will be published monthly by The Los Angeles Audubon Society for distribution to its members and to others interested in the activities of Audubon. In addition to the news of the Society, THE WESTERN TANAGER will contain as many feature articles, curious facts, and other interesting information about the birds as can be crowded into the available space. We hope that you will welcome this new venture of the Audubon Society, and that you will help your editor to make it a success by communicating with her whenever you feel you have something that will be of interest to the others. Write to Mrs. Raymond Brennan, 3507 Crestmont Avenue, Los Angeles, or telephone Normandy 7952.

BIRD COLORATION

If you have followed the gorgeous Tanager and found him perched on some high branch, his exotic coat ablaze in the sunlight, or if you have watched the little Hummingbird darting from blossom to blossom, his colors changing with each movement, you must certainly have wondered at the marvels of bird coloration.

In ordinary birds there is thought to be but three pigments in any of the feathers--red, yellow and brown. A green pigment occurs in the African Plantain-eaters, but in other birds the green is due to a yellow or brown pigment overlaid with a structure that refracts the light. Blue and all the metallic colors are due entirely to this process of refraction, the exposed portion of the feather being coated with a transparent colorless layer of extreme thinness (8/1000 of an inch) which breaks up the rays of light.

Thus we can see the Brewer Blackbird standing solemnly in the shade dressed in somber black, and the next moment he is strutting across our lawn sporting a dashing coat of green.

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Los Angeles Audubon is fortunate in having for its new president one whom we all admire and one who is a real lover of nature. We appreciate the responsibility you have undertaken, Mrs. Salmon, and we wish you much success.

SOCIETY RECEIVES GIFT

As the scrapbook that the Audubon Society uses for the recording of clippings and other information of interest has been filled, Mrs. Robert Fargo has requested the pleasure of presenting us with a new one. Mrs. Fargo, we thank you.

MRS. FARGO ENTERTAINS BOARD

The Executive Board of the Los Angeles Audubon Society for the year 1934-35 held its first meeting Thursday, September 13, at the home of Mrs. Robert Fargo, a dearly beloved life member of our Society.

After a delicious buffet luncheon, Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon, the new president, called the meeting to order. Items of particular interest to members include the following:

It was voted to include in our activities the study of trees.

There will be no official speaker during the ensuing year. Instead, President Salmon will appoint various ones to represent the Society as the occasion arises.

The offices of Membership Chairman and Treasurer are to be combined.

The office of Program Chairman will be dispensed with for the year 1934-35. Each of the monthly programs will be arranged by individuals appointed by the president.

Past presidents of the Society will form an Advisory Committee to attend Board meetings and assist in formulating policies.

Mrs. Raymond Brennan was authorized to publish for the Society a monthly newspaper to be called THE WESTERN TANAGER.

The next regular meeting of the Executive Board will also be held at the home of Mrs. Fargo. The date is October 11. The time, one o'clock. This will not be a luncheon meeting.

1934-35 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Officers

Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon, President
Mrs. Leonard S. Hall, 1st Vice-Pres.
Mrs. Munson Deuprey, 2nd Vice-Pres.
Miss Charlotte Hamilton, Rec. Sec'y
Mrs. James M. Brennan, Cor. Sec'y
Miss Ella N. Johns, Treasurer
Miss Jennie Winchester, Librarian
Miss Ruth Spencer, Auditor
Mrs. John Schmitz, Historian

Chairmen

Mrs. Munson Deuprey, Birds & Wild Life
Mrs. Robert Fargo, Education
Mrs. Raymond Brennan, Press
Miss Ella N. Johns, Membership
Mrs. J. W. Mabb, Hospitality
Mrs. Oliver Edwards, Wild Flowers
Mrs. Grace S. Hall, Trees
Mrs. Roy Sergeant, Butterflies

PROGRAM CHAIRMEN FOR 1934-35

October 18	-	Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon	- Summer Experiences and Memorial Service for Mrs. Bicknell
November 15	-	Mrs. George L. Veatch	- Birds
December 20	-	Mrs. Leon S. Griswold	- Christmas Festival
December	-	Mrs. James M. Brennan	- Census Plans
January 17	-	Miss Charlotte Hamilton	- Birds
February 21	-	Miss Miriam S. Faddis	- Birds
March 21	-	Mrs. E. E. Cobb	- Birds
April 18	-	Mrs. Oliver Edwards and Mrs. Grace S. Hall	- Wild Flowers and Trees
May 16	-	Mrs. Roy Sergeant	- Butterflies
June 20	-	Miss Ella N. Johns and Mrs. Veatch	- Birthday Party

A TRIP TO OLD MEXICO
(By Mrs. Leon S. Griswold)

Ever since early school days when learning to pronounce Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl and reading of the perpetually snowy mountains overlooking Mexico City, a desire to visit that country has been my dream.

So in June we travelled by train down the west coast and across the Tropic of Cancer, finding it all delightfully primitive.

Adobe and thatched Indian villages, men working the fields with oxen and wooden plows, ox carts with solid wooden wheels, women carrying water in jars on their heads and washing the family laundry in the pools and streams, were common sights.

Wrapped in brilliant serapes, with sandals on their feet and huge sombreros, the peons surrounding the train at every stop and selling their fruits, sweet-cakes, tortillas, flowers, baskets and bright pottery, were an ever-changing study.

Every small town had its charming cathedral--or the ruins of one--of Spanish architecture.

After leaving Mazatlan--a beauty spot with its cocoa palms and banana trees--a climb of 7000 feet had to be made before reaching the valley of Mexico City.

The mountain scenery was varied, especially through the barrancas. With canyons 2000 feet deep to conquer, the railroad is the most costly in North America.

Guadalajara, with its many cathedrals, brilliant pottery, and delicate statuary, is a picture in itself. Its 16th century cathedral shelters one of Murillo's finest works, the "Assumption of the Virgin."

The first great impression of Mexico City was, of course, the two mountain peaks. Then came the broad boulevard of Paseo de la Reforma, 200 feet wide and studded with monuments to the heroes of Mexico. Planned by Emperor Maximilian, it leads from the business district to Chapultepec Castle, the "White House of the Presidents," where the Emperor and Empress Carlotta ruled in extravagant splendor, and, centuries before them, the Montazumas of the Aztecs.

Of intense interest are the Pyramids, the National Museum, and the National Theatre with its glass curtain. Started 34 years ago by Diaz and his Italian architect, it was not until this September that the latter was completed and dedicated.

World travellers contacted on our trip to Old Mexico stated they were surprised to find so much charm and color so close to our own United States.

YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE

For their first field trip this fall the Los Angeles Audubon Society will visit the La Brea Pits in Hancock Park, on Wilshire near LaBrea. You are all urged to come as we expect to see many interesting birds. Also, you will want to hear Dr. W. E. Bryan, an authority on the geological discoveries in the Pits, who will speak to us at one o'clock. Bring your lunch and meet us at Hancock Park, 9:30 A. M., Thursday, October 4.

The first program meeting of the new year will be held in the State Building at Exposition Park, at two o'clock, Thursday, October 18. During the first thirty minutes President Salmon, who will be in charge, asks that you give us a three-minute account of your summer experiences. Certainly you saw, heard or did something of interest to the others. Won't you tell us about it? The last twenty minutes will be devoted to a memorial service for Mrs. Frederick T. Bicknell, whose recent passing brought such grief to us. Mrs. Fargo will conduct this service, and we are asking that each of you bring a few flowers so that the service will be more beautiful. Music will be rendered during the meeting.

A BEDTIME STORY FOR NATURE LOVERS

Once upon a time many, many years ago--well, if you try to pin me down, I should say about two hundred million years ago--there lived in what is now central Europe, but what was then a tropical sea with many coral islands, a very strange bird. He was somewhat smaller than our friend, Mr. Crow, but what his colors were I can not say, for all there is left of him is the print of his bones and features in the silt where he finally came to rest.

Now like all birds he had to have a name; so they called him Archaeopteryx. An unusual name, you say? Well, let me tell you, Archie was an unusual bird. Though he had feathers, wings, legs and feet, like any other bird you might imagine, he also had a long, lizard-like tail, with a row of twenty large feathers down each side of it. His bill was very broad and blunt, reminding one of the snout of a lizard. Moreover, his jaws were armed with teeth set in sockets like those of a reptile. I am telling you the truth when I say that Archaeopteryx had twenty-six teeth in his upper jaw, thirteen being on each side. However, he was not so well equipped below, for his lower jaw could boast of but a total of six.

Archie did not fly around through the air the way Mrs. Mocker does. Oh, he probably took short flights, but for the most part he scrambled about through the tree tops with the aid of his fingers. Birds don't have fingers, you say? True, present day ones don't, for they have no more than the thumb free. But Archie had three free fingers with which he could grasp the branches and climb about like an iguana.

Poor Archaeopteryx will never be seen by you, nor by me, nor by your children, nor by my children, for all that is left of him or any of his family are a few fossilized remains which have been unearthed. Clearly he is a connecting link between the birds and the reptiles, and if you don't believe this, or if you think he never existed, just ask Arthur Allen, Professor of Ornithology at Cornell University. He said so in his book on bird life.

GOODBYE, PAL (By Mrs. Leon S. Griswold)

Pal Bassett, who occasionally delighted in attending our trail trips, was recently taken to the Pet Cemetery to look over his future "happy hunting ground." He was not at all impressed, but in a rather disgusted manner sought the shade of a tree, sat down, and scratched imaginary fleas, or otherwise.

His friends, in peeping through the iron barred doors of the tiny mausoleum, found the center electric chandelier contained a cunning bird's nest--a house finch, we thought.

JOIN THE AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Los Angeles Audubon Society has regular meetings on the first and third Thursday of each month--the first being the ~~program meeting~~ (which is held in the State Building at Exposition Park unless further notified), and the ~~second a~~ ~~field trip.~~ ~~program meeting~~

Dues for annual membership in the Society are \$1.00 per year, with life membership \$10.00, Patron \$100.00.

If you are interested in studying and protecting your feathered friends, won't you identify yourself with us?

Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon, President, 1979 Benicia Avenue, Westwood Hills.