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THE WESTERN TANAGER

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**** THE TANAGER GETS BLUE ****

Gentle Bluebird, born of the bright and genial skies,
kindly as the heavens, harbinger of spring, and

Mr. Blue Jay, you handsome, boisterous, flat-headed,
old villain, you bold, bad, squalling, untrustworthy reprobate, you --

Yes, this month THE WESTERN TANAGER gladly changes its colors,
sings out a welcome, and dedicates itself to both of you.

**** A JUNE DAY IN THE MOUNTAINS ****

By Mrs. Munson Deuprey

Leaving Crestline early one June morning, I rolled along over the highway to Big Bear. Upon reaching Bear Creek Inn, which is just west of the lake dam and immediately above the rushing Bear Creek, it seemed time indeed for coffee and flannel cakes. While the man was beating and fussing in his tiny kitchen, I strolled out to look and listen. Suddenly a beautiful song rang out from some high point. A long song, too--about half a minute. "What, oh what could it be? Surely nothing but a Townsend Solitaire has a song so sweet and so long." And truly enough, there he was, on the dead top of a very old and tall white fir. He would fly into the air and to another dead top and sing again. As he flew, his wings showed from underneath, a beautiful pattern of rich buff against a black frame. For two hours he sang. A glorious experience! But even though I walked there several times the following week, he did not repeat the performance for my enjoyment.

While driving along the north side of the lake I saw a home on the hillside, with bird baths in the lovely garden and bird houses in the trees. Of course a stop had to be made, and again a sweet song extended a greeting. Two loud clear notes, followed by trills and runs. In a few minutes here was a Stephens Fox Sparrow, perched on a bush in plain sight, singing this very same song. All day long from some direction could be heard Mr. Fox Sparrow, and he was very generous with his personal appearances. This winter we shall see him in Griffith Park. He is one of the gray type, and he has a bill so large that it appears to cover almost all of his face.

Returning from the little house on the hill, I watched to see the birds flying in and out of one of the houses--a double affair, rather long, with a door at each end. It seemed to me there were eleven of these busy little rascals, but later when talking to Mrs. Gay, the proud owner of the house, I was told they had counted thirteen! They were white-naped nuthatches. Later I saw about the same number in a hole in an old dead tree.

Neat here were flocks of Pine Siskins, ke-see-ing along over the dry grasses, and everywhere in the pines could be heard the sweet song of the Cassin Purple Finch.

Along the road in the evening, feeding on the penstemon blossoms, were three Calliope Hummingbirds. Suddenly another bird came--very large. It did not seem possible, but it was a Rufous Hummer. The Calliope is so tiny that the Rufous by comparison seemed large. And, as the twilight approached and this wonderful day came to an end, the world was lulled to sleep by the sweet songs of the Green-tailed Towhee, Lazuli Bunting and the Western Robin. What more could be desired!

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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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The Los Angeles Audubon Society has regular meetings on the first and third Thursday of each month--the first being a field trip, and the next a program meeting which is held in the State Building at Exposition Park at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Dues for annual membership in the Society are \$1 per year, with life membership \$10, and Patron \$100.

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

If you heard Dr. Henry Smith Williams, of Connecticut, and an honorary member of our Society, give his illustrated talk on orioles at one of our program meetings last spring, you will want to read his article that appears in the September issue of NATURAL HISTORY. It is entitled "Nest Building--New Style," and is beautifully illustrated with 29 photographs and drawings, many of which are in color.

Having over a period of years succeeded in educating the orioles that frequent his home to desire yarns for the construction of their nests, Dr. Williams remarks that these birds have shown individual preferences as to the texture and color of the material which they use, and that they can easily distinguish between white and other colors, blue included. Only the orioles, he continues, weave nests of yarn. Imitators incorporate yarn with other material, or leave it dangling, but they have no clear notion as to why they are using the strange textiles.

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---- CAL - N - DAR ----

Los Angeles Audubon Society

Nov. 1 -- Field trip to Griffith Park. Bring your field glasses, a notebook and a pocket lunch, and meet us at the Western Avenue entrance at 9:30 a. m.
Nov. 8 -- Executive Board will meet at the home of Mrs. Fargo. 1 p. m.
Nov. 15 -- Program meeting in the State Building at Exposition Park, at 2 p. m. Mrs. George L. Veatch, the chairman, promises an interesting afternoon.
Nov. 26 -- Deadline for material for the December issue of THE WESTERN TANAGER.

Other Events You Might Like to Attend

Nov. 1 -- Zoological Society. Lecture by Dr. Edward O. Rehrig on Pythons, Snakes, etc. Los Angeles Public Library, 5th and Grand. 7:30 p. m.
Nov. 15 -- Southern California Academy of Science. "Afield in the African Belt," by Dr. R. B. Cowles of U. C. L. A. Slides. Los Angeles Public Library. 7:30 p. m.
Nov. 22 -- "Native Life in Northern California" by Julian Arnold. Los Angeles Public Library. 7:30 p. m.

!!! TWO NEW LIFE MEMBERS !!!

Two members have asked that their status be changed from annual to life membership. They are Miss Zulema Parcell, of Los Angeles, and your editor, Lois Brennan.

***** OUR PRESIDENT EMERITUS *****

Last Thursday in a beautiful memorial service the Audubon Society paid tribute to its past President Emeritus, Mrs. Frederick T. Bicknell, and awarded her chair to the one most fitted to carry on. Mrs. Robert Fargo, a devoted student and lover of nature, and a member of Audubon for many years, is well worthy of receiving this high honor. May your years as our President Emeritus, Mrs. Fargo, be many!

*** BOTH THE SAME DAY ***

In this locality there are but two birds which migrate south for breeding, all others flying north.

But as they go so must they return. Weary and exhausted from his long flight, the Large-billed Sparrow paused for a moment in front of the Hollywood Riviera Club in Palos Verdes, on September 21, where Mrs. Oliver Edwards saw him resting on a shrub. A few minutes later the Heermann Gull, distinguished by his red bill, stopped at Redondo. He was refreshing himself for the rest of his homeward journey when Mrs. Edwards arrived.

***** THE GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE *****

** By Helen S. Pratt **

On September 17 I heard in my yard at Eagle Rock the clear call of the Green-tailed Towhee, and in an instant saw him on a low branch of the redwood tree. Soon he hopped over to the stones in the brook, and then to the lawn where he busily ate seeds of grass. Five days later I saw him in nearly the same location. Always he was very shy, speeding away at my slightest movement. Two other years the Green-tailed Towhee has visited me in my yard, but never before has he come so early or stayed so long.

!!! MR. HIPPLEWATER IS INTERESTED !!!

There is no need to introduce Frank Watanabe and Augustus Hippelwater, those dispellers of blues whom we hear over KNX each evening.

Well, the other day Archie was down at the gun club doing a little concentrated practice before going out to bag some ducks. Target after target he tossed into the air, each time aiming very carefully. But it was no use; he could not hit. Finally, in supreme disgust, he threw his guns aside. "There is only one thing left to do," he said. "I am going to join the Audubon Society."

Mr. Hippelwater, we welcome you. That will be \$1, please. Mrs. Edwards, perhaps you could also interest Mr. Hippelwater in the wild flowers.

***** A BIRD'S VISION *****

Have you ever tried to read your morning paper and at the same time watch Madam Linnet, who is sunning herself on a branch of your favorite apricot tree? If you have, you found it most difficult, for your eyes are not constructed so that you can use each independently. But not so with the birds.

Most birds have a distinct faculty for two kinds of vision--binocular and monocular. In the first both eyes concentrate on the same subject, but in the latter each works independently.

So you may think that Madam Linnet is busy searching the branches for choice morsels of food, but the moment you move to get a better view of her, she is off--for all the time she had one eye "cocked" on you.

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

The jungles being dry and brown as a result of the drouth, we had a chance to view the hundreds of nests hanging in the trees and bushes. Tropical orioles are much larger than ours; so their nests were very conspicuous. Three and four feet long they hung from the tips of the branches, and waved with every breath of air.

For miles and miles before reaching Mazatlan we were surrounded by a forest of organ cactus. Here is where the hundreds and hundreds of military macaws (always in pairs) and parakeets gave us a thrill.

The long-tailed, crested magpie jays, measuring over two feet from head to tail, were several times seen. Then came the mot-mots of the Barrancas. Long slender birds, they are beautifully colored, with a large head and bill, the latter deeply toothed on each side. The tail is long and greenish blue--the two central tail feathers extending beyond the others. These have been picked to resemble an arrow, which act is repeated by both sexes after every moulting, although no one knows why. This very ornamental tail is kept moving like a pendulum. Hence the name, "The Pendulum Bird of the Barrancas."

Chapultepec Forest, surrounding the mansion of the President, was a dream of beauty. Here are trees that rival our redwoods. The ahuehuetes (cypress), 160 to 200 feet high, with red bark, and trunks 40 to 50 feet in circumference, are 1000 to 7000 years old. These trees, in whose shadow Montezuma walked, are hung with southern moss, symbols of grief and mourning, and in the somber light have a ghostly appearance. All through this park are tiny streams overgrown with flowering vines, unexpected open spaces with marble statuary, and charming resting spots of circular blue and white tile platform seats. Many hummingbirds added a lovely touch.

The homes of old Mexico are entirely enclosed. If one is fortunate enough to have a peep through a gateway or an open door, there is always a patio with a fountain, flowers, ferns, and birds in cages.

At Cuernavaca are the Borda Gardens, where Emperor Maximilian and Empress Carlotta rested from the cares of state. Still beautiful, though sadly neglected, these gardens are a paradise for birds. Thrill after thrill we experienced, as buntings, red starts, vermillion fly-catchers, and coppery-tailed trogons flew from tree to tree.

In one of the walled gardens of a convent was a canyon wren, singing more beautifully, if possible, than ours.

The Floating Gardens at Xochimilco, which are owned by the Indians, were centuries ago but a lake. Rafts of weeds, covered with soil, were planted to vegetables and flowers. These, floating along on the water, finally took root and became stationary. The canals thus formed were dredged and the silt thrown up to form the islands. Now visitors do the floating in a flower bedecked boat, poled leisurely for hours. Our party hired a floating orchestra which played Indian airs delightfully. Indian women in loaded canoes poled along selling, for a few pennies, great bunches of pansies, sweet peas, carnations, etc. Large butterflies floating all about added a touch of beauty. If one wished a native meal, there were floating cafes, fitted with charcoal stoves, and Indian women to serve you.

Surrounding Mexico City are 100 miles of these canals bordered with willow and poplar trees, and the reflection of these and the flowers growing to the water's edge are a sight never to be forgotten.

A POEM
Taken From The Christian Worker

If a wren can cling
To a spray a-swing
In the mad May wind and
Sing and sing,
As if she'd burst for joy;

Why can not I,
Contented lie
In his quiet arms beneath the sky
Unmoved by earth's annoy!