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PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

Western Tanager



MRS. RAYMOND BRENNAN, *Editor*

VOL. II

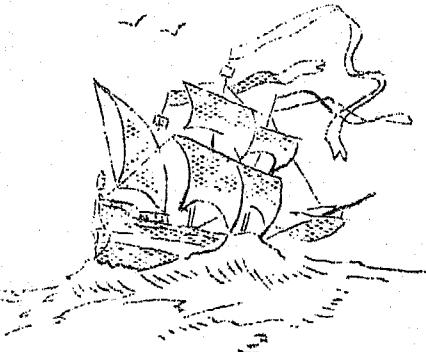
APRIL 1936

No. 6

Editorial Letter

COMPARATIVE ORNITHOLOGY

Josiah Keely



For the bird student with youth and money there seems to be a considerable field of investigation in comparative ornithology, especially the less difficult species in eastern America, western America and Europe. Separated by the mountains and deserts, birds which once must have mingled freely now show the results of long separation, differences in plumage and song; and, in the wider and, perhaps, longer separation of the Atlantic Ocean, stranger differences have evolved. Only the waterfowl seem to have kept

up their intermingling into geological periods recent enough to maintain a large number of the species unchanged: Our old friend the Coot is the same in California, Florida, Massachusetts, Mexico, Cuba, Europe; and, for all I know, in the islands of the sea. On an ocean liner one is never out of sight of birds.

On the other hand, the land birds are so easily isolated that the European birds show some remarkable changes; in plumage and song rather than characteristic habits. The English Robin has the first right to be called Robin. Our red-breasted thrush is a Robin only because of the red breast. The European bird that is really the cousin to our American Robin is the black Amsel, the call notes being almost identical, and the size, nesting habits, and feeding are the same. The European Jay is brown with a blue slash in the wing. The water ousel has considerable white on the breast. There are four or five species of European Chickadees. I have seen four kinds in one park in Munich. One has the usual black markings, but a bright yellow breast. For some reason, perhaps the cleaning up of the waste places, there are but two sparrows. Our Gold Finch has taken on red and white in addition to the old dress of black and yellow. No one knows just what is the cause of the origin of a new species. The great gulf fixed by the Grand Canon of Arizona has squirrels on both sides, but those on the north side have snow-white tails. The two species can almost look across at each other.

If origin of species could be caused by the short period during which man has been an influence, the birds of southern Europe perhaps ought to have grey heads, they have had troubles enough. In their migration to Africa for the winter, they have to fly twice a year over land where until quite recently no bird was too small for game. When the training of a bird-glass has the effect of a sawed-off shotgun, there is little room for argument as to the cause; and we all know how quickly wild life recognizes sanctuary. A scant fifty miles across the Brenner Pass into Austria, and you find the birds almost eating from your hands -- the same birds that you could scarcely glimpse with a glass farther south.

The bird lovers of northern Europe, however, have one un-American custom -- that of keeping in captivity nearly every species of wild bird. They argue that we would have no domesticated fowls today if, at some time, birds had not been kept in captivity. And that, if all birds are not domesticated, civilization will surely lead to their extinction, -- no dead trees for woodpeckers, no coverage for partridges, no waste places for sparrows, no deserts and no marshes. That their keeping of these captive pets has fostered the desire for protection seems likely; but we will continue to hope that for many generations Americans will be able to spare the birds ample reservations.

THE WESTERN TANAGER

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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 \$1.25 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?

MAR. 5. FIELD MEETING.

At Point Fermin. Those wishing to take the hike to see the water birds will meet at Cabrillo Beach (near San Pedro) at 9:00 a. m. From here our Field Chairman, Mrs. Eldridge, will lead the group to the Breakwater, to study the migrating birds. Luncheon will be eaten at the Point Fermin Park. A few of the birds that we may expect to see on this day are the White Throated Swift, the Herring Gull, the Glaucous-Winged Gull, and

MARCH

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29	30	31				

THINGS OF INTEREST

Two new books have been purchased for our library. They are "Singing in the Wilderness," by Paettie, and "Enos Mills of the Rockies," by Esther Burnell Mills. Mrs. Mills is a sister of Elizabeth Burnell Smith, a former member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, and co-author of "A Field-book of Birds of the Southwest." If you have not read these books, you will want to get in touch with our librarian, Miss Jennie Winchester, right away.

Many fine comments have reached the editor regarding the last program meeting, at which Mr. and Mrs. Michael talked on "Yosemite." Those of you who are missing these monthly programs, are overlooking some real treats.

Audubonites are saddened by news of the illness of our Tree Chairman, Mother Grace Hall. We hope that she will be well soon.

Word comes from Alfred Cookman that he has been made General Educational Lecturer for the 9th Corps Area--the eight western states for the Civilian Conservation Corps of America. From Vancouver Barracks, in Washington, he writes that he is contacting 17,000 men of the CCC, and covering "lots of God's Country in the interest of the Wild Life of America." He says: "We are getting results and the CCC men are becoming 'Conservation conscious.'" Los Angeles Audubon wishes you good luck, Mr. Cookman.

the Wandering Tattler. Many Meadowlarks, and possibly some Snowy Egrets, should be seen on the way down.

MAR. 12. Board Meeting.

At the home of Mrs. Fargo, 2 p. m.

MAR. 19. Program Meeting.

State Building in Exposition Park at 2 p. m. Mrs. Eldridge in charge. We do not know definitely yet, but we hear that Mrs. Eldridge is likely to bring a speaker with her from the University of Southern California.

BIRD NOTES

Flocks of Robins and Cedar Waxwings were seen on the Field Day at Arroyo Glen. Thirty-one species of birds were listed.

Reports from various parks say that the Kinglet is most generous this year in displaying his "ruby-crown."

President Salmon reports having seen a pair of Golden-Crowned Kinglets with their orange flame-colored crowns lifed, singing in a Black Acacia Tree.

At Playa del Rey Mrs. Deuprey saw a flock of White-fronted Geese flying in wedge formation.

Mrs. Schmitz writes from her new home at Van Nuys about five Meadow Larks under her windows. A few of her other visitors include: the Red-shafted Flicker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Audubon Warbler, Lark Sparrows, Say Phoebe, Bullock Oriole, Green-back Goldfinch, Black-chinned and Anna Hummingbirds, Crows and Towhees.

Has the song of the California Brown Towhee ever made you exclaim: "Can it be possible a young Wren-Tit is around here?"

Mrs. Cobb and guests at her Mountain Cabin on February 7 wondered much at the scarcity of the smaller birds, but they did see a Prairie Falcon and a large hawk with all the distant identification marks of the Ferruginous Roughlegged.

A Slate-colored Junco was seen near the Zoo at Griffith Park by Mrs. Edwards on February 22; and near the Bird Sanctuary in a tree where a California Thrasher was singing was a large silver-white bird shaped like a thrasher. It was very shy, but it was seen a second time flying across the path into the underbrush. Could it be an albino? Please report any other observations of it.

A murmur of pleased approval kept running through the audience when, by means of Mr. and Mrs. Michael's moving pictures, we had a peep into the nest life of the Water Ouzel or Dipper in its Yosemite haunts. The baby Dipper certainly lived up to its title.

REMINISCENT JAUNTS

BY A Rambler

A tang of spring, sometimes summer, autumn and winter in the air makes ramblers of us all who like the way of the wild-folk. When opportune -- into the car and off we are.

Early one spring morning we left the city and drove along a highway which led to Waterman Canyon in the San Bernardino mountains. It was there we took note of many wild flowers and listened to a gay and sweet songster hidden away, somewhere, in the chaparral. "The song of a lazuli bunting," remarked Mrs. Grace Hall. We were glad when the little bird of blue and cinnamon shades flew out to view and continued to sing. Meanwhile an antlike wasp scurried over rocks and ground. It was one of the dark red species of *Mutillidae*, the females of which are wingless and by some called "Velvet Ants" -- velvety wasps they are. We wonder if red-shafted flickers mistake them for ants?

Mill Creek Canyon in the San Bernardino mountains attracts nesting birds. In that canyon, one June day, Mrs. J. W. Mabb rested under incense cedars, watched a pair of western bluebirds feed their young and admired a broad-bordered mourning-cloak butterfly, while Miss Jennie Winchester and others sought to ouzel at the foot of Rushing Falls.

Longing to see the ouzel, we made several trips to the largest falls in southern California. Then there came a day -- parent birds flew repeatedly upstream carrying moths, larvae and beetles into a niche, under moss covered rocks, to feed the young.

As if to say, "Stop thinking of those water birds and look at me," or thus, we wanted to imagine the distinctive calls we heard. We stopped where a manzanita showed masses of tiny waxy-white cups. No time for imagining then, only a desire to be quiet and watch a little male calliope hummingbird.

Continued on Page 24

THE TURTLEDOVE (*Streptopelia Turtur*)
by Gonzalo A. Moreno
(As translated by The Editor)

One of the best known and numerous birds of the locality (Quito, Ecuador, S.A.) is the turtledove. It is a bird that on the one hand is very delicate and nutritious to eat, and, on the other, is a devourer of sowing seed and other plantings. Thus it is greatly persecuted, and killed in great numbers.

The hiker, the tourist, or any traveller, notes the presence of this bird by the sad and touching song of the female on summer afternoons.

It is a bird of about 30 centimetres in length, and of movements a little clumsy. Its abundant plumage is of a gray or coffee gray color. It is a migrant, which attacks the seeds and plantings in large bands, causing, on occasion, considerable damage.

The turtledoves that are found in these regions differ from the turtledoves that inhabit other places, the differences being in size, habits, color of plumage, manner of living, etc. Generally they live in pairs, the female making the nest in tall trees in shady and solitary places, where she lays two or three white or spotted oval-shaped eggs. Usually the male feeds the young until they are grown. The young are born naked.

The turtledoves are very jealous; they have a sad life, and are strong and swift in flight. In general they possess the habits of the mimic.

REMINISCENT JAUNTS, Cont.

Some of us, among the yucca trees on the Mojave Desert one January day, wanted to list a gilded flicker, but Mrs. Munson Deuprey's identification revealed an immature red-shafted flicker. Our enthusiasm was rewarded, however, when we listed two desert thrashers, sage and leconte, common locally and maintaining the "secretive characteristics" of desert birds.

Another day near Palm Springs, two little verdins flitted about in the, to us, formidable smoke trees. A successful kodak snap shows a big nest for small birds. Two nests, used for winter quarters we were told, had been torn apart for new nests under construction.

Closer to home at Chatsworth Reservoir, December 1934, Mrs. James M. Brennan, studying tree and plant parasites, hearkened to a bird call, which set us to scanning branches of gall infested oaks, until a black-tailed gnatcatcher was identified.

Two months later we drove again to the beautiful and interesting Chatsworth area. Over the low hills about the lake we hiked. Mrs. Oliver C. Edwards listed flowers, as well as birds, and pointed out a rare lupine. After making, as always, a careful study, Mrs. Edwards told us that the plant was a natural species of its kind, *Lupinus truncata*.

To her "old stamping grounds," in the saddle days, Mrs. James Daugherty took us last year when hillsides and ravines were aglow with wild bloom, and bird songs and butterflies all about. Mrs. O. M. Stultz's calls to this and that place to behold glorious specimens of butterflies, not long from pupal cases, furnished rare treats. Mrs. O. L. Wait's detection of larvae camouflage gave us knowledge of species of buck-moth and tiger-moth caterpillars and their food plants of oak, chamise, and low growth, including lupines. Back through Tuhunga Wash we drove to gaze again at the wonderful flower show of yuccas.

Well, well, here we are way past the stop signal of words. Reminiscences go on, and on.

(Insert)

(Insert)

TO GRACE HALL

All hail to Hall, she's our "Hall of Fame",
In your record now go place her name;
For years she's tramped the sands,
The walks and paths of wildwood lands.

The flowers and trees she knows so well
And when with us she loves to tell
Of nature's gifts for man to use,
She knows that man these gifts abuse.

While oft alone within the trees
She learned the birds and all their needs,
And brought to us the cry of birds
And gave us names we'd never heard.

He kills her birds and fells her trees,
She oft begged man on bended knees
To save these friends for all of men
By word of tongue and word of pen.

We give her praise for work well done
This toiler of the AUDUBON;
So let us think and never fail,
To remember Grace who walks the trail!

James M. Brennan, Poet Laureate
***** LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

A phonograph for our headquarters has been given by Mr. and Mrs. James M. Brennan. Miss Charlotte Hamilton and Mrs. Ella W. Hamilton provided A. A. Allen's fine records of bird calls and songs. These gifts will greatly assist in our study classes. Many thanks!

EXCHANGE OF FACTS AND COMMENTS

The following is an excerpt from "The Gull", San Francisco:

Red-Naped Sapsucker in Contra Costa County :

In THE CONDOR for March-April, 1936, Mr. Paul F. Covel reports taking a Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius nuchalis*) in Santa Cruz County December 11th, 1934. He states he has found only four previous records for the San Francisco Bay Region. Having noted this, I felt that it might be of interest to know that on April 30th, and May 1, 1936, near Diablo Country Club, Contra Costa County, this bird came many times to a tree to inspect sapsucker holes.

He was only ten feet from me and his crimson head bordered by black, crimson throat and black breast, and narrow crimson line at nape as well as his other characteristic markings were plainly seen.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers were in the neighborhood at the same time.

I did not have the bird in hand but as I have seen the Red-naped Sapsucker many times and as this one was only a few feet distant there could be no question as to the bird's identity.

Mrs. C. S. Deuprey
(Life Member-Los Angeles Audubon
Society)

A SPRING SUNRISE

By - Mrs. Alma W. Mason

Awakening just before dawn, the soft, gentle notes of a little owl floated in to me through the bedroom window; the owl, /a Screech Owl, but why so named is a mystery to me for the notes which I have heard are soft and mellow - anything but a screech.

Soon the darkness began to fade and I thought what a fine opportunity to view a sunrise, for I was at my daughter's home, high upon a hillside in Eagle Rock. By the time I was dressed it was light, though no color was visible in the east to give promise of the glory which was to come.

(A SPRING SUNRISE - continued)

Standing at the big bay window facing east, a broad and vast panorama, stretching from north to south, spread before me. At the north the mountains - Mt. Wilson, Mt. Lowe, of the Coast Range - next the valley reaching eastward with a lone hill near my right, and then the tree-covered hills with a clump of giant eucalyptus trees standing out boldly against the sky. The clouds, dull gray, were thickest and heaviest near the mountains at my left, gradually narrowing to one long cloud extending nearly across the sky, and slightly above the horizon. Below the cloud the sky was a pale, turquoise blue.

Just above the one lone hill near my right, the first faint color appeared on the clouds - a pale rose tint. Almost imperceptibly it grew and spread to the cloud masses near the mountains. As I watched, and as the sun came nearer, the dark blue of the mountains changed to lavender-rose, the lower peaks standing out clear cut against the sky with mist between the ranges. The color of the clouds changed from rose to gold, and clouds which I had not seen before, appeared faintly in the sky above, tinged with gold. At the right of the hill behind which the sun was still hidden, there appeared a mass of beautiful golden clouds, and it needed but little imagination to see in this exquisitely beautiful cloud mass, the "Golden City" of which we are told "there shall be neither sorrow nor crying there."

From time to time the form of some bird silhouetted against the sky, winged his way silently across the landscape.

When the sun rose above the top of the hill, the flaming light came in waves, and it seemed to me as if a narrow rainbow rimmed the great golden orb.

As the sun came fully into view the sky was full of fleecy clouds, the gold had disappeared and the great blue dome of the heavens was filled with silver clouds as light as down.

I gazed enraptured - but suddenly from the live-oak tree in a neighbor's yard, came the squawk of a California Jay, and the spell was broken. A new day was at hand full of its possibilities and its duties.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE FLOWERS

Thou shalt learn to know the wild flowers of thy State.

Thou shalt love them and cherish them.

Thou shalt consider the places where they grow as thy garden, and make it thy aim to protect it.

Thou shalt gather no more than thou cans't use.

Thou shalt remember the seedtime of another year, and the joy of others who are to look upon the flowers.

Thou shalt pass along thy knowledge of them, that they may find favor with the careless observer.

Thou shalt learn from them the grace of line and the harmony of color.

Thou shalt consider how carefully the sun and the wind and the rain join hands in completing their beauty for thee.

Thou shalt preserve them in thy mind and in thy heart as a great lesson from Nature's book.

Thou shalt not destroy, but shalt use thy best knowledge to bring two blossoms to the coming year where last year counted one.

Lona Scott Harris

