

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

T H E



Western Tanager

VOL. III

JANUARY 1937

No. 3

HUMMER NOTES

Do you know?

Humming birds with their brilliant flower-like coloration, insect-like flight, and wonderfully varied form, are a typically American order.

Humming birds fly forwards, backwards, sideways or remain stationary in the air with equal ease -- a bird flying like an insect, yet in structure, strictly bird-like.

The wings vibrate with a rapidity that can be measured only by the tuning fork method used with insects.

The wings are long, narrow and the keel of the sternum is immensely support to the great muscles that

In proportion to its wing-spread a breast keel nearly three times larger than a bird of average flight, or forty times of an albatross.

They feed largely on the nectar of flowers. The tongue is very long and protrusive as in woodpeckers, but with its sides curled over towards the middle to form a double tube frayed into a brush-like tip that makes a most efficient organ for sucking liquids. Numbers of small insects, however, are taken with the nectar and judging from feeding experiments on captives, seem to be necessary to the bird's welfare. They are usually minute forms taken from the flowers from which the nectar is obtained.

It is a problem what becomes of the male humming-birds in the summer. While mating, the sexes are equally common, but as soon as nesting duties are seriously engaged in, the brilliant male ceases his interest in proceedings and not only lets his more sober-colored mate take the whole burden of family raising, but disappears from the scene entirely.

The Calliope humming birds are peppery, pugnacious little midgets, and never meet each other without a battle of elfin fury. Were humming birds as large as their courage, their haunts would not be safe for anybody.

(Notes selected by Mrs. O. C. Edwards, from "Birds of Canada" by - P. A. Taverner.)

The iridescent and multifold hues of the Hummer's plumage are due not to the presence of coloring matter in the feathers, but to the manner in which rays of light are refracted by the peculiar feather structure.

Audubon has called them "glittering fragments of the rainbow."

Although the humming bird is easily capable of 60 miles an hour, speed is not the only remarkable feature of its flight. It is the only land bird that can really fly backwards and one of the few that can rise straight up into the air like a helicopter.

The first time we saw a mother feed the baby we were quite ready to notify the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. It was squeaking as if in distress and the bird hovering over it seemed to be stabbing it to death, but we discovered the little one was being fed by regurgitation--the predigested food being pumped into the stomach by its mother. (Notes from "Holidays with Humming Birds" - by Margaret L. Bodine.

THE WESTERN TANAGER
Published By The
Los Angeles Audubon Society
Free to Members. Outside Subscriptions - 50¢ per year

INSPIRATIONAL RESOLUTIONS
FOR 1937

Please help me to have:-

1. An understanding heart, that I may have more love for those with whom I come in contact;
2. A sympathetic eye, that I may see beyond the surface and know the true reasons for others' actions;
3. A tolerant disposition, that I may agreeably consider opinions with which I do not agree;
4. A reverence for my fellow men, who are placed in this world to carry out the Master's wishes;
5. A conduct of life that will make others glad that I have lived.

(From the Editor's Scrap Book)

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
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Club Editor.....Mrs. Maud Murphy
1300 Spruce Street--South Pasadena, Calif.
Telephone -- Blanchard 71312

The Los Angeles Audubon Society holds two regular meetings each month -- the first Thursday being Field Day, the third Thursday, a program meeting held in the State Building at Exposition Park at 2 P. M.

The annual dues are \$1.25; Life Membership \$10.00 and Patron \$100.00.

western Ave entrance - Suffit Park

Lovely Fern Dell is the location chosen for the first trip of the new year, January 7th. Mrs. Eldridge, Field Chairman, will start at 9 o'clock sharp on the bird walk. There are sheltered, woodsy retreats for those coming later to gather for luncheon and the meeting. Guests are always welcome.

Have you room in your car for an extra passenger? Call Mrs. G. L. Veatch, at Parkway 6127, so she can better solve transportation problems.

The regular Board meeting will be held at 10 A. M., January 14th, 1937, at 2820 West Sixth Street, Los Angeles.

A distinctly different type of program is planned for the indoor meeting to be held in the State Building at Exposition Park on January 21st, at 2 P. M.

Ruth Forbes Sherry, a graduate of Stanford, and Poetess of note, will read some poems with birds as their theme.

While the more serious lectures are always enjoyed, we realize the need of rounding out the programs by presenting work of an aesthetic nature.

Members are requested to bring a short verse to read, which will be pertinent to the program.

JANUARY						
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SIDE LIGHTS ON OUR TRIP TO MEXICO
CITY

After crossing the Rio Grande River over the bridge between Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, we drove forty miles south over the longest straight paved road in the world. The topography of the country is not so different from the United States, but the people, their mode of living, manner of dress, and method of travel, as well as their character and personality, are as unlike ours as Egypt or any foreign country. Even the birds are dissimilar. Their black bird is about four inches longer than our Brewer. The beak and tail are bigger--the tail is like a rudder. When they go to roost in the evening, they make a great noise and chatter just like the Starling and English Sparrow.

Our North Western Crow also disappears, and we have Ravens instead. These take their place side by side with the Vulture and the Audubon Caracara, Mexico's National Bird, in the scavenger work. Now we notice our Western Mocking Bird has vanished.

Traveling rapidly as one does in an automobile, it is the large birds such as hawks that one sees, and among the many species seen were the Aplomado, Falcon and Mexican Goshawk. The smallest large bird seen was the Desert Canary--he was always with us.

The great struggle which was everywhere evident was for water and wood. The women washing clothes in every river, stream or mudhole, and cooking with charcoal.

After traveling 370 miles South, we crossed the Tropic of Cancer, and soon we saw Mango and Papayas, Banana and Coffee trees growing wild, and for miles, groves of Palms in the swamps. But this changed somewhat at 500 miles out, and we crossed the great Moctezuma River and wound in and out, ascending to a height of over 8000 feet. This continued all the way to Mexico City, a mountain highway for over 50 miles from which we could view the Switzerland of America.

Corn patches as large as ten acres in size, are hand cultivated by the Indians who you might say cling to the side of the mountains which are so steep. This altitude must give them vigor, as the Indian women, dressed in very long and full skirts, spin as they hurry along to the village to exchange their corn for tortilla dough.

The beautiful red-trimmed thick-billed Green Parrots are seen sometimes in flocks as we see Black Birds here. The natives say they eat their corn and so they shoot them.

By the side of the road in the low country they pile palm leaves to be carried away to be used as roofs. All huts have thatch roofs of different grasses, sugar cane or cactus leaves, or palm. The best kind of grass lasts 30 years, others but a few years.

We visited the homes of the peons all along the route and the millionaires in Mexico City. Our knowledge of their language increased our enjoyment of the trip, and it gave to us an entree that others not speaking it did not have.

----- Mrs. James M. Brennan

Christmas Festival - December 5th

1936

A fine bright day made a perfect setting for the "Birds' Christmas Festival" arranged by Mrs. Eldridge and held in Echo Park. Christmas bells and bread houses swung above the gaily decorated tables. Poinsettias and Chrysanthemums vied with dishes of home made candies and golden orange peel in great profusion, causing park visitors to flock around in wonder, wishing they were either birds, Audubon members or girl scouts.

Miss Helen Pratt, of National Junior Audubon, brought an interesting exhibit, also showing the National Association of Audubon Societies pamphlets for juniors and adults.

Miss Barbara L. Kruger, director of Los Angeles Council of Girl Scouts, presented a playlet, "The California Woodpeckers' Convention", written by our Mrs. F. T. Bicknell and Mrs. Robert Fargo.

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Christmas Festival - December 5th
1936

(Continued from Page 11)

The girls, dressed in bird costumes, fluttered their wings and in clear, young voices proclaimed the good deeds of our woodpeckers.

Over two hundred girl scouts, members and guests were present, many taking a bird walk around the lake before lunch, Miss Miriam Faddis being Field Leader for the day.

The call to lunch was answered by many Ring-billed Gulls, who flocked around the tables catching tidbits with cries of delight.

We wish to express our appreciation to Ed. Regins, Superintendent of Echo Park, for his fine co-operation, to Miss Cora Bassett for the clever Christmas tree, to Mrs. Roy Sergeant for orange peel and cookies, to Buron Fiss for the flowers, to Mrs. Needham for candy, to Harold K. Needham, President of Southern California Bible School, who acted as official photographer, and to Mrs. Eldridge for planning and achieving the entire program, which was a great success.

Mrs. O. M. Stultz.

THE DESERT

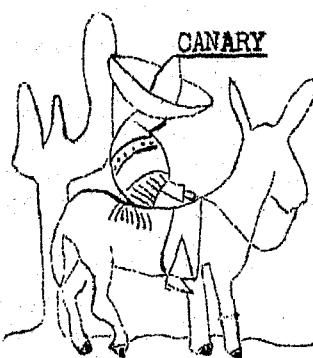
Toot the whistle, sound the horn,
There's a Donkey on the track,
And the Donkey he is laden
With an "hombre" on his back.

The man has legs a dangling
And panniers at his knees
That are loaded down with firewood
Chopped from Manganita trees.

The rider gently snoozes
While the Donk has joined his
dreams

Knowing not that waiting Angels
Are aboard the thing that steams.

And some "Choles" now are joyous
And some Cholos bless the day
That the Donkey he was sleeping
On the railroad's right-of-way!



CANARY

The whistle keeps on tooting
But the master and his steed
Remain away in dreamland
Filling bellies up with feed

Then the engine bumps the duo
And the Angels scoop them in,
Flying on with them to Heaven
But on earth is left their
skin.

Their hides are turned to leather
And the leather into shoes
So some Hombres now are happy
By the ending of the snooze.

Written in Mexico City,
By - J. M. Brennan...10/12/36

Apropos of Mrs. Edward's article on Condors, --

Mrs. W. L. Salmon reports that while visiting in San Diego, she found a live Condor in the zoo, also two mounted specimens in the museum. While it seems a crime to place these wonderful birds in cages, those of us not so fortunate in having seen these birds in their natural haunts are afforded a splendid opportunity to study them at close range.