

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, II

T H E

PLUMMER PARK  
7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

# Western Tanager



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No. 7

## CALIFORNIA WILDFLOWER CARPETS

Again our hills and valleys are carpeted with flowers of many colors ranging from the brilliant reds and yellows to the most delicate of orchid tints. From Los Angeles to Bakersfield we find representatives of scores of flower families, from the shiny yellow buttercup (*Ranunculus californica*) mother of flowers, with multiple pistils and stamens, to her descendants, the grasses, pentstemons and mints who have become economic specialists with few stamens and single pistils producing fewer and better seeds, and the sunflowers and other tribes of Compositeae. The flowers of this latter family are really clusters of tiny florets organized for collective bargaining with pollen gathering insects.

Perhaps we shall see some of those royal cousins of the lowly buttercup, the larkspurs and columbines, though one would hardly suspect the relationship unless he peeked beneath their irregular corollas to discover the many stamens and several pistils.

Along the roadside and on the slopes we find at least two representatives of the Borage family, the orange-yellow fiddle neck (*Amsinkia douglasinana*) and the white nievitas (*Cryptanthus flaccida*). Not so attractive singly, in mass display this latter appears as patches of freshly fallen snow and because of this the Spanish people gave it this name nievitas, meaning little snow.

What are these carpets of mingled hue spread over the hills? There the deep orange almost vermillion of our California poppy (*Eschscholtzia calif.*) blends with the paler yellow of the mustard, the bright yellow of gold fields or sunshine (*Baeria*) and the taller hilltop daisy (*Monolopia major*) or the several varieties of tidy-tips (*Layia*). Also mingling with the poppies are blue lupines and purplish pink owl's clover (*Orthocarpus purpurascens*). Spanish people have a very pretty name for this too-escobita, little whisk broom. This flower with the flowerets tucked in among the colored bracts belongs to the same family as our more spectacular pentstemons and monkey flowers. Here are patches of baby blueeyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), several species of phacelias, dainty cream cups, coreopsis, brodieae, and the silky textured large white evening primroses.

In the fields we find an especially exquisite combination of the delicate birds eyes (*Gilia tricolor*), the pinkish lavender spikos of thistle sage and golden girls, a yellow *Chaenactis*, all with an ethereal background of dainty white *lynanthus*. Looking down from the grade into the valley the fields of thistle sage (*Salvia carduaceae*) appear as a lilac mist. Close up the flowers with their fragile petals long protruding purple pistils and stamens tipped with orange anthers are seen mounted on pale green wooly though prickly balls in whorls. Its plebeian cousin the chia has a rather striking color combination too - bright blue flowers set on heads which have bright wine colored bracts below. It is this plant which the aborigines valued so highly for its nutritious seeds.

Another combination enraptures us, the blue of the lupines with the pale canary yellow of the *Malacothrix californica*, nature's flower arrangement of color, form and texture. May the time never come when through thoughtless or selfish picking of these wild flowers there shall be no more of these glorious flower carpets in California.

Ruby Curry

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CALENDAR APRIL 1940						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3 (4)	5	6	
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	14	15	16	17 (18)	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25 (26)	27
	28	29	30			



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS !

Mrs. H. B. White      Mrs. Florence Pearce

MEETING NOTICES

FIELD TRIP - Thursday, April 4th - Buena Vista Lake near Taft - the combined Bird and Wild Flower Trip of the Year. Our regular Tanner Bus will leave 544 South Hill Street, Los Angeles, promptly at 7:30 A. M., in order for us to have a full day with the birds and wild flowers, both of which should be at their best on that date, returning to Los Angeles about 6:30 P. M. Bus will pick up passengers, also, at Cahuenga and Hollywood Blvd., at 8 o'clock. Take a lunch. Wear hiking boots or heavy shoes. Round Trip \$1.50. Reservations must be made in advance - PLEASE - if possible by April 2nd, with Mrs. Jesse L. Morain, 1041 S. Gramercy Drive, Los Angeles, Telephone PArkway 0339.

BOARD MEETING - April 18th - 10 A. M., in the Directors' Room of the State Building, Exposition Park, Los Angeles.

PROGRAM MEETING - April 18th - 2 P. M., State Building, Exposition Park, Los Angeles. A varied and interesting program has been planned by our Chairman, Mrs. O. M. Stultz. Mrs. C. H. Comby will talk on the San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary. Dr. Henry Smith Williams, author and lecturer, will have as his subject, "Private Life of the Birds." Miss Lois Booker, a pupil of Mrs. Milton Jeffs, will entertain with some unusual bird calls and songs. Guests Welcome!

BOTANY CLASS - April 26th - 9 A. M., Plummer Park. Mrs. Mary V. Hood in charge. Immediately following will be the

BIRD STUDY CLASS - 9:30 A. M., to 12 o'clock - Mr. C. V. Duff conducting.

SOUTHWEST BIRD STUDY CLUB MEETING NOTICES

April 1 - 10 A. M. Echo Park Library (Pres. Mrs. Alma Mason - Telephone CApitol 3441)  
8 - 9 A. M. Whittier Woodland Park  
15 - 9 A. M. Little Tujunga & Kagel Canyons - Lunch at Dexter Park  
22 - 9 A. M. Lippincott Picnic Grounds-Griffith Park  
29 - 9 A. M. Sierra Madre Canyon

Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer presented the Society with a picture of two beautiful white Herons. Another new picture "St. Francis and the Birds", also a gift, has been hung in the library....

Several scout, camp-fire and school groups have visited the Park during March. Seventeen visitors registered one Saturday...

Mrs. Josiah Keely found a Hummingbird's nest with two young. Now that they have departed, the nest has been placed on exhibit in the rooms ...

Visitors to Plummer Park are requested to park outside the grounds while necessary construction and improvements are in progress. Your cooperation will be appreciated ...

Mrs. May Wait and Mrs. Nellie Goodrich will be hostesses for the month of April.

Mary Barnes Salmon

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BIRD NOTES

Miss Charlotte A. Hamilton reports that a Cardinal has visited her garden to feed...

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Michael and party observed two Myrtle Warblers at Hughes Lake in Elizabeth Canyon..

### MARCH FIELD TRIPS

Fifty-one members and friends gathered at Chatsworth Lake to enjoy an ideal day for birding. The rolling green hills, deer grazing among the trees and the beautiful expanse of lake, provided an artistic setting for nature lovers.

Leading the bird walks, Mrs. Caroline Dougherty listed 57 birds. A flock of White Pelicans, Rock Wrens and a Townsend Warbler were the less common ones observed.

On another walk, Miss Ruby Curry, Mrs. Elsie Humphreys and Mrs. Roy L. Sargeant heading a group listed 11 butterflies, 27 wildflowers and 4 types of fern.

Following luncheon, Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers, President of the California Audubon Society, remarked on the work of the Sanctuary Committee, then handed Mr. W. A. Kent the new sign, which he accepted in behalf of the Committee and placed it at the gate entrance, officially making Chatsworth Park a bird sanctuary.

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Miss Miriam Faddis acted as leader on the bird walk number 2 at Griffith Park, always a popular gathering place for Audubonites. Thirty birds were listed. After luncheon, Mr. R. E. Bullard, Superintendent of Park Maintenance, Park Department, gave an outline of the plans for the proposed improvement of the park, both from the standpoint of suitable planting and the provision of more adequate picnic grounds. The program was in charge of the Tree Chairman, Mrs. William T. Shelford.

### MARCH PROGRAM MEETING

Mr. Arthur H. O'Connor again delighted a large audience with an illustrated talk on Australia. The kodachrome slides of unusually colorful birds were outstanding. Motion pictures of the cunning Koala Bear brought forth chuckles. A fitting climax was the sound motion picture of the Lyre bird - a mother bird shown feeding her young, the baby's clumsy attempt at learning to walk and last the song and dance of the male with his gorgeous plumage outspread, forming a lacy pattern as he went through his gyrations on a mound among the ferns.

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### EXHIBIT ON BIRD MIGRATION

Don't fail to see the educational exhibit on "Birds of Passage" at the Museum in Exposition Park, Los Angeles, arranged by Mr. George W. Willett, Senior Curator of Ornithology of the Los Angeles Museum.

The exhibit will aid greatly in giving a satisfactory explanation of bird migration.

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### STRANGE BEHAVIOR OF A KILLDEER

The other day when I saw a Killdeer tripping along the shore of Bolsa Chica Slough I was reminded of another Killdeer on another shore -- the shore of a shallow lake among the timber-line trees.

Enid and I were out knapsacking and we were camped for a few days at the head of Bloody Canyon. It was a lovely camp-site; our sleeping-bags on a mattress of Albicaulis pine needles were so situated that we could see the sunrise over Mono Lake without getting out of bed. The lake picture was framed by the ragged red of the canyon walls. At night the bouncing stream that came out of Sardine Lake sang a lullabye and in the mornings we were awakened by the raucous voices of the Clark Nutcrackers. These Nutcrackers gathered on the crest crags to get the first of the morning sunshine. After exchanging gossip for a half hour or so the Nutcrackers would plunge off into space and volplane down the canyon for the day's business among the pinyon pines. To Enid and me the power dives and the aerial gymnastics of the Clark Nutcrackers were one of the adventures of the day.

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NOTICES OF THE CALIFORNIA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers,  
President

Mrs. Merta White, Secretary  
Telephone: Cleveland 6-6702

APRIL MEETINGS

April 11th, 1940 - at 7:30 P. M. - Lecture at the Los Angeles Central Library, 5th and Grand Streets, Los Angeles. Speaker, Mr. Paul W. Colburn. Subject: National Parks of California and their Birds, illustrated with color slides.

April 27th, 1940 - Field Day - at 8:30 A. M. to 10 A. M. Fern Dell - Griffith Park - Western Avenue entrance. Visitors Welcome.

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A VISIT TO OAKWOOD

It was recently my privilege to spend the week-end at Oakwood, the Dorothy May Tucker Bird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon. The green hills, the sycamores with their tiny new green leaves, the wide brook tumbling past the house and the returning birds, all lend enchantment to this lovely spot.

The migrant Hummingbirds have not come back, but there are many Annas, which are now nesting, and at least one male Costa has spent the winter there. Many interesting and interested visitors come Saturdays and Sundays to watch this bird display. Hundreds of Valley Quail come daily from the neighboring foot-hills to partake of the grain provided for them and for the other birds. It is an inspiring sight to see and hear them.

I recently came upon an old Biological Survey Bulletin (No. 506), 1918, by F. E. L. Beal and W. A. McAtee, which tells of the feeding habits of the Ruby-throated and Anna Hummingbirds. It is interesting to note that the food consumed is mainly animal--45.23 per cent of that of the Anna being gnats and small flies and two per cent is of spiders. The eastern birds eat many more spiders than gnats. In the case of the Ruby-throat, the vegetable food amounts to 5.68 per cent of the whole, and it is doubtful if any of it is taken intentionally. All but .44 per cent of the Anna's food is animal.

Mr. Tucker has always claimed that the Hummingbirds have kept his grounds free of gnats, and certainly these insects, as well as others, never bother us when we picnic there.

\*\*\*\*\* Harriet Williams Myers \*\*\*\*\*

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STRANGE BEHAVIOR OF A KILLDEER

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By noon the waters of the little lake that lay on a bench just below camp were somewhat warmed up and it was here that we took our daily swim. One day after our swim while sitting among the sun-warmed boulders at the edge of the lake there came to our ears the familiar call-notes of a Killdeer. Out of the east the Killdeer came winging toward us and it soon became evident that he was going to land at our little lake. The shallow water along the margin of the lake was alive with plump, pot-bellied pollywogs.

The Killdeer stepped leisurely along the shore, moving in our direction and pausing every few steps to make a jab. He appeared to be spearing pollywogs, as indeed he was, as we soon learned. We sat perfectly still. The Killdeer came closer and closer and we discovered that he was not eating the pollywogs, but carelessly tossing them aside. Finally the Killdeer came so close that we could hear the pollywogs pop as they were speared in their fat bellies. Always the pollywogs were tossed aside and we were forced to conclude that the Killdeer was popping pollywogs just for fun.

A weird sense of humor had this particular Killdeer. Perhaps he was affected by the rarified atmosphere of 10,000 feet, which is high above his normal range of altitude.

Charles W. Michael