

## THE Western Tanager



VOL. VII

December, 1940

NO. 3

## BIRD-BATH OBSERVATIONS

By Miss Charlotte A. Hamilton, Past President, Los Angeles Audubon Society.

Our bird-bath is the conventional type, - a shallow receptacle eighteen inches in diameter. Maidenhair fern and fuchsias surround the base, while as a background is an acacia, a fig and a loquat tree. Hanging on the trunk of the acacia is a small shrine and bird feeder. Early morning has been a wonderful time to observe the birds while bathing.

The mockingbird takes a real bath, with much fluttering of wings, often repeating the process. The California thrasher often wets only his feet, but at times splashes as much as the "mocking." Adult California jays take their baths quietly, but not so the dashing young fellows, who sit in the middle of the pool yelling and screeching. After telling the world in no uncertain terms what they think of it, they proceed to bathe like any respectable person.

Linnets, goldfinches, waxwings, bushtits and most sparrows like community bathing. It is extremely rare to see a goldfinch bathing alone. Several times I have seen one make a "belly-plop" into the middle of the bath while a larger bird was bathing. This maneuver was done repeatedly, whether to show off or to startle the other I do not know, for at other times goldfinches bathe as decorously as their bigger brothers. The cedar waxwings' baths are as rapid as is their drinking. They make me think of those Oriental toys of chickens in a circle pecking grain, for they arrange themselves around the rim of the bath, first one and then another taking three or four sips, then away, their places taken by others until all have drunk.

I have seen four or five English sparrows in our bath with a Gambel's sparrow and a goldfinch, or with linnets. The bushtits bathe together, as they do everything else. It is fun to see them alight on the rim one after another, close together, like "ten little Indians". Then one will get up courage to jump in, the others following, as many as twelve bathing at once. The San Diego song sparrow will not let any one bathe with him, not even tolerating other birds on the side line. He's an aggressive little fellow, driving others away from the feeding places whenever he can bluff them.

It is fun to watch young blackheaded grosbeaks. It takes them some time to get up their courage. They stand on the edge, dipping their bills and fluttering their feathers. Finally the urge is so great, they take the chance and plunge in, really enjoying themselves and feeling most brave.

The Alaska hermit thrush usually bathes very early in the morning or very late in the evening. He slips quietly to the bath, skirting the rim. He then leaps up about a foot, landing back in the water. He bathes quickly, leaps again, then another bath, repeating this until satisfied with his saturation.

The shrike is equally cautious at first, going from side to side, peeking over the edge to see that all is safe. Then he leaps into the middle, then out, then back, each time splashing violently.

One morning a western wood pewee swooped down, skimming across the water as if swimming, but apparently wetting only his undersides. This was repeated several times. The Bullock orioles bathe often and thoroughly. The Audubon's warbler used the bath daily while with us, but a little Lutescent disdained the fancy pool, preferring a crockery saucer on the ground near a dripping hydrant. He made a lovely picture with the sun glinting on his green-gold coloring.

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THE WESTERN TANAGER

Published by  
The Los Angeles Audubon Society  
Free to Members  
Outside Subscriptions 50¢ per year.

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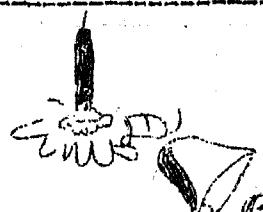
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Membership Dues

Annual \$1.25, payable in October, de-  
linquent in December. Life, \$10.00  
Patron \$100.00



DECEMBER MEETINGS

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 7:30 P.M. Plummer Park. Illustrated lecture by Mrs. Mary V. Hood. Boulder Dam, desert flora and a trip up the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Admission 20¢.

Thursday, Dec. 5, 10 A.M. to 3. Our time-honored Christmas party. Come early. Visit the headquarters. There are so many interesting things there. Lunch at 12 noon, in the Club House, followed by what promises to be a delightful program of music, whistling, bird songs, kodachrome slides of birds and their habitats, and a story of Christmas in California in the early days. Bring lunch as usual, and do not forget to bring something extra for the birds. They like bread crumbs, raisins, nut meats, peanuts, cracked corn and seed on their dining table and popcorn and cranberry strings and suet cups on their Christmas tree. Remember, guests are always welcome. Hostesses, Mrs. Grace Brown and her committee.

Wednesday, Dec. 11. 10 A.M. Board meeting at the beach home of Mrs. George L. Veath, 3107 Strand Avenue, Hermosa Beach.

Sunday, Dec. 15. 8:30 A.M. Bird walk in Griffith Park, led by Mr. Arthur L. Berry. Meet in front of the Park Cafe, near the zoo entrance. Bring lunch.

Tuesday, Dec. 17. 7:30 P.M. Plummer Park. Illustrated lecture by Mrs. Mary V. Hood. Death Valley and a trip to the summit of Telescope Peak, with pictures of the exceptional floral display of last spring. Admission 20¢.

"There is hardly a hobby that pays as great return in adventure, satisfaction, mental and physical training, accumulation of wisdom and an awareness of the Cosmos, as the study of wild birds." -- J. Otis Swift, Nature Editor, New York Telegram.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS:

Miss Christine F. Hughesdon  
Miss Alberta Hodge Miss Agnes Hickson

GIFTS FOR HEADQUARTERS

The receipt of a number of gifts for our Plummer Park headquarters is gratefully acknowledged: Exceptionally interesting bird nests, three from Mrs. Mary V. Hood, three from Mr. George Dowker; a framed picture of Audubon, from Mrs. Carl P. Smith; a hand-colored photograph of our canary member, Mickey Bishop, and a photograph of his foster-mother, Mrs. John H. Bishop; a copy of "Audubon's America," from a friend of Mrs. O. M. Stultz who prefers to remain anonymous.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The National Audubon Society offers a Christmas card designed especially for California, as it bears a Roger Tory Peterson drawing, in color, of the beautiful California Woodpecker. Proceeds are to be used for the benefit of the sanctuary fund. Order direct from Mr. C. A. Harwell, 2630 Hilgard Avenue, Berkeley, California.



(Continued from first page)

The Number 1 thrill was a visit from our Society's emblem, - a gorgeous male. A grosbeak was bathing when he flew down. In went the tanager, fluttering and splashing, later returning for a quick rinse. No fear was shown, although he was a stranger.

The Nuttall woodpecker is an amusing bather. His quaint ladder back is always turned toward the house. He sits in the water with his neck craned upward, moving his head from side to side as he does when inching along the limb of a tree. There is no splashing of water, for he merely cools his feet and wets his tail feathers. So far he has never varied this performance.

Usually hummingbirds bathe in the spray of a sprinkler, but one little female Anna that lives with us likes the pool. She tries hard to perch on the rim of the bath, but her feet are so tiny and frail that she cannot retain her balance for long at a time, having to fly up often, then alight again. She ducks her head into the water repeatedly, almost tumbling over, finally succeeding in wetting head and breast. It may not be a perfect bath, but it certainly is a persevering one, done under a great handicap.

Other stories could be told, but these are a sample of the fun we have received from a small investment.

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FIELD TRIP. The November field trip, - Woodland Park and the San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary, - brought out sixty members and friends. Forty-three species of birds were observed, including the always thrilling Cardinal. Many Western Bluebirds, Audubon's Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seen. After lunch, Mrs. Shearer and Mrs. Daugherty tested our knowledge of birds by displaying some thirty-five mounted specimens for us to identify. Not all of us, alas, knew all the answers; but it was fun!

INDOOR MEETING, November 14, was advanced one week because of Thanksgiving coming on the regular meeting day. Some members, failing to notice the change, missed an inspiring talk by Mr. W. A. Kent and beautiful motion pictures, in color, shown by Miss Ruby Curry, both talks dealing with Big Bear Lake and vicinity and the birds found there. They missed, also, a brief but interesting talk by Mr. C. A. Harwell, the newly appointed California representative of the National Audubon Society, whose coming was not known until too late to announce it in THE TANAGER. Mr. Harwell spoke of plans for Audubon work throughout the state, emphasizing the wildlife tours soon to be undertaken.

MRS. HOOD'S LECTURE. An audience of close to one hundred gathered at Plummer Park the evening of November 19, for the first of a series of illustrated nature lectures generously arranged by Mrs. Mary V. Hood for the benefit of the Society's projector fund. With a fine knowledge of her subject, Mrs. Hood showed and discussed kodachrome slides of views taken in the High Sierra last summer, - snow-clad peaks in the warm glow of the setting sun, wildflowers growing in the most unexpected places, interesting birds of the higher altitudes, trees silhouetted majestically against the blue sky. Adding greatly to the interest of the occasion was an exhibit of butterflies, displayed by Mr. Donald C. Meadows; minerals by Mr. W. Scott Lewis; botany specimens by Mrs. Hood; mounted birds loaned by Los Angeles Museum and arranged in a habitat by Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon. Miss Helen S. Pratt was there with the new National Audubon Society leaflets. Among many honored guests was Mr. C. A. Harwell. Altogether, it was a most enjoyable affair, and Mrs. Hood and those who assisted her have the Society's grateful appreciation.

A DAY AT LOS ANGELES MUSEUM, arranged by Mrs. Thos. R. Shearer, chairman of the Extension Committee. Throughout the morning of Friday, Nov. 22, Mrs. Carl P. Smith and Miss Greely acted as hostesses in the section containing the exhibit of California birds, talking with some sixty visitors. At two o'clock Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon gave a half-hour gallery talk, illustrating her remarks with mounted specimens of birds.

THE CALIFORNIA AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers  
President

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

DECEMBER MEETINGS

Thursday, Dec. 12, 7:30 P.M. Central Library, Fifth and Grand Streets, Los Angeles.  
Speaker, Mrs. Mary V. Hood. Subject: Highlights of 1940 High Sierra Trip. Illus-  
trated with kodachromes.

Saturday, Dec. 28, 8 A.M. Field Day. Fern Dell, Western Avenue entrance to Griffith  
Park. Visitors welcome. In connection with this, Miss Blanche Vignos will conduct  
a class in field leadership.

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
By Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers

On the evening of October 6th, I left Los Angeles and after a pleasant trip reached New York the morning of the 10th. The weather was warm and the autumn foliage in all its glory. Our western representative, Mr. C. A. Harwell, met me at the station, and that afternoon, after a conference with our Executive Director, Mr. John H. Baker, escorted me about Audubon House, which is a lovely old mansion on Fifth Avenue. It was a joy to meet the many people who carry forward our work, - some old friends, others whom I had not met. Mrs. Theresa Homet Patterson came in from her New York home, and Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Keely were there, so that five of us represented California.

The first meeting, the fifth Nature Camp Reunion, a delightfully informal affair, was held at Audubon House. Fine kodachromes of camp activities were shown. The next two days were given over to a birding trip to Cape May, New Jersey, about two hundred miles from New York. Nearly one hundred species of birds were seen.

The thirty-sixth annual convention began at noon Monday, with a buffet luncheon at Audubon House, and we visited as we ate. The afternoon and evening sessions were held in the American Museum of Natural History. At the Tuesday morning session the name "National Audubon Society" was adopted, and Mr. Guy Emerson was elected president, to fill the office held by Dr. Robert C. Murphy for three years. Tuesday afternoon I was given opportunity to bring greetings from California and express our delight that Mr. Harwell is to be our state representative. Mr. Harwell then gave a talk and showed films of Yosemite.

Space will not permit me to tell of the many lovely films shown nor review the splendid talks given throughout the entire session, but I must at least mention two that attracted great attention, - an "Indignation Meeting," devoted to a discussion of the use of feathers on women's hats, and a talk by Mr. Richard H. Pough on "Bird Slaughter at Fish Hatcheries." We shall hear more about these in the future.

The convention closed with a dinner at Roosevelt Hotel. There were 400 present, and I was given a place of honor at the head table where one other woman and I were the only women among many distinguished men. All were introduced. Mr. Ira N. Gabrielson was on my right and Mr. Horace M. Albright on my left. I was glad to visit again with Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson and learn something of his work for bird protection in South America.

AUDUBON JUNIOR CLASS

Miss Helen S. Pratt, Audubon Junior Club representative for California, Arizona and New Mexico, is showing some particularly interesting leaflets issued recently by the National Audubon Society. Two of these, No. 144 and No. 145, deal with birds, in color, of southern and central California. They can be purchased separately at five cents each, or as a part of the new Audubon Junior Club set, in which there are six birds, - the robin, killdeer, Mallard, mourning dove, great blue heron and downy and hairy woodpeckers - which are nationwide. Order direct from Miss Pratt. Her address, 2451 Ridgeview, Eagle Rock, California.



THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS  
December 22, 1940

Sixteen observers, representing the California Audubon Society, Los Angeles Audubon Society, Pasadena Audubon Society, Southwest Bird Study Club and Calypte Club. Territory: Section of Los Angeles radiating  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles from La Cienega and Airdrome Crossing, taking in short stretch of seashore, sloughs, four city parks, canyons on south and west slopes of Griffith Park, foothills within specified area, and city reservoirs. Director, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, Field Leader, Los Angeles Audubon Society.

LOONS: 1 Red-throated.

OWLS: 3 Barn, 3 Burrowing, 2 Short-eared.

GREBES: 2 Horned, 38 Eared, 9 Western, 23 Pied-billed.

SWIFTS and HUMMINGBIRDS: 50 White-throated Swift, 45 Anna's Hummingbird.

PELICANS and CORMORANTS: 22 California Brown Pelican, 37 Farallon Cormorant.

KINGFISHERS: 6 Western Belted Kingfisher.

HERONS, Etc.: 4 California Blue Heron, 24 American Egret, 6 Snowy Egret, 1 Anthony's Green Heron, 25 Black-crowned Night Heron, 2 American Bittern.

WOODPECKERS: 29 California, 7 Lewis's, 2 Cabanis's, 4 Willow, 9 Nuttall's, 59 Red-shafted Flicker, 1 Southern Red-breasted Sapsucker.

DUCKS, GEESE, Etc.: 1 Cackling Goose, 6 Mallard, 4 Baldpate, 294 Pintail, 6 Green-winged Teal, 4 Cinnamon Teal, 201 Shoveller, 1 Ring-necked, 1 Greater Scaup Duck, 238 Lesser Scaup Duck, 1 Buffle-head, 60 White-winged Scoter, 406 Surf Scoter, 145 Ruddy Duck, 68 Red-breasted Merganser.

PERCHING BIRDS: 1 Ash-throated Flycatcher, 46 Black Phoebe, 7 Say's Phoebe, 20 California Horned Lark, 75 California Jay, 8 Western Crow, 2 Bailey's Mountain Chickadee, 21 San Diego Titmouse, 254 Coast Bush-tit, 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 44 Pallid Wren-tit, 2 Western House Wren, 1 Western Winter Wren, 16 San Diego Wren, 36 Tule Wren, 167 Western Mockingbird, 26 California Thrasher, 345 Western Robin, 29 Alaska Hermit Thrush, 8 Western Bluebird, 26 Western Gnatcatcher, 67 Western Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 11 American Pipit, 32 Cedar Waxwing, 1 Phainopepla, 21 California Shrike, 2 Dusky Warbler, 352 Audubon's Warbler, 29 Tule Yellow-throat, 1111 English Sparrow, 58 Western Meadowlark, 13 San Diego Red-wing, 1495 Brewer's Blackbird, 9 California Purple Finch, 708 House Finch, 32 Willow Goldfinch, 70 Green-backed Goldfinch, 20 San Diego Towhee, 76 California Towhee. Sparrows: 63 Western Savannah, 42 Belding's, 2 Large-billed, 180 Western Lark, 4 Rufous-crowned, 274 Gambel's, 14 Golden-crowned, 4 ~~Belding~~ Fox, 135 San Diego Song.---79 Thru-ber's Junco.

VULTURES, HAWKS: 2 Turkey Vulture.

Hawks: 5 Sharp-shinned, 5 Cooper's, 14 Western Red-tailed, 4 Marsh, 18 Desert Sparrow.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS: 255 California Quail.

CRANES, RAILS, Etc.: 648 American Coot.

SHORE-BIRDS: 5 Semi-palmated Plover, 114 Killdeer, 112 Black-bellied Plover, 1 Black Turnstone, 7 Long-billed Curlew, 12 Hudsonian Curlew, 5 Spotted Sandpiper, 320 Western Willet, 67 Greater Yellow-legs, 170 Least Sandpiper, 8 Red-backed Sandpiper, 20 Long-billed Dowitcher, 90 Western Sandpiper, 312 Marbled Godwit, 292 Sanderling, 45 Avocet, 65 Forster's Tern. Gulls: 39 Glaucous-winged, 67 Western, 1 Herring, 190 California, 1114 Ring-billed, 202 Bonaparte's, 54 Heermann's.

DOVES: 32 Western Mourning, 81 Chinese Spotted, 33 Ringed Turtle.

ROADRUNNERS: 5 Roadrunner.

Total number of species ..... 126  
Total number of individual birds ..... 12,303