

## Western Tanager



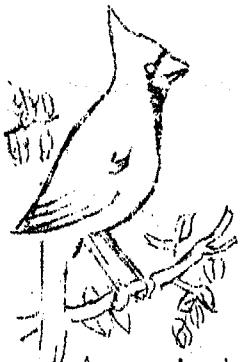
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THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER BIRD SANCTUARY

By Mrs. J. H. Comby, Extension Chairman



Cardinals, their brilliant plumage like jets of flame among the leafless trees, are broadcasting the news in San Gabriel River Sanctuary, that Spring is just around the corner. Song Sparrows, Spotted Towhees and California Thrashers, not to be outdone, are joining in the chorus. Every thicket of vines and shrubs is a potential nesting place for the busy birds. Even the most particular among them can find some place to suit his fancy in this variety of habitats.

Approximately 326 acres along the banks of the San Gabriel River comprise this sanctuary. Only twelve miles from Los Angeles it is almost incredible that a piece of natural woodland such as this has survived the encroachment of a great city.

Bird lovers have been attracted to this place from near and far. Here they have heard the wild fierce cry of the Red-bellied Hawk and the scolding of the Long-tailed Chat. They have seen the Yellow, Wilson, Calaveras, Orange-crowned, Audubon, Black-throated Gray and the dainty Black and White among the Warblers. After much observation and attendant discussion, the Trail Flycatcher has been identified here. Along the river bed or silhouetted against the green of alfalfa fields, American & Snowy Egrets may be seen in all their statuesque beauty. These are but a few glimpses of the many interesting sights that visitors to the sanctuary may enjoy. Over all is the thrill of knowing that Cardinals have made this their adopted habitat, for these birds are not native to this State.

Audubon Societies are ever on the alert in conservation work. It was at the instigation of the California Audubon Society, with the assistance of Los Angeles Audubon Society, Pasadena Audubon Society, Southwest Bird Study Club, Whittier Nature Club and the encouragement of the National Audubon Society that the Sanctuary was launched in 1939. Under this enterprising leadership the project was carried on for the greater part of two years when an extended sanctuary program made continued responsibility difficult. The National Audubon Society, in cooperation with the efforts of California groups now has assumed the major responsibility for the San Gabriel River Sanctuary. It is the first project of this kind in California for the National organization.

If you are interested in communing with Nature, or if you wish to enlarge your knowledge of birds and plants; if you wish to help, "Keep the Cardinals in California," you will be a welcome visitor to the Sanctuary. The password is "Do as you would be done by" extended to inhabitants of Nature's world.



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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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#### WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Mary K. Haymond,  
 4813 - 4th Ave., Los Angeles  
 Mrs. Alice M. Church,  
 5717 Virginia Ave., Los Angeles  
 Mrs. Robert Lewis,  
 2550 Durfee Rd., El Monte, Calif.

#### PLUMMER PARK NOTES

Our Society has sent a Victrola and surplus literature to the camps for soldiers.

Construction work on paving the lane and otherwise improving the park has reduced the numbers of birds seen there this winter.

The Coordinating Council now occupies two rooms at our headquarters.

#### MARCH CALENDAR

FIELD TRIP -- Thursday, March 5, Sunland Park and vicinity (safest spot at this time for birding). Following lunch we will go to McGroarty Park where Mr. John S. McGroarty will speak to us. Our Tanner Motor Bus will leave 544 S. Hill St., Los Angeles at 8 a.m. SHARP, returning about 3:30 p.m. Round trip fare \$1.00. Take lunch. Please make reservations by Tuesday, March 3, if possible, with Mrs. Jesse L. Morain, 1041 S. Gramercy Dr., L.A. Phone PARKway 0339.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, "Bird and Arbor Day," and the first day of "California Conservation Week." South Park, 51st & Avalon (on "S" carline), where more than 70 kinds of trees may be identified. Tree Walk, 10 a.m., led by Mr. George T. Hastings. Following picnic lunch at noon, Mr. Gilbert L. Skutt, Superintendent of Parks, and Mr. R. E. Bullard, Supervisor of Park Maintenance, will speak to us. Mrs. John H. Bishop will then dedicate a bird fountain, the gift of Mickey Audubon Bishop, with Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers, president of the California Audubon Society, presiding.

BIRD WALK - Sunday, March 8, in San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary. Joint meeting with Whittier Nature Club. Leader, Mr. Arthur L. Berry. Meet at Durfee Road entrance at 9 a.m. Bring lunch.

BOARD MEETING - Thursday, March 19, at the home of Mrs. Jesse L. Morain, 1041 South Gramercy Drive.

PROGRAM MEETING - Thursday, March 19, State Bldg. Exposition Park at 2 p.m. Glorious colored motion pictures of the Quetzal Bird, lecturer Mr. Victor von Hagen. The search for this famous tropical bird is a thrilling narrative. For centuries it was considered a myth, then when this small bird with the red breast, green plumage and a golden green tail a yard or more in length was found to live in the highlands of Central America - it was eagerly sought by the collectors. But little more was known about it until the von Hagens, in 1937, brought out the first Quetzals alive. They duplicated this feat again in Panama in 1940. The myth is doubly broken. A native of Saint Louis, Missouri, Victor von Hagen is a distinguished authority on the animals, Indians and cultures of Latin America. He is the author of more than a dozen books on Latin America and contributor to many of our well known magazines.

(Program continued)

BIRD WALK - Sunday, March 22, in San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary. Leader: Mr. Howard L. Cogswell. Meet at Durfee Road entrance at 9 a.m. Bring lunch.

STUDY CLASSES - Thursday, March 26, Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
 9:30 a.m. Botany - Leader, Mr. Geo. T. Hastings. Subject: "Ornamental Garden Plants"  
 10:30 a.m. Birds - Leader, Mr. Josiah Keely. Subject: "Identification of Birds by Characteristic Movements and Positions."

These study classes are proving so popular that there is not room at headquarters to accommodate all who attend and we have had to use the long hall in the clubhouse. Be sure to bring your textbooks, pencil and notebooks, also your lunch, and enjoy a social hour after the lessons.

WEAR YOUR NAME PIN AT ALL MEETINGS. IT'S MORE FRIENDLY.

#### FEBRUARY MEETINGS

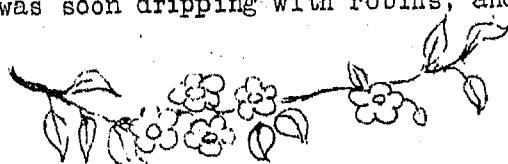
The Field Trip at Griffith Park on February 5, was attended by 53 members and guests. Forty-five species of birds were listed, including Golden-crowned and Chipping Sparrows, Thurber Juncos, Cedar Waxwings and great flocks of Robins. Mrs. Daugherty had told us beforehand that our list would include a Red-breasted Sapsucker but not a glimpse did we get of it until lunch was over and the program well in progress. Then, as if not to disappoint too many people, a Sapsucker flew into the tree above our picnic table.

Our Program Chairman, Mrs. O. M. Stultz, is to be congratulated on the splendid entertainment she has been providing for our program meetings. The pictures shown by Dr. and Mrs. Cockerell, February 5 were breathtaking in their loveliness. More than 250 persons enjoyed the trip through the scenic Canadian Rockies, Hoff's rare and beautiful "Life History of the Broadtailed Hummingbird" and others. Mr. Harwell showed pictures taken recently by Allan D. Cruickshank of our California Bird Refuges where thousands upon thousands of ducks, geese and other water birds find protection.

#### TRAVEL NOTE

Mr. & Mrs. Planesticus migratorius propinquus, along with thousands or so of their relatives and friends, were demonstrating the meaning of their middle name for our edification, over the week-end. The sojourners, probably from Mexico or points still farther south, put up at the Griffith Park Hostelry where robin food in the way of toyonberries and other delicacies is superabundant. They arrived in force (somewhere between two and three thousand) late Sunday afternoon, and when your reporter went over to the park at dawn on Monday for an interview, they were just arising in waves from the trees, and heading for the toyon fields over the ridge. Racing with them, we arrived in time to see them circling over the trees; the entire sky seemed to be full of robins, and they uttered a soft cooing sound which, accompanied by the whir of wings, filled the canyon with a music like rain on leaves. Every toyon bush and tree was soon dripping with robins, and we hope each visitor had his share.

Helen W. Shearer



CONVENTION REPORT

Thirty-three of our members attended the three-day session of the Second Annual Convention of the National Audubon Society held in Santa Barbara, January 23-25. A report read by Mrs. Carl P. Smith, our Historian, covered activities and future outlook of the National and its affiliated societies.

Miss Charlotte A. Hamilton, Chairman of Butterflies and Small Wild Life, has been appointed Chairman of Birds in District #2 of the California Garden Clubs, Inc. This is the Los Angeles district and takes in a large territory.

A CALIFORNIA WOODPECKER FAMILY

Last summer, while working at Bass Lake, near Yosemite, I had occasion to watch a pair of California woodpeckers raise their family. Their home was deep in the side of an abandoned telephone pole outside our kitchen window. By April the babies were either very young or not yet hatched, however, we soon heard them chattering and beginning to be fed and saw the parents making endless trips for food.

During my absence of two months they learned to fly and were as large as their parents. The only way to tell them apart was that the parent birds still fed their young. In September the whole family started putting away their winter's supply of food. The oak trees, poles, posts and buildings nearby were full of acorns. The birds used the top of one pole as a work table to crack the little cap off the acorn. When the acorn is green the cap is very tight. All day long we heard "Tap-tap-tap" and knew more acorns were being stored under the eaves of the dining room. The men at the resort tried to shoot the birds whenever they saw them boring holes in the buildings, but like a true Audubonite I kept talking to them and one man gave it up; at least while I was there. I had many chances to get a close-up view of these woodpeckers and they are beautiful. The red spot on the head was just like satin.

Before I left several of the family had disappeared, but the rest of them kept right on storing acorns for winter as if nothing had happened.

Among the birds I could identify were the grosbeaks, mountain bluebirds, bluejays, robins (fat and saucy) and goldfinches which came in flocks every evening to feed outside the dining room windows.

I wish all Audubon members could have spent a week or more up there. The back country must certainly have been a bird lover's Paradise.

-----Minna Brown

Mrs. Carrie Steere Ellis passed away on February 17. She had been a member for twenty-one years. A great lover of birds, many of them coming at her call to eat from her hands.

From the pen of Frank Chapman: "Friendship with nature is one of the most wholesome and inspirational influences of life and birds are nature's most vital and potent expressions."

