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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

Western Tanager



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THE REGIONAL AUDUBON CONFERENCE
May 7-8-9, 1943

A regional conference was held in Los Angeles May 7-8-9 under the auspices of the National Audubon Society with Southern California affiliated organizations participating. Local arrangements were made by Mr. C. A. Harwell, California Representative, in cooperation with the California, Los Angeles and Pasadena Audubon Societies and the Southwest Bird Study Club. Mr. John H. Baker, Executive Director of the National Audubon, came from New York for the occasion.

The first day's program, held in Plummer Park, was one of Round Tables and wildlife photography. There was an informal reception honoring Mr. Baker in the late afternoon, then an early California dinner in the clubhouse patio, with Jose Arias in charge of strolling musicians. A fire blazed in the huge chimney, lighted in true Scout fashion by John Hood and John Parks, of Scout Troop 121. Many honored guests were introduced by the official hostess, Mrs. J. H. Comby, president of the Los Angeles Audubon, and not only then but whenever called upon throughout the Conference, Mr. Harwell delighted everyone with his whistling and his bird songs.

At the first session of the Conference, after a word of greeting from Mrs. Comby, Mr. George T. Hastings, Santa Monica, introduced the two speakers, Mr. W. A. Kent and Miss Miriam Faddis. With carefully drawn charts illustrating his address on "The Development of Birds," Mr. Kent led his audience through the aeons elapsing between the archaeopteryx and the present highly developed species of birds. Miss Faddis followed with a talk on "Feather Facts," dealing with feather construction, utility and beauty.

The first afternoon round table was led by Mrs. Anna B. Young, president of the Pasadena Audubon, on the very interesting topic, "Let's Go Afield!" Mrs. Alma W. Mason, president of the Southwest Bird Study Club, stressed the rich rewards awaiting those who thus spend their leisure time. Dr. Maude Wilde, who has had years of experience with underprivileged children, challenged her hearers by her account of the utter poverty among such children in the field of nature study. The last speaker at this session, Mr. Howard L. Cogswell, gave practical information on the technique of studying birds in the field, speaking from wide experience as author of "The Season" report to Audubon Magazine from Southern California.

Mr. W. Scott Lewis had charge of a Round Table on "Nature in Morale Building." Discussing this topic from the standpoint of the individual, Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer brought out the enrichment of life which comes from communing with Nature. Mr. Roy Tuttle, Assistant Executive of the Los Angeles Citizens' Service Corps of the Defense Council, told of the alarming increase in juvenile delinquency, one of the most challenging problems of the day, and he emphasized his belief in the value of outdoor activities in combatting the influences which lead to youthful offenses.

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Editor.....Mrs. W. T. Shelford
3315 W. 41st St., L. A.

OFFICERS

President.....Mrs. J. H. Comby
256 Walnut St., Pico, Calif.
Recording Sec'y- Mrs. Belle H. Maguire
Corresponding Sec'y...Miss Laura Greely
904 Kendall Ave. South Pasadena
Telephone: BLanchard 7-1849
Treasurer.....Miss Bonnie C. Green
774 N. Heliotrope Dr. L. A.
Telephone: MO 1-5537
Curator & Librarian-Mrs. Mary B. Salmon
1117 N. Fuller Ave. Hollywood
Telephone: GRanite 9312

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FIELD TRIP - Thursday, June 3, - 9:00 a.m. entrance to Griffith Park. Bring lunch. Newly elected officers will be installed.

SUMMER FIELD TRIPS. Our field leader, Mrs. Daugherty, has arranged an unusually fine program of summer field trips, to be conducted by Ranger-Naturalist Joseph E. Burgess, who is well known to our members for his fine talks on Lassen Volcanic National Park. The trips will cover birds, trees and flowers, and will be held in Fern Dell, Western Avenue entrance to Griffith Park, starting from the picnic grounds at 8:30 a.m., the discussion and summary of the morning's walk at lunch time. Meeting place for all four trips will be at Table #1, South.

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An attractive feature of the Audubon Conference was the exhibit displayed at both Plummer Park and the Ambassador Hotel. Miss Helen S. Pratt and Mr. C. A. Harwell arranged National Audubon charts, pamphlets and other interesting material. There were many beautiful things made by children of the Audubon Junior clubs, -posters of bird pictures, conservation slogans, school movies, scrap books, a habitat chart and a beautiful electric Nature game made by a boy, now 17, who had been a member at 12. Mrs. Mary V. Hood lent her collection of California conifers and the charts used in her bird study classes for Scouts, displaying feet, wings and other material showing the adaptation of individual birds to their way of life. The outstanding exhibit was provided by the Los Angeles Museum, of the fine loan collections available to teachers and interested organizations.

WHISPERINGS: Mrs. T. G. White of Redondo, who recently received a check for a poem on Godwits which appeared in Nature Magazine, promptly sent it to the National Audubon Sanctuary Fund, saying she thought the birds ought to have the benefit of same.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Los Angeles:

Mrs. Edna Gramm, 6120 Romaine St.
Miss Elizabeth C. Landram,
1144 Coronado Terrace

Mrs. Marshall McIntire, 2930 Waverly Dr.

Long Beach:

Mr. Will J. Reid, Box 137 (Sustaining)

Hollywood:

Mr. Guy C. Caldwell, 7047 Hawthorne Ave.
Mrs. E. H. Nicolas, 1330 N. Harper Ave.
Mrs. Marie C. Longley, 6901 Visco Dr.

South Pasadena:

Mr. Zane Southerland, 1411 Oak Ave.

Our membership list has now reached 245

Miss Mary Ferguson Coble, co-author of "Introduction to Ornithological Nomenclature" has presented a copy of this valuable booklet to our library.

FOUND: May 9, at San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary, a black binocular case, also a knife, fork and spoon. These articles are at the residence of Mrs. Lewis, 2550 Durfee Road, El Monte.

Mr. Harwell led the next session, introducing as the speakers Mr. Don Eckelberry, Los Angeles Bird Artist, and Mrs. Dorothy Dean Sheldon, Berkeley, Nature Photographer and Vice-president of the Audubon Association of the Pacific. Mr. Eckelberry, commenting on the essential difference between a painting and a photograph, told of long hours of observation of, for example, a Chat, before attempting to embody his impressions and to bring out what he called "the essence of Chat." He displayed a number of his sketches illustrating his remarks, and Mr. Harwell took from the Conference exhibit a painting by Mr. Eckleberry of two mockingbirds, which a fellow-artist described as being "vibrant with life." Mrs. Sheldon presented her latest natural color or film, including exceptionally fine studies of the American Egret and of the Yellow-headed Blackbird. It is with such pictures as these that Mrs. Sheldon brings the beauty and inspiration of the outdoors to shut-ins and many underprivileged groups.

At the evening session there were more motion pictures in natural color: "The Western Grebe" film taken by W. F. Kubichek of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Audubon Society's pictures of beautiful birds of Audubon Sanctuaries, thrilled all who saw them.

The Saturday sessions and the Luncheon at the Ambassador Hotel were held in the Fiesta Room. At the entrance everyone was greeted by a poster: "Mickey Welcomes the Audubons." "Mickey" and his devoted foster parents, Mr. & Mrs. John H. Bishop, were introduced at the luncheon by Mrs. Comby, with an account of the many benefactions conferred in the name of this beautiful Canary, and with evident happiness she announced that "Mickey" had become a patron-member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, his dues having already been invested in a war savings bond.

Mr. Clinton G. Abbott, director of the San Diego Museum of Natural History, presided at the luncheon, introducing Mr. John H. Baker as the speaker. Here, and indeed at all the sessions, Mr. Baker added much to the program by his timely remarks. He brought out the policy of the National Audubon Society in carrying on youth education in Nature, the fact that the society is not opposed to hunting where it is warranted by the status of a species, and the conservation activities of the society, especially in the Southern states which lack sufficient national and state parks and refuges to protect endangered species. Mr. Baker spoke with feeling of the responsibility entrusted to us, at home, to protect the natural environment for those who are giving their services to their country, and from time to time stressed the great value of outdoor life in the maintaining of a more balanced viewpoint.

The morning session at the Ambassador was devoted to the subject "The Status of Wildlife in California," with Mrs. Comby presiding. Dr. W. E. Hemming, Professor of Biology, Whittier College, gave a fine talk on general conservation, bringing out the necessity of viewing the picture as a whole rather than stressing a single phase. He closed his remarks on a high note for peace, that the natural environment might be retained for the benefit of all mankind. The fundamental principles of keeping a balance in Nature was highlighted in an unscheduled talk by Mr. George Willett, Curator of Ornithology, Los Angeles Museum. He maintained that hunting is justifiable if the balance is maintained. Calling attention to the persecution of hawks, he deplored the general lack of knowledge regarding the beneficial habits of most species. Criminal individuals are found in any species, he said, and for the good of the whole these must be eliminated. Commissioner Edwin L. Carty, of the State Department of Fish and Game, gave a résumé of several of the two hundred or more bills concerning fish and game which came before the last session of the legislature. He suggested that a better understanding of proposed legislation might be arrived at if groups came together for discussion in open meeting.

Mr. Will J. Reid, president of Ducks, Unlimited, brought out the conservation value in the program of that organization. He reported the increase in ducks and other waterfowl through the restoration of breeding grounds, and he made a plea for more resting and feeding grounds for migratory birds along the Pacific flyway.

Mr. Gilbert L. Skutt, Superintendent of Los Angeles City Parks, stressed the value of a master plan to convert suitable areas in and around such a city as Los Angeles into parks, in order to preserve native plants and bird life. He spoke of the educational advantages for young people and of the esthetic values which might so be developed.

"Youth Leadership" was discussed at the afternoon session, with Mr. Baker presiding. Miss Helen S. Pratt, National Audubon Junior Club Representative in California, mentioned the six million children who have joined the Junior Clubs and the 7,000 at the present moment in California. She presented club leaders, who showed many beautiful things made by the children in pursuit of their study of birds. One teacher, adept at taxidermy, reported value from the examination of the stomach contents of hawks. Another spoke of activities which changed a problem sixth grade class to one of active bird protection. Others brought out the children's enthusiasm for bird pictures, and the pleasure of parents over the children's use of their spare time in observing birds rather than practicing on them with their guns. Mr. Baker presented briefly a new plan of Junior Club material which is to take effect in the near future.

The enterprising program of Youth Leadership developed by the Los Angeles Audubon through its Committee on Extension was described by the Committee's chairman, Mrs. Mary V. Hood, who told of bird study courses and field trips for Scouts. She outlined a series of suggestions for spreading the Scout Nature program over all six years of a boy's Scout life, and expressed the hope that all groups interested would join in forwarding these ideas. Mr. Floyd W. Forker, president of the Los Angeles Council, B.S.A., expressed his approval of the suggestions, and the appreciation of the Council for the help extended. Mr. Roland J. McKinney, director of the Los Angeles Museum, told of the place of the museum today in the life of the community, and he spoke warmly of the courses given by Mrs. Hood at the Museum this spring.

The final indoor session was held in the Hancock Foundation, Mr. Otto J. Zahn, president of the California Audubon, presiding. The program was given by Mr. Ed N. Harrison and Mrs. Frances Roberts, of Encinitas, consisting of motion pictures of surpassing beauty and interest, of birds of the Pacific flyway.

The final day of the Conference was spent afield. Assisted by the hummingbirds which have brought fame to the spot, the California Audubon held open house at the Tucker Bird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon. Bird walks were conducted in the San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary. Sponsored by the National Audubon Society, this sanctuary is administered locally by a committee of which Mrs. J. H. Comby is chairman, and her words of welcome were augmented by tuneful greetings of Cardinals, Chats and scores of other species. The very interesting history of the area was told at the picnic tables by Mr. Harlan Cate. By 2:30 p.m. the green Verdugo Hills, with their blossoming ceanothus and chamise, were again experiencing the glow of early California hospitality in the warm welcome extended the Audubon visitors by Mr. & Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer, who have dedicated their home near Tujunga as the Alma Stultz Bird Sanctuary. Next came Camp Arthur Letts, a Boy Scout Camp in the Hollywood hills. Already devoted to outdoor activities, it was this day dedicated as a bird sanctuary by the Los Angeles Audubon Society, with Mr. Baker officiating. Mrs. Comby presided, Miss Dorothy Groner, Protection Chairman, unveiled the sanctuary sign. Mrs. Hood told of plans for next year's study classes for Scouts, Mr. Harwell imitated the birds singing in the chaparral and as the sun disappeared over the hills the day's program, and the Conference program ended with a flag-lowering ceremony by the Scouts.