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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PLUMMER PARK

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# Western Tanager



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THE GIFT OF WONDER

By Dorothy Dean Sheldon

"My heart leaps up when I behold  
A Rainbow in the sky;  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man;  
So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die! ...."

What spiritual kinship we feel with the poet Wordsworth in sharing his joy at the sight of a rainbow! When the beams of sunlight, shining through the rain, are broken by the crystal drops into the colors of the spectrum and arched against the storm clouds, we pause in silent wonder before the ageless token of Promise. Then, renewed with cheerful courage, we can meet whatever life may bring.

It may not be a rainbow that stirs our sense of wonder. Any moment may bring a joyous discovery on our quest for Beauty: The sudden view of a golden field of poppies; a wedge-shaped line of geese flying across the sky; the first spring song of the meadowlark, or the clear call of a mountain chickadee breaking the dawn-stillness of the forest; the flaming flight of a vermillion flycatcher from a gray-green desert shrub; a fluttering cloud of monarch butterflies in migration over the blue sea; the sunrise glow on snowy mountain peaks. How prodigal with her gifts is Nature! We have only to look - or listen.

Among the census lists of a Buffalo, New York, Ornithological Bulletin is one from a blind person who had heard forty-nine species of birds. The valiant spirit cannot be bound by the limitations of physical handicap - the will to freedom stimulates other faculties to compensate the blocking of one channel of perception.

Close at hand lie opportunities for sharing our joyous gift of Wonder with those who live under the shadow of hardship, grief, or futility. The children next door may know only artificial forms of recreation: tin soldiers, air rifles, "funnies" or jazz records. Perhaps their older brother has just returned from war, crippled and stunned. What a joy it would be, at Christmas, to open their eyes and ears to the beauty and wonder of Nature! Make a simple rustic feeding shelf and bird bath for their back yard, and lo! the daily miracle of living song and color will light the spark of joy within their souls.

"Therefore am I still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods  
And mountains; and of all that we behold  
From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
Of eye and ear,- both what they half create  
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
In Nature and the language of the sense  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
Of all my moral being." (William Wordsworth)

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Membership Dues

Student (12 to 18 yrs.), 75¢ annually; Annual, \$1.50; Sustaining, \$5 annually; Life, \$25, and Patron \$100, in one payment. Joint membership with National Audubon, including "Tanager" and "Audubon Magazine," \$5 (minimum) annually.

OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

THURSDAY, DEC. 7. Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Come to headquarters at 11:30 A.M. and let Mrs. Salmon and her committee show you our library, museum and Memory Garden. Also visit again the Dr. Henry Smith Williams bird paintings in Long Hall. At 12:30 eat your picnic lunch in the auditorium, at the festive tables decorated by Mrs. Churchill and her committee on Hospitality. Tea will be available. During the program to follow, arranged by Mrs. Warren Holden, new members will receive special honor. A special treat will be musical numbers by Miss Sarah Ellen Barnes, pianist, and Mrs. Bertha Caroline Stockwell, whistler. You and your friends will enjoy this day. Don't miss it, and don't forget to bring some food for the birds. Bring packages of seed, cracked corn, sunflower seed, nut meats, dried fruits, particularly raisins. Above all, bring your Christmas spirit!

RECENT ADDITIONS TO OUR LIBRARY

Corporal Francisco Holguin, a member in the service, sends us from Australia "The Australian Animal Book," with a chapter on the birds of that country (Garrett). Francisco writes: "I do hope the members will enjoy it." They will, Francisco, and thank you! Mrs. T. G. White presents "Under the Sea-Wind (Carson), Mrs. Salmon and her Sister, Miss Sarah Ellen Barnes, "Wings at My Window" (Govan), "Walden" (Thoreau) and "The Man Who Walked with the Flowers" (Carver), and from Mrs. Elizabeth Burnell-Smith comes a gift of thirteen nests. For all these gifts our grateful appreciation.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT,-

Although we live in a changing world, the spirit of Christmas still abides in the hearts of the people in every corner of the earth. It is a living thing that grows stronger with the years, and as the Wise Men of old followed their star of faith to its port, we too pursue a beacon of hope that ere long there will be peace on earth, good will to men, once more. With kindness and friendly understanding may we this Christmas help to speed that day.

---Erna Comby

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY held its 40th annual convention in New York City Oct. 14-17, 1944. Our society was represented there by our president, Mrs. Comby. She and Mr. Harwell, Western Representative of the National Audubon, were the only Californians present. Mrs. Comby was deeply impressed by the scope of the discussions, and she returned with new enthusiasm for the part a local society may take in a program of vital, nation-wide importance in the field of conservation. Especially interesting was an all-day meeting at the Audubon Nature Center near Greenwich, Conn., where there is in highly successful operation what is hoped will, in time, be developed here in California at the San Gabriel River Sanctuary.

There were reports of progress in the Audubon Junior Clubs throughout the country, helpful discussions of national and state conservation policies, and a stimulating account of Nature work in the New York public schools, much credit for which is given the National Audubon. Ways in which national and local groups can be mutually helpful were discussed, and one can understand how attentively Mrs. Comby listened, now that our own society has become a branch of the National. She herself was called upon frequently for information as to what is going on here in Los Angeles, and she showed kodachromes of the San Gabriel River Sanctuary.

It is impossible to tell here the whole story of the convention. The important thing is the encouragement and inspiration that come from exchanging views with like-minded people and with those who stand high in the regard of the nation because of their work for conservation, and the resulting eagerness to have a part, however small, in that effort.

HOWARD L. COGSWELL, U.S.N. writes from an island in the Pacific that he has added 24 birds to his life-list, bringing the total to 390. Among his acquisitions is the White-tailed tropic-bird, of which he has seen four specimens. He writes: "The glistening whiteness of their plumage in the sun over a shady, forested valley is a picture of contrast only Harwell's camera or Don Eckelberry's brush could do justice to." Read Mr. Cogswell's article in "The Condor," July-August, 1944, p 204, about the Sharp-tailed sparrow he found here just prior to entering the Navy,- a new record for this species in California. Christmas greetings to Mr. Cogswell, as to all our members in the Service!

THE FALL ACTIVITIES of the Extension Committee, Mrs. W. Scott Lewis, chairman, are off to a fine start, reaching even as far as New York, where our president, Mrs. Comby, addressed the N.A.S. convention. Mrs. Hood gave lectures at Sequoia National Park and for the Sierra Club and the County Museum's Sunday programs. Mrs. Sheldon favored several groups with her lovely pictures before she returned north, and the W. Scott Lewises conducted a Nature walk for the Sierra Club, showed the Sanctuary pictures to the California Audubon Society, gave several Nature lectures and aroused real enthusiasm for bird study in the San Fernando Valley Girl Scout leaders.

WORD COMES FROM CANADA that Jack Miner died at his home in Kingsville, Ontario, November 3, 1944. Every lover of birds is indebted to him for the sanctuary which he established at his home in 1904. It was one of the first to be established on the North American continent.

THE CLUB YEAR 1944-45 opened auspiciously October 5 with a much-enjoyed field trip to Redondo Beach. Not many kinds of birds were found, but we had fine studies of Heermann and Western gulls, and in the afternoon one of those informative tree walks led by Mr. George T. Hastings. The group of which Mr. R. W. Julian is chairman had two Sunday field trips, - one in San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary October 8, when the register showed an attendance of 85, including many Scouts and their leaders. On the 22nd this group enjoyed the gracious hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Rolland Truman at their Tujunga home, with side trips to Sunland Park and the Alma Stultz Bird Sanctuary.

Then there was the field trip to Echo Park Oct. 21 for our younger members and their friends, led by Mrs. Daugherty and Mrs. Stultz, assisted ably by little ten-year old Connie Berry. Since babyhood Connie has studied birds with her father, Arthur Berry. She has a life-list of 72 birds and really knows them. This was the first field trip under the auspices of Miss Unterkercher's Youth Leadership Committee. The attendance of 33 boys and girls was encouraging evidence of youthful interest.

INDOOR MEETINGS IN OCTOBER. The first occurred at Central Library Oct. 11, when Mr. W. D. Quattlebaum, president of the Pasadena Audubon Society, talked on "The Song of Birds," which he believes to be "one of the most extraordinary performances in Nature." His views are given at greater length in his recently published monograph on this subject. Mrs. Bertha Caroline Stockwell, whistler, added greatly to the interest and pleasure of the evening by imitating bird songs and calls.

The program meeting at the Museum Oct. 19, arranged by Mrs. Holden, opened with a delightfully amusing playlet staged by our Curator, Mrs. Salmon, setting forth typical activities at our headquarters. Mrs. Dorothy Dean Sheldon then showed some of her exquisite motion pictures, in color, of High Sierra scenery and of Southern California birds. On Oct. 26 came the study class at Plummer Park directed by its new leader, Mrs. Shearer, - a spirited discussion of two of our most common hawks, - *Certhneis sparveria phalaena* and *Buteo borealis calurus*, or, if you'd rather, Desert sparrow hawk and Western Red-tailed hawk. After picnic lunch under the park's old pepper tree, we adjourned to the Memory Garden for the planting of shrubs honoring Miss Miriam S. Faddis and the late Dr. Henry Smith Williams and Mr. Charles Michael. Mrs. Comby, presiding, expressed her own and the society's feeling of indebtedness to these outstanding friends of the birds. In the afternoon we had a gallery talk in the clubhouse, where Mr. Scott's committee had hung thirty or more of Dr. Williams' famous bird paintings, of which our society is now the proud possessor. Mrs. Williams charmed us with stories back of the paintings. Ending happily a happy, busy day, Mrs. Churchill and her Hospitality Committee served tea in the patio.

The final indoor meeting of the month was that of the Youth Leadership Committee at the Museum Oct. 28, when 42 young people and their leaders took campstools into the bird gallery and studied at close hand mounted specimens of birds previously seen or to be looked for on the next field trip.

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A TRUE AUDUBONITE, according to Tom and Arlene Hadley, of the Detroit Audubon Club, is an individual, man, woman or child, it really doesn't matter which, who can look up into a tree, no matter how large, and instantly spot a bird, no matter how small, and then spend a lifetime, no matter how long, looking up into bigger trees, for smaller birds, until he, or she, or it, finds a Cuckoo in the clock, or a Bat in the belfry, and goes bughouse trying to figure out why "A bird in the bush is worth two in the hand" or vice-versa. And Arlene adds: "Besides all that, Audubonites are the finest people on the face of the earth, true leaders in a new era of creative conservation, all 'friends of the earth.' "--This is just one of many things Mrs. Comby learned at the National Audubon convention.