

T H E

Western Tanager



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BIRDING IN THE ARMY

Sergeant R. L. Pyle, RCC Weather Station, A.A.F., West Los Angeles

When the time came to put away my mufti and don the now familiar khaki of the United States Army, the hard decision was finally made to leave bird glasses and "Peterson" with the white shirts and red neckties. Little did I realize that the anticipated sacrifice of birding to the general military exigencies would instead become a wonderful new era in the pursuit of one of my favorite hobbies. Even here is an example of the poor forecasts with which my recent years have been plagued!

The first six weeks of army life was essentially a period of adjustment and intensive military training in the life-quenching "warmth" of a Texas July. But chances were found during this period to see my first adult orchard oriole and to observe the nest and young of a pair of least vireos; and the realization soon dawned that everything need not be viewed through khaki-colored glasses. Instead, the apparent total dominance of the military could easily be broken and the enjoyment of Nature's wonderful gifts be made an important part of the months to come. It was easy to find many opportunities, especially during the camping trip which closed basic training, to become acquainted with cactus and mesquite, with painted buntings and scissor-tailed flycatchers and (somewhat uneasily) with tarantulas and black widow spiders.

A chance at this time to spend ten days at home (in Delaware) seemed granted especially for the purpose of retrieving bird glasses, and from then on, the avocation of bird study became a welcome relief from the vocation of being a soldier.

En route to my first permanent assignment in Los Angeles, a slight rearrangement of train schedules made possible an overnight stay at the rim of Nature's most spectacular and inspiring work of art. Who has not watched the retreating sunshine give way in the early evening to the truly "deep purple" shadows which gradually work their way westward down the Grand Canyon, has indeed one of his richest experiences still before him. Always at the top of my "must-see" list, it took the Army to make this visit possible. And what better spot could be picked for an introduction to the birds of the real West? Here I first met the mountain chickadee and plain titmouse, Steller's and California jays, canyon wren, American raven and Western bluebird.

Then on to California, winter resort for lots of smart birds and permanent home of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Many confusing species have been untangled with the valued and appreciated help of this enthusiastic group of birders, and I am privileged indeed to have shared with them some unforgettable experiences. The first visit to Playa Del Rey, where, during the course of a foggy morning's work, I added a new bird to my list every nine minutes! And the trip to Big Bear Lake when thrilling new birds vied for attention with exotic desert or spectacular mountain snow scenes! And now, at the time of year when Eastern bird fans nearly go mad, the West too, brings on a rush of new species to every nearby park and woods.

Yes, birding is possible in the Army. And when many fine friends are so anxious to share prized opportunities, and so generous in providing time and companionship, the pursuit of the hobby becomes a really glorious adventure.

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THE WESTERN TANAGER

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The Los Angeles Branch of the National
Audubon Society

* * *

President-Emeritus.....Mrs. Robert Fargo
President.....Mrs. J. H. Comby
Route 3, Box 378-F, Whittier
Telephone: Whittier 41-4236

Cor. Secy - Editor..... Miss Laura Greely
904 Kendall Ave., S. Pasadena
Telephone: Blanchard 7-1849

Treasurer.....Miss Bonnie C. Green
774 F. Heliotrope Dr., Los Angeles 27
Telephone: MorningSide 1-5537

Curator-Librarian.....Mrs. Mary B. Salmon
1117 N. Fuller Ave., Los Angeles 46
Telephone: GRanite 9312

Group Leaders

Field Leader Mrs. C. H. Daugherty
Telephone: CITrus 2-2437

Evening Program R. W. Julian
Telephone: WALnut 7853

Youth Leadership Miss B. L. Unterkircher
Telephone: MUtual 5241

Headquarters

Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. From
downtown Los Angeles take Santa Monica Bl.
car, Subway Terminal, or transfer to it.
Get off at Fuller Ave. Walk one block west.
For appointment, telephone Mrs. Salmon,
GRanite 9312.

Membership Dues

Student (12 to 18 yrs. of age), 75¢; An-
nual, \$1.50; Sustaining, \$5; Life, \$25;
Patron, \$100. All members receive "The
Western Tanager." Joint membership with
National Audubon Society, with subscrip-
tion to "Audubon Magazine," \$5 (minimum).

OBSERVATIONS: Bullock orioles seem to be
supplanting Arizona hoodeds in many local-
ities. Warbler migration later this year
and more scattered. Long-tailed chat
found in many areas. Western Tanager mi-
gration numerous, also scattered, -small
flocks and singles appearing even in city
yards.

LISTEN NOW FOR: The beautiful songs of our
spring and summer birds. One of the great-
est pleasures the birds may give us is
through their song, - from the modest lit-
tle (chip) song of the California towhee
to the rollicking, jovial one of the
Black-headed grosbeak and the beautiful
song of mystery of the Russet-backed
thrush. --Mrs. Caroline Dougherty

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME!

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Mr. Earle H. Bowersock
139 - 60th Ave., Venice

Mr. George Braile
545 W. Doran St., Glendale 3

Mrs. Ernest A. Bryant, Jr.
15 Berkeley Square, Los Angeles 7

Mr. W. S. Hook
510 E. Commercial St., Los Angeles 12

Mrs. Olive F. Kierscay
1923 Michelorena St., Los Angeles 26

Mrs. Beatrice Wise Nielsen
126 Circular St., Tiffin, Ohio

Sgt. Robert L. Pyle
2101 Barry Ave., West L.A. 25

Mr. John Seemayer
3520 Amethyst St., Los Angeles 32

Miss Marguerite Speck
1700 E. Glenoaks Blvd., Glendale 6

Mrs. Ray Thomas
600 Sarbonne Road, Los Angeles 24

Mrs. Lura D. Watson
327 Camino Del Campo, Hollywood
Riviera, Redondo Beach

DUES FOR THE CLUB YEAR 1945-46 become
payable July 1. Members who pay promptly
greatly lessen the Treasurer's task.
Joint membership dues become payable one
year from the date of joining. The
National Audubon Society will notify
such members one month in advance. Any
one desiring to become a joint member
may send the dues to the National Audubon
Society, 1006 Fifth Avenue, New York 28
N. Y., or if preferred you may hand them
to our Treasurer.

THE SOCIETY has received several deeply
appreciated gifts recently. Honoring
the memory of her husband, Arthur F.
Roetken, who died March 2, Mrs. Roetken
sent a contribution to the Educational
Fund. From Mrs. Elizabeth Burnell Smith,
fifteen nests for our collection, includ-
ing one of a Verdin in a smoke tree.
From Bob Brown, also, several nests, and
from Mrs. Christianson two pamphlets on
life in the South seas. There are now
149 books in our library. Mrs. Salmon
requests that borrowed books be returned
this month, for the annual inventory.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT,-

As we look back upon our year's work we feel a singular satisfaction in the accomplishments of our Society. On the threshold of a new era of peace for peoples of the world, we are grateful that we too have had a part, however small, in this achievement, in carrying out those tasks which have come within our province with courage and faith in the future. Work well done will set its own goal for achievement in the time to come, and in unity of purpose we shall strive toward that end. May I share with you this vacation thought: "Nevermore, however weary, should one faint by the way who gains the blessing of one mountain day; whatever his fate, long life, short life, stormy or calm, he is rich forever." (John Muir)

.....ERNA COMBY

IN MEMORIAM. Mrs. Christine Bickel, a member for many years, died May 7, 1945. Our sympathy to her husband and daughter. Our sympathy also to Mrs. Walter C. Anthony and Mrs. Arthur F. Roetken, each of whom lost her husband recently through death.

MRS. J. H. COMBY announces that Mrs. Ethel Richardson, well known to many of our Audubon friends, is now ready to greet visitors at the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary. She is making her home in the stucco residence at the front of the property. We are very happy to have Mrs. Richardson in our midst again.

TRAVELING COMPANIONS. The road stretched across the Arizona desert. A raven, out to gather a breakfast of possible traffic victims, flapped steadily along a short distance ahead of my car. Flying at a height of around 15 feet or so, he could be seen turning his head from side to side in careful search of the roadway beneath. Passing cars disturbed him not at all, though he turned aside momentarily upon meeting a couple of huge diesel-burning trucks. For several miles my speedometer registered his speed at a little under 28 miles an hour. I lost him when a wayside pond containing three Green-winged teal claimed my attention.GEORGIE WARE

BALLONA CRAB NEWS. The Light-footed rails are busy fishing, no doubt preparing for, or nesting. Last week one was catching crabs along the canal bank and carried one crab over 100 feet into the Salicornia. The crab was so large and active that the rail had to rest about every six feet and fight the crab; but after about ten minutes it managed to reach its objective. The rails have been with us the year through. Last spring four black, downy babies made their first appearance on May 21. ... Today we saw six Least terns, the first of the season (April 30). They circled over the marsh, but did not make a landing. They will be nesting here in a few weeks. E. H. and ALICE BOWERSOCK

MRS. O. B. PRATT, a former member of our Executive Board, conducted a bird study course in April for nurses and employes of Glendale Sanitarium. There were five two-hour meetings, at one of which Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, with Mrs. O. M. Stultz at the projector, gave an illustrated lecture, using our own kodachromes and some museum specimens.

SATURDAY, April 14, was a busy day at Plummer Park, writes Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon, our Curator. "Mrs. Wait and I had 52 children here, in four groups, with ten adult leaders,- Cubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls. These eager, interesting children had come 'to see the birds.' They bought Audubon leaflets and then had a picnic under the pepper trees. Many expressions of appreciation and profit were heard and we felt the group had had a happy experience."

BIRD WORD ADVENTURES, by Ernest A. Choate, in "Frontiers," February, 1945, p. 83, gives an interesting account of the origin of certain bird names. Thus, "The sub-family name for geese, Anserinae, is derived directly from the Latin word anser, which is a part of the word merganser. Merg is from the Latin mergus, meaning diver; hence, diving goose." "Frontiers" is on file in our library at Plummer Park.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE SCREEN TOURS By R. W. Julian, Chairman

Audubon Wildlife Screen Tours, which has proven so successful in the East, is making its debut on the West coast this fall. It is offering five outstanding and nationally known lecturers, with motion pictures in natural colors. Sponsored by the National and Los Angeles Audubon societies, the Wildlife Screen Tours Club of the Los Angeles Audubon Society will present to its members the following programs:

Our Heritage in the Rockies (Friday, Nov. 2, 1945). All-color motion pictures by Karl and Edna Maslowski, presented by the latter while her husband is in the service, brings us a remarkable story of this heritage of spectacular mountain scenery, fascinating geysers, brilliant wildflowers, trumpeter swans, bull moose, bighorn rams and beavers gnawing down trees and building dams. All of this ably interpreted by one of America's best-known women naturalists and lecturers, Edna Maslowski.

Natural History in Colored Motion Pictures (Friday, Nov. 30). Murl Deusing, a master in the art of lecturing, presents his own films characterized by charming beauty, sparkling good humor and flawless photography. Such subjects as "Northwoods Adventure," "Wild Wings" and "Bright Feathers" have been enthusiastically received by audiences of the National Geographic Society, American Museum of Natural History, Chicago Natural History Museum and many others. Murl Deusing tells his story with a compelling interest which is exceeded only by the beauty of his subject matter.

Wildlife in Action (Friday, Jan. 25, 1946). Spectacular natural color motion pictures of American birds and animals, by Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. The weird courtship dances of the prairie chicken, the unbelievable aquatic displays of the Western grebe, wild turkeys, gorgeous tanagers, orioles and hummingbirds, the Great-horned owl, a sidewinder rattlesnake, majestic prong-horned antelope on the Dakota prairies and the freakish family life of the possum. These and more, for which Dr. Pettingill traveled 20,000 miles in four years and exposed six miles of film to get. A swift-paced story, unforgettable told, provoking consciousness of our conservation responsibilities.

Wings West from Florida (Friday, March 1). A superb all-color picture filmed by John H. Storer, Massachusetts naturalist-lecturer. Starting with Florida, he shows many fishing scenes, a glossy ibis rookery, American egrets in nuptial plumage, the Florida jay, herons and many other birds in amazing numbers. Then into Texas to the roseate spoonbill and white pelican sanctuaries; a blow-by-blow in slow motion of snowy egrets fighting in midair. A most unusual shot, in slow motion, of steelhead trout swimming up perpendicular falls and making 10-foot leaps. Stops are made in Grand Canyon, Bryce and Yellowstone national parks, showing the grandeur and color of their natural phenomena. A memorable record of beauty, interest and instruction by a recognized authority on bird flight.

Wonders of the Southern Wilderness (Friday, April 12). From Key West through Florida to the marshes of Louisiana and the Rio Grande Valley, Alexander Sprunt, "Prowler of the Swamps," able and forceful lecturer, brings us an all-color film revealing wildlife on a scale seldom witnessed by man. Ducks, geese, porpoise splitting coastal waters, a tree snail "in action," fascinating studies of Seminole Indians, muskrat houses, plants in bloom along the Rio Grande and a profusion of miscellaneous wildlife cover only a part of his repertoire. A variety of absorbing subjects long to be remembered by those seeing and hearing these "Wonders of the Southern Wilderness."

Membership dues in the Wildlife Screen Tours Club amount to \$2.00 per year, entitling members to attend all meetings stated above at no further cost. Meeting place to be fixed at a later date. Membership blanks will be available later to anyone wishing them.

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
The Los Angeles Branch of the National Audubon Society

CALENDAR FOR THE SUMMER OF 1945

THURSDAY, May 31. Field Trip. Fern Dell, Western Avenue entrance to Griffith Park. Meet at entrance to Dell, just off Los Feliz Blvd., for bird walk starting at 9:15 a.m. Leader, Mrs. C. H. Daugherty. Take lunch and wear name pin. At 11:30 return to picnic tables in Section 1, South. After lunch, officers for 1945-46 will be installed by Mr. W. D. Quattlebaum, president of the Pasadena Audubon Society.

THURSDAY, June 7. 7 p.m. Central Library, 5th St. and Grand Ave., Los Angeles. First floor. Illustrated lecture by J. R. Pemberton, on "The California Condor." One group of pictures will show the birds as they wake up in the morning, will carry them through a whole day's activity and put them to bed at night. A second group will show the home life of condors, - the egg and the raising of a young bird to the time he becomes a free, sky-roving condor. Presiding, R. W. Julian.

SUNDAY, June 24. Field Trip. Chantry Flats. Drive up Santa Anita double drive to end and park. Those who are not driving take Monrovia-Glendora car, P.E. Station, 5th and Main Streets, Los Angeles, 6:59 and 7:59 a.m., pay fare to Sierra Madre and get off at end of line. Those driving will meet the car there at 7:55 and 8:55. Bring lunch and plan to spend the day in this beautiful canyon. Arthur L. Berry, leader.

THURSDAY, July 5. Field Trip. Fern Dell, Western Avenue entrance to Griffith Park. Bird walk will start at 9:30 a.m., from the entrance to the Dell, just above Los Feliz Blvd. Leader, Paul W. Colburn, former ranger-naturalist at Sequoia National Park. Take lunch and meet at 11:30 at picnic tables in Section 1, South.

THURSDAY, August 2. Field Trip. Redondo Beach City Park. Hosts, Redondo Beach and nearby Bay Cities members. Take Redondo Motor Coach, Subway Terminal, 423 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 8 a.m. Round trip fare, 69¢. Get off at Torrance Blvd., close to City Park. Take lunch. Walk will start about 9:30 a.m. Paul W. Colburn, leader.

THURSDAY, Sept. 6. Field Trip. Santa Monica beach and area. Hosts, Santa Monica members. Take Los Angeles Railway Santa Monica Motor Bus, 5th and Hill Streets, Los Angeles, 8:02 a.m., to Ocean and Colorado Avenues, at base of pier. Meet at pier at 9:30 a.m. George T. Hastings, leader. Take lunch and meet at picnic tables at north end of Palisades Park at 11:30 a.m.

CHECK WITH INFORMATION TUcker 7272 FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES IN TIME SCHEDULES

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, where there is always good birding. Approximately 326 acres along the banks of the San Gabriel River, only twelve miles from Los Angeles. Maintained by the National Audubon Society and operated in co-operation with the Los Angeles, California and Pasadena Audubon Societies and the Southwest Bird Study Club, all of which are represented on the local committee, Mrs. J. H. Comby, chairman. (Telephone, Whittier, 41-4236) Open to visitors without charge. Visitors are requested to register with Mrs. Ethel Richardson, at the Sanctuary residence, opposite Temple School. The P.E. Pasadena-Long Beach bus, four trips each way daily and Sunday, stops at Temple School. From downtown Los Angeles, go by P.E. train or bus to El Monte and transfer to Long Beach bus going south; or, go by Whittier bus to Pico and transfer to Pasadena bus going north. Call P.E. Information, TUcker 7272, for best schedule. If driving, go east on Third St. to Beverly Blvd., continue on Beverly to Durfee Ave., thence north to the Sanctuary. Or, go east on Valley Blvd. to Durfee Avenue, thence south to Sanctuary.