

T H E

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

# Western Tanager



VOL. XII

October, 1945

No. 2

## GEORGE WILLETT - AN APPRECIATION

By John A. Comstock, Associate Director - Science, Los Angeles County Museum

The passing of George Willett on August 2nd of this year leaves a void in our ornithological ranks that can not be filled. The loss is felt by professional and amateur alike, for there was no leader of this generation who was more respected for his knowledge and revered for his kindly human attributes than was George Willett.

As Curator of Ornithology of the Los Angeles County Museum from 1927 until the day of his death, Willett was in a strategic position to serve as a focal center around which a large amount of teaching and professional activity with respect to bird and mammal life revolved. His classes in bird and mammal study for high school students were remarkably successful, and the deep regard, amounting almost to reverence, in which he was held by his pupils was an inspiration to all his associates.

George Willett was born in Hawkesbury, Ontario, Canada, May 28, 1879, the son of George and Hannah (Sawyer) Willett. His earlier years were spent in a variety of pursuits and activities, all of which tended to build in his nature a love of wildlife and a thirst for knowledge of living creatures. During the years 1912 to 1918 he served as inspector in Alaska for the United States Bureau of the Biological Survey, and in that capacity he traveled widely throughout the coastal waters and islands of the territory. In the Spanish-American war he served with the 35th Volunteer Infantry, Company A, in the Philippine Islands, and after the close of that campaign remained as a special guard in Manila for some time. He also volunteered for service in World War I and was in Infantry Officers Training Camp at Camp McArthur, Texas, when the armistice was declared.

Willett's scientific interests were not confined to Ornithology. He was equally respected for his contributions to Conchology, and he described a number of new species of mollusks, recent and fossil. A list of his published papers reveals that between the years of 1895 and 1945, he wrote and had published 125 separate articles, including the series of popular booklets on the birds and mammals of Los Angeles County which were recently issued by the Museum.

George Willett was a Vice-President of the American Ornithological Union, and was in line for the presidency. He was a past-president of the Cooper Ornithological Club, Southern Division, and was a member of its Board of Governors. He was a member of numerous scientific societies including the Northwest Bird and Mammal Society, the California Academy of Sciences, the Biological Society of Washington, the San Diego Society of Natural History and the Southern California Academy of Sciences. Among his many outstanding accomplishments should be mentioned the editing of the "Ten Year Index of The Auk, 1931-1940." He was engaged in the continuation of that task at the time of his death.

During his sojourn in Alaska, George Willett met and married Ora A. Bellah, then of Ketchikan. Her interests and talents supplemented his in every particular, and she became an able field observer, collector and collaborator.

In addition to his widow, now of Kent, Washington, George Willett is survived by a brother, Fred H. Willett, of Menton, California; a sister, Mrs. Walter Trager, of Paso Robles, California, and a son, George Willett, Jr., the issue of an earlier marriage. He was buried with military honors in the Sawtelle Soldiers Home Cemetery, the final services being conducted by Roosevelt Camp, United Spanish War Veterans, of which organization he was a member.

THE WESTERN TANAGER

Published Monthly, October to June, by  
THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
The Los Angeles Branch of the National  
Audubon Society  
Headquarters, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa  
Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 46

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Student (12 to 18 yrs. of age), 75¢; Annual, \$1.50; Life, \$25; Patron, \$100. Joint membership with the National Audubon Socy., including "Audubon Magazine," \$5 (minimum). Annual dues are payable July 1, except for those who have taken a joint membership. These will be notified at the proper time by the National Audubon Society.

OBSERVATIONS: Band-tailed pigeons and Western robins seem to be changing their preference for higher altitudes and to be moving to town. Many were seen all thru the summer in Los Angeles, Glendale and Elinridge residential areas; robins nesting in Glendale areas.

WATCH NOW FOR: Returning migrants and winter residents,- shore birds, ducks, Gambel's sparrows, Audubon's warblers, etc.

--C.H.D.

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME!

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A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT --

Beginnings appeal to our imagination; they challenge our capabilities, as we have before us the future, in which we may exercise our finest effort toward the attainment of our objectives. We launch our program this time in the beginning of an era of peace, in the building of which we hope we have a part. We know of no better way to express our gratitude for the preservation of our land than to devote ourselves with enthusiasm to the perpetuation of our forests, streams and wildlife, and to the education of our young people in this field, that they may enjoy greater enrichment of life and a higher degree of good citizenship through this understanding.

-----ELNA COMBY

THE WESTERN TANAGER comes to us this year with the compliments of Mickey Audubon Pishon, one of our patron members. On receipt of the first issue after the summer vacation he wrote: "How nice to receive the Tanager again. I see that the largest single item under Disbursements last year was the cost of its publication, so to help out a little I am enclosing my check for \$200 to pay for it for one year." What could be more encouraging, more inspiring than this? Our warmest thanks, Mickey!

COMMENTING ON THE DANGER which threatens the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary through the proposed building of a dam at Whittier Narrows, Mr. John H. Baker, president of the National Audubon Society, writes: "Whatever happens, we want you to know that Mrs. J. H. Comby, president of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, and her crew, have done a fine diplomatic piece of work in presentation of our case and the cementing of good relations, apt to have beneficial results in many directions." (Audubon Magazine, July-August, 1945, p. 251.)

MISS NORA PREISKER found excellent birding at Lake Gregory, in the San Bernardino Mountains, this summer. She writes of finding ten species of birds at her feeding table one morning, and within a radius of twenty-five feet she saw a Cassin vireo, junco, lazuli bunting, Western bluebird and San Diego towhee building their nests. "The lazuli bunting was laying the foundation for her nest in a gooseberry bush only a foot or so from the ground. It was an all-white nest, the materials being bleached grasses, roots, etc. The male danced attendance on her, following her and singing, but never a bit of help did he give. The vireo's nest was about done, but Mrs. Vireo added a decorative insect wing while I watched. Mr. Vireo was very vocal, but offered no other assistance."

CONGRATULATIONS to Mrs. Morain. She has found a way to frighten stray cats that wander, uninvited, into her dooryard bird sanctuary. She fills a tin can with enough small stones to make a good rattle and keeps it handy to throw in front of such unwelcome visitors. It does not hurt the cats, and it has proved effective.

SGT. ROBERT L. PYLE has been transferred to the Weather Bureau at Palm Springs. On a recent trip to Salton Sea he added an Abert towhee to his list, and now he is looking for a vermillion flycatcher...Cpl. Francisco Holguin, of the Army medical corps, is at San Francisco. He returned from the Philippines on a hospital ship, helping care for the sick and wounded.

SUMMER CAMPS of Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls called on the Los Angeles Audubon Society again this year for help in their nature study. Miss Clara E. Pflager served as Nature Counselor at the Campfire Girls camp on the Santa Ana River. Mrs. W. L. Fumuhreys had a bird study class of 35 Campfire Girls in the Alhambra City Park one day in July. There were 225 girls enrolled at the Girl Scout camp in Flummer Park this summer. Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon, our Curator, arranged nature walks and indoor programs twice a week for all the girls who were interested. The final program was given by Mrs. O. M. Stultz. She illustrated her talk with her own Kodachromes, and was assisted by Mrs. Bertha Caroline Stockwell, who whistled bird songs and calls.

NEW MEMBERS, Continued from Page 6

Mrs. E. H. Archer,	1835 E. First St.	Long Beach 3
Miss Florence Archer	1515-A Monterey Blvd.	Hermosa Beach
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A CHUCKER PARTRIDGE -----

By Mrs. Elsie M. May

A chucker partridge stood on a little knoll near the water tank, his checkered coat camouflaged into the rocky background. He was very angry. With each "chuck, chuck," his black wattles glistened in the brilliant sunlight. Back of him was his family, - eleven young chucks and the demure little mother. The cause of so much turmoil was that a mere human being had invaded their sanctum. Under the cottonwood's cool shade was the life-giving drip of the water-box, so kindly placed by the hand he so vociferously scolded.

Last winter the State of California furnished 150 banded partridges and the game warden placed them at the quarry of the Southwestern Portland Cement Company at Victorville. The company men and the Desert Fish and Game Association have cooperated in the care of these birds. They have placed water tanks and feed tables for them. No hunting is permitted on the company property.

There are many rock crevices for shelter. Clumps of giant yucca and Joshua trees, creosote bush, a beautiful perennial aster shrub and many other desert plants shelter wildlife from the mid-day sun and birds of prey.

The partridges are inclined to remain with us throughout the year, whereas the quail, which abound in the summer until the rains come, leave at that time and do not return until the next season. At present, during the month of August, there are numerous quail families of all sizes, - one with tiny little ones recently hatched. Much is being accomplished here toward the preservation of wildlife.

## THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

MRS. J. H. COMBY, President

## CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER, 1945

THURSDAY, OCT. 4. Field Trip, Playa del Rey. Shore and back bay areas for shore birds. Take Redondo Motor bus via Playa del Rey, Olive Street deck, Subway Terminal Bldg., 423 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 8 A.M. Get off at Playa del Rey and Vista del Mar St. Round trip fare, 40¢. Take lunch. Bird walk will start from bus stop at 9 o'clock. At 11:30 meet on the bridge near shore south of restaurant. Return bus leaves Playa del Rey at 1:13, 2:13 and 3:13. Check for possible motor bus change by calling Information, TUcker 7272. Leader, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty.

THURSDAY, OCT. 11. 7 P.M. Los Angeles Central Library, Fifth Street and Grand Avenue. First floor. Address, "Trees, Flowers and Birds of Our City," by Mr. George T. Hastings; illustrated with kodachrome slides and motion pictures. Prologue: Reports on summer observations. Mr. R. W. Julian, presiding.

SUNDAY, OCT. 14. 9 A.M. San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, 2610 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte. Telephone, Whittier 6-3748. Located opposite Temple School, on the Pacific Electric Pasadena-Long Beach bus line, which makes four trips each way daily. From downtown Los Angeles go by El Monte bus or train to El Monte P. E. Station; change to Long Beach bus leaving El Monte at 8:38. Get off at Temple School. If driving, go east on Third Street to Beverly Blvd., continue on Beverly to Durfee Avenue, thence north to Sanctuary. Take lunch. Leader, Mrs. Ann B. Young, president of the Pasadena Audubon Society.

SUNDAY, OCT. 14. 2 to 4 P.M. San Gabriel Wildlife Sanctuary. (See preceding notice for directions.) An illustrated talk on birds, for Student Members and other young people under 18 years of age, will be presented by the Committee on Youth Leadership, Mrs. O. B. Pratt, chairman.

THURSDAY, OCT. 18. 1:30 P.M. Los Angeles County Museum; assembly hall on second floor. The Program Committee, Mrs. Carl F. Smith, chairman, presents Mrs. Mary V. Hood, Second Vice-President of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, in "Sequoia Side-lights," - six weeks of pictures taken this summer on the foot-trails of this lovely park.

THURSDAY, OCT. 25. 10 A.M. Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Study Class, conducted by the Committee on Nature Study, Mrs. Thomas R. Shearer, chairman. 1. Discussion of year's work, 1945-46; 2, Identification of winter visitors; 3, Symposium: Should undesirable species be controlled? Mrs. Daugherty, Mrs. Willis, Mrs. T. G. White; 4, Question Box. Bring notebook and pencil. Bring lunch also, and spend the afternoon in our headquarters with our books, pictures, mounted specimens, bird song phonograph records, etc.

SUNDAY, OCT. 28. Field Trip, Playa del Rey. Take Redondo Motor bus via Playa del Rey, Olive Street deck, Subway Terminal Bldg., 423 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 8:50 A.M. Get off at Vista del Mar Street. Bird walk will start from there on arrival of bus (9:36 A.M.). Take lunch and meet at 11:30 on the bridge near the shore, south of the restaurant. Check for possible bus change by calling Information, TUcker 7272. Leader, Arthur L. Berry.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS, Burdett Hall (Philharmonic Building), 427 W. Fifth St., Los Angeles. Presented by the Audubon Screen Tours Club of the Los Angeles Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society. Membership open to the public. Dues, \$2 to June 30, 1946. Purchase tickets of Walter Scott, 967 S. Sydney Drive, Los Angeles 22.