

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

T H E

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WESTERN PACIFIC BIRDING Howard L. Cogswell, U.S.N.

A visit to new regions, whether voluntary or in connection with one's military service, always provides the enthusiastic bird student with plenty of material to occupy his spare time. Thus, when I went to Okinawa last spring I made my first acquaintance with a number of typically Oriental or Eurasian birds and was surprised to find so many of them similar to American forms -- or at least filling the ecologic niche that some common species does back home.

The street and dooryard sparrow, for instance, of Okinawa (and of Japan) is at first glance like the English, but closer inspection shows it to be a richer brown above, with reddish brown crown and a black ear mark, - the old world Tree Sparrow. In place of the American warblers and vireos as gleaners of the foliage in the scheme of bird life is the ubiquitous White-eye, a little greenish bird with yellow throat and white eye ring. It is widespread over the Pacific and Orient in one or another species. On Okinawa too, was one bird which I tried hard at first to call a jay. Its actions and voice were of the boisterous and audacious quality of the California jay and it sat similarly for long periods, quietly watching events below from some perch of advantage, only to retreat with screeching and yelping when it found itself the object of scrutiny. This was the Brown-eared Bulbul, which in size, form and demeanor, if not in actual physical relationship, is the jay of Okinawa.

Some birds were really old friends, - those that range all across America, Europe, and Asia and have worked their way on out to the Ryukyus, the stepping stones between Japan and Formosa. Such were the House Swallow (called Barn Swallow in America), a welcome sight to me after a year in the Hawaiian Islands where no such aerial insect feeders are found, the Asiatic Little (our Least) Tern, Greater (our American) Egret, the Osprey, and several of the shore birds. Okinawa has a chickadee too, but it has a black patch down the center of the abdomen and is called the Great Tit. The Jungle Crow differs from our American Crow chiefly in voice, and the E. Turtle Dove is a larger and brighter cousin of the Chinese Spotted - and much more wary.

The most beautiful birds on Okinawa are its two kingfishers: (1) the tiny Kawasemi, or River Kingfisher, whose brilliant turquoise back and tail and contrasting dark green wings and head and ruddy underparts flash up and down the streams or along the rocky coast; and (2) the Aka-shobin (Ruddy Kingfisher), all bright reddish brown except for a lens shaped patch of bright blue on the rump and a red bill, found in the forest or in windbreak trees of the villages.

Just at this writing, on Guam, I am becoming acquainted with another forest kingfisher, almost the size of our Belted but with a cinnamon head and a lizard and grasshopper diet. In its really tropical jungle Guam has much of interest and contrast to the pines of Okinawa, too, some of the birds being the bright red and black Cardinal Honey-eater, the Edible Nest Swiftlet, a parrot-green, yellow and red Fruit Dove, and little flycatchers of the jungle understory, one of which obligingly keeps his tail spread, so that you know its name at an instant -- the Rufous-fronted Fantail.

Nowhere in the Pacific, however, that I have been - or heard of - does the birding compare with California's variety of abundant seashore, valley, high mountain and desert species; and the bird watcher in the humid West or Southwest Pacific who persists in his search for additional species perspiringly admits that he'd much rather be back with the familiar places and birds and birders at home.

THE WESTERN TANAGER

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Charlotte J. Fox, 5442 Monroe St., L.A. 38.

OBSERVATIONS: Shore-birds returning in
great numbers, but ducks still very tardy.
Only a few pintail, baldpate, and cinnamon
teal observed on ponds where usually great
numbers are found. Rarely-seen surf-birds
seen many times- 10 on Nov. 3 in Playa del
Rey area. Lesser scaup ducks, pintail and
redhead in Douglas MacArthur Park. Great
flocks of white pelicans, over 1000 to a
flock, seen over Sunland Mountains Nov. 1.
Our mountain stream ouzel found within an
hour's drive of Los Angeles. Western rob-
bins and Western bluebirds feeding on
city lawns. A flock of over 2000 white-
faced glossy ibis observed Nov. 2 in
Imperial Valley.

WATCH for Lewis woodpecker, varied thrush,
golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets,
Thurber junco, golden-crowned, Fox and
Lincoln sparrows.

.....Caroline H. Daugherty

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME !

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WELCOME, also, the return of Mrs. E.
H. Crane, Playa del Rey, and Mrs. Has-
sel Smith, Whittier, who have been ab-
sent from our ranks for a while.
Rejoice, too, over the return of Mr.
and Mrs. Harlan Eckler, after a year's
absence in their former home, Buffalo.
Mrs. Eckler promptly added a surf-bird
to her life list, and then, to her de-
lighted surprise, observed a lesser
yellowlegs, rare here, but as familiar
to a new Yorker as the greater yellow-
legs to a Westerner. Mr. Geo. Willett
left six records of the lesser yellow-
legs, all at Playa del Rey. --- Mrs.
Eckler has accepted appointment as Ex-
tension Chairman and is therefore now
a member of the Executive Board.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT --

At this Christmas season peoples from all over the earth will share in the fervent hope that the peace which has come to us once again may be enduring, that it may be as eternal as the earth and sky, that it may nevermore be destroyed within the consciousness of man. It is a time when we may express our thankfulness by commemorating the time of Noel with a friendly warmth and imbrewing our festivities with a joyous spirit that will reach out in goodwill to those who have suffered much, that all might live in the sunshine of peace.

—ERNA COMBY

IN MEMORIAM. Mrs. Arthur J. Mix, a pioneer member of the society, and a member of the Executive Board for seven years, passed away Nov. 7. The society extends heartfelt sympathy to Mr. Mix.

THROUGH THE COURTESY of the Cooper Ornithological Club, a generous supply of colored plates, illustrations by Major Allan Brooks from Dawson's "Birds of California," have been made available to us and will be invaluable in our work with Scouts and other young people. We are indeed appreciative of this friendly spirit of cooperation between our bird clubs.

--D.E.G.

MRS. ELIZABETH BURNELL SMITH, former Supervisor of Nature Study in the Los Angeles public schools, has presented us with much valuable material for nature study, - a fine collection of trap-door spider tunnels (in clay), some thirty mineral specimens mounted in cement, scrap books used by herself and Mr. Luther Wyman in compiling their "Field Book of Birds of the Southwest United States," about fifty nests and many bird pictures and pamphlets. For this highly valued gift to our nature museum Mrs. Smith has our grateful thanks.

IN A LETTER FROM ENGLAND, S/Sgt. Lloyd Morain, A.A.F., son of our member, Mrs. J. L. Morain, thanks Mrs. O. M. Stultz for sending him copies of "The Western Tanager" and "Audubon Magazine." "Very few American publications reached England during the war years and those you sent have had eager readers... During recent months I have studied at close range the fauna and flora of Ireland, Scotland and Wales and here in England. Much has been done toward bird conservation; even here in these tiny islands some areas have been set aside exclusively for wildlife... One of my richest experiences has been watching skylarks spiral into the sky and out of sight. Thrushes, which sing here at night, are just as melodious as the nightingales. What a symphony of sound! How it brings one alive!"

FROM LT. A. H. MORGAN, U. S. Marine Corps, of Massachusetts, stationed temporarily at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, comes this interesting observation: "A semi-palmated sandpiper was seen at the Maxton Brown Sanctuary Oct. 22, 1945. This bird so closely resembles the least and Western sandpipers that it is doubtless often overlooked, Peterson's Field Guide gives field marks and has an excellent plate (p. 62), but watch for a bird with black legs in a flock of least sandpipers, or a slightly smaller bird with a much shorter bill with a flock of Western sandpipers."

HIGHLIGHT OF THE FIELD TRIP of Sunday, October 28, was the presence of Dr. Loye H. Miller, noted ornithologist and paleontologist, who thrilled at the sight of a flight of white pelicans and the stooping of a duck hawk even as you and I. After lunch, at the request of Mrs. O. M. Stultz, he kindly gave a short talk on his recent field trips to southern Arizona, which included some of his famous owl calls. A memorable day!

-- D.E.G.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REGRETS the necessity of dropping from the "Tanager" mailing list the names of annual members whose dues for the current year have not yet been paid. If you are among the tardy ones, do not delay sending your dues to the Treasurer. If for any reason you cannot continue your membership, please make that fact known to her.

CHRISTMAS PARTY, Thursday, Dec. 6. This annual gala event in Plummer Park is being arranged jointly by the Program Committee, Mrs. Carl P. Smith, chairman, and the Hospitality Committee, Mrs. Roy M. Barnes, chairman. It will begin promptly at 12 in the Assembly Hall. Bring picnic lunch as usual. Our guest speaker will be Mr. Richard C. Craven, Western Regional Director of the American Humane Association. He will tell us about "Birds and Animals in Motion Pictures." This will be followed by a talk by Mrs. Harlan Eckler on "Birds of the Seashore and Mountains," with Mr. Eckler at the projector illustrating her talk with their own kodachrome slides. Meanwhile, the House Committee, Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon, chairman, will keep open house at our headquarters from 11 to 12, to show members and guests our many new possessions there. Do not fail to bring a Christmas gift for the birds of Plummer Park, - nut meats, seeds, raisins, etc. Leave your package in Mrs. Salmon's care at headquarters. Members may bring guests.

WE WERE REPRESENTED at the annual convention of the National Audubon Society, held in New York October 21-24, by our president, Mrs. Comby, and in her vivid reports of the meeting she has imparted to us much of her own enthusiastic admiration for the far-reaching program of the national organization. She had the pleasure and inspiration of meeting and exchanging views with many like-minded people from all parts of the country, and she gained much valuable information. It was a special pleasure to her to meet Dr. Olin S. Pettingill, Jr., who is to present the Screen Tour here January 25 next. New and of vital importance was a discussion of the use of DDT, its effect on wildlife and vegetation, and the need and method of its control. Mrs. Comby spent considerable time at the Audubon Nature Center, at Greenwich, Conn. and the nearby, recently acquired Fairchild Garden, finding special interest in the new museum exhibits prepared by our old friend, Don Eckelberry. She enjoyed, too, a program presented by our Honorary Member, Mr. C. A. Harwell, who has filmed, in color, many magnificent Western scenes. All in all, Mrs. Comby felt well repaid for the long journey.

"SUPERB!" That was the general verdict of the motion pictures, "Our Heritage in the Rockies," presented by Mrs. Edna Maslowski at our first Screen Tour November 2. In no slightest detail did they fail to live up to their advance advertising. It is safe to predict that the next Screen Tour, to be given November 30 by Murl Deusing, "Backyard Safari," will find no vacant seats in the hall. A few tickets are still available at this writing. Mr. Walter Scott, 967 S. Sydney Drive, Los Angeles 22, will supply them while they last.

FIELD TRIP, Sunday, Dec. 9. Mrs. Comby, chairman of the San Gabriel River Sanctuary Committee, announces the usual second-Sunday field trip at the sanctuary, starting at 9 A.M. from the entrance, 2610 S. Durfee Avenue, El Monte. Leader, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty. The Pasadena-Long Beach bus stops at Temple School, opposite the entrance. Connection is made at El Monte at 8:38 A.M. with trains or busses from Los Angeles. Call Information, TUCKER 7272, for best schedule from Los Angeles. If driving, go east on Third Street to Beverly Blvd., continue on Beverly to Durfee Ave., thence north to the Sanctuary. Take lunch. Returning busses leave Temple School at 4:57 for El Monte, and at 3:46 for Pico.

PACIFIC ISLAND BIRDS. Dr. Harvey L. Fisher, ornithologist of the University of Hawaii, and Paul H. Baldwin, U. S. National Park Service, who have recently completed a survey of the birds on Midway Island, report that many species of Pacific Island birds may become extinct. Both the Laysan rail and the Laysan finch are probably gone already as none are left on Midway and their only other habitat was Laysan Island, where none appear to be left. The "gooney bird," or Laysan albatross, has been reduced to half its former numbers. The Bonin Island petrel population has dropped from 500,000 to 25,000 and the noddy terns from 2000 to 3. Principal causes of the reduction are: Influx of rats, use of large areas for buildings, planting of lawns, slaughter by planes and collecting of eggs for eating.

.....W. SCOTT LEWIS