

# Western Tanager



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BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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## ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

The following very brief outline of the principal activities of the National Audubon Society was furnished, on request, by John H. Baker, President of the Society.

1. Junior Education. (a) Audubon Junior Clubs, organized in schools throughout the United States. Last year 357,744 children enrolled in 13,636 clubs. Total enrollment since inception of plan, over seven million. (b) School Nature League Bulletins published monthly during the school year cover whole field of nature and are valuable teaching aids. Seventy-five different bulletins available.

2. Publication of "Audubon Magazine." Bi-monthly; to all members free and to others at subscription price. Subject matter covers entire nature and conservation fields. Illustrated.

3. Lecture Program, including Audubon Screen Tours. Over 500 lectures by outstanding nature lecturers, with the best available color motion picture film, were booked in the 1945-46 lecture season. Audubon Screen Tours, involving five such lectures per season, have been booked in 65 principal cities for the current lecture season.

4. Sanctuary Maintenance. The Society is currently responsible for the maintenance of 33 areas of sanctuary character in the United States, and employs in that regard 17 wardens. These patrols involve considerable boat, car and other equipment. Principal job entails protecting bird roosting, feeding and nesting congregations where subject to disturbance and destruction.

5. Adult Education. (Audubon Nature Camp and Audubon Nature Center.) To aid teachers and other youth leaders in stimulating lasting informed appreciation of the value and need of conservation of soil, water, plants, and wildlife. Eighteen hundred persons from 39 states and 4 provinces of Canada have attended the summer sessions at Audubon Nature Camp and Audubon Nature Center. Most other activities of the Society also come under the head of adult education, especially the Magazine, lectures, distribution of reprints and other leaflets, and the wildlife tours.

6. Audubon Wildlife Tours. Conducted, with expert leadership, by station wagon and boat, in various parts of the United States, especially in the vicinity of Audubon federal or state refuges or sanctuaries.

7. Legislative Representations. As the Society believes that legislation without majority public support is rather useless, stress is currently put on education rather than on legislative activities. The Society keeps in touch with federal and, to some extent, state legislators and with government personnel, and does not hesitate to venture recommendations as to policy or to promote assumption of proper responsibilities.

8. Research. It engages in considerable research into life histories and conservation problems related to rare species or wildlife management controversies. Illustrations in recent years include: Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Roseate Spoonbill, California Condor, Whooping Crane, Desert Bighorn Sheep, the Deer Tick controversy in Florida.

9 to 18. Service and business departments, including films available for rent, a first-class reference library, exhibits, leaflets, etc.

19. Affiliates and branches. There are at present 9 branches (including the Los Angeles Audubon Society) and 167 affiliates. Any group of persons, as an organization, may apply for affiliated membership and thus express encouragement and support of the National Society.

THE WESTERN Tanager

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MEMBERSHIP DUES: Student (12 to 18 years of age), 75¢; Annual, \$1.50; Life, \$25; Patron \$100. Joint Membership with the National Audubon Society, including "Audubon Magazine," \$5 (minimum).  
Membership Chairman, Mrs. Wm. T. Shelford, 3315 West 41st Street, Los Angeles 43.  
Telephone: Axminster 0410

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS: Our by-laws require the appointment, in January, of a nominating committee of three members, selected, one by the President, one by the Executive Board, one by the Society from the floor. Be ready at the Program Meeting January 16, with your choice for this important committee.

OBSERVATIONS: A Black Oyster-catcher seen in Playa del Rey area since Nov. 14 by many different observers. Rare to our beaches, liking a more rocky shore usually; but the Playa del Rey rocks, being heavily barnacle-covered, proved a good feeding ground, as the bird was still there Dec. 10. One Black-necked Stilt, seen in the same area Dec. 9 (D), evidently wintering over. Very few ducks reported as yet. San Fernando Reservoirs only area where large numbers of Pintail, Canvas-back and Redhead were seen Dec. 4 (D). One rare Wood Duck seen on Devil's Gate dam Nov. 24 (Cogswell). W. A. Kent reports 5 Short-billed gulls (2 mature, 3 immature) in Santa Monica area Nov. 19. Another rarity, one Golden Plover, carefully observed at rest and in flight, Playa del Rey Dec. 9 (S & D). Ethel M. Anderson, Sherman Oaks, has had 3 Red-breasted Sapsuckers since Nov. 18 working in pepper and walnut trees. Twenty Western Bluebirds in Forest Lawn Park Dec. 6 (D). Mrs. Erna Comby reports Western and Mountain Bluebirds, Fuddingstone Dam area, Dec. 8. Townsend Warbler and Fox Sparrows, Griffith Park, Nov. 10, by Justin Russell.

WATCH NOW FOR: Chickadees, Nuthatches, Varied Thrush, Cedar Waxwings, California Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Slate-colored Juncos and Fox Sparrows. Check on number of wild ducks observed.

---CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT,-

Our Society is gratified that the George Willett private collection of bird skins is to remain in the Los Angeles Museum. This collection, a part of the estate of the late George Willett, was eagerly sought after by private parties as well as by museums in other parts of the country. It was through the efforts of the County Museum and the cooperation of the Academy of Sciences and the Los Angeles Audubon Society that the matter was brought to the attention of the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County. This body voted the required fund of \$3400 which, in addition to the sum of \$50 each given by our Society and the Academy of Sciences in token of interest and cooperation, comprised the purchase price of \$3500.

The collection of 3200 skins tells the story of a lifetime devoted to interest in Ornithology and, especially in later years, a rare comprehension of conservation in this field. Some of the specimens are rare, others uncommon, and all are so skillfully done that it is easy to detect the hand of a master in the art of preserving material of this kind.

It is with profound respect for his accomplishment in the preservation of wild-life in a day when such programs were new that we recall the fine work done by George Willett on Laysan Island in the interest of protecting albatrosses from extermination and again while in the wilderness country of Alaska on a mission of conservation for the United States government.

During his years as Curator of Ornithology and Mammology at our County Museum, Mr. Willett made his private collection available for research and for education generally. We feel that it is an invaluable asset of this department and we extend our thanks to the Board of Supervisors for their cooperation in recognizing this emergency.

-----ERNA COMBY

MORE THAN A HUNDRED members and friends gathered at Plummer Park December 5 for the annual Christmas party. The change from the usual picnic lunch to an afternoon tea met with definite approval. There was delightful music and a charming Yuletide story, and a warm friendliness prevailed, enhanced no little by the service from the beautifully appointed tea-table. First, however, Mrs. Comby installed Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon, a past President and present Curator of the Society, as President-Emeritus, a richly deserved honor, bestowed in recognition of more than a decade of a high order of devotion to the Society and its purpose. Mrs. Comby then presented a silver pin, bearing in color the Society's emblem, the Western Tanager, to Miss Bonnie C. Green, retiring treasurer, after four years of highly efficient service in one of the Society's most important and exacting offices. The birds of Plummer Park were well remembered by generous contributions to their feeding trays, including a gift of money from Mrs. Beatrice Wise Nielsen, of San Leandro, a member unable to attend the party, who sent greetings to the Society with her gift to the birds.

NATURE STUDY COURSE FOR YOUTH LEADERS. The Society, through its Committee on Youth Leadership, Mrs. O. B. Pratt, chairman, announces that the special nature study course for youth leaders, which met with gratifying success last year, will be repeated, beginning Feb. 19 and continuing once a week through April 30, exclusive of Easter week. The course will be given at the County Museum, with the cooperation of the Section of Education. At each session there will be a lecture, illustrated with Kodachrome slides, and a study of exhibits. A series of field trips is being organized to correlate with the lectures. Mrs. Mary V. Hood, First Vice-president of the Society, is managing the course, and will supply desired information. Address, 138 S. Wilton Drive, Los Angeles 4; Telephone, HEmpstead 0974.

THE CHINESE SPOTTED DOVE. Mr. Kenneth E. Stager, Curator of Ornithology and Mammalogy, Los Angeles County Museum, is making a study of the Chinese Spotted Dove, with a view to ascertaining how far from the center of Los Angeles the bird has established itself. He asks our members to cooperate by sending in their observations. State the number seen, the date and the exact location, being careful, of course, not to confuse the Spotted with the Mourning Dove.

"OUTDOOR SYMPHONY", our December screen tour, fulfilled our highest hopes and expectations. The speaker was happily introduced as "Our Bert Harwell" (he is an Honorary Member of our Society), and there was a home-coming note throughout his program, the while we were charmed by his birdsongs and thrilled by the beauty and educational interest of his pictures. We look forward to Mr. Harwell's next "screen tour" which, he tells us, will be the story of a trip through Canada. He spent three weeks on Bonaventure Island among the gannets. "I like them so much; they are so gentle," he says. "Often I sat among them at one-foot range for hours, studying their activities."

AN OPPORTUNITY. A short time ago I visited an orphans' home not far from Los Angeles. It is taken care of in the most able manner and the children are comfortable and happy. When the small girls who were acting as our hostesses this day found that we are interested in Nature lore, they conducted us with great pride to the Recreation Room to view their nature exhibit. It was a pathetic collection of a few color pictures of birds, some shells and a few mineral specimens. However, they knew the names of all their exhibits and where they were obtained. It occurred to me that we who have so much might share with those who have so little. I have sent some things and will send more. If any of our members have specimens they can spare, and will send them to me, or hand them to any one of our officers, they will be forwarded at once. There may be a future Audubon among these children, so please lend a helping hand.

..... HELEN W. SHEARER, 8231 Chapin Way, Tujunga.

RED-SHAFTED FLICKERS solve the housing shortage - for 18 of them! Helping on the very pleasant assignment of checking the bird life on a Government project, we were hurrying back just at dusk when we noticed several flickers flying to and from small holes (called weepers) about ten feet up on a channel wall. On closer observation we found that these holes were serving as cozy sleeping apartments and the flickers were occupying them just as fast as they could catch one unoccupied, or could persuade an occupant to vacate his hole. Some were just clinging to the outside of several occupied holes; some, safely settled inside, were sticking their heads out and placidly surveying the unlucky ones, those who were just clinging. As we came up a Sparrow Hawk was hurriedly exiting from the area, followed closely by two mad flickers. Then a Kingfisher flew in and perched on the opposite wall (which had no holes). Instantly two flickers flew over close to him and began bobbing at him, just daring him to try for a roosting hole. Soon Kingfisher gave up and left, with the two flickers in hot pursuit. The holes were numbered, and as finally we had to leave, our last look showed all holes occupied (we could see 18), and a clinging flicker trying desperately to hitch in on already-occupied No. 112, with no success!

--- CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY

SUNDAY FIELD TRIPS. In the hope of broadening our perspective of Southern California's greatly varied wildlife areas during 1947, a series of field trips on the fourth Sunday of each month is scheduled that will take us to beaches and marshes, inland valleys, foothills, deserts and mountains. Some of these trips will be to more distant places than those we have visited in the past, so watch the monthly program in "The Tanager" for details of transportation and routes. Some of the trips are also listed as two-day trips, but those able to come for only one day can join the group at an announced meeting place for the second day. Following is the tentative schedule:

January 26. Sherwood Lake, Hidden Valley and Oxnard Plain.

February 22-23. Coachella Valley and Salton Sea area.

March 23. Bolsa Chico Gun Club to Cabrillo Beach and Point Firmin.

April 26-27. Elizabeth Lake, western Antelope Valley, Buena Vista Lake (first day):  
Maricopa to high mountains of southwestern Kern County near Mt. Pinos,  
Cuyama Valley, Wheeler Gorge and Ojai Valley (Second day).

May 24-25 Big Bear Lake and vicinity, San Bernardino Mountains.

Let's all turn out for the January trip to Sherwood Lake and help plan details for the later ones.

--- HOWARD L. COGSWELL, Chairman, Sunday Field Trips.

New address, 2610 S. Durfee Avenue, El Monte. Telephone, Whittier 6-3748.

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY ..... MRS. J. H. COMBY, President  
CALENDAR FOR JANUARY, 1947

THURSDAY, Jan. 2. Field Trip, Chatsworth Reservoir Sanctuary. A very birdy spot. Tanner Motor bus will leave 6th and Olive Sts. (park corner), Los Angeles, 8:30 A. M. Will stop to pick up passengers corner of Hollywood and Cahuenga Blvds., Hollywood, 8:45 A.M. Round trip fare, \$1.40. Exact change, please. Take lunch. Make reservation EARLY with Mrs. J. L. Morain, 1041 S. Gramercy Dr., Los Angeles 6; telephone, Parkway 0339. Those driving, go out Ventura Blvd. to Topanga Canyon Blvd., right to Roscoe Blvd., left to Fallbrook St., right to Reservoir gate. Please be at reservoir gate close to 9:30, when gate will open to admit Audubon visitors. All will leave Chatsworth Lake grounds by same gate about 3 P.M. Leader, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty.

THURSDAY, Jan. 9. 7 P. M. Central Library, Fifth and Grand, Los Angeles. First floor. R. W. Julian presiding. Speaker, our member from Iowa, Mr. Charles C. Ayres, Jr., of Ottumwa. We had the pleasure of meeting him when he visited in Los Angeles last winter and are happy to know he is returning for another visit. He will give an illustrated talk on "Glimpses of Iowa Birds", and will display a number of oil paintings and water colors of Iowa birds, the work of Iowa artists. Mr. Ayres is president of the Ottumwa Bird Club, president, also, of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union.

SATURDAY, Jan. 11. 9 A. M. to 12 Noon. San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary. Illustrated talk on birds, presented by the Committee on Youth Leadership, Mrs. O. B. Pratt, chairman. Telephone, Union 1-4990 (Montebello). Sanctuary, Whittier 6-3748.

THURSDAY, Jan. 16. 1:30 P. M. County Museum, Exposition Park. Mrs. Comby presiding; Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Program Chairman. Speaker, Mrs. Harlan E. Eckler, Second Vice-President, Los Angeles Audubon Society. With Mr. Eckler at the projector, using their own kodachromes, Mrs. Eckler will tell us about "Birds of the Desert", - the family life of the brilliant Vermillion Flycatcher, the progressive steps of the Verdin building its bulky nest, the un-wrenlike Cactus Wren, several shots of the Bullock Oriole, and others that are among some of the best that Mr. Eckler has taken.

THURSDAY, Jan. 23. Study Class, Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. (Santa Monica Blvd.-West Hollywood car.) Leader, Walter Scott, chairman of the Committee on Nature Study. Telephone, Angelus 2-4649. Topic: A study of a representative bird of each family of the Perching Birds, as set out in outline distributed at the November session. Please bring your copy. Five-minute contributions from members designated at that session. Continued bird song records from our museum collection. Whistling of the songs of the representative birds mentioned above, by Mrs. Bertha Caroline Stockwell. We shall begin promptly at 10:00 and close at 12:00.

SUNDAY, Jan. 26. Field Trip: Sherwood Lake and Oxnard Plain, southern Ventura County. Drive out Ventura Blvd. to Sherwood Lake-Hidden Valley turnoff, which is the first paved road to the left after crossing into Ventura County. Group trip will start from pumphouse on north shore of lake at 9 A. M. After studying ducks, herons, bitterns and a good assemblage of land birds around the lake, we will drive on through Hidden Valley to Camarillo and fields toward Mugu area, where we hope to find mountain plover and visit some gun club areas for more waterfowl. Mileage from Los Angeles to Sherwood, 41.7; to Mugu area, 66; estimated total for trip, 130. Leader, Howard L. Cogswell, 2610 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte; telephone, Whittier 6-3748.

FRIDAY, Jan. 31. Screen Tour, "Midnight Movies in Animaland", by Howard Cleaves. See special Screen Tours announcement.

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SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, operated by the National Audubon Society. Field Trip, Sunday, Jan. 12, starting from the entrance, 2610 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte, at 9:00 A. M. The Pasadena-Long Beach bus, four trips each way daily, stops at Temple School, opposite the Sanctuary entrance. From downtown Los Angeles go to El Monte by P. E. bus or train and transfer to Long Beach bus leaving El Monte at 8:38. Telephone Information, Tucker 7272, for best schedule. If driving, go east on Third Street to Beverly Blvd., continue on Beverly to Durfee Ave., thence north to Sanctuary. Mrs. J. H. Comby, chairman of Sanctuary Committee; telephone, Whittier 41-4236.

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VISITORS WELCOME AT ALL MEETINGS

For desired information, telephone Morningside 1-6350 or Blanchard 7-1849