

Western Tanager



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JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

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By MIRIAM S. FADDIS

In 1789 Captain Audubon sailed from Santo Domingo to France with his young son, John, and a younger daughter, Rosa. The children were cordially received by a loving, sympathetic, understanding mother, Madame Audubon. In later years John said, "I was ever to her as a son of her own flesh and blood, and she was to me a true mother."

The Captain was soon called from home to become deeply involved in the French revolution. Mother wished her handsome son brought up as a gentleman and had him well instructed in music, dancing, fencing, English and geography. In those trying times Mother often allowed John to follow his own inclinations and to spend much of his time out-of-doors. His room was soon well stored with nests, eggs, lichens and stones. The lad early learned to prepare bird skins and to draw the birds. These little sketches decorated his walls.

John was about fourteen when his father returned and became deeply concerned in what the lad had been doing. Father decided to send the lad to military school. After a year's rigid discipline, the lad escaped. The Captain, realizing the boy's natural bent, sent him to Paris to the famous painter, David. After several months of classical casts, John longed to draw from life. After one more year of mathematics and mechanical drawing, John was sent to his father's estate at Mill Grove, Pennsylvania. Now eighteen, John had over one hundred drawings of birds in his inseparable portfolio, which accompanied him to America.

With leisure and ample means John spent his daylight hours studying and drawing birds. In his vicinity he found phoebes nesting. He banded the young with light silver wire, to help solve the mystery of migration. His room soon filled with specimens which overflowed into other rooms, much to the dismay of a careful housekeeper.

Our young man became a great social favorite. He played the violin, flute and flageolet; danced, skated, fenced and imitated birds' songs and calls. One of the neighborhood skaters, Thomas Bakewell, said John was the fastest skater, the finest dancer and the handsomest man he ever saw. Father Bakewell called on John, who returned the call, and met Lucy, the one perfect girl for him. They danced, skated, studied together. When the subject of marriage was approached, Father said they were too young and John needed business training. Dacosta, the man in charge of Mill Grove, objected to the marriage and refused John money. John walked to New York, borrowed the money from Benjamin Bakewell, and sailed to Nantes. He soon convinced his folks that Lucy was all right, and spent a profitable year adding to his bird paintings. Fortunately he met an ornithologist, Dr. d'Orbigny, who encouraged him in his painting and gave him instructions in the classification of birds.

On his return to Mill Grove John was accompanied by a business partner, Ferdinand Rozier. A year as a clerk soon passed. The two young merchants went to Louisville. The store was enough of a success, so John returned to Mill Grove and married Lucy, twenty, and John twenty-three. Together they journeyed to Louisville, and in a short time moved down the Ohio to Henderson.

John's next move with merchandise was to St. Genevieve, where the partnership was dissolved. John walked back to Henderson, where he carried on the buying and selling. Then followed several years of really successful money-making. The Audubon family, Lucy and the two sons, Victor and John, now had a very comfortable home, and even some luxuries. But John was influenced to put \$15,000 in a mill and \$10,000 in a steam-boat. The mill failed; the steamboat was stolen. By 1819 bankruptcy came and every

thing was lost. This was the beginning of John's predestined life work, his real success. Lucy, so strong, so sympathetic, offered to teach to care for the family, and urged John to rely upon his genius. Sadly he went to his brother-in-law, Nicholas Berthoud, who advised him to go ahead with his painting. "Those paintings, the birds, just as they are, on the wing, alive! I've seen him grow since he came here, and he's changed from painting dead things in profile, on the same old twig. Why, there are as many as two hundred paintings in that portfolio, and every one the bird to the life!"

In this darkest period the plan for "Birds of America" took final shape. In the East John found no encouragement to publish his paintings. He turned to New Orleans, and supported himself by portrait painting, teaching French, music, drawing, dancing, and fencing. He send for Lucy and the boys. Again Lucy taught. Audubon worked constantly, fourteen to sixteen hours a day, until his portfolio contained four hundred paintings. Daily he wrote in his journal concerning the birds he had observed.

Lucien Bonaparte strongly urged Audubon to take his paintings to Europe where they could be properly engraved and better appreciated. In 1826 Audubon sailed from New Orleans to Liverpool. In England he was well received and many honors were bestowed upon him. Engravers were procured. Then Audubon found himself confronted with an amazing financial problem. He must solicit subscriptions to pay for hand engraving, hand painting, hand printing, hand coloring elephant folio plates, 435 in number, with 1035 figures of birds. With unsurpassed salesmanship and indomitable courage Audubon raised the necessary \$100,000. The first plates were published in 1827, and the last of his London publications in 1839.

In the summer of 1839 Audubon bade farewell to Europe. In 1841 he purchased a home on the Hudson River, an ideal place for the last years of the greatest ornithological artist.

MRS. ADA MILLER. In the passing of Mrs. Ada Miller, of Long Beach, a dear friend has gone from our ranks. She went her way among us quietly and with gentle and serene manner. She bestowed her friendship generously, and her approval meant much to those who worked side by side with her. We shall miss her, but her faith in our cause is like a handclasp that reaches beyond the years.

-----ERNA COMBY.

CORMORANT FISHING. As a tourist one summer I spent a week in the inland city of Kyoto, Japan. When the week was nearly completed I inquired of my hotel clerk whether there was any attraction I had missed. He suggested "cormorant fishing," and this proved to be the most astonishing and fascinating side trip I had taken. I learned that cormorant fishing can be seen on every dark night in summer, except when the water is muddy. Fortunately such a night was at hand, and a guide conducted us to a river near Uji.

This unusual method of catching ayu, a fish something like a trout, is accomplished by well-trained cormorants. The birds are carried in baskets. Each bird is tied with a collar around its neck so that a marketable fish cannot pass below; also, each bird has a cord several yards long attached to its leg. One man at the stern of the fishing boat manages the craft. In the bow stands the master who handles six or eight trained birds, the cords acting as reins.

After the birds are lowered into the river an assistant strikes the side of the boat with an instrument which makes considerable clatter. At this sound the cormorants dive. A blazing torch is also used to attract the fish and make them visible to the birds. It requires considerable skill on the part of the master to keep the reins from fouling. When any of the flock is gorged, the fact is made known by the bird itself, which swims about in a helpless manner, its neck erect and swollen. Then the master draws in that bird, lifts it aboard, forces its bill open with his left hand, which still holds the remainder of the lines. Next he squeezes out the fish with his right hand and drops the bird again into the water, - all this with such skill that the other birds have no time to become tangled. Our boat is rowed down the stream beside that of the fisherman. The ancient practice of fishing with cormorants is still followed by the Japanese and Chinese. Taken from the nest when young, the birds are first tamed and then trained.

----- E. P. TERRY

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT.-

The birth month of John James Audubon brings this genius of early America vividly to our minds. He has immortalized the great wilderness of our pioneer day, because he saw it through the eager eyes of a naturalist and with the creative soul of an artist. This alone could not have set his star in the orbit of our national history, but the perseverance inherent in his character accomplished for Audubon and for this and future generations a record of the richness of America in her primitive state, through picture and story. To Audubon we owe a debt of gratitude for he has preserved for us the treasures of our wilderness heritage, so that we too may visualize the grandeur of nature as he saw it. The story of his life and accomplishments is an inspiration to all, for the combination of rare qualities which he possessed establish him as a unique figure in our history.

---ERNA COMBY

HONORING THE MEMORY OF JOHN JAMES AUDUBON, the Los Angeles County Museum will display this month its fine collection of elephant folio prints of his famous paintings of birds, together with an exhibit of related subjects. The exhibit will open April 11. Tea will be served from 2 to 4 by the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

SAN GORGONIO. The two-day hearing arranged by the Department of Forestry at San Bernardino Feb. 19, to discuss the matter of re-defining the boundaries of San Gorgonio Primitive Area brought forth many vigorous presentations both for and against the proposed plan. Sixty-nine groups and 39 individuals were represented. A record of all presentations is sent to the Chief Forester, Mr. Lyle Watts, and it is to him that we look for a decision in the matter, after the 90-day period stipulated for a study by him has elapsed. It was heartening to find that so large and representative a group of individuals is interested enough to meet together and present opinions in a logical and forthright manner. Moreover, it seems to be the consensus that if the decision is based upon the facts and opinions brought out at the hearing the boundaries of the Primitive Area should remain unchanged.

----ERNA COMBY

THE FIELD TRIP TO CABRILLO BEACH Thursday, March 6. The day: sunny, fresh and cool after the rain, with few clouds in a blue sky. Our private bus left Pershing Square filled with eager old and new friends who started the day's list with our common city birds. More quietly we drove through green fields with the country birds: meadowlarks, crows, willow goldfinches, a sparrowhawk, a shrike.

A stop at the "Slough" with its dry dead tules was productive, as through the brown reeds glowed the red bill and frontal plate of the "little hen," the Florida gallinule. Here too were the tule wren and a few ducks. In the lower pools a solitary American bittern stood motionless and silent, while the great blue heron and numerous ducks and egrets exhibited flying form, Savannah sparrows fluttered in the weeds at the water's edge, San Diego redwings cried from the tules and one Audubon's warbler passed quickly through the bushes. We found a single black-necked stilt wintering in the company of killdeers, sanderlings, a long-billed dowitcher and western, least and spotted sandpipers. Experts identified rarer birds, while I introduced an astonished bus driver to a bittern.

While some lingered at the Slough, others, led by Mrs. Enid Michael, birded at Cabrillo Beach. Later Dr. Wm. L. Lloyd director of the Marine Museum there, discussed habits of seabirds and life cycles of mollusks, showing us many beautiful and fascinating forms of marine life.

After luncheon, Mrs. Daugherty and Mrs. Stultz cleverly arranged a harbor boat trip. Scattered over the breakwaters and buoys were identified six species of gulls, three of cormorants, three of grebes, numerous scoters, brown pelicans and ruddy turnstones. We also passed Howard Hughes' mechanical bird, the great 8-engined seaplane soon to be launched.

Total species for the day, 58. However, I ended the Audubon Day in Pershing Square when Mr. Thomas led me to a flock of little ring-necked turtle doves, whose delicate beauty contrasted strangely with the sad human vagrants of the big city.

-----ELIZABETH BURWELL GOOLDEN

THE WESTERN TANAGER

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OBSERVATIONS: Feb. 10, MacArthur Park, 2 Arizona hooded orioles feeding in cactus (Mrs. Woods). March 2, Griffith Park, 1 Bullock's oriole (Berry). Griffith Park has been the winter home of slender-billed nuthatches, 1 Sierra creeper and 2 red-breasted sapsuckers. Golden-crowned and Fox sparrows found near tennis courts.

Three different juncos seen this winter:

1 gray-headed, Brand Park, Feb. 10 (Stultz);

1 slate-colored, Griffith Park, March 2 (Berry); Thurber's (common). March 6, at Nigger Slough, among several hundred shoveller ducks, a few pintail and cinnamon teal, there was (rarely seen in the Pacific states) a male blue-winged teal, distinctly showing white crescent in front of eye.

March 9, over San Gabriel Mountains, migration flight of 200+ turkey vultures. March 12, Verdugo Woodlands, 1 yellow warbler.

WATCH NOW FOR migration flights: vultures, Swainson's hawks, white pelicans, ducks, geese and cranes; San Gabriel Mountains under flight lane. Summer residents coming back: Flycatchers, wood pewee, russet-backed thrush, Cassin's vireo, warblers, Western tanager, black-headed grosbeak, lazuli bunting. ---CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY

A SAFARI. Departing Indio on the morning of the Fourth Sabbath of the Second Month, a caravan of fifteen motor-powered camels bearing more than forty Audubon Arabs made a pilgrimage to Mecca, to pay homage to Pyrocephalus, the vermillion flycatcher, spirit of fire and rubies. From thence they journeyed on to the shores of Salton Sea in search of the mythical crane, gathering along the way such gems as Crissal thrashers, Abert towhees and plumbeous gnatcatchers. After visiting Mullet Island and the mud-pots, they broke bread at the State Game Refuge and were entertained by Gila woodpeckers, burrowing owls and white pelicans, natives of the place. As the day grew older the members of the caravan returned to their homes in distant cities, laden with sparkling memories of the trip and singing

praises to the shrewd leadership of their Chieftan, Howard El Cogswell.

---ARTHUR L. BERRY

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME: !

Mrs. J. W. Bain

8711 Denker Ave., Los Angeles 44

Miss Ina Champney

3709 Folsom St., Los Angeles 33

Mr. Christian Christianson

1065½ N. Oxford Ave., Los Angeles 27

John de Carteret

318½ E. Palmer Ave., Glendale 5

Mrs. Dorothy B. Hall

211 W. Second St., Downey

Mrs. A. Haman

524½ S. Catalina St., Los Angeles 5

Mrs. A. E. Hanson

531 S. Windsor Blvd., Los Angeles 5

Mr. Austin A. Innes

1651 N. Avenue 46, Los Angeles 41

Mr. John G. Joham

2110 W. 84th Place, Los Angeles 44

Mr. Wm. Jupe

3450 Primera Ave., Hollywood 28

Miss Doris Linsley

5550 Poplar Blvd., Los Angeles 32

Mr. & Mrs. Ross H. Lund

4874 Gage Avenue, Bell

Mrs. James A. Moody

4606 Louise Ave., Encino

Paul Peszynski

114 Franklin Court, Glendale 5

Mrs. Ruth Smith

1217 Cypress Ave., Santa Ana

Mr. James A. Stevens

7601 S. Main St., Los Angeles 3

Mr. Daniel D. Streeter, Jr.

4200 - 102nd St., Inglewood

Mrs. Ernest A. Tranquada

626 Friendship Ave., Pico

Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods

672 S. Rampart Blvd., Los Angeles 5

MEMBERSHIP, March 13, 1947,-

Number of members, 516

Number of new members, the current

fiscal year 93

IN MEMORIAM,-

Mrs. Ada Miller, died Feb. 23, 1947

Mr. Victor Potel, died March 8, 1947

The Society extends sympathy to the families of these honored members

LOS ANGELES AUDIBON SOCIETY

MRS. J. H. COMBY, President
CALENDAR FOR APRIL, 1947

THURSDAY, April 3. Field Trip, Chantry Flats, above Sierra Madre. Rich birding territory. Warblers, canyon wrens and ouzels among the many birds there. Ferns are out, wildflowers in bloom. Our Tanner Motor bus will leave 6th & Olive Streets (park side) Los Angeles, 8:30 A.M. Will stop at 8:55 to pick up passengers opposite El Molino Station, P.E. Ry., 900 block on Huntington Drive, San Marino. Round trip fare, \$1.60. Exact change please. Make reservation early with Mrs. J. L. Morain, 1041 So. Gramercy Dr., Los Angeles 6; Parkway 0339. Take lunch. Will leave Flats for Los Angeles about 3 P.M. Those driving, go out Foothill Blvd. to Santa Anita Ave., Sierra Madre; turn left and drive up to picnic grounds. Paved road. Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty, leader.

THURSDAY, April 10. 7:00 P.M. Central Library, Fifth and Grand Ave., Los Angeles. First floor. R. W. Julian presiding. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is sending us for this occasion motion pictures, in color, which show reasons for establishing wildlife refuges, together with a map of the Souris River refuge. Included are pictures of waterfowl nesting there, shorebirds, sora rail, prairie chicken in its dance, the dance of the sharp-tailed grouse, pheasants and many small birds such as the swallows, flicker, Baltimore oriole, lark bunting, etc. A few mammals are included.

SATURDAY, April 12. 9 A.M. to 12 Noon. San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary. Student members and other young people are invited to meet with the Committee on Youth Leadership, to study birds. To reach the Sanctuary, see directions below.

THURSDAY, April 17. 1:30 P.M. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. Mrs. J. H. Comby presiding; Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Program Chairman. Mrs. Dorothy Dean Sheldon, of Berkeley, will speak on "East of the Sierra" showing two new reels of birds and flowers taken by her east of Lake Tahoe; also, a bit of her "Sierra Pastorale" film, showing irrigation processes and their effect on wildlife.

THURSDAY, April 17. Screen Tour, "From Seashore to Glacier," by Karl H. Maslowski. See special Screen Tour announcement.

THURSDAY, April 24. 10 to 12 Noon. Study Class, Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. (Santa Monica Blvd. car; get off at Fuller and continue on foot one block west to entrance.) Program will comprise (1) Study of California quail, Farallon cormorant, coot, avocet, ring-billed gull, puffin, road-runner, red-shafted flicker, Western belted kingfisher, bush-tit; (2) Contributions by members. Bring lunch. Leader Walter Scott, Chairman, Committee on Nature Study; telephone, Angelus 2-4649.

SUNDAY, April 27. Field Trip: Buena Vista Lake (Kern Co.) and western Antelope Valley. A visit to a large lake which has had nesting white pelicans, black terns, avocets and black-necked stilts, followed by a drive through a corner of the Mohave Desert famous for its wildflower scenery, stopping for desert birds en route. Chartered motor bus will leave Sierra Vista Station (parking lot), Main and Huntington, Alhambra, at 6:15 A.M. and Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. at 7:00 A.M. Return to Los Angeles about 6 P.M. Round trip fare \$4.35. Make reservation EARLY with Mrs. C. L. Christianson, 1065½ No. Oxford St., Los Angeles 27; Hillside 5940. If driving, go via "Ridge Route" (U.S. 99) to Wheeler Ridge, whence conducted trip will start about 9:30 A.M. Round trip mileage from Los Angeles, 305 (est.). Leader, Howard L. Cogswell; Whittier 6-3748.

SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, operated by the National Audubon Society. Field trip Sunday, April 13, starting from the entrance, 2610 So. Durfee Ave., El Monte, at 9 A.M. Howard L. Cogswell, leader. Take lunch and meet at picnic tables at 11:30. After lunch, Mrs. M. A. Brattland invites the group to come to the Nature Center, for an informal program. The Pasadena-Long Beach bus, four trips each way daily, stops at Temple School, opposite the Sanctuary. From downtown Los Angeles go to El Monte by P. E. Bus or train in time to transfer to Long Beach bus leaving El Monte at 8:39 A.M. Telephone 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. Sanctuary telephone, Whittier 6-3748.

VISITORS WELCOME AT ALL MEETINGS

For desired information, telephone MOrningside 1-6350 or BLanchard 7-1849