

Western Tanager



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CONSERVATION IN GENERAL

By GEORGE T. HASTINGS

Blessed with greater natural resources than any other country in the world, we have been notoriously careless and wasteful of our riches. Far-seeing citizens have "viewed with alarm" the diminishing forests, the diminution of game birds and animals, the lessened number of insect-eating song birds, and more recently the serious erosion of fertile soil. Thoughtful people realize that all forms of living things are intricately interrelated, so that one cannot suffer without starting a chain reaction, the end of which cannot be foreseen.

The Balance of Nature is a thing of constant fluctuation, though tending to become approximately steady. Changes in rainfall and temperature affect directly the development of plants; this affects the abundance of insects and animals that live on the plants, and the birds and animals that live on the insects; changes in insect population in turn affect the plant life; so the changes go, often too slight to be noticed unless continued over a period of years. Like a pebble thrown into a pool where the ripples spread out in widening circles, slowly dying away, so the changes in nature spread out indefinitely. But the most serious changes are likely those caused by man. For example, ditching and spraying to control mosquitoes in the marshes near Playa del Rey, result in destruction of small fish that naturally helped control mosquitoes, and small crustaceans that form an important part of the food of the marsh birds.

We upset the Balance of Nature of necessity as land is developed for homes or agriculture and in bringing in domesticated animals. This cannot be helped, but we must try in some way to restore the balance, or at least prevent the change from reacting too much to our disadvantage. Our efforts to control any form of living thing should take into consideration the effect on other forms. This is especially true in man's efforts to control what he calls depredators or vermin. When, years ago, the state of Pennsylvania placed a bounty on hawks and owls because of their supposed destruction of poultry, rodents increased to such an extent as to cause far greater loss than had been attributed to the birds, and the law had to be repealed.

Nothing is of more importance to the welfare of our land than the conservation of all natural resources, - bearing in mind that conservation is not synonymous with preservation, but means a wise use that does not waste or destroy. Minerals must be mined, but not wastefully; soil must be cultivated, but in such a way as to cause as little erosion as possible; wild game may be hunted, but not to the extent of reducing breeding stock; wild flowers may be gathered, but not with the destruction of the plants or curtailment of seed production. In every case wise conservation should lean to the side of protection rather than of use. We still have a noble heritage, though much has been lost; thousands of acres of land have been rendered unfit for agriculture by unnecessary erosion, some species of plants and birds and mammals have become extinct because of man, - civilized man; now, the much greater part that remains must be guarded and the accelerating rate of destruction checked. If our interests are primarily in the conservation of wild birds, we must bear in mind that this is part of a larger problem. It is up to us, individually and as a society, by actions and example, through stimulation of interest in conservation by education, by active support of conservation agencies and legislation, to help in passing on through the years to come the wealth with which our land is blessed.

JOHN ACKLAND HOOD, son of our president and Mr. A. W. Hood, met death in a rock-climbing accident at Devil Slide, in San Mateo County, August 17. Though only 21, John, a member of the Northern Division of the Sierra Club, was an experienced climber and was leading a party of three on a climb sponsored by that organization when the accident occurred. He did not recover consciousness and passed away the next morning. The bereaved parents have our Society's deepest sympathy.

GIRL SCOUTS STUDY BIRDS. For the fifth consecutive year the Los Angeles Audubon Society kept open house on Tuesday and Thursday mornings during July for the Girl Scouts who have their summer camp in Plummer Park. A course in bird study was organized by Mrs. O.M. Stultz on behalf of the Youth Leadership Committee. Twice each day a twenty minute talk about birds was given by Mrs. Gertrude Woods. Titmice, house finches, California towhees, California jays, mockingbirds and song sparrows cooperated by visiting the feeding tray outside the window while she was speaking. Other members of the society assisted by showing and discussing the mounted birds in our museum. Arizona hooded orioles, Anna's hummingbirds and green-backed goldfinches were closely observed during the field trips about the grounds. More than 300 Scouts and their leaders expressed appreciation for the help given them.

THE AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS, arranged by the National Audubon Society and presented here annually as the program of the Screen Tours Club of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, will be held this year, as last, in Patriotic Hall, 1816 South Figueroa St. The usual announcements have been mailed. If by any chance you failed to receive one, Mr. Wm. K. DePue, 4517 Ambrose Ave., Los Angeles 27, will send you one on request. The "tours" bring to us the finest natural history lecturers and the latest and best in all-color motion pictures on a variety of wildlife subjects. Because of their growing popularity, arrangement has been made for each of this year's five programs to be given twice, - first on a Saturday afternoon on the dates scheduled, and repeated the following Monday evening. In applying for membership, it is necessary to state which of the two programs is desired, - Saturday afternoon or Monday evening. Send your application to Mr. Walter Scott, 967 S. Sydney Drive, Los Angeles 22, together with your check or money order for \$2 for each membership desired.

WILDLIFE SHOW. Spotlighting the importance of active fish and game conservation in California, an exhibition entitled "Wildlife and the Sportsman" will open at the Los Angeles Museum in Exposition Park on Thursday evening, October 2, at 7:00 P.M. and will continue through October 26.

"Wildlife and the Sportsman" is presented by the Science Division of the museum and is pointed to the hunting and fishing sportsman of the southland. It will be made up of interesting exhibits of California's fish and game, augmented by continuous showing of colored wildlife motion pictures, projected by means of a shadow box screen in the center section of the large exhibition gallery.

The section of bird exhibits will contain such items as an attractive display of the non-native birds introduced into California. Ring-necked and Reeve's pheasants, Chukar partridge and the wild turkey will be featured, with accompanying maps to show the native home of each species and the areas in which they have been liberated in California. Another outstanding exhibit will compare the now extinct passenger pigeon with our band-tail, by showing what only through vigorous and sensible conservation practices have we been able to keep the band-tail from following the passenger pigeon to extinction. Actual mounts of the extinct pigeon will be displayed.

A display of California's beneficial hawks will show the unending war against harmful rodents and insects made by these birds and why it is necessary for the sportsman to afford them the full protection they so richly deserve.

These and many other exhibits of birds, deer, Tule elk, fresh water and marine game fish will prove of interest to conservation-minded members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. A most cordial invitation to attend the opening of the show is extended to all members of the Society by Dr. John A. Comstock, Head of the Division of Science, and Kenneth E. Stager, the museum's curator of birds and mammals.

OBSERVATIONS

Existence grows more and more difficult for our birds as the years go by. Draining of marshes and, as noted by Mr. George T. Hastings, the mosquito control work, rob shore birds of feeding grounds of long duration.

Quite a number of non-breeding shore birds remained over this summer; migrants are now returning in good numbers. Black-necked stilt nest in our marshes. Mr. Hastings saw 10 at one time this summer. During August he noted in the Playa del Rey area 3 avocet, 3 black-necked stilt, many long-billed dowitcher, 20 Northern and 2 Wilson's phalarope and great numbers of black-bellied plover in all types of plumage. Terns: Caspian, Forster's, least (1) and black (1) noted in that area Aug. 19.

Mrs. Erle Morton reports on back bay region Aug. 2, a fully matured osprey; Aug. 3 and 10, an immature osprey. During August, 100 Caspian terns and 6 black terns feeding in the bay; during July and August numbers of least tern feeding their young. August 20 she watched a duck hawk "practice his hunting tactics by chasing numerous Northern phalarope." A white-tailed kite July 7 and numbers of light-footed rail.

An encouraging report from Maxton Brown Sanctuary, Carlsbad, Sept. 1, by Mrs. O.M. Stultz: Great numbers of pintails, shovellers, green-winged and cinnamon teal, 50 black terns, 100 least, numbers of Caspian and Forster's, and many Northern phalarope. At nearby Cardiff, 26 wood ibis.

Miss Dorothy Getz, Glendale, reports few young valley quail this year (Burbank noted same shortage). Phainopepla brought off few young. Miss Getz found a Thurber junco feeding its baby near Griffith Park Zoo in July. Nesting Western robins with several young on Verdugo Woodlands lawns this summer. Robins feeding young near Wilshire Golf Course in Los Angeles on August 13.

WATCH NOW FOR: Returning wild ducks and shore birds, chipping, Gambel's and golden-crowned sparrows, Thurber's junco, migration flights of Swainson hawks and of warblers.

-----CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY

NATIONAL AUDUBON NEWS

Prospects for an expanded National Audubon Society program in California are increasing by leaps and bounds. Of first import is a proposed summer Nature Camp for adult leaders, modeled after the one on the Maine coast which has been in successful operation for nine years. Conservation of natural resources is the theme around which all the instruction is given, although the enrollee may consider it from the aspect of birds, plants, marine and fresh water life, insects, or nature- and conservation- teaching methods. No dry, bookish curriculum is offered. Every one has a tremendous amount of fun while he learns about Nature in the most effective way -- in the out-of-doors.

Just what is the status of the proposed Nature Camps in California? All that can be said now is that one (or two?) is planned, starting in 1948, if a suitable site and buildings sufficient to feed (and preferably also to house) 75 persons are made available to the Society at a cost which, together with other costs, will permit enrollment fees that teachers and other youth leaders can afford.

Several places in our Southern California mountains are being considered, but none has yet (Sept. 1) been found that fulfills all requirements. The location must be within easy auto reach of a number of habitat-types (as pines, canyon streams, chaparral, fields, lake, etc.) and in especially attractive immediate surroundings, yet close enough to stores to allow frequent supply service.

The San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountain ranges seem to offer the most in such requirements; but the most ideal locations, perhaps even any suitable one, may require some local financing. Of the whole West, Southern California has the greatest variety of habitats within a half-day's field trip range, and it is hoped that suitable arrangements can be made for a Nature Camp here. So, if you know of a likely site transformable into a camp, or of funds to aid in its development, contact National Audubon Socy., 1006 Fifth Ave., New York 28, N.Y. or:

-----HOWARD L. COGSWELL

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Headquarters in Plummer Park
7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 46
Editor. Miss Laura Greely
904 Kendall Avenue, South Pasadena
Telephone: BLauchard 7-1849

President-Emeritus. . Mrs. Mary B. Salmon
OFFICERS

President. Mrs. Mary V. Hood
138 S. Wilton Drive, Los Angeles 4
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1112½ S. Orange Dr., Los Angeles 35
Telephone: WALnut 8937

Treasurer. Mrs. C. J. Parker
821 N. Garfield Ave., Alhambra
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MEMBERSHIP DUES: Student (12 to 18 yrs. of age), 75¢ annually; Annual, \$1.50; Life, \$25.00 and Patron, \$100.00 in one payment. All members receive "The Western Tanager." Joint membership with National Audubon Soc'y, including "Audubon Magazine," \$5.00 (minimum) annually.

IF YOUR DUES are payable this month (consult your membership card for exact date), please bring the amount with you to the next meeting, or mail it, and save the Treasurer the time and expense of sending you a statement. . . And please notify the Editor promptly of any change in address.

MRS. ARTHUR L. BERRY, recipient of the first nature study scholarship awarded by the Los Angeles Audubon Society from its Educational Fund, took a special three-weeks course in Natural Science held at Santa Barbara in August by the extension division of the University of California. Mrs. Berry returned with increased interest in and a broader knowledge of nature study, in which she had already demonstrated a fine ability.

MRS. ANN YOUNG reports saying Farewell on Sept. 6 to the last black-headed grosbeak of the summer in her yard in Pasadena, and Hail to her first Gambel's sparrow on Sept. 15. What is your record?

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS !

Mrs. Elizabeth Brown
5415 S. Main St., Los Angeles 37
Miss Margaret deGarno
412-B So. Broadway, Redondo Beach
Mrs. Mary Wood Hinman
1950 N. St. Andrews Pl., L.A. 28
Mr. Albert M. Jongeneel
Route 1, Box 56, Walnut Grove
Mr. Wm. R. Lasley
618 S. Coronado St., Los Angeles 5
Mrs. Allan O'Haver
17205 S. Denker Ave., Gardena
Mr. Joseph F. Rhodes
523 W. 6th St., Los Angeles 14
Mr. Frank C. Winter
210 W. 7th St., Los Angeles 14

NOTE: With the addition of the above, the total membership on June 30, end of the 1946-47 fiscal year, was 542, classified as follows: Annual, 477; Life, 30; Patron, 3; Honorary, 8; Complimentary, 7, and Student, 17. Of these, 247 were members also of the National Audubon Society. During the fiscal year 124 new members were received.

Since July 1, beginning the current fiscal year, the following new members have been received:

Miss Michele K. Arons
13956 Magnolia Ave., Van Nuys
Mr. V. H. Bush
573 Kendall Ave., Los Angeles 42
Miss Lydia Devenport
11152 Sarah St., North Hollywood
Mr. Richard Estes
10531 Edgeley Place, Los Angeles 24
Dr. Eric Lindroth
642 Redondo Ave., Long Beach 4
Dr. Evarts G. Loomis
538 N. Hoover, Whittier
Mrs. Lewis Oldfield
101 S. Sycamore Ave., Los Angeles 36
Miss Martha Salonen
7523½ Lexington Ave., Los Angeles 46
Mrs. Ida N. Snow
356 Twenty-ninth St., San Bernardino

IN MEMORIAM:

Mrs. Celia M. Holbert passed away April 14, 1947, and Mrs. Stella E. Hanson in June. Word of these sad losses to our membership came too late for notice in the then current issue of "The Western Tanager."

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETYCALENDAR FOR OCTOBER, 1947

Mrs. Mary V. Hood, President

Mrs. Bess M. Hoffman, Executive Secretary; Telephone: WALnut 8937

THURSDAY, Oct. 2. Field Trip: Playa del Rey. Shore and back bay areas fine for study of gulls and shore birds. Take Redondo Motor Bus via Playa del Rey, Olive Street deck of Pacific Electric Subway Terminal Building, 423 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, 8 A.M. Get off at Playa del Rey and Vista del Mar Sts. Round trip 50 cents. Take lunch. Bird walk starts from bus stop at 9. Return bus leaves Playa del Rey at 1:22 P.M., 2:02, etc. Check for possible motor bus change by calling Information, Tucker 7272. Meet for lunch at 11:30 on bridge on the shore just south of Restaurant, but check with leader again at 9 o'clock. Program will follow lunch.

Leader, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty; Telephone: CHARleston 6-1747.

THURSDAY, Oct. 9. 7:00 P.M. Central Public Library, Fifth St. and Grand Ave., Los Angeles. Howard L. Cogswell presiding. At this, the first indoor meeting after the summer vacation, the program will be devoted to summer experiences and observations of members. Come prepared to participate, also to help outline plans for a study section in connection with the Evening Program.

THURSDAY, Oct. 16. 1:30 P.M. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. Our president, Mrs. Mary V. Hood, will show "Photographic Treasures," - kodachromes, many new, some old, of birds, animals and flowers, which she and Mr. Hood have taken since becoming members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Mr. Kenneth E. Stager, the museum's curator of birds and mammals, will speak about the wildlife exhibit now on display.

THURSDAY, Oct. 23. 10:00 to 12:00. Study Class. Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. (Take Santa Monica-West Hollywood car, get off at Fuller and continue on foot one block west to park entrance.) First Hour: Shore birds, having in mind the field trip to Playa del Rey, Oct. 2. Distinguish between black turnstone and ruddy turnstone; between western sandpiper, least sandpiper and sanderling; distinguish the three cormorants, the avocet and black-necked stilt, the surf-bird and the tattler. Compare the two curlews, the two yellow-legs, the dowitcher and the godwit. Describe accurately one gull. Second Hour: Pond and bog birds and ducks, having in mind the proposed trip in November to the Maxton Brown Sanctuary near Carlsbad. Distinguish between wood ibis and white pelican, and contrast brown pelican. Study white-faced glossy ibis. Contrast blue heron and green heron. Compare bittern and black-crowned night heron.

Bring your lunch and eat it with us under the trees. Walter Scott, Chairman, Committee on Nature Study. Telephone: ANgelus 2-4649.

SUNDAY, Oct. 26. Another field trip to Playa del Rey, where every day finds more winter visitors arriving. Take Redondo Motor Bus via Playa del Rey, Olive St. deck, Pacific Electric Subway Terminal Building, 423 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, at 8:50 A.M., arriving at Playa del Rey and Vista del Mar streets one hour later. Take lunch and meet on bridge along the shore south of the restaurant at 11:30.

Leader, Arthur L. Berry; Telephone ATLantic 4-6575.

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Operated by the National Audubon Society, through a local committee headed by Mrs. J.H. Comby, Route 3, Box 378-F, Whittier; Telephone, Whittier 41-4236. Field trip each second Sunday of the month, starts from the entrance, 2610 S. Durfee Avenue, El Monte, at 9 A.M. The Pasadena-Long Beach Pacific Electric bus, four trips each way daily, stops at Temple School, opposite Sanctuary entrance. For desired information, telephone Howard Cogswell, Whittier 6-3748.

VISITORS WELCOME AT ALL MEETINGS