

Western Tanager

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THE AUDUBON NATURE CAMP OF CALIFORNIA

By John H. Baker, National Audubon Society, New York

Nestled among spectacular peaks of the Sierra Nevada is beautiful Sugar Bowl Valley, site of the Audubon Nature Camp of California for its 1948 summer sessions. Seven thousand feet above sea level, carpeted with wild flowers and rimmed by extensive forests, this sun-drenched valley lies within the Hudsonian Zone, just at the fringe of the Canadian, with timberline in easy reach. Here, in the space of a morning's field trip, one may thrill to the piping notes of the dipper, surprise a mule deer with her day-old fawn, or read the geological imprint of the ages in ice-carved canyons. In but an hour's time one may journey by station wagon down the western slope of these majestic mountains to the oak-grassland foothills, or to the east make quick descent to the Nevada desert's rim. With five life zones within easy access, Audubon Nature Camp students will find unexcelled opportunities for nature study.

The camp will be Sugar Bowl Lodge, one mile off the main highway from Sacramento to Reno at Norden and 24 miles from Lake Tahoe. Geologically, it is near the contact of the granites of the Sierra Block and the volcanic flows of the Cascades. The whole story of the uplift that produced the Sierras - the longest and highest mountain range in the United States - can be studied here. Historically, it is right at Emigrant Cap and on the Donner Party Trail. Campers may relive the days of the "49-ers and become steeped in the tradition of a country made famous almost a century ago by such authors as Mark Twain and Bret Harte.

Pines, firs, hemlock and junipers are about the Lodge. Upwards of 150 kinds of birds may be seen in the region. The forest is brightened by ferns, fungi, snow plants and mosses; above timberline there are rare alpines. Insects and other invertebrates, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and fish of many species are widely distributed from the crest of the divide to the Sacramento Valley and the Nevada desert.

As members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society probably know, the purpose of the camp is to better equip teachers and other youth leaders to arouse public understanding of the value and need of conservation of soil, water, plants and wildlife, their interdependence and the relation of their intelligent treatment and wise use to human welfare. Although persons with hobby interest in nature are welcome, the program is designed primarily for persons actively engaged in youth leadership. The subjects of instruction will be Nature Activities (techniques), Birds, Insects and other Invertebrates, Vertebrates other than birds, and Plants. The program is so arranged that all campers may participate in the Birds and Nature Activities courses and in one of the other three.

Mr. Floyd J. Brown, Camp Director, is Vice-principal of the Thomas Starr King Junior High School in Los Angeles. During the past twelve summers he served as Temporary Park Ranger and Naturalist in Sequoia National Park. Other staff is composed of all-round naturalists. These include Howard L. Cogswell, warden of the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary, El Monte; Ernestine Smith, of the Santa Rosa High School; John P. Harville, of San Mateo Junior College; Ferdinand S. Ruth, of Monterey Peninsula College; Ruth Hubbard, Elementary Science Supervisor in the Cleveland Heights Schools, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Ruth Price, of Los Angeles, as assistant to the director; Wynona Clements, of Los Angeles, as Dietician and Nurse, and Mr. Brown's daughter, Carol, as secretary-stenographer.

Board and lodging facilities at the Lodge are of the best. A qualified nurse is in continuous attendance. There are excellent hospital facilities in Reno and Sacramento. The camp has a well-equipped nature library.

The five 2-week sessions in the summer of 1948 will be June 20 to July 3; July 4-17; July 18-31; August 1-14; August 15-28. The fee for each of the 2-week sessions \$75., covers tuition, board, lodging, transportation on scheduled field trips and from and to nearest railroad or bus station on scheduled arrival and departure dates. The camp is operated at a loss and rates have been set at a minimum. Applications for enrollment must be accompanied by a deposit of \$10. which will be applied to the total fee, the balance to be paid two weeks prior to the first day of the enrollment period.

Inquiries and enrollments will be taken care of by Mrs. Ethel E. Richardson, 887 Indian Rock Ave., Berkeley 7, California. After June 18, all inquiries and enrollment applications should be addressed to the Audubon Nature Camp, Norden, Calif. For the convenience of southern Californians, information concerning the camp may also be obtained from Mrs. O. M. Stultz, 2594 S. Durfee Ave., El Monte, Calif.

THE SOCIETY extends deepest sympathy to Mrs. T. G. White, whose husband passed away in January. Mrs. White has given up her Redondo Beach home and is moving to New York.

THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM, in Arcadia, will observe Arbor Day by a tree planting Sunday, March 7, at 3 P.M. All interested persons are cordially invited to attend. It is understood that Sterling and Wirt Morton, grandchildren of Mr. Julius Sterling Morton, who is credited with having originated "Arbor Day" in America, will be present.

CONGRATULATIONS TO "The Condor," publication of the Cooper Ornithological Club, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The anniversary number will contain some colored plates of the unpublished paintings of the late Major Allan Brooks. The January-February issue carries an exceptionally fine portrait of the zone-tailed hawk. The club plans also to publish one or two colored plates of the California condor, and possibly one of a new parrot from the highlands of Mexico. Congratulations, also, to Mr. C. V. Duff, Mr. Kenneth E. Stager and Miss Dorothy E. Groner, all of whom have been re-elected as officers of the Southern Division of the Club. All are members also of the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

MRS. ALMER P. NELSON, in renewing her membership this year, wrote from her home in Jackson, Wyoming, where her husband is manager of the National Elk Refuge: "This is not a bird country, but big game country. Our birds are the eagles (both bald and golden), the sandhill crane in summer, ravens, magpies; long-billed curlews nest here; but best of all, trumpeter swans. There are eight trumpeter swans here today (Feb. 1, 1948). They are very erratic and unpredictable. They nest on old muskrat houses, but have not nested the two past summers. We have watched them "necking"; we have heard them "talk" to each other; we have seen them chasing Canada geese; we have listened to them call their wildly beautiful trumpets across the valley. We feed them wheat and barley through the winter. We give them every protection. We do not allow photographers, even the ultra-special ones, to go near their sacred haven on the creek. In fact we don't go there either during the nesting period. We just coddle those birds like poor little rich children. But still -- no babies! One pair nested in 1945 and had three cygnets. This was so much of a triumph that they haven't done a thing since!"

Mrs. Nelson's pen name, Grace Sharritt, is frequently seen in conservation and other magazines. Read her "Home-coming of the Elk" (Audubon Magazine, Nov.-Dec., 1946), a story of the National Elk Refuge; also her fine tribute to our member, Theodore Payne, whom she calls "Savior of the Wildflowers" (Nature Magazine, May, 1947, and more recently, American Home, February, 1948). These articles tell of Mr. Payne's experiences in saving California wildflowers from extinction, from the time of his first job, in 1893, as gardener for the great Polish actress, Mme. Helena Modjeska, on her estate in Santiago Canyon.

THE WESTERN TANAGER

Published by the Los Angeles Audubon Socy. LOONS-GREBES: Great numbers of red-throated Free to members. Non-members, 75¢ annually. loons observed Jan. 19 off-shore near Santa Editor Miss Laura Greely 904 Kendall Ave., South Pasadena Telephone: BLanchard 7-1849

OPSERVATIONS

President-Emeritus .. Mrs. Mary B. Salmon President Mrs. Mary V. Hood Executive Secretary..Mrs. Bess M. Hoffman 1112½ S. Orange Dr., Los Angeles 35 Telephone: WALnut 8937 Treasurer..... Mrs. C. J. Parker 821 N. Garfield Ave., Alhambra Telephone: ATLantic 1-2490

GESE: A flock of 15 Canada geese on Sherwood Lake Jan. 19 (S-D). This is our largest goose and the only goose that breeds in the west coast states.

DUCKS: Canvas-back and ring-necked ducks observed more commonly on local lakes and reservoirs this winter than for several years. This winter's prolonged drouth is keeping the Los Angeles River settling basins along Hollingsworth Drive filled long after the usual shutting-off time, thus proving a great boon to the many canvas-back, ring-necked, pintail, shoveller, baldpate, cinnamon teal, lesser scaup and ruddy ducks that find fairly safe sanctuary there. Red-breasted mergansers (26) noted close off-shore near Santa Monica; 12 American mergansers on Sherwood Lake Jan. 19 (S-D) and one in San Fernando Reservoir area Feb. 10 (d).

SHOREBIRDS-GULLS: 36 greater yellow-legs seen Feb. 10 feeding near the Los Angeles River settling basins; 2 Florida gallinules same area Jan. 23 (D). One herring gull in San Fernando Reservoir area, and a large mixed flock of California and ring-billed and 3 herring gulls on the settling basin dikes Feb. 10 (D).

SWALLOWS: Numbers of tree swallows were heard honking over the settling basins Feb. 10 (D).

THRUSHES: Jan. 11 numbers of mountain bluebirds and a few western bluebirds and western robins were observed in Glen Haven Memorial Park. Mountain bluebirds have a cute trick of hovering a few feet above ground, with rapid wing beats, tail spread and feet dangling, then suddenly flying gracefully down to seize the insect prey. Feb. 10, in a Sand Canyon vineyard, hundreds of western robins were seen feeding on the fallen dried grapes, and mountain and western bluebirds were feeding in an alfalfa field across the road. Flocks of band-tailed pigeons were flying around in the oak tree area.

WATCH NOW FOR returning swallows and martins, Arizona and Bullock's orioles and Lawrence goldfinch, western bluebirds, Juncos, crested jay, Alaska hermit thrush, western warbling vireos.

-- CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY
Field Leader

MEMBERSHIP DUES: Students (12-18 yrs.), 75¢; Annual, \$1.50; Life, \$25; Patron, \$100. Joint Membership, Los Angeles and National Audubon societies, with "Audubon Magazine," \$5 (minimum). Send membership applications, with the dues, to the Treasurer, at the above address.

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME !

Mr. Frederick Blunt
1563 American Ave., Long Beach 12
Mrs. Audley Butler
612 N. Kilkea Dr., Los Angeles 36
Mrs. M. W. Hammond
629 W. 20th Place, San Pedro
Mr. A. L. Wirin
846 S. Catalina Ave., Los Angeles 5
Thomas Rabensteine
3420 Emma Ave., Los Angeles 31
Mrs. Lila M. Mann
2632 Sichel St., Los Angeles 31
Miss Frances L. Cramer
921 W. 36th Place, Los Angeles 7
Mrs. Almon W. Scott
128½ S. Sycamore Ave., Los Angeles 36
Mr. Wyclif Taylor
3864 Ridge Road, Riverside

FROM THE ALMA STULTZ BIRD SANCTUARY, 8231 Chapin Way, Sunland, comes the following list of winter visitors:

Western robins, in large flocks; cedar waxwings; golden-crowned sparrows (unusually numerous), Fox, rufous-crowned and Gambel's sparrows; California purple finch, Lawrence goldfinch, western bluebirds, Juncos, crested jay, Alaska hermit thrush, varied thrush (very few), dusky warbler and Audubon's warbler.

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

President Mrs. Mary V. Hood
Executive Secretary, Mrs. Bess M. Hoffman, 1112½ S. Orange Drive, Los Angeles 35
Telephone: WAlnut 8937

CALENDAR FOR MARCH, 1948

THURSDAY, March 4. Field Trip: Playa del Rey. An opportunity to study shore-birds which will soon be leaving for their summer homes, - north for all except the beautiful red-billed Heermann gull, which goes to Lower California to nest. Take Redondo Motor Bus via Playa del Rey, Olive Street deck of Pacific Electric Subway Terminal, 423 South Hill Street, Los Angeles, 8:06 A.M. Get off at Playa del Rey and Vista del Mar streets. Fare, 30 cents each way. Take lunch. Bird walk starts from bus stop shortly after 9. Return bus leaves Playa del Rey at 1:13 and approximately one hour later. Check for possible motor bus change by calling Information Tucker 7272. Meet at 11:30 for lunch, on the bridge along the shore just south of the restaurant. Program will follow lunch.

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

THURSDAY, March 11. 7:00 P.M. Central Public Library, Fifth St. and Grand Ave., Los Angeles. Howard L. Cogswell presiding. Miss Ruby Curry will show moving pictures, in color, of birds of Sequoia National Park, taken by herself on different trips to this mountain home of beautiful birds, -whiteheaded woodpeckers, evening grosbeaks, red-breasted nuthatches, Sierra creepers, dippers and many others. The study section following will center around birds of the desert.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18. 1:30 P.M. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park. Mrs. Hood presiding. The Program Chairman, George T. Hastings, will present Dr. John A. Comstock, the museum's Director of Science, who will speak, with kodachrome illustrations, of outstanding butterflies of this particular area, their life histories, how they came by their names, the damage, or otherwise, they may do to our vegetation. Kenneth E. Stager, Curator of Ornithology and Mammalogy, will talk about the "bird of the month."

THURSDAY, March 25. 10 to 12 Noon. 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. Bring your Peterson, or Hoffman, or both. Program will comprise: First hour, - Phalaropes, jaegers, glaucous-winged, western, California and ring-billed gulls, Caspian and Forster terns. Second hour, - Mr. W. Scott Lewis will favor us with a set of films to be chosen and discussed by him. Bring your lunch and stay for the eating of it with us under the trees. Take time to visit headquarters.

Leader, Walter Scott, Chairman, Nature Study Committee; ANgelus 2-4649

SUNDAY, March 28. The field trip usually held on the fourth Sunday of the month will not be taken this month, since March 28 is Easter Sunday.

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Operated by the National Audubon Society. Telephone: Whittier 6-3748
Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director. Howard L. Cogswell, Warden.

Field Trip, Sunday, March 14, starting from the entrance, 2594 S. Durfee Avenue, El Monte, 9 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 bus or train. Change to Long Beach bus leaving El Monte at 8:39. If driving go east on Third St. to Beverly Blvd., continue on Beverly to Durfee Ave., thence north to Sanctuary.
