

# Western Tanager

BLED MONTHLY, OCTOBER TO JUNE  
THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY



THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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## LET'S FEED MR. AND MRS. HUNGRY BIRD

By Helen Gere Cruickshank

(Reprinted, by permission, from Colliers', January 22, 1949)

--Extract--

This is the season of the year when one of man's best friends, the bird, comes upon hard times. In many parts of the northern states, from Maine to the Rocky Mountains, its natural food is buried under snow or encased in a coating of ice too hard for probing bills to penetrate. Thousands of birds will die of starvation before the warm spring sun releases the hibernating insects and uncovers the burgeoning weeds.

To survive, birds need help. And they deserve it, because every bird that dies during the winter represents an actual cash loss to American agriculture and a decline in the health of our fields, gardens and forests. Throughout most of the year birds consume astronomical numbers of insects and weed seeds, and cram fabulous quantities into the gaping mouths of their young, which sometimes require almost their own weight in food each day.

For example, consider the chickadee, a tiny bird weighing just a few ounces. Scientists have estimated that in Michigan alone the chickadees gobble up eight billion seeds annually. During the laying season for cankerworms, one lone chickadee will destroy 5000 eggs every day. Cankerworms do enormous damage to fruit and shade trees.

The Department of Agriculture says that without the birds, the damage to trees and crops by insects each year would be increased by some \$400,000,000. This is really a very conservative estimate of the value of birds to mankind. Many scientists go much farther. The famous French historian and naturalist, Jules Michelet, said long ago that "if it were not for birds no human being could live upon the earth, for the insects upon which birds live would destroy all vegetation."

There is now a new way, made possible by the Post Office Department, by which birds can be helped through the cold winter months. It is both easy and inexpensive. First, lay in a supply of bird food, - wheat, cracked corn, millet, sunflower seeds and waste sweepings. Divide your bird food into one- or two-pound lots, and make paper packages strong enough for shipping, but not so strong that they cannot be opened easily. Then go through your gazetteer, or atlas, or use your own knowledge, and select a town or city large enough to have a rural delivery service, in a part of the country where there is apt to be snow and ice. Address your package to "Mr. and Mrs. Hungry Bird, R.F.D. No. 1," that place. Mail the package by regular parcel post. The rural mail carrier who receives it for delivery will take it to a place on his route where wild birds congregate. There he will open it and scatter the food. But be sure you address the package plainly so that it does not read something like "Henry Bird" instead of "Hungry Bird."

Just because you've sent a parcel-post package of food to birds you'll never see, don't neglect the birds in your own neighborhood. Establish one or more permanent feeding stations and supply them regularly with food. Almost any sort of food a bird can handle is acceptable. Birds like bread crumbs, especially greasy crumbs. They like beef suet and pork fat, chopped meat, bones to which bits of meat are clinging, and nut meats without salt. Many birds are fond of doughnuts. Peanuts, especially if they are chopped, are excellent food for birds.

If you'll put up one of your bird feeding stations near a window, but far enough away so that the birds will not be frightened, you'll be well rewarded for your trouble... And the more birds you feed this winter, the more there will be to sing their melodious songs and flash their gay color during the long summer months.

THE WESTERN TANAGER

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MEMBERSHIP DUES: Student (12 to 18 yrs.), 75¢; Annual, \$1.50; Life, \$25; Patron, \$100. Joint membership, Los Angeles and National Audubon societies, with "Audubon Magazine," \$1 (minimum). Send membership applications, with dues, to the Treasurer at the above address.

Purpose of the Society: "To promote the study and protection of wildlife, plants, soil and water."

FRANCIS MARION FULTZ, naturalist, educator and writer, passed away Dec. 7, 1948, at his home, 5352 Aldama Street. He was an Honorary member of our society and its very good friend for the past twenty years.

To many of us, Mr. Fultz was best known through his books, notably "The Elfin Forest," a story of the chaparral, "The Flyaways," dealing with the dissemination of seeds, and "Lilies, Iris and Orchids of California."

A lasting tribute to Mr. Fultz's interest in young people and in conservation is what is known as the Clear Creek conservation project of the Los Angeles city schools, operated in cooperation with the National Forest Service on a 250-acre tract in the Angeles National Forest near the junction of Angeles Crest Highway and the Palmdale cutoff. This was established and for many years directed by Mr. Fultz and William R. Tanner, groups of boys and of girls from the city schools being given instruction there in forestry and camping. The project is still in active operation.

The Society extends deepest sympathy to Mrs. Fultz.

NEW MEMBERS, WELCOME :

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15302 Daphne Ave., Gardena  
George Haskins  
15302 Daphne Ave., Gardena

HIGHLIGHTS of a trailer trip "Down Texas Way," as told by Mrs. J. H. Comby, gave 75 members and guests an enjoyable evening at Central Library Dec. 9. Mrs. Comby described regions rich in bird life and told how she and Mr. Comby tracked down 48 new birds for their life list. Colored motion pictures obtained from the National Audubon Society illustrated the talk. Plans for the annual Christmas bird count were discussed by Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty and observers were assigned to their various posts.

At the evening meeting Jan. 13, Charles Ayres, Jr., a member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society whose home is in Ottumwa, Iowa, gave a stirring conservation talk on the damage to Nature's balance caused by the thoughtless destruction of natural barriers through careless burning, overgrazing, draining of marsh areas, and greedy methods of farming. He illustrated his talk with pictures of the devastating flood in Ottumwa last year. Eighty members and guests were present.

---LOUISE LUCKAN,  
Evening Program Chairman

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MRS. ROY L. SERGEANT, a former member of the society, living now in Kalamazoo, Mich., has sent us a charming gift, - a John James Audubon print of white-winged crossbills. Gratefully accepted, the picture will be hung on the wall at Headquarters.

#### OBSERVATIONS

This winter's freezing nights are causing a drastic cut in the animal food needed by many of our birds. Hummingbirds are especially hard-pressed; no flowers, no nectar, and few tiny insects. NOW is the time for sugar-water feeders to be kept regularly supplied for the hungry little sprites.

GEESE, DUCKS: Canvas-backs very abundant on city reservoirs and lakes. Hundreds reported resting nights on the reservoirs, leaving before dawn, knowing they must be gone before the day's systematic shooting-off begins (a Water Dept. ruling, to prevent water contamination). Dr. R. L. Taylor reports, on Hansen Dam, 3 common Canada geese, Nov. 10; 2 lesser snow geese Nov. 14, and 3 whistling swans Dec. 15. Howard L. Cogswell reports 16 whistling swans observed and photographed just offshore from Santa Monica Dec. 23. Dr. Taylor and Ralph Mall found one female old-squaw and one female American scoter off Seal Beach Pier Dec. 29, and another female old-squaw at Recreation Gun Club the same day. H. L. Cogswell found 2 American golden-eye ducks, Playa del Rey area Dec. 25. All very irregular winter visitors this far south. Great rafts of scoters, mostly surf, reported just off-shore up and down the coast.

WATER BIRDS: The unusually wary Holboell's grebe, commonly found along the Oregon-Washington coast, is visiting our South; last reported on the Recreation Gun Club pond. Dr. Taylor reports the Louisiana heron back in the Mission Bay area, San Diego; also, many ducks and black brant.

LAND BIRDS: Large mixed flocks of robins and cedar waxwings noted by Mrs. Ruth McCune, Mt. Washington. Hundreds of robins over Griffith Park golf courses. M. S. Dunlap reports varied thrush in Glendale and Whiting Woods areas. In Altadena, Jan. 5, Wendell Humphreys found a male Arizona hooded oriole wintering over. Townsend's warblers are reported from various areas.

WATCH NOW FOR: Horned grebes, flights of wild geese and ducks. Study them on reservoirs and lakes. Wilson's snipe; band-tailed pigeons; nuthatches, varied thrush, purple finch, early migrating hummingbirds.

---CAROLINE H. DAUGHERTY

W. DAN QUATTLEBAUM, the Audubon representative on the Arboretum Advisory Committee, reports 6 canvas-backs and two 3-day old baby pied-billed grebes on the Arboretum lake Christmas day. "I wish you could have seen these babies and their parents," writes Mr. Quattlebaum. "While the fathers hunted for and brought food, the mothers either sat on their floating nests, with the babies under their wings or at the side, or else floated near the nest with a baby cuddled under each wing. When the father came with food, the babies slipped to the water to take it, then scrambled back under the mother's wing."

THE BIRD STUDY COURSE being conducted at the County Museum by Mrs. Hood and the Society's Committee on Youth Leadership, Mrs. Neil H. Lewis, chairman, got off to a fine start January 8. Following an illustrated lecture by Mrs. Hood, the group had a personally conducted tour of Bird Hall. The course will continue each Saturday until Feb. 12. Then will follow a course for youth leaders, for five consecutive Wednesday nights, beginning at 7 o'clock Feb. 16. This second course will be given in the ground floor lecture hall, at the southeast corner of the Museum. Registration will be open to all over 15 years of age who are actively interested in any form of youth leadership, and there will be a registration fee of \$1 to help cover the cost of the materials to be given out. For both courses there will be a field trip at the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary. A later issue of the Tanager will carry a full report of these courses.

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY reminds us that 1949 is the 50th anniversary of "Audubon Magazine." Two of Roger Tory Peterson's new paintings of western birds will be reproduced in full color on the inside spread of each of the six issues of 1949. The first two will appear in the January-February issue and will portray Bullock's Oriole and the Western Tanager. To obtain these twelve reproductions in full color will be more than worth the price of membership, without taking into account the balance of the magazine or the other privileges of membership. Remember that if you live in the Los Angeles district, membership in the National Society carries with it, on request, membership in the Los Angeles Audubon Society without additional dues.

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 FEBRUARY, 1949

THURSDAY, Feb. 3. Field Trip, Chatsworth Reservoir Grounds. Besides geese, ducks and many shore and land birds found there, we shall look especially for Cassin's kingbirds, pipits, grasshopper, vesper and lark sparrows, also found there but seldom hunted out. Special Tanner Motor Bus will leave Los Angeles, 6th and Olive streets (park corner), 8:30 A.M. Will stop for passengers pick-up corner Hollywood and Cahuenga Blvds. at 8:45, and Ventura Blvd. and Laurel Canyon 8:55. Round trip fare, \$1.65. Please have exact change. Take lunch. Make reservation EARLY with Miss Edith Crane, 4925½ Cimarron St., Los Angeles 37; ALminster 2-8458. 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 Reservoir grounds by same gate about 3 P.M. Lunch at 11:45 at picnic tables, followed by nature talks. LEADER, Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty; CHARLESTON 6-1747.

TUESDAY, Feb. 8 and again Saturday, Feb. 12. Audubon Screen Tour, "Wild Life Down East," a sparkling color motion picture program, by Carl W. Buchheister, Vice-president of the National Audubon Society. For information, see special bulletin issued by Wm. K. DePue, Business Manager, 6055 Fair Ave., North Hollywood.

THURSDAY, Feb. 10. 7 P.M. Los Angeles Central Library, Fifth St. and Grand Ave. First floor. Mrs. Elizabeth B. Goolden, First Vice-President, presiding. Speaker, Walter Scott, who last summer followed Audubon's trails down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, will give his impressions of what he saw, beginning with Henderson, Ky. on down to Feliciana, Audubon's Louisiana "happyland." The discussion period, led by Miss Louise Luckan, will be devoted to the sparrow family. Bring your Peterson, or Hoffman, or both, - your questions, too, and help work out the answers.

THURSDAY, Feb. 17. 1:30 P.M. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, Mrs. Hood presiding. Mr. and Mrs. Harlan E. Eckler will show kodachromes of Arizona desert birds, taken by them in the Southwest Arboretum, at Superior, and in Madera Canyon, where they spent three months last spring. These are views not only of typical birds of the region, but also of cacti in glorious bloom and other desert plants, such as the saguaro, the giant cactus which grows to a height of fifty feet and lives for two centuries. Kenneth E. Stager, Curator of Ornithology, County Museum, will present "the bird of the month." A vote will be taken on proposed changes in the by-laws, read at the January meeting.

THURSDAY, Feb. 24. Study Class, 10 to 12 Noon. Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., on the Pacific Electric Santa Monica Blvd.-West Hollywood line. Leader, George T. Hastings. The program, arranged by Thos. F. Parker, will be: First Hour, The Structure of Birds, - skeleton, circulation, bills and feet; Second Hour, Some Families of Monocotyledons, - grasses, palms, lilies, orchids. Bring lunch and spend the afternoon at headquarters.

SUNDAY, Feb. 27. Field Trip, Griffith Park, Riverside Drive side. Meet at 8 A.M. in front of the Cafe. Take lunch. LEADER, C. J. Parker; ATLantic 1-2490.

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

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Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director.

Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods, Assistant Director

C. W. Hamilton, Warden

Maintained by the National Audubon Society, with the cooperation of its Southern California affiliated societies. Regularly scheduled field trip the second Sunday of each month, starting from the entrance at 9 A.M. Advisory Committee: Chairman, Mrs. J. H. Comby, Southern California Representative, National Audubon Society; 200 Kratt Lane, Whittier. Telephone: Whittier 41-4236.