

T H E

# Western



# Tanager

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, SEPTEMBER TO MAY  
BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

---

Volume 18

March, 1952

Number 7

---

## LAND NOBODY WANTED

The most disastrous forest fire in the history of America, 1,280,000 acres burned, 1500 lives lost, occurred in Marinette County, Wisconsin, in 1871. But lumbering went on throughout the state in the old and accepted "Cut out and get out" manner. By the early years of the century parts of the state were in serious difficulty, the best pine had been cut, most of the remainder was going, abandoned lumber camps and mills were numerous. Marinette County was especially hard hit. In 1928 the county board made an appraisal of the county's condition. Of 905,000 acres more than 400,000 were tax delinquent, - no one wanted the land. An effort had been made following World War I to convert the cut over land, - much also burned over - into farms. Hundreds of people started bravely with high hopes to develop homes and farms. But soon the thin top soil was exhausted or blown away, leaving barren sand. The settlers mostly gave up, some moved away, many went on relief. The county was practically bankrupt; much of the land seemed worthless, once clear streams were muddy, game birds and animals had largely disappeared. What could be done? The Board decided the only hope was to "Plant trees...Put the Pine-back." Against the determined opposition of many who thought the attempt an impossible one, and others who thought the land might still be farmed, from some who had a monetary interest - fertilizer manufacturers, makers of agricultural machinery, large land owners, - 220,000 acres of abandoned land was blocked out as a county forest and planting of pine started. The land along streams and lake shores was earmarked for recreational use. In the jobless days of the depression crews of idle men were put to work in the woods under trained foresters.

Now there is a county forest of 223,000 acres and more than 20,000,000 pine trees growing on 12,500 acres of new plantation. There are also 18 school forest projects, - nearly every high school and many of the district grade schools have their forests. Marinette County proved to Wisconsin the sound economics of putting poor land to work growing forests. Interest in planting was spread through the state. The state is planting 480,000 acres, the U.S. Forest Service 1,400,000 and other counties are pitching in with 2,500,000. Farmers are planting forests of their own, in some counties they are setting out over half a million trees each year. Sportsmen finding the young forests improve the streams and fishing and provide cover for game have joined the movement. Several large paper companies are planting forests of one thousand acres and more.

With all this Wisconsin is not slipping as a farming and dairy state, but more than 10,000,000 acres that should never have been farmed are going back to growing trees. The goal for this year is the planting of 40,000,000 trees.

And Marinette County is now receiving over \$40,000 a year from trees cut in thinning operations and a dividend increasing from year to year as the trees become older is expected for an indefinite time in the future. More important, - there are thousands of acres of beautiful young forests, clear streams and wooded lake shores with recreational areas and public camps where only a few years ago were miles of fire-blackened stumps on "land nobody wanted."

Selected from an article - Wisconsin's Rebirth of Pine- In American Forests for December, 1950

## THE WESTERN TANAGER

Published monthly, September - May, by the Los Angeles Audubon Society, Inc. \$1.00 per year, free to members. Editor - George T. Hastings, 517 Euclid, Santa Monica. Phone - Brook 5-1137. Leoti Fisher, Associate Editor.

## THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

## Membership

Joint with the National Audubon Society Regular \$5.00, Sustaining \$10.00, Active \$25.00. All include subscription to Audubon Magazine. Local, Student \$1.00, Annual \$2.00, Life \$25.00, Patron \$100.00

## OFFICERS FOR 1951-1952

President..... Mrs. Maybelle DeMay  
Vice-Pres..... Miss Bessie Pope  
Exec. Sec..... Miss Elizabeth Patterson  
Recording Sec..... Miss Elsa Schwartz  
Treasurer..... Miss Treva Russell  
Registrar of Members, Mrs. T.H. Fulton  
Curator..... Miss Clara Pfleger  
Historian..... Mrs. Ruth McCune

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Miss Myra Penne Anderson,  
455 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach 2  
Miss Marjorie Butler,  
2500 Silver Lake Terrace, L.A. 39  
Mr. Leroy Hooker,  
429 N. Farnore, San Fernando  
Miss Esther Kolew,  
2321 1/2 W. 10th St., L.A. 6  
Mrs. G. H. Lambert,  
975 E. Glenoaks, Glendale 7  
Mr. Arthur L. Marble,  
6202 Allston St., L.A. 22  
Mrs. J. Townsend,  
13721 Leffingwell Road, Norwalk  
Mr. Curtis A. Weber,  
723 Muirfield Road, L.A. 5

\* \* \* \* \*

With very great regret we report the death on February 13, of Mr. W. F. Willis, a member of long standing. When health permitted, he and Mrs. Willis were regular attendants at our meetings. The signs on the outside of Audubon House and on the office wall were made and donated by Mr. Willis. Our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Willis.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Nominating Committee which will report a slate of officers for next year at our April meeting, consists of Miss Leoti Fisher, Miss Clara Pfleger and Miss Marjorie Walther. The committee will appreciate suggestions as to officers from members.

Have you noticed the beautiful photograph of a Whooping Crane on the cover of the last Audubon Magazine. It was taken by one of our own members, Mr. Don Bleitz.

On the radio program, "Hallmark Playhouse", on the evening of January 24th, James Hilton presented Donald Culross Peattie's "Wings in the Wilderness." Gene Pierre Aumont gave a very convincing performance in the role of the artist naturalist, John James Audubon, and Lorraine Tuttle, that of his devoted wife, Lucy.

If you have not already read this outstanding book, why not borrow it from our library at Plummer Park. Ask Mrs. Salmon for it.

From Mrs. Jules Mocabee of Stockton, we received the following: One morning last spring I heard my cat yowling for help. I ran up the hill and found him trying to help a mother quail herd a covey of newly hatched young up over the curb. Borrowing a dust pan from a neighbor we scooped the baby birds up onto the parkway in front of her house. The cat sat quietly watching, making no attempt to harm the baby birds. The mother called her brood and the family moved safely away.

From the ELEPAIO, of the Hawaiian Audubon Society, January 1952. A clipping comes from New Zealand - "Annual war on deer and goats. The annual slaughter campaign of the Noxious Wild Animals - Control Operational District to exterminate animal pests which do grave damage to native fauna and flora and pastures, resulted in shooting 31,794 deer. In six years more than 151,000 deer have been shot." (Note by the editor, European Axis deer were introduced as game animals into New Zealand years ago. Now efforts are being made to introduce them into Hawaii, a move the Hawaiian Audubon Society is righting).

A MID-JULY NATURE WALK IN  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

At six o'clock one morning in July, Dorothy Groner, Christine Bleifeldt and I joined a party led by Ranger Beideman at Fern Canyon, a most attractive place for nature lovers. The beautiful mountain stream comes tumbling down over boulders through a narrow canyon in a forest of lodgepole pine, elders, aspens, Douglas fir and some handsome Colorado blue spruce on which were interesting prickly galls much like tiny Christmas tree ornaments. The stream was bordered by mossy banks with bracken and large blue columbines. Along the trail to the "Pool", our objective, were masses of fragrant deep pink wild roses, purple clematis, low ninebark shrubs covered with white blossoms, clumps of airy galium, dainty white northern anemones, pink blossomed squaw currants, pine bog pyrolas, and a red wood lily with head held erect and many other flowers and grasses.

The songs of the olive-backed thrush, ruby and golden-crowned kinglets, chickadees, western warbling vireos, Audubon's and McGillivray's warblers filled the air. The ranger and the Easterners were excited at seeing the Audubons, while we Californians were exultant over the, to us, rarer McGillivarys, abundant there. A broad-tailed hummingbird perched atop a dead snag, showing his rosy red throat as he looked about for insects in the air and darted after them. Red-naped sapsuckers fed young in a nest hole, house wrens were nesting too, red-shafted flickers and long-crested jays made their presence known. Violet-green swallows, white-throated swifts and Clark's nutcrackers were seen over the cliffs on the opposite side of the canyon.

When we reached the "Pool" we sat down on the huge boulders across the stream from the ledge where the ousels were nesting and watched the busy parents feeding three babies with gaping yellow-lined bills. A young boy in the party who wanted to take everything home with him, found a porcupine under our boulder. No, he did not grab it but chased it away so we only had a glimpse of it as it lumbered up the hill. A garter snake was caught by the ranger and inspected with interest before being released.

"MC GEE"

About the end of May Aunt Ellie brought us two young black-billed magpies, intending to take them to San Lois Obispo later. At the time she left, however, one of the birds refused to come down from the highest walnut tree, and we had "Maggie" on our hands. This noisy, black and white rascal soon captivated the hearts of the neighborhood. We quickly decided that "Mc Gee" better fitted this feathered friend, for no female could be so cocky, strut, "swear," or scold as much as he did. Yet at times he was as affectionate and lovable as a puppy. During these moments his usual raucous voice was transformed into soft gurgling sounds deep down in his throat. He acquired quite a vocabulary during the summer and we could understand him when he said "Sure," "Maggie," "Hi," "O.K." and "Gosh."

He ate practically anything, but preferred meat. When McGee had eaten enough he accumulated a beakful and hid it for future use. We often found his snacks falling out of patio pillows, knitting that had been laid aside and other inappropriate places. At the end of the summer we took him to join his sister in San Lois Obispo. There he lived with Aunt Ellie out on the ranch, and followed her all over the place. He would have nothing to do with the native yellow-billed magpies. One day he found a hole in the screen of one of the windows and came into the house. He kept doing this but Aunt Ellie decided he really belonged outdoors and so repaired the screen. Soon afterwards there was a terrific racket outside and she thought the dogs were after him. No sir! He was O.K., but clinging to the screen that had been mended, saying all the magpie swear words he could think of.

But his story is now ended. He used to roost high in a tree close to the house. One night he came in through a door left open for the dog. She put him out, back in his tree. Next morning he was gone. Aunt Ellie thinks a great horned owl got him. Perhaps?

Ernie Smith, Instructor at Camp Norden

Three days later we went back to this lovely spot to enjoy its beauty more leisurely. This time a violet-green swallow was the star performer. He posed on a branch in the sun close to us showing to perfection the shimmering green back and the white of the face encircling the eye.

Ruby Curry

## WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY

The field trip of January 17 was cancelled because of rain, but five members met anyway in MacArthur Park. Among the birds seen in the lake were Western and Eared Grebes, Farallon and Brandt's Cormorants, American Egret, Pintail, Shoveller, Ruddy and Canvasback Ducks, California, Ring-billed and Herrmann's Gulls, and, of course, Coots. One of the Herrman's Gulls, a beautiful adult, had a broken wing.

The Study Class on January 24 met in Plummer Park. Mr. W. Scott Lewis showed kodachrome slides to indicate the relation of water to forests and the effects of forest on water supply. Then followed pictures of the five-needled pines, with trees in typical habitat, and details of the trunks, leaves and cones. Mr. Nelson, Superintendent of the Santa Anita Arboretum, spoke of the development and plans of the Arboretum, inviting a visit from the Society. Mr. W. Dan Quattlebaum gave a talk on Sparrows, illustrating his descriptions of our native species by showing mounted birds and prepared skins.

At the Thursday afternoon program meeting of February 7 we were fortunate in seeing two fine films shown by the courtesy of the Standard Oil Company. The first of these showed the water cycle, from evaporation from the surface of the earth, the formation of clouds to precipitation in various forms. Water in various natural bodies and its importance to raising crops was shown. The second film showed the ninety day adventures of a young couple and their eight and five year old children in the wilds of Alaska. They were landed on one lake and picked up three months later on another in the Klondike region. Packs weighing eighty, sixty, eight and six pounds respectively were carried. After food supplies gave out they lived off the land. At the end of the period they were all in good health. The parents had enjoyed wilderness experiences before and wanted their children to enjoy the same advantages.

Birds in Griffith Park- Jan. 15 to Feb. 15  
 Downy & Calif. Woodpeckers, Road Runner, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's & Red-tailed Hawks, Calif. Thrasher singing, Gambel's, Golden Crowned Sparrows, Oregon Junco, Green-backed Goldfinch, many Robins & Waxwings but numbers decreasing. --Wm. Lasky

## SONG SPARROW SONG

When sleeping streams begin to stir  
 And throw aside their blankets  
 All up and down the leafless dell,  
 I hear a gay antiphonal --

"Oh, sing and sing and sing,  
 Ye merry birds of spring."

When apple blossoms scent the air,  
 And tulip beds are glowing,  
 On every hand the wild birds call:  
 To me the sweetest song of all

Is, "Sing and sing and sing,  
 For now indeed it's spring."

When grain fields turn from green to gold  
 Beneath the skies of summer,  
 From dawn to dusk, the whole day long,  
 A cheerful sparrow sings his song --

"Oh, sing and sing and sing,  
 It can't be always spring."

When autumn fires are all burned out,  
 And winter's in the offing,  
 The challenge comes to us once more,  
 As brown birds sing it o'er and o'er --

"Oh, sing and sing and sing,  
 For soon it will be spring."

## A SONG SPARROW SINGS

I veil my eyes and bow my head  
 And vainly try to pray.  
 But I forget the litany,  
 And all the countless benefits  
 I should be grateful for.

I'm sure that God must understand  
 My weariness to-day,  
 And why it is I just give thanks,  
 That hour by hour, a brown bird sings  
 Outside my open door.

Two poems by Mary H. Beam  
 The blind lady of whom we wrote in the  
 Tanager in January.

A bird's song contains a clew to its life and establishes a sympathy, an understanding between itself and the listener.

--John Burroughs

REPORT FROM THE SAN GABRIEL  
RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

January rains made lakes of our fields and a raging torrent of the San Gabriel River. We could hear the river grinding rocks together to make soil which greatly interested our school children. During the rain three trees fell in the Sanctuary, the brook and ponds filled with water and high in the clouds we could hear the wild cry of the Red-bellied Hawk, seeming to be part of the storm itself. These hawks started nest building in the top of a tall Cottonwood the first week in January. As a tribute to their skill, the nest is still intact.

Wild grape vines are the dominant plants furnishing food and shelter. Birds and small mammals have fed all winter on the dried grapes. Thousands of Robins and Cedar Waxwings have taken their share and there are plenty left. The bright red stems of the Creek Dogwood gave color to the woods all winter, and their small white fruits were greatly relished by Thrashers, Mockingbirds and Cardinals.

The warm weather brought out swarms of insects, large and small. White-throated Swifts were flying low over the tree tops, Cedar Waxwings, Audubon Warblers and Mockingbirds out-did the Black Phoebes in insect control. The Anna's Hummingbird that had been singing and flying high in his nuptial flight the last two weeks, abandoned all thoughts of wooing, to become an efficient gnatcatcher.

Bees are feeding eagerly on the pale red flowers of the wild gooseberry after weeks of gathering pollen from the catkins on our willows. The "pussies" appeared early this year on the willows.

The Monarch, Mourning Cloak and West Coast Lady have appeared in large numbers.

At night the frog chorus and screech owl proclaim "it is spring!"

--Alma Stultz

Finches, Sparrows: On Feb. 7 and every day since, flocks of Lawrence's Gold-finches flying over, smaller flocks dropping into the garden to feed on sweet alyssum seed. They announce their presence by tinkling notes like little glass bells clinking together.

(Curry)

OBSERVATIONS

Herons: American Bittern, Playa del Rey Jan. 20 (Cunningham); Bittern caught and banded, then released, Sanctuary, (Pyle); 2 American Egrets at temporary lake above flood control dam in San Gabriel River, end of Jan. (I. Rogers)

Ducks and Geese: 11 large flocks of geese following foothills from Monrovia toward Pasadena (I. Rogers); Black Brandt, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter, Readhead, Cinnamon Teal, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy, Gadwall, Playa del Rey, Feb. 9 (Hawkins and Dobson).

Hawks: Several small flocks of Turkey Vultures passing north over Sanctuary, Jan. 27 (Hawkins), large migrating flocks, Feb. 5, Monrovia (Rogers); Bald and Golden Eagles, Ferruginous Rough-leg Hawk, Point Mugu, Jan. 28 (Kent); 2 White-tailed Kites, Playa del Rey, Jan. 20 (Cunningham); 2 near Long Beach airport, Dec. 23, 2 pair at Sanctuary (Stoltz).

Rail: Sora Rail in lumber yard in S.M. alive one day, found dead next. Feb. 5 (Cunningham).

Gull: Glaucous at Playa del Rey marshes, Jan. 20, so busy pulling something from mud in the road that a car stopped within 15 feet and occupants watched for some time (Hastings).

Owls: Long-eared high in trees, S.M. Jan. 27 (Wm. Bro); Short-eared, Playa del Rey, Jan. 20 (Cunningham); Point Mugu, Jan. 28 (So'west Bird Study Club)

Doves: White-winged in yard in Whittier for past 3 mos, left for week, returned with mate, Jan. 4 (E.M. Pencin) The pair banded, Feb. 11 (Bill Hawkins).

Roadrunner: on a Santa Monica street near ocean, very tame, Jan. 24 (Wm. Bro).

Townsends Solitaire: 3 in Monrovia Canyon, Feb. 5 and 6 (Rogers)

Robins: Large flocks at Sanctuary and elsewhere, individuals from many places.

Phainopepla: 1 male, Sanctuary, Jan. 26.

Hooded Oriole: Los Angeles, Feb. 10 (Groner)

Waxwings: "Dozens gobbling up pyracantha berries. My bush is stripped but I am glad I did not use them all for Christmas."

Long Beach (Mrs. Esther Lampe)

Warblers: Myrtle feeding on Opuntia fruit daily in late Jan. Redondo Beach (Shuart) in Sanctuary, Feb. 11 (Hawkins)

Calaveras feeding on Toyon fruit just outside window, watched from very short distance- all markings observed. Redondo Beach, Jan. 19 (Shuart).

TO ALL AUDUBON MEMBERS :

The Los Angeles Audubon Society, Inc., has an active program to promote the study and protection of birds and other wildlife, plants, soil, and water. Besides lectures, study groups, and field trips, there are projects of special interest, and committees that carry on the full activity of the Society. May I take this opportunity to invite each of you to lend your help to some of these activities? Please let me know how much time you can devote and which activity on the enclosed check-list appeals to you most. Then sign and return this list to me, and I shall be happy to give your name to the proper chairman and help you get started with the work.

Maybelle DeMay, President  
504 East Oak Street  
El Segundo, California

THE CONSERVATION CHAIRMAN needs folk who will make a study of a current problem and help keep him and the Society abreast of developments, such as: \_\_\_\_\_ The development at Hanson Dam; \_\_\_\_\_ The development at Whittier Narrows; \_\_\_\_\_ The proposed development and sanctuary at Playa del Rey yacht harbor.

THE PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN needs news items of interest to the downtown papers, and help in distributing publicity materials.

THE AFTERNOON PROGRAM COMMITTEE needs help with meeting the speakers and setting up the auditorium at the Los Angeles County Museum.

THE EDITOR OF THE TANAGER needs articles on conservation and observations of bird and animal activity.

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE needs qualified speakers to speak and show slides to youth and adult groups.

THE YOUTH ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE needs more assistance with the Junior Audubon program and to conduct field trips with young people.

IF YOU HAVE SECRETARIAL OR BOOKKEEPING EXPERIENCE, there are times when the secretaries, the treasurer, and the registrar would be glad of assistance.

THE CURATOR could use some help with the annual inventory.

THE HISTORIAN needs folk to watch for published news items, and to help report the activities of the Society.

THE HEADQUARTERS COMMITTEE would appreciate assistance in furnishing and decorating Audubon House at Plummer Park, and in the sewing of curtains.

THE LAURA GREELY EDUCATIONAL FUND COMMITTEE needs talented and qualified people to present the aims and program of the Society in the solicitation of funds for educational projects.

THE SALES COMMITTEE needs salesmen and -women to help at the various meetings of the Society and to fill orders that come by mail, and for transportation.

THE OUTDOOR PROGRAM CHAIRMAN needs people to help load, to arrange transportation, and to scout field trips.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Officers - 1951 - 1952

President..... Mrs. Maybelle DeMay, 504 E. Oak St., El Segundo  
Secretary..... Miss Elizabeth Patterson, 6040 W. 76th Pl., L.A. 45  
Treasurer..... Miss Treva Russell, 5611 Fountain Ave., L.A. 28  
Registrar of Members..... Mrs. T. H. Fulton, 3605 Tacoma Ave., L.A. 45

CALENDAR FOR MARCH, 1952

The public is invited to the following meetings and trips.  
Information regarding any of them may be obtained by calling the numbers given.

THURSDAY, March 6. Afternoon Program Meeting. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, 1:30 P.M. Mr. Edward P. Terry will show colored slides of European gardens taken last summer. Interspersed with these pictures of many of Europe's most beautiful gardens will be other subjects which should be of value to anyone interested in European travel. Whitney 5946

WEDNESDAY, March 12. Evening Program Meeting. L.A. County Museum, entrance at S.E. corner, 7:30 P.M. (The museum will be open at 7 to give opportunity for examining the specimens before the program). DENIZENS OF THE DESERT, an account of lizards and snakes and other life forms of the desert. Illustrated by colored slides and live specimens. Mrs. Maybelle DeMay HEmpstead 0974

THURSDAY, March 20. Field trip to GRIFFITH PARK, enter at Fern Dell entrance. Take bus on Western Ave. to end of line. Those going in their own cars are asked to be at the corner of Western and Russell Ave. (one block north of Hollywood Blvd.) at 9:30 to help those coming by bus to the park. Bring lunch. Leader Mr. W. Scott Lewis. AKminster 1-7855

SUNDAY, March 23. Field trip to SAN BERNARDINO WARM SPRINGS SANCTUARY. (This is the trip postponed from January 13). We will be guests of the San Bernardino Audubon Society. Meet at the entrance to the Sanctuary, 1100 South E Street, San Bernardino at 10 A.M. (The entrance is one block south of the Orange County Fair Grounds). Bring lunch. Lovely wildlife pictures will be shown in the afternoon. Leader Mrs. Ira W. Wissler of the San Bernardino Society. CApitol 8782

THURSDAY, March 27. Study Class. This month the class will meet at the San Gabriel River Wildlife Sanctuary as the guests of Mrs. Stultz. 10 A.M. Mrs. Stultz will discuss birds of the Thrush Family. Following a walk through the Sanctuary and lunch Mrs. Enid Michael will talk on the Aesthetic Side of Bird Study. An effort will be made to furnish transportation. Those who will have room in their cars for others, and those needing a place in a car are asked to notify Mrs. May Wait, 8972 Dicks St., Hollywood 46, 'phone CRestview 6-1990, before March 20. GRanite 2312

SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

664 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte Telephone FOrrest 0-1872  
Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director Mrs. E. Gertrude Woods, Assistant Director  
Maintained by the National Audubon Society with the cooperation of the Southern California branches and affiliates.

Regular field trips the second Sunday of each month, starting from the entrance at 9 A.M., led by Pat Gould and Bill Hawkins.