

Western Tanager



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MEXICO, LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

To the casual observer, the city of Nogales is just another border town, but to the traveller who makes his first acquaintance through its portals with our sister country, Mexico, it is a door opening into a land of beauty, mystery and adventure.

In January of this year, my husband and I journeyed over this threshold along the highway to the Gulf of California. Jagged, colorful mountain peaks seemed warm and close in the clear atmosphere, and the countryside is landscaped in Nature's own orderly way. Magnificent Organ-pipe Cactus, giant Sahuars, Cholla, Mesquite, Ocatillo, Christmas Thorn and other desert plants predominate over a large area.

For some miles, we travelled along the Santa Cruz River, a typical desert stream. Here fields were under cultivation, alfalfa, grains and even the dried stalks of last year's cotton. Giant Willows, Cottonwoods and Sycamores border the stream and from these thickets come familiar songs of Mockingbirds, Thrashers, Wrens and many others. The brilliant Vermillion Flycatcher dominates the scene by his beauty. Mexico is a land of flycatchers for in summer many species may be seen on the fences along the road.

Vultures, both Black and Turkey, are very companionable, coming right into the streets of the towns on their garbage disposal mission. The Caracara or Mexican Eagle is a familiar sight, perched like an adornment on a Sahuaro cactus, or flying gracefully in long gliding motions reminding us of our own Condor. It is truly a magnificent bird, with its white head which usually has a slightly ruffled appearance, giving him an air of fierceness, though his placid behavior denies this. I have seen a Caracara following behind a man plowing, apparently searching for grubs or mice.

Although the countryside is alluring, it is the gulf on which our attention is focused and it was with a feeling of anticipation that we skirted the mud-flats and came to rest in the tiny trailer city on the banks of the Lagoon, with its mangrove thicket.

Here they were - our avian friends, the Louisiana Heron, the Little Blue, the Reddish Egret clowning as usual, and the little Snowy Egret, stirring up the gooey mud with his golden slippers and looking eagerly in the mass. Flocks of sandpipers ran back and forth, and Godwits and Willets were also present. A pair of Kingfishers had their perch on a corner of the mangrove thicket, and Ospreys made regular trips overhead on their fishing forays. A lone American Oystercatcher frequented the flats, and the Yellow-crowned Night Heron was an early morning visitor. Red-breasted Mergansers, tireless fishers and divers, were always present, and often when we looked up from their manoeuvres we saw Man o' War Birds flying overhead, their long tails like rudders trailing behind.

Immediately we became known as the "Bird People", but we were not the only ones, for one day another appeared with binoculars and here was Mrs. Ruth McCune of our Los Angeles Society, who with her husband, was a near neighbor in our little community.

THE WESTERN TANAGER

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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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The Centinela Valley Girl Scout Camp in the Big Pines area has positions open for counsellors, especially a nature counsellor. Applications should be sent to Centinela Valley Girl Scout Council, 101 W. Queen St., Inglewood

THE ASILOMAR CONVENTION

Twenty-four folks from the Los Angeles area attended the California Convention of the National Audubon Society from April 5 to 7. Twelve California societies were represented, also one from Washington and a visitor from a Connecticut society. All had a very wonderful time, learned a lot, saw a lot and made a lot of new friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Burton Oliver and Mr. and Mrs. Dale Leever of the L.A. City Schools were there for the entire time. Our President, Mrs. DeMay, took an active part in the discussions and was chairman of one of the sessions. Miss Lecti Fisher and Miss Clara Pflager were out birding every morning before breakfast. Marjorie Walther took part in a panel discussion and helped all the L.A. folk get acquainted with each other. As a result, the few who were not members of our Society before, are planning to join right away.

The banquet Sunday evening was attended by many dignitaries. There was Mr. Elmer Aldrich of the State Parks Department, Mr. Fred Cronmiller of the U.S. Forest Service, Mr. Dorr Jaeger of the Park Naturalists, Mr. Robert Sibley of the Eastbay Regional Parks, and Mr. Merton Henshaw of the Pacific Grove Museum. The speaker, Dr. Carl Duncan of San Jose State College, told us that Conservation is a Way of Life. He pointed out the need for the Audubon Society to further a great expansion of knowledge, of understanding, and of appreciation of the forces of nature. Man has always had the ability to modify nature according to his own desires, but the results have not always been what he anticipated. Our high calling is to help man be wise in his modifications so that the tremendously complicated web of life can continue to his advantage.

After a beautiful boat trip, most of the folks started home. Some drove straight through, others took side trips of interest. Nearly everyone went down the San Simeon highway for a last look at the herd of sea otters that were resting just offshore. Arnold Lane had discovered a group only a seventeen minute drive from camp. He drove several parties down and they in turn took others, so there were many unscheduled field trips to see these "teddy-bears of the sea."

Maybelle DeMay

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY!

One year old as an incorporated society!
Forty-one years young since the birthday
in 1910!

This demands celebration at all meetings
in May - and surely Birthday Presents!

For our society must meet the challenge of the increasing destruction of birds, animals and all of nature's supply. To the best of our ability we WILL increase our conservation education. We need material things to aid in this. Plummer Park Museum needs many new books, slides, slide viewer, charts and cabinets for the use of all groups. Adequate movie and slide projectors with a good screen are necessary for our large program meetings, and teaching equipment would be so helpful to our splendid workshop project. New check lists appropriate for different groups have an initial cost. The fine training at Norden Camp given to youth leaders and teachers who will influence hundreds of children make it important to give more small scholarships to these influential persons. Ideas for publicity to bring more people to our fascinating programs may have a price.

So it is that expansion requires funds. Friends of our society are giving generous contributions to the Laura Greely Educational Fund. Let us show these kind friends that we members are also rallying to finance the programs, the workshop, the library, the museum, in the conservation teaching of our important civic organization.

So, as we will, let us send to our treasurer, or bring to a meeting a dollar, or ten, twenty, or a hundred dollars as our circumstances permit, or make your gift for a specific object, such as those listed below. Let our society have a Happy Birthday greeting from every member, no matter how small or large it may be because we build on the warm interest of all.

FOR YOUR GOOD DEED

Rewards! For 150 lucky contributors!

These worthy members will receive invitations to the Walt Disney Studio the evening of May 22, for a showing of Nature Films - and you know how very wonderful that will be. So be sure your name is on your birthday present.

Suggestions for Gifts to the Society -
Kodachrome Slides to be used at our meetings and loaned for nature talks, fifty cents each.

Slide Viewers to be kept at Plummer Park, small hand viewer, \$3.50 - larger table viewer, \$12.50

A 60x60 inch beaded screen - \$41.00

A slide projector suitable for large auditorium, about \$150.00.

A sound movie projector, about \$450.00

Scholarships to pay half expenses at Audubon Nature Camp - \$50.00 each.

SOMETHING TO DO NOW

An excellent conservation bill is now before congress. Letters to our Senators and Representatives will help towards its passage.

The Johnson Bill (H.R. 5023) would prohibit the construction of dams in National Parks and Monuments.

Write asking support for this bill to Hon. Leroy Johnson, House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C.

Hon. John R. Murdock, Chairman, Interior and Insular Affairs Comm., House Office Building.

(Mexico, continued from first page)
 We shared several delightful experiences the few days we were together. Mr. and Mrs. Clayton of the Sequoia Audubon Society of Burlingame, also came on some of our excursions.

Turning our backs on the Lagoon we faced the Gulf, with guano covered islands that resembled mushrooms dotting its blue expanse here and there. On trips to these islands we became acquainted with Boobies. These are wonderful flyers, circling aloft in easy spirals, or flying swiftly close to the water they give an impression of power and grace. Nature has equipped them for deep diving with a mat of feathers on the face and neck that is as dense as fur. It is exciting to see them diving from a height deep into the water. Two species, the Blue-footed and White-bellied were present. The feet and legs of the former species are an incredible shade of light blue, and the bird is handsome indeed and appears vain of this adornment. The White-bellied was very common, flying about and resting on the water in thick clusters. At this season fuzzy young birds, looking like little white teddy bears peered from nests on the cliffs.

A handsome Man O'War Bird with his bright red throat pouch perched on a low cliff. A direct opposite in color accent was the Yellow-footed Gull, a sub-species of our Western Gull, which posed to good advantage with his bright yellow feet and legs and bill of the same shade.

Mexico is a land of pleasant surprises, but there is rarely a pleasure that does not have some pain and we found that in the lack of protection given plants and wildlife in this beautiful land. It is a long time since we in the United States have harvested fifty Pintails in one day, or purchased live quail in the market for ten cents apiece. It seems tragic to witness another country following the path we started when Audubon trod the wilderness, which unchecked, leads to the time when such glories as Mexico can now boast will be only a matter of history.

Erna Comby

REPORT FROM THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Yerba Mansa, Philadelphia Fleabane and Yellow Monkey Flowers are abundant, a good indication that the water level is back to normal in the Sanctuary. Bulrushes and Cat-tails are tall and green; in the ponds the Bull-frogs and turtles are sunning themselves on logs.

Wild Gooseberry and Tree Tobacco, now blossoming, are the hummingbirds delight. Wild Grape, Wild Blackberry and the Creek Dogwood, in bloom, are enjoyed by the bees and the butterflies.

The Fiddle-neck attracts the Goldfinches and House Finches.

Under the Black Cottonwoods the ground is carpeted with white and many birds are using the "cotton" for nest material. The Periwinkle, originally a cultivated plant, is blooming along the paths. Wordsworth mentions it in one of his poems: -

"Through primrose tufts in that green bower

The periwinkle trailed its wreaths
 And 'tis my belief that every flower
 Enjoys the air it breathes."

The fragrance of the wild grape blossoms attracts the bees and butterflies and the great abundance of bloom assures a winter food supply for the birds. Also the wild blackberry and creek dogwood will later furnish food in their berries and their branches give shelter for the birds.

Just before dawn we hear the Screech Owl calling, and the hoarse crow of the Pheasant. The early morningbird chorus has been increased by the beautiful songs of the Black-headed Grosbeaks and the Bullocks Orioles while the Cardinals sing with undiminished vigor.

Bush-tits, Mockingbirds, Flickers, Song Sparrows, Nuttall's and Willow Woodpeckers, California Jays, Sparrow Hawks, Crows and House Wrens are busy incubating their eggs.

Yellow Throats, Hutton's Vireos, House Finches, Red-bellied Hawks, Spotted and Brown, Towhees and Mourning Doves are seen gathering nesting material.

Alma Stultz

WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY

The Field trip on March 20 to Griffith Park was led by Mr. Scott Lewis. He took the group up the trail from Fern Dell, calling attention to geological features along the way and to the chaparral on the slopes, as well as to the birds seen and heard. A rufous hummingbird that lit in a shrub, then hovered in the air in front of the group was the outstanding bird.

The San Bernardino Audubon Society was surprised at the interest shown in their Sanctuary by the large group attending the Sunday field trip on March 23. There were fifty-three present. Despite it being a "bit between seasons," the count of birds for the day was forty-five. We enjoyed our lunch in the patio of Mrs. Ira Wissler, who served tea and coffee while we enjoyed a gorgeous view of the mountains and watched a Townsend's Solitaire which perched above us. After lunch Mrs. Wissler showed her own lovely moving pictures of the sanctuary and surrounding areas and the birds found there. After the pictures we visited ponds on the estate of Mr. Van Camp in San Bernardino.

It would take more space than we have to fully describe the Study Class held on March 27 at the San Gabriel River Sanctuary. Forty-five members hunted birds along the sanctuary trails, all getting glimpses of the Cardinals, among others. Mrs. Stults and Mrs. Woods served us tea and coffee while we were eating our lunches. Mrs. Enid Michael spoke to us on the aesthetic side of bird study. Mrs. Stultz and Mrs. Shearer spoke of birds of the thrush family.

The Board Meeting of March 13

Mr. Burton Oliver of the city school board met with us. In discussing the advantages of offering scholarships to the Audubon Summer Camp, he spoke of one teacher who has brought the knowledge gained at Norden, into her classroom and has influenced other teachers by her example. He reported that the February issue of the California Journal of Secondary Education was devoted entirely to conservation, and that the State Curriculum Department is working on conservation booklets to be used in

the high schools and at two levels in the elementary schools.

Mr. Bob Pyle read the revised work rules for officers and committees.

Our president, Mrs. DeMay, was named as delegate to the Asilomar Convention of the National Audubon Society. Ruth McCune

WORKSHOP AT WHITTIER

The Workshop, called by Arnold Lane, Southern California Representative of the N.A.S. fulfilled the promise of its program in every way. Instead of reports of Audubon activities, there was first-hand information from experts on different facets of the subject we all are interested in - Conservation, especially as it affects us in Southern California.

Mr. Hamilton Pyles, Supt. of the Cleveland National Forest, said that the budget for the upkeep of Orange County Park is larger than the total amount allowed the Forestry Department in California, for the upkeep of its recreation camps.

Mr. Lane reviewed the history of the Tucker Hummingbird Sanctuary and the effects of the two fires and the last years of drought on the plant life and the resultant number of birds. The conditions there on Sundays especially, are anything but desirable. A caretaker with some pay is a "must", for the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is known the world over and it is not only our problem, but should be our pride to restore it to its original status. A movement was begun to accept donations of \$1.50 or more for a maintenance fund. A minimum of 400 donors will enable the work to start at once. Miss Helen Pratt, 2451 Ridgeview Ave., Eagle Rock 41, will accept these donations. Do your part immediately.

Mr. Willis Evans of the State Fish and Wildlife Commission, brought the good news that on March 26, the Legislature had authorized \$75,000 for the purchase and development of the Buena Vista Lagoon, near Carlsbad, as a wildlife refuge. Water surveys will be made and there may be both a fresh and a salt water area. The new freeway will pass over the area.

Bob Pyle gave an interesting account of the effects on environmental changes, through drought or the hand of man, on bird populations.

Ruth McCune

OBSERVATIONS

LOONS: Pacific and Red-throated, off Point Dume, Mar. 28 (J. Cunningham)

PELICAN: White, during a lull in a heavy rain, near mouth of Monrovia Canyon, over 100 milling about in the air for over an hour (Irma Rogers); over 200 high in the air in apparent complicated manoeuvres near San Fernando Reservoir, Apr. 5 (Elsie Kennedy, Nellie Spencer)

DUCKS, GEESE: 3 Canada, 2 Snow Geese and many Cinnamon Teal, Hansen Dam, Mar. 30 (Daugherty); Redhead Duck, Venice marsh, Apr. 17 (Cunningham)

HAWKS, VULTURES: migration of Turkey Vultures in flights of 200 or more over Sunland, Mar. 30 (Daugherty); 2 Golden Eagles, Sanctuary, Apr. 13, (Julian); Ferruginous Rough-leg, Antelope Valley, Apr. 14 (S.W.B.S. Club), Santa Inez Canyon, Apr. 17, (Cunningham); 3 pairs Sparrow Hawks nesting, Sanctuary, Apr. 13 (Stultz)

QUAIL: Valley Quail and a pair of Pheasants, nesting, Sanctuary, (Stultz)

RAIL: Sora, Sanctuary, Apr. 6 (Hawkins)

GULLS, ETC: Black Turnstones, Venice Lake, Apr. 17 (Cunningham); Glaucous Gull, Playa del Rey, Mar. 16 (Hawkins)

PIGEONS: Band-tailed, apparently nesting, Pasadena, Apr. 3 (Quattelbaum)

OWL: Screech, two pairs nesting, Sanctuary, Apr. 13 (Stultz); female Screech Owl in nesting box, Pasadena, Mar. 31, apparently same one that has been living in this box for 10 or 12 yrs., and raised young every year (Quattelbaum)

CUCKOO: Yellow-billed, Sanctuary, Mar. 9, (Pat Gould)

HUMMINGBIRDS: Rufous, Monrovia, Mar. 30 (Rogers), Griffith Park, Mar. 20 (Audubon Field Trip); Black-chinned, Monrovia, Apr. 10, (Rogers)

WOODPECKER: a pair of Cactus taking food to hole in Joshua Tree, Antelope Valley, Apr. 7 (Southwest Club)

FLYCATCHERS: Little Flycatcher and Wood Pewee, Little Tujunga, Apr. 14, (Southwest Club); Ash-throated, Sunland, Apr. 6 (Daugherty), Temescal Canyon, Apr. 10 (Hastings); Western Kingbird, Santa Anita Canyon, Mar. 31 (Rogers), El Monte, Apr. 9 (Hawkins)

SWALLOWS: Tree, Sanctuary, Mar. 9 (Gould); Cliff and Purple Martin, near Palos Verdes, Mar. 16 (Gould)

ROBINS, SOLITAIRE: Large flocks of Robins all around Sunland, started leaving about Mar. 15 (Daugherty), a few in Santa Monica, Apr. 18, apparently nesting (Hastings); 3 Townsend Solitaires spent winter at mouth of Monrovia Canyon, last seen Mar. 25 (Rogers)

WAXWINGS: Dr. Elmer McGregor, President of the Whittier Aud. Soc. reports a large flock of Cedar with many Bohemian Waxwings feeding on Pepperberries near Ojai, Mar. 23, differences between the two quite marked.

THRASHER: Two old ones and one young, Eagle Rock, Mar. 25 (Curry)

VIREOS, WARBLERS: Hutton's Vireo, Sanctuary, Apr. 6 (Hawkins); Western Warbling, Little Tujunga, Apr. 14 (Southwest Club), Lutescent, Yellow-throat, Pileolated, Yellow, Black-throated Gray, Sanctuary, Apr. 11 (Hawkins); Lutescent, Calaveras, Black-throated Gray, Audubon's Little Tujunga, Apr. 14 (Southwest Bird Study Club)

ORIOLES, GROSBEAK: Hooded, Monrovia, Mar. 30 (Rogers), El Monte, Apr. 2 (Hawkins); Bullock's abundant at Sanctuary by Apr. 13 (Stultz); Scott's, Antelope Valley, Apr. 7 (Southwest Bird Study Club); Black-headed Grosbeak, Monrovia, Apr. 4 (Rogers), Sanctuary, Apr. 5, (Stultz)

SPARROWS: Cassin's Purple Finch, Camp Rincon, Apr. 19 (Curry); Desert Sparrow and Lazuli Bunting, Antelope Valley, Apr. 7, (Hoffman); Lazuli Buntings, Santa Inez Canyon, Apr. 13 (Cunningham); Rufous-crowned, Santa Inez Canyon (Cunningham); White-throated, Hollywd, Mar. 11, (Wait); several White-crowned with many Gambel's and one Golden-crowned, Santa Monica, Apr. 12 (Marguerite Driver)

BIRDS IN GRIFFITH PARK

As reported by Bill Lasky: Red-tailed & Cooper's Hawks, Kestrel or Sparrow Hawk; Black-headed Grosbeak, first seen Apr. 8; large flock of Cedar Waxwings, Apr. 11; a pair of Ravens nesting; Calif. & Willow Woodpeckers; Spotted & Calif. Towhees, Thrasher; Wren-tit, Bush-tit & Titmouse; Western Bluebird, Apr. 16; Gambel's and Golden-crowned Sparrows very few after first of April; Audubon's Warbler, none since end of March.

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
Officers - 1951-1952

President.....Mrs. Maybelle DeMay, 504 E. Oak Street, El Segundo, El Segundo 317-J
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Treasurer.....Miss Treva Russell, 5641 Fountain Avenue, L. A. 28, HEmpstead 1060
Registrar of Members, Mrs. T. H. Fulton, 3603 Tacoma Ave., L. A. 65, CApitol 4093

CALENDAR FOR MAY, 1952

The public is invited to the following meetings and trips.
Further information regarding them may be had by calling the numbers given.

THURSDAY - MAY 1 - AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING - Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, 1:30 P.M. Color Motion Pictures of the Norden area with many wild-life shots. A new camp film that is well worth seeing. Reports from last year's campers and from scholarship candidates for this year.

WHitney 9546

SATURDAY - MAY 3 - SCREEN TOUR TEA - Plummer Park at 4 P.M. to honor Bert Harwell. A Birthday cake for the Society, at the end of the first year of incorporation.

THURSDAY - MAY 8 - Executive Board Meeting at the home of Miss Bessie Pope, 912 Victoria Avenue at 7:30. Members of the Society are welcome to attend.

WHitney 9546

WEDNESDAY - MAY 14 - EVENING PROGRAM MEETING - Exposition Park Museum, 7:30 P.M., enter at south-east corner. Mr. Roland Truman will talk on LET'S CLIMB MOUNT WHITNEY, with descriptions of plants and birds seen along the trail.

HEmpstead 0974

THURSDAY - MAY 15 - FIELD TRIP - Tapia Park. Go out Ventura Blvd., turning left at Brent's Junction. Returning via Topanga Canyon and along the ocean. This will be a fine trip for birding, wild flowers and scenery...so let's all go. Our Tanner Motor Bus will leave Los Angeles, 603 S. Olive St., 8:30 A.M., stopping for passengers, Hollywood and Cahuenga Blvd., 8:40; Ventura Blvd., and Laurel Canyon, 8:50. Take lunch. Fare \$1.60. Please have exact change. Make reservations early with Miss Edith Crane, 4925-1/2 Cimarron St., L.A. 37. Phone AXminster 2-8458. Field Leader, Mrs. Caroline Daugherty

THURSDAY - MAY 22 - STUDY CLASS - Plummer Park - 10 A.M. Mr. Scott Lewis will continue his lesson on the trees of California with more of his beautiful pictures. The second hour a study of Warblers, Vireos and Kinglets, by Mr. George Hastings.

GRanite 9312

SUNDAY - MAY 25 - FIELD TRIP - Blue Ridge. Meet at Big Pines Recreation Hall in the Big Pines Recreation Area, 9 A.M. Bring lunch - Leader Mr. Howard Cogswell.

AXminster 1-7855

THURSDAY - JUNE 5 - ANNUAL MEETING AND FIELD TRIP - Charlton Flats - Installation of officers, summary of year's activities. Field trip for mountain birds in morning, led by Mr. and Mrs. Scott Lewis. Bus will leave 6th and Olive at 8:30. For reservations call or write Mrs. Dorothy Bush, 3631 W. 60th St., L.A. 43 - AXminster 2-7585