

Western Tanager



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DOVES ARE GAME BIRDS

Probably the bird most often seen in every state as one crosses the country is the Mourning Dove. The several regional subspecies are so much alike that one would not recognize any differences. Gentle and confiding in nature, the fit emblem of peace, it is hard for bird lovers to think of them as game birds. With a live weight of scarcely half a pound their value for food is slight, while it is hard to think of shooting a bird that likes to sit quietly in an exposed situation as sport or requiring any skill. Yet in more than half the states they are considered game birds, with open seasons, usually in the fall except in some of the southern states where they spend the winter and can be hunted in January and February. An article in the October number of California Fish and Game states that the Dove is the most widely distributed upland game bird in the state, and the more than 2,000,000 killed annually by hunters in the state make it the leading upland game bird in terms of numbers killed.

From the article, Life History and Productivity of a Population of Mourning Doves in California, most of the following account is taken. Doves feed almost entirely on weed and waste grain seeds, feeding chiefly in early morning and late afternoons. Water is usually taken after feeding. As most of us know the dove is one of the very few birds that drinks with the head down, not raising it to let water run down the throat. The doves studied nested in trees at an average height of about eleven feet, the highest nest found was thirty feet from the ground. But in some areas doves nest on the ground, even when trees are near. The nests are carelessly made platforms of twigs and grass. A story remembered from childhood is of the birds being assembled for a lesson on nest building. The instructor explained that a platform of twigs should be placed in a crotch in a tree as a foundation. Whereupon the dove flew off thinking it knew exactly how to make a nest, not waiting for the rest of the lesson. And doves have never since gone beyond this part of a nest. The males gather the materials, twigs, weed stalks and plant fibers and bring them to the females who arrange them in the nests. Usually a pair of eggs are laid at a time and three or even four broods may be raised in a year. The eggs hatch in about fourteen and a half days, after which the young are brooded for from eleven to fourteen days. The baby dove when hatched is naked and blind and weighs about 7 grams. Twelve days later, feathered and ready to fly it weighs about 70 grams, over half as much as the adults. The young are fed on "Pigeon Milk", a secretion from glands in the crop. In feeding the young bird inserts its bill in that of the parent which pumps up the food with a bowing motion. The beginning of the breeding season, in late February or early March is marked by the cooing of the males. This mournful note from which the bird gets its name is really a love song. At this time the male frequently flies up in the air a short distance, then with wings extended and tail spread glides down to its perch.

Over ten percent of the young hatched were still in the nests when the hunting season opened on the first of September - the open season lasting all of September - so that some young birds must perish in the nests when the parent are killed.

THE WESTERN TANAGER

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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
To promote the study and protection of birds and other wildlife, plants, soil and water.

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THE STATE CONVENTION

Asilomar, March 28-31. Sandy Sprunt chairman. Carl Buchheister, Vice-President of the National Audubon Society will be one of the speakers. There will be panel discussions of subjects of interest, demonstrations of aids in teaching nature and conservation, and a variety of field trips.

WHO WILL BE OUR OFFICERS FOR
1953-1954?

If you are interested in this vital matter you should send recommendations for some or all of the positions to the nominating committee. The complete list of present officers is given in the adjoining column. Your recommendations will receive careful consideration and will help the committee. The nominating committee is as follows:

Mrs. Mary V. Hood, 138 S. Wilton, L.A. 4.
Mr. R.W. Julian, 608 Poinsettia Pl.L.A. 36
Mrs. Elizabeth Fulton, 3603 Tacoma Ave.,

L. A. 65

PELAGIC BIRDS

On March 15 there will be an ocean trip to see offshore birds. The trip will start from Point Hueneme at 8 A.M. The capacity of the boat limits those who can go to 34, so reservations should be made soon. The final day on which reservations will be taken is March 6. Make reservations with Mrs. Maybelle DeMay.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Did you make any? Have you kept them? The breaking of New Year's resolutions is a stock joke every year, yet there is a value in them and it is never too late for good resolutions. Here are some (slightly modified) that were recommended to the Birmingham (Alabama) Audubon Society in its attractive monthly, "Flicker Flashes": --

1. To keep a Year's List of birds seen.
2. To read at least one good nature book this year, and to draw at least one such book from our library.
3. To improve the Tanager by a contribution & by suggestions to the editor.
4. To keep written records of birds and flowers.
5. To think and talk Conservation.
6. To seek and find beauty in everything.

AUDUBON CAMP AT SUGAR BOWL LODGE

It's a long time till summer, but not too early to make plans, and a two weeks spent at the Camp would be an experience of inestimable value to all lovers of nature, especially to those who will spread a knowledge and appreciation of nature and conservation. The first session of the camp will be from June 17 to 30, and other sessions will continue through July and August.

WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY
Grace H. Phillips

At the Afternoon Program Meeting on January 6 at the Museum only 30 members were present on account of the rain. The subject of the program, was appropriately, liquid. Mrs. Ruth McCune, our Conservation Chairman, gave a fine review of conservation as a whole, since the time when the need of it was first recognized, illustrating with many facts, theories and varying points of view. Her account tied in wonderfully well with the film, THE RIVER, and its demonstration of the annual snow and rain fall that we not only do not conserve, but allow to wash away the precious top soil that takes so long to build. The terrible destruction wrought by flooded rivers was the culmination of run off on thousands of hillsides.

The Field Trip to Temescal Canyon on January 15 was led by Mrs. May Wait who kindly took the task as the scheduled leader, Mr. Hastings, was ill. Seventeen members were present and enjoyed the trip though the strong wind in the canyon kept the birds hiding. The group then drove to Playa del Rey where more birds were found. In all 41 species were listed.

AN INVENTORY OF BLACK BRANT

In the January number of California "Fish and Game" is given the result of an inventory taken last winter. This bird breeds on the Arctic and Bering coasts of North America and in northeast Siberia. In winter a few go south along the coast of Asia, a very few along the Atlantic coast, but the vast majority along the west coast of North America. More were found on the coast of Baja California than anywhere else. The inventory gives 174,740 Black Brant, about 44,000 of them in California. Hunters are estimated to kill 16,000 a year in California, a number that was not considered excessive.

Last year there was a sudden increase in the damage done by these birds to crops, pasture and grain in the north, truck crops near Moro Bay. This may have been due to a decrease in the favorite food -- eelgrass."

TOO MANY SPECIALISTS
W. Scott Lewis

This is an age of specialization. Men devote a life time to very small fields of research which fill their entire mental horizon, so that they are in danger of forgetting that each field is only a small part of the whole. As time goes on they gradually know more and more about less and less till we sometimes wonder if they are not in danger of ending up by knowing everything about nothing.

Specialization is necessary in science. All discoveries in science and the practical application of them are made by specialists. And they add immeasurably to our present national economy, to our health, comfort and enjoyment. They are pushing out into the unknown in every direction and are constantly widening our field of knowledge. But they sometimes become so centered in their own work that they find themselves fettered by a lack of knowledge of what others are doing. They are apt to become mentally lopsided unless they are careful.

Most of us are not research workers, we shall go through life without publishing a single technical paper, or adding to the fund of knowledge of details of structure or chemical reactions of living things. We study nature for the fun of it, so why limit our fun by concentrating on too small a field?

We know rockhounds who have no interest in any field of nature except rocks, and no interest in them unless they look cutable when licked.*

We know bird students whose only interest is in adding a new species to their life list.

We have been out with botanists who knew nothing about the insects intimately associated with the plants.

In such cases specialization cuts these students off from a lot of interesting knowledge of other things.

Because we are interested in crystals we forget that flowers are more remarkable and beautiful. Interest in the flowers doesn't mean that we should not hear the song of birds. Let's get all the fun out of living that we can in a good way.

*(A cutable rock is one that shows color when cut and polished, moistening it will indicate whether it will show good color).

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT OF DECEMBER 28, 1952

This, the 15th count for the Los Angeles area, was part of the nation wide count conducted by the National Audubon Society for the past 53 years. In spite of rain and wind in the morning the count was very successful with a greater number of birds, 63,399, than in any previous year, while the number of species, 151 with 2 additional subspecies, was the same as last year. The area covered was the same as in 1937 and subsequent years, a circle with a 15 mile radius, extending from Griffith Park and North Hollywood south to Inglewood and Exposition Park, and west to the ocean at Venice and Santa Monica. 34% of the area was in the city streets and yards, 14% in cemetaries and parks, 53% in chaparral and wooded areas, 9% in marshes, lakes and reservoirs, 5% along the ocean, and others 5%. 93 observers in 41 parties and 23 others watching about their homes took part. The number of miles covered by the parties was approximately 649, - 159 afoot, 490 by car. The complete list of species and numbers seen follows:

Common Loon, 1; Red-throated Loon, 2; Horned Grebe, 8; Eared Grebe, 24; Western Grebe, 314; Pied-billed Grebe, 37; California Brown Pelican, 97; Farallon Cormorant, 37; Brandt's Cormorant, 4; Baird's Cormorant, 3; unidentified Cormormants, 2; Treganza's Heron, 10; American Egret, 21; Brewster's Snowy Egret, 31; Anthony's Green Heron, 3; Black-crowned Night Heron, 68; Bittern, 3; Mallard, 42; Pintail, 20,429; Green-winged Teal, 201; Baldpate, 149; Shoveler, 501; Redhead, 4; Ring-necked Duck, 20; Canvas-back, 82; Lesser Scaup, 454; Surf Scoter, 389; Ruddy Duck, 68; Red-breasted Merganser, 89; Turkey Vulture, 19; White-tailed Kite, 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 11; Cooper's Hawk, 13; Red-tailed Hawk, 31; Red-bellied Hawk, 1; Marsh Hawk, 7; Osprey, 1 (a resident at Silver Lake for a month past); Pigeon Hawk, 2; Sparrow Hawk, 130; Unidentified Hawks, 6; Valley Quail, 365; Light-footed Rail, 1; American Coot, 2021; Snowy Plover, 11; Semi-palmated Plover, 2; Killdeer, 181; Black-bellied Plover, 53; Surf-bird, 34; Ruddy Turnstone, 5; Black Turnstone, 47; Wilson's Snipe, 2; Long-billed Curlew, 2; Hudsonian Curlew, 17; Spotted Sandpiper, 16; Western Willet, 1444; Greater Yellow-legs, 4; Least Sandpiper, 315; Red-backed Sandpiper, 6; Long-billed Dowitcher, 147; Western Sandpiper, 50; Marbled Godwit, 134; Sanderling, 148; Avocet, 78; Unidentified Sandpipers, 4; Glaucous-winged Gull, 88; Western Gull, 287; Herring Gull, 12; California Gull, 1820; Ring-billed Gull, 913; Short-billed Gull, 13; Bonaparte's Gull, 698; Heermann's Gull, 273; Unidentified Gulls, 286; Forester's Tern, 3; Caspian Tern, 1; Band-tailed Pigeon, 12; Chinese Spotted Dove, 271; Mourning Dove, 1127; Ringed Turtle Dove, 214; Unidentified doves, 37; Road-Runner, 1; Barn Owl, 5; Pasadena Screech Owl, 3; Pacific Horned Owl, 6; Short-eared Owl, 4; Nighthawk, 5 (probably Roaming, all seen together foraging in late afternoon, all field marks were noted, but light was too poor to determine species); White-throated Swift, 179; Black-chinned Hummingbird, 1; Anna's Hummingbird, 308; Western Belted Kingfisher 5; Red-shafted Flicker, 144; California Woodpecker, 5; Yellow-bellied sapsucker, 5 (1 Red-naped, 4 Red-breasted); Willow Woodpecker, 1; Nuttall's Woodpecker, 18; Cassin's Kingbird, 6 (found by 3 parties); Ash-throated Flycatcher, 2; Black-Phoebe, 247; Say's Phoebe, 20; Horned Lark, 47; California Jay, 686; Cow, 6; Bailey's Chickadee, 5; San Diego Titmouse, 93; Bush-Tit, 1125; Wren-Tit, 424; House Wren 27; San Diego Wren, 36; Cactus Wren, 4; Tule Wren, 1; Canyon Wren, 3; Rock Wren, 2; Unidentified Wrens, 7; Mockingbird, 626; California Thrasher, 206; Western Robin, 1726; Alaska Hermit Thrush, 36; Western Bluebird, 54; Western Gnatcatcher, 15; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 13; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 43; American Pipit, 127; Cedar Waxwing, 231; California Shrike, 75; Hutton's Vireo, 13; Lutescent Warbler, 6; Calaveras Warbler, 1 (observed closely and at leisure, all field marks noted); Audubon's Warbler, 273; Tule Yellow-throat, 5; Golden Pileolated Warbler, 2; English Sparrow, 1887; Meadowlark, 492;

continued on page 28

Christmas Bird Count. - continued

San Diego Red-Wing, 181; Tricolored Redwing, 38; Brewer's Blackbird, 3266; Dwarf Cowbird, 56; Black-headed Grosbeak, 2 (a pair wintering at the zoo, attracted to the spot where discarded food and refuse from the aviaries is dumped); California Purple Finch, 20; Cassin's Purple Finch, 7; Common House Finch, 7789; Northern Pine Siskin, 1; Willow Goldfinch, 261; Green-backed Goldfinch, 144; Lawrence's Goldfinch, 23; Unidentified Goldfinches, 8; San Diego Towhee, 80; California Towhee, 931; Savannah Sparrow, 201 (140 Western, 61 Belding's); Western Lark Sparrow, 9; Rufous-crowned Sparrow, 22; Slate-colored Junco, 2, (seen by two parties); Thurber's Junco, 236; Chipping Sparrow, 123; Gambel's Sparrow, 879; Golden-crowned Sparrow, 152; Stephen's Fow Sparrow, 17; Lincoln's Sparrow 11; Song Sparrow, 396.

Comparing the count this year with other years we note that the total was nearly 50% greater than a year ago and almost three times that of two years ago. In no other year was there such a great number of Pintail Ducks, over 20,000 this year contrasted with 744 last year and fewer the year before. The total number of gulls this year is only about half the number counted a year ago, and less than the count of two years ago. Willets seen this year were only one fourth as many as last year. The 1726 Robins of this year is only about half last year's 3316. But in most cases the count corresponds closely to that in other years in comparison with the total birds seen.

The Christmas Count of the Pasadena Audubon Society, including the San Gabriel River Sanctuary was made on December 27 by a group of 41 working in 12 parties. 104 species and 14,000 individual birds were counted. Note-worthy were 175 Band-tailed Pigeons and a Macgillivray's Warbler. The great find was a Yellow Palm Warbler a stray from the east. It was discovered by John Tremontano. Four days later he located the bird again this time in

company with Bill Hawkins and Pat Gould. Then he was able to take Mr. and Mrs. Baxter to see the warbler, and later several others. Mr. and Mrs. Comby also saw it. It remained in the same general locality for nearly two weeks.

OBSEVATIONS

With our Christmas count in this issue there is little need of other ob-servations.

Mountain Plover, a flock of 12 seen on Dec. 21 in freshly plowed fields between Santa Ana and Newport Beach. Say's Phoebe, Montebello Hills, Dec. 27. (Dorothy and Harold Baxter)

Red-naped Sapsucker, in Santa Monica, Dec. 27 and again on the 29th, but not found on the 28th, the day of the count, fortunately another was seen for the count by Mr. Don Bleitz (Hastings)

White-throated Swift, last year and the year before none were seen for the Christmas count. This year nine parties reported a total of 179.

An albino Mocking bird is reported by Mr. Frank Becherer. He says this beautiful bird can usually be seen in a yard at 299 Kentor Ave., Brentwood.

Dr. J. E. Pottenger with two friends made a Christmas day count on the west bank of Saw-Pit Canyon, Monrovia. The 19 species and 207 individuals seen was a smaller number than in other years, 53 Band-tailed Pigeons were seen, also 26 Juncos and 22 Golden-crowned Sparrows.

"Because Indians lived in the out-of-doors and close to nature, they knew much more about animals, plants, the weather, and the country around them than most of us can ever hope to learn. They recognized the work of the Great Spirit all around them and thought of the animals as a kind of people dis-tantly related to themselves. Once-upon-a-time animals talked and acted like people; so say the legends of all the Indians."

Calendar of the Month

Nashville Childrens Museum

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY, 1953

Thursday, February 5. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, 1:30. Miss Linnean Blind will tell of a visit to Hawaii, of the birds and mammals of the Islands and a little of the native legends. This will be followed by a film, Aloha Land showing much of the beauty and grandeur of Hawaii.

Members are invited to come at 12, have lunch in the Museum Cafeteria, then spend some time with friends in informal study in one of the museum halls.

Thursday, February 12. EVENING PROGRAM MEETING. Los Angeles County Museum, 7 P.M.
enter by the door at the south east corner.

A joint meeting with the Leadership Training Workshop. The subject of camp museums and how to set them up will be discussed by Mr. Edward P. Baker and Mr. George T. Hastings. As always there will be special exhibits to study before and after the program.

Thursday, February 19. FIELD TRIP TO CABRILLO BEACH. For the study of shore and water birds. Take Pacific Electric car at 6th and Main Street for San Pedro at 8:19, 8:34 or 8:56. Bus connection at San Pedro for Cabrillo Beach. Fare 73¢ each way. Bring lunch, which will be eaten in the picnic area. After lunch visit the Marine Museum under the guidance of the Director. Leaders Miss Linnean Blind and Mrs. Margaret Parker.

Sunday, February 22. FIELD TRIP TO HANSEN DAM AREA. For land and water birds. Meet leader at 9 o'clock at corner of Glenoaks Blvd. and Sheldon Street. Go out Glenoaks through Glendale, Burbank and Sun Valley to Sheldon Street. We will go in the back area first, then meet for lunch at 12 at the Recreation area picnic grounds, near the front entrance to Hansen Dam at the corner of Osborne Street and Foothill Boulevard. Birding again after lunch. Leader -- Mrs. Caroline H. Daugherty

Thursday, February 26. STUDY CLASS AT PLUMMER PARK, 10 A.M.

A nature talk with colored slides by Mr. W. Scott Lewis, a continuation of the fine series we have been enjoying every month this season. The second hour will be a member participation session, with reports from recent nature magazines, bird poems and personal experiences and observations. Everyone is asked to make some contribution to this program.

Visitors will be welcome at all these Meetings and Trips.

SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

664 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte Phone: 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 affiliated societies.

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

FOR INFORMATION CALL CRestview 6-1990