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Western



Tanager

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RESPONSIVENESS OF THE WREN-TIT
Loye Miller

Those of us who have suffered frustration in the pursuit of the elusive Wren-tit will do well perhaps to invert the old prophet's profound deduction, for the Wren-tit is no mountain, and it is extremely hard to "go" to a Wren-tit. You will get better results with less perspiration and disappointment if you can bring the Wren-tit to Mahomet. This account of my efforts in that direction is offered for your encouragement.

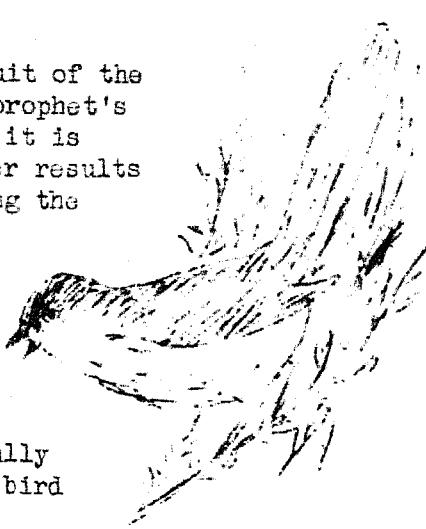
I was making a short visit at Pacific Palisades in mid-April of this year when these notes were taken. A steep west-facing slope of Tomescal Canyon still harbors a dense thicket of bushy Sumac that seems ideal for Wren-tits and California Thrashers. I took station at the top of this slope at 3:30 p.m., April 13th on a fully exposed wall and waited in silence for some time. Not a bird sound was heard.

I started piping the Wren-tit's call at intervals of eight seconds. After the sixth call a Wren-tit appeared in a scrubby Sumac within four feet of me. We piped back and forth repeatedly as he hopped about the bush in full view.

I left the spot for some minutes while I went in search of my grand niece who has an interest in birds. When we returned and sat down, all was silent. Two "pipes" from me brought the bird back to the same bush where it showed itself freely on various exposed branches, piping repeatedly. The tail was cocked up at quite a wren-like angle and the whole body, from swelling throat to tail tip, vibrated with each note. If I remained silent for a few minutes the bird would retreat down the hill only to return immediately as I resumed piping. We played with him for a while, then we retreated.

The following day at 4:00 p.m. I took five children and three other adults to the same spot. No bird sound was heard until I had piped twice. Then a Wren-tit appeared without a sound in the same bush as yesterday but it immediately began piping. It moved about the bush in plain view of all of us as it piped in response to my imitations. If I remained silent for a minute or two it would drop back into the thicket below but it would return as it did yesterday, whenever I resumed piping. The listeners were entirely exposed to view, standing on a paved driveway. The bird seemed quite unaware of us.

At ten o'clock the following morning I went alone to the same spot to call my bird. During ten minutes of silence no bird was heard but my first "pipe" brought instant response from 50 yards down the hill. I piped again and the response was closer by. After my sixth call, a Wren-tit appeared in the same isolated bush as before and performed in the same fashion. I kept silent for a few minutes and he dropped back down the hill but he came back after my fourth call and we repeated the whole performance as on the three previous occasions. I came away and left him in peace.



Continued on page 2

THE WESTERN TANAGER

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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Joint with the National Audubon Society including subscription to Audubon Magazine: - Regular... \$5., Sustaining... \$10., Active... \$25., Supporting... \$5.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Greetings to you, fellow Audubonites, one and all. As we start a new year there is waiting for each and every one of us so much interesting work - or shall I call it play?

Do you remember the gorgeous Tanager, the emblem of our Society that came down and had lunch with us at our Installation meeting at Charlton Flats in June? Could there possibly have been a more beautiful omen for a new year than that?

Someone has said "Keep your feet on the ground, but keep walking." Good advice, isn't it? But perhaps it might be well to add "Keep walking together," for it is the "Togetherness" that makes for accomplishment.

So, forward march, all in step, to a very happy and successful Audubon year.

Bessie M. Pope

This month we start a column of news notes about our members, we have called it Cheeps and Chirps (we hope there will be no squaks). Do you approve of such a column? Will you suggest a better name? And will you help by sending notes about yourself or other members?

Our OBSERVATIONS this year will be compiled by Miss Curry. Send what observations you make, birds seen or what you see them doing, to Miss Ruby Curry, 1395 Hill Drive, Eagle Rock 41, Calif.

Responsiveness in the Wren-tit,-
Continued from first page.

My visit to the area was ended by my departure within the hour for the airport. I assume that the same bird was involved in each case since the behavior pattern remained the same. Would he have become "conditioned" to my imitation Wren-tit notes? Would he have come to react more quickly - or not at all? No rival bird was discovered by him. Would he have associated certain imperfections in my pipings with the absence of a rival and ultimately become wiser? I wish I knew.

Museum of Invertebrate Zoology
Berkeley

WE ARE HAPPY TO WELCOME THE FOLLOWING
NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Alex Blumstein
1727 Nichols Canyon Rd., L.A. 46
Dr. Robert Bogus,
2730 Fruitdale St., L.A. 39
Mrs. Leola Cason
11840 Simms Ave., Inglewood 2
Mrs. Verna H. Collins,
730 Santiago Ave., Long Beach 4
Mr. Francis X. Curtis,
7545 Hampton Ave., L.A. 46
Mr. Fred DeBoer,
926 W. 9th St., San Pedro
Mrs. R. A. Dodson,
3516 Downing Ave., Glendale 8
Mrs. Paul D. Dodds,
749 Longwood Ave., L.A. 5
Miss Nellie E. Elginton,
2711 W. 14th St., L.A. 6
Miss Myrtle A. Evans,
747 S. New Hampshire Ave., L.A. 5
Mrs. Mildred G. Ewing,
17515 Chase St., Northridge
Miss Castella M. Fisher,
339 N. Rampart Blvd., L.A. 26
Mr. T. J. Fleming,
1549 Broadview Dr., Glendale 8
Mr. George A. Gorham
3107 Arbor Vitae St., Inglewood 4
Miss Dessie Adele Green
746 S. New Hampshire Ave., L.A. 5
Miss Hilda Jo Grobstein,
2055 Greenfield Ave., L.A. 25
Mrs. Edna D. Hartman,
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Mr. James W. Huffman, Jr.,
2912 Manhattan Ave., Manhattan Beach
Dr. E. J. Joergenson,
632 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale 5
Miss Ruth A. Johnson,
10917 S. Figueroa, L.A. 61
Miss Doris C. Kerber,
4332 Marietta Ave., North Hollywood
Miss Nan Killgore,
346 Euclid St., Santa Monica
Mr. Ken H. Lenhard,
3232 Oakhurst Ave., L.A. 34
Mrs. Philip E. Lewis,
1521-3/4 Vista, Hollywood 46
Mr. J. A. Lighthipe,
3744 Orange Ave., Long Beach 7
Mr. Walter W. Lindsey,
2146 Brandon St., L.A. 26
Dr. William L. Lloyd,
3981 Menlo Ave., L.A. 37
Mr. Vaughn McCaughey,

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Mrs. Ida D. Perry
10376 Oletha Lane, L.A. 24
Mrs. Anna Pesonen,
2226-1/2 Aaron St., L.A. 26
Mrs. Axel Reed,
501 S. Rampart Blvd., L.A. 57
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749 Cypress Ave., Pasadena
Mr. Otis Wade,
1806 Redesdale Ave., L.A. 26
Miss Marjory Washburn,
15654 Rayon St., Sepulveda

THE BIRD IN THE LONDON TREE
Geoffrey Dearmer

He had no perch in the Abbey Church
Nor claim therein to be
A wren could have claimed to be farthing
But two-for-a-farthing he; famed,
And altogether, very all-weather,
Sparrow in a London tree.

He saw the approach of the golden coach
(A galleon huge in the haze),
From a sea of cheering he saw appearing
The pride of the Royal Guards:
A thrilled to the marrow London Sparrow
Little and lost in the daze.

Drably feathered and very all-weathered
And feeling faintly forlorn;
The small bird brown saw the heavy crown
(So heavy, so lightly worn);
And he stared at the Queen and he said
"Cecor!"
And he cocked a cockney eye at her,
For he was London born.

The sparrow he looked at a queen that day
As a cat may look at a king;
And who can say that the Queen on her way
Didn't hear him twitter and sing
And throw the crumb of a glance at him?
And who can be sure that the Queen didn't
"Do not forget as you sing, to pray, (say
To pray, little friend for me."

This verse was sent by Miss Christine
Hughes and Miss Agnes Hickson, former
members of our Society now living in

OUR SOCIETY LAST YEAR

The annual report of officers and committee chairmen are briefly summarized to show what was accomplished last year.

Our Registrar of Members, Mrs. Tracy H. Fulton, reports that at the end of the year our membership was 615, a gain of only one during the year in spite of our receiving 84 new members. Of the members 35 are Life Members, 25 are Sustaining Members jointly with the National Audubon, 2 are Patrons, and we have 7 Honorary Members.

With very deep regret we list the following 9 members who were lost through death: Mr. Albert E. Colburn, Miss M. Margaret Elmer, Mrs. Mary K. Haymond, Mrs. Mary Wood Hinman, Miss Alice MacQuarrie, Mrs. Elizabeth C. Owen, Miss Elizabeth Schneller, Mr. Edward Vaughn, and Miss Jennie Winchester.

The Treasurer, Miss Treva Russell, reported that the net income of the Society was \$2894.95; the total expenses \$2129.35. The chief items of income were membership dues, \$996.44; profit from Screen Tours \$398.03; profit from sale of Audubon material \$52.51; interest on bonds, \$162.60, and bequests, \$1137.42. Of expenditures the cost of the Tanager was, as usual, the largest item, \$684.49. Equipment, a moving picture projector and a slide projector, \$674.63, this, of course, an unusual expense. \$310.00 was spent for scholarships, \$150.00 was the cost of our Yearbook; and there was a score of lesser expenses. It will be noted that except for the bequests received the Society would have spent more than it received.

The Executive Secretary, Miss Beth Patterson, wrote letters for the Society to state and national legislators regarding measures important to the cause of conservation. She purchased for the Society by authority of the Executive Board an Ampro Sound Projector for moving pictures and a projector for 35mm still pictures suitable for use in a large auditorium.

The Historian, Mrs. Grace Phillips, besides sending reports of meetings and trips to the editor for the Tanager, also collected clippings for our large scrap-book. Reporting on the afternoon programs, Mrs. Phillips says that the average attendance at the eight meetings was 47.

Miss Pope reports that the average attendance at the 8 Thursday field trips was 35. The last trip of the season was

the annual Charlton Flats trip in June when in addition to bird walks and an illustrated talk on local wild flowers, we had the installation of officers for the coming year. The installation ceremonies were in charge of Mrs. Alice Lewis. Framed pictures of native birds were presented to each new officer with remarks as to its appropriateness for the office in question.

The seven Sunday trips were well attended, the largest attendance being at the over-night trip to the Salton Sea area the end of June with some 75 present. Miss Dorothy Groner says that outstanding observations on the trips include the Varied Thrush, Calliope Hummingbird, Elegant Tern, Vermillion Fly-catcher, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. The large concentration of geese, ducks and shore birds at the Salton Sea was of great interest.

The Study Classes at Plummer Park were well attended. The special feature of each two hour session was the series of fine nature pictures with descriptions and talks on conservation by W. Scott Lewis.

Our Curator, Miss Clara Pflager, tells us that our equipment, the specimens and books in Plummer Park have been insured; that during the year we have received as gifts a small slide projector, a number of bird skins, a mounted bald eagle, some beautifully mounted birds' eggs and other things. She, with the Chairman of the House Committee, Mrs. Salmon and the help of Mrs. May Wait have planned and acted as hostesses at the teas in Audubon House in honor of our Screen Tour lecturers after each Saturday afternoon lecture.

The Librarian, Mrs. Mary B. Salmon, reports 206 books in our library on birds and other nature subjects in addition to many pamphlets and magazines. A list of these is now being prepared to appear as a supplement to the October Tanager.

Reporting on the Screen Tours, Miss Pope tells us there were 729 adult and 142 junior members of the Screen Tours Club, in addition there were 262 adult and 142 junior guests at the Tours. For the season the club had a profit, after sharing with the National Audubon Society of \$398.03.

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The Society Last Year - Continued

An important part of our educational work was the granting of one full and two half scholarships to the Audubon Nature Camp at Norden - one a gift from Mrs. David Watkins - and one to the Idyllwild School of Conservation and Natural Science. Mrs. Salmon and Dr. Lloyd at Plummer Park, Mrs. Stultz and Mrs. Woods at the Sanctuary, Mrs. McCune, Mrs. Bush, Mr. Hastings and others have given instruction to youth groups and given merit badge tests in nature subjects.

The Nature Study Workshop was again very successful in training leaders for young people's groups and summer camps. Since its inception this Workshop has been planned and directed by Mrs. Mary Hood, though other members of the Society have helped.

Mrs. Ruth McCune, Chairman of the Conservation and Public Relations Committee has kept the Society informed regarding legislation affecting conservation, has written many letters to legislators, and prepared letters for others to send. She reports that the year has in general been favorable to the cause of conservation.

A TRIP TO LOOK FOR CONDORS

Miss Dorothy Groner has planned a trip for September 19 and 20 to Thorn Meadows camp ground, Mt. Pinos District, Los Padres National Forest.

Take Ridge Route (99), turn left about 3 miles beyond Gorman, past Frazier Park about 23 miles, then turn left 9 miles to end of spur road to Thorn Meadows.

If you intend to hike the 3 1/2 (one way) on Sunday to see Condors (we hope), wear sun hat and bring canteen. There is water at the camp grounds.

Watch the signs to Piru Creek or Thorn Meadows.

Mr. Leslie Mee reports that on May 13th and 14th a pair of Western Tanagers came to his yard in Long Beach and fed on half ripe boysenberries. At the same time some Russet-backed Thrushes were feasting on the berries. The birds ignored suet, bird seed, crumbs, and peanut butter on the feeding table. It was the first time either of these birds had been seen in the yard. Both male and female tanagers came frequently, but never together.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

For the past two years we have been fortunate on having for President Mrs. Maybelle DeMay. Our thanks to her for her work and our wish for all good things for her in the years ahead. We are confident that her interest in the Society and all it stands for will continue unabated.

Now we welcome Miss Bessie Pope who after two years as Vice President takes over the Presidency and promise her our loyalty and support.

We also express appreciation to Miss Elsa Schwartz for her efficient work as Recording Secretary for the past two years and our regret that she is unable to continue the work. But we are very glad to have Mrs. Bess Hoffman take up the work; we have missed her from the Executive Board. And we welcome Mr. Hiram Beebe, who has been on the Board as a committee chairman, as our Second Vice President.

IMPRESSIONS OF A NATURE HOBBYIST

William L. Lloyd

A nature student soon finds that there is nothing new "under the sun". Everything that man has discovered or invented has already been used, in principle, in Nature. An interesting example of coquetry was observed the other day in Exposition Park.

A pair of Chinese Spotted Doves alighted on the lawn back of the museum. The male proceeded to attract the attention of the little lady. He would pass in front of her a few steps to the left and make a jerky little bow, then to the right and bow again. This was repeated as the lady watched. Finally she turned and walked away as though not interested, whereupon he fell in behind and followed. Seeing this she moved in a circle and he followed. Around and around they went, till he apparently in disgust, marched off and left her. This was not what the lady desired, because after watching him for a moment she ran after him, placing herself before him again and again. He was adamant however and would pay no attention. After a few minutes they both flew away.

The moral here is plain - coquetry can be overdone. A certain amount is pleasing and a great factor in attracting the male but it must be used with discretion.

CHEEPS AND CHIRPS - A BIT OF GOSSIP

Of the seventeen past presidents of the Society only eight are now living.

Mrs. Leonard Hall, President from 1926 to 1930 lives in Santa Monica. She and Mr. Hall spent a number of week-ends at Snow Crest this summer, also had a trip to San Francisco. Still interested in birds but other interests and duties have kept her away from our meetings recently.

Mrs. Mary Barnes Salmon -1934 - 1936, spent some time this summer in Forest Home and elsewhere in the San Gabriel Mountains. She is preparing a catalogue of our Audubon House library for the October Tanager.

Miss Charlotte Hamilton, 1936-1937, has been unable to get away from home for the past three years as she has to care for her invalid mother. Orioles and Grossbeaks nested about her home in North Hollywood. She says she works Nature Study into the lessons she teaches her two adult Bible classes.

Mrs. Alma Stultz, 1937-1939, had a wonderful trip this summer to Alaska. Mr. Stultz says they looked inside Alaska as they flew over an active volcano. Hundreds of Murres, Albatross, Puffins, Fulmars, Petrels, Kittiwakes, and many others; some of them "Life Birds"!

Mrs. Erna Comby, 1942-1947, while still a member of our Society is this year President of the Whittier Audubon Society. She and Mr. Comby found a Black-throated Green Warbler in their Whittier grounds this spring. They had a grand trip to Glacier Park, but more about that later.

Mrs. Mary V. Hood, 1947-1949, as usual has been in Yosemite Park and conducted a Nature School in connection with the Ranger School there. She and Mr. Hood of course found time for picture taking.

Mrs. Alice Lewis, 1949-1951, had a trip along the coast as far as Oregon with our new President and several other Audubonites. Stops and detours for scenery, birds, and wild life thrilled them all. She says "We really live in this world when we take time to enjoy its beauty".

OBSERVATIONS

SHORE AND WATER BIRDS: Least Tern, 1 nest June 6, 3 nests, June 13 on a small area of clear sand in the marsh north of Ballona Creek, Hastings; 500 nesting south of the creek, July 4, Hoffman and Dunn. Wilson's Phalarope, 25, Del Rey, Aug. 12, Pflager; Northern, 7, Del Rey, Aug. 24, Hastings.

QUAIL, PIGEON: 10 Valley and 12 Mountain Quail on Angeles Crest Highway, Aug. 16, Groner; 20 Valley, including 4 young, Eagle Rock, Aug. 7, Curry. Band-tailed Pigeons, Eagle Rock, Aug. 7-9.

HUMMINGBIRDS: Rufous, Buckhorn Flats, Aug. 16, Anna's and Black-Chinned, Eagle Rock, July 29 through Aug. 24, feeding chiefly on Abelia, Plumbago, and Grevillia flowers, Allens, at San Fernando Veterans' Hospital, Aug. 12, H.

WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS: Williamson Sapsucker, Buckhorn, Aug. 10, White-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Buckhorn, Aug. 16, Wood Pewee, young, Fern Dell, Aug. 20. Dunn.

OTHER BIRDS: Bailey's Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Buckhorn, Aug. 10, C.; flocks of Black-eared (Pigmy) Nuthatches, Sierra Creeper, Buckhorn, Aug. 16, G. San Diego Titmouse daily, Coast Bushtits at intervals to clean insects from shrubs and trees, Palid Wren Tits very active and vocal daily thru' August, Eagle Rock, C. California Thrasher, young birds of the year practicing song, daily, Eagle Rock.

Robins reported summering from Vine to Highland, at Los Feliz and on Vermont, Los Angeles, San Rafael Hills, Forest Lawn.

Bullock's Oriole, Eagle Rock, Aug. 6; Black-headed Grossbeaks coming to feeding tray and singing through June, young crying, Aug. 15 to 24, C.

Western Tanager, male, near Plummer Park, Aug. 15, Salmon; a pair nested in grounds on LaCanada Blvd, reported by the owner, Mrs. Little. Ruby Curry

Mrs. Maybelle DeMay, 1951-53, with her 3 children drove as far as Vancouver. A few weeks at Paradise Ranch seemed really Paradise for the children. Mr. DeMay went by air to join the family and return with them. Visits to Grand Coulee, Crater Lake, the Oregon Caves & others!