

Western Tanager



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A MORNING IN A SEQUOIA MEADOW

Ruth and Harlan Eckler

A mile or so beyond Stony Creek Camp, along the General' Highway in Sequoia National Forest we found a lush green meadow. Along the road's edge was a fringe of young fir trees. Thru' the meadow were scattered fallen logs, and on one side was an upturned stump and a dead tree. On three sides the meadow was surrounded by a magnificent forest of evergreens.

We ensconced ourselves comfortably against a log at the edge of the meadow to watch for birds. And what a sight met our eyes! The air seemed full of birds. A dozen Western Tanagers were darting about catching insects and then perching on logs and in the branches of the evergreens, where, with their yellow bodies and brilliant red heads, they looked like exotic blossoms. Out of the blue zoomed a Red-breasted Sapsucker, catching an unwary fly, then wheeling and turning to snap up another and another, before settling on the dead tree, out of which popped a nesting Chick-a-dee. So fascinated were we watching the tanagers that we almost missed seeing a pair of modest Pine Siskins giving a log a good going over. In the grass feeding were several Oregon Juncos, a number of Robins, a Chipping Sparrow, and a Lincoln's Sparrow, the latter stopping occasionally to fly to a stump and pour forth his sweet melody.

All the time we had been hearing the clear, loud call of the Olive-sided Flycatcher and the plaintive note of the Western Wood Pewee. Soon they both appeared to join the tanagers for their share of insects. Then came a Townsend's Solitaire to join the chase. Another flycatcher appeared which we puzzled over considerably. Our bird book told us there were five small flycatchers impossible to tell apart in the field, except by their habitats and where they built their nests. So we watched closely and discovered they were building some sixty feet up in a pine tree, so concluded it was a Hammond's Flycatcher.

In the small evergreens along the road a Yellow Warbler was singing its spirited song, and a Lutescent Warbler was heard now and then. A beautiful, full-plumaged Audubon's Warbler sat for a moment for us to admire him, then flew away, his place taken for a fleeting moment by a female humming bird, but it darted off without giving us a chance to identify it, which we probably could not have done anyway.

From overhead came the sweet warble of the Cassin's Purple Finch, then he dropped to the edge of a bit of open water for his morning dip. Almost at our feet a streamlined Green-tailed Towhee was feeding; far over head wheeled a Red-tailed Hawk, beautiful against the lovely blue sky. Off in the distance came the song of the Sierra Hermit Thrush, and the yank, yank of the Slender-billed Nuthatch.

What more could one ask of a few hours of quiet bird watching?

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George T. Hastings, Editor, 517 Euclid St.
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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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"To promote the study and protection of birds and other wildlife, plants, soil and water."

Membership

Joint with the National Audubon Society, including subscription to Audubon Magazine:--Regular \$5.00, Sustaining \$10.00 Active \$25.00, Supporting \$50.00

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I sat down to rest in my garden the other day, and, thinking to improve my mind, started to read an article entitled "Rules for Mental Health". I had read but a few lines when little Black Phoebe swooped down in search of lunch, or was it "brunch"?-- a hard way to get any meal, it seemed to me.

Dear me, what is all that commotion in Linnet Lodge? (That is the corner of my garden reserved for feathered friends, especially linnets). Is it a cat? Oh, no, it's merely a Jay Boy demanding full possession. Oh, well, there are plenty of wires to sit on while waiting, and they can join with the mockers and song sparrows in their concert.

Now, I ask you, how could anyone concentrate on reading an article on mental health when surrounded by all that action? Who wants to anyway? Who needs to when surrounded by birds? They are much better than any printed page on the subject.

Bessie M. Pope

ANNOTATED FIELD LIST OF THE BIRDS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

A booklet by Bob Pyle which can be secured at meetings of the Audubon Society. This 40-page, paper-bound booklet lists all the birds recorded from Southern California, showing graphically the months when they are present and giving some indication of the ease with which the ordinary bird-watcher can find them. There will be supplementary notes on most species, including suggestions as to where to find the rarer species. There will be suggested birding spots in about ten counties of Southern California, with a map showing just where the "desert" and "mountains" are and showing the birding spots. There will be a habitat designation for all species that prefer an easily defined type of habitat. The price will probably be 35¢ per copy or three copies for one dollar.

Our sales department offers the Angwin Nature Games - Birds, Animals, Butterflies, Wild Flowers and Trees. 56 cards in color for each. Ideal gifts, at \$1.25 a set. Mrs. Celia Christianson, 1056 1/2 N. Oxford Ave., Hollywood 27.

A VISIT TO GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

In June Mr. and Mrs. Comby visited the Park in their new trailer. From Mrs. Comby's letter we select a part, describing some of the birds they saw. "On the way we saw Starlings feeding along the Salmon River in Idaho. They were nesting in a tree over the water. We saw Western Grebes do their mating dance on the water and Holboell's Grebes on their nesting ground. A tiny young one peeped from the feathers of its mother's back as it rode in the water. We saw the elusive Harlequin Duck in a secluded lake high in the mountains. Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were quietly feeding along the snow banks, paying no attention to us. A Dusky Grouse put on a motion picture show for us, with appropriate sound effects. He went through his entire routine of booming and strutting. A Ruffed Grouse "froze" by the roadside in the light of our car one early evening. The mountain goats were my particular delight, high on sheer cliffs, feeding in miniature meadows. It nearly paralyzed me to see the little white kids gamboling on the edge of sheer cliffs at those dizzy heights. On our return trip we followed the coast of Oregon and Washington. We saw a pair of Trumpeter Swans on a river and Tufted Puffins nesting on a huge rock close to the shore near Seaside, Oregon. They were staking out their nesting sites and were engaged in courting and flying madly about on foreays over the ocean and back to the rock. There is just no way one can adequately describe a trip such as this. Is is one of the greatest incentives to stimulate people to a greater appreciation of the out-of-doors."

HUMMINGBIRDS VISIT A HOSPITAL

Recently a few Audubonites visited the large Veterans' Hospital at San Fernando to see the hummingbirds. A number of the patients have made feeders which they keep filled with sugar solution hanging outside their windows. There on the fourth and fifth floors we saw Anna's, Allen's, Black-chinned and Costas Hummers often several at a time, around each feeder. Some of the men said that early in the morning and late in the afternoon there might be as many as eighteen or twenty birds about each feeder, at which

six birds could feed at a time. The birds are so accustomed to the men that they can stand within a few inches of the birds without disturbing them. One bird had a short bill, little over a quarter of an inch long, apparently the victim of some accident, but it seemed to feed as well as the others and came with them daily.

The men took great interest in watching the birds and several had taken series of kodachrome pictures.

BIRD STORIES FROM THE NEWSPAPERS

A letter from Phoenix, Arizona, encloses a newspaper cutting with a picture of a Blue-footed Booby that landed in a sand and gravel pit. The bird, a female, was in an emaciated condition, but was cared for and seemed in good condition at the time the letter was sent. But what was an oceanic bird doing far inland?

The Times on July 12 had an article which it claimed was well authenticated of a bird that adopted a human baby. The bird, a butcher bird in Western Australia had been cared for by the wife of the manager of a large sheep ranch and refused to leave the immediate neighborhood of the house. When a baby was born to the lady the bird seemed to adopt it, bringing grubs, grasshoppers, centipedes, scorpions and lizards, which it tried to force into the baby's mouth. It was necessary to keep a screen over the baby whenever it was outside. When the baby would not take the food offered the bird swallowed it himself.

INEXPENSIVE NEW BIRD BOOKS

Two little booklets, useful for beginners or young people are BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS and BIRDS OF FLORIDA. Each describes over 50 common birds and is illustrated by several color plates from Peterson's Eastern Birds and some black and white drawings. There is a list of the best places to see birds in the state and a complete check list. They are sold at 25¢ each. We hope there may be a similar book for Southern California. They can be obtained (minimum order \$1) from the Blue Heron Press, Box 236, Bronxville, N.Y., or from the Massachusetts Audubon Society, 155 Newberry St., Boston, Mass.

CHEEPS AND CHIRPS

Our oldest member, and certainly one of the most beloved, Miss Faddis sends the following note: "Dear Audubon Friends. It gives me great pleasure to address you. I am now gliding towards my ninety-fifth birthday. My chief concern is the daily conservation of my spiritual and physical energies. To brighten these days I am delighted to hear from or to see any Audubon member. My housekeeper and I enjoy watching the birds that come to our yard.

Yours sincerely, Miriam Faddis"

At one time we had committees on trees, flowers, butterflies and birds. The chairman of the Tree Committee was for some years Mrs. Jesse Morain. Later she was chairman of the Transportation Committee. Several of our members have visited her home this summer to see her garden of Fuchsias. She has the gardener's green thumb and her plants are vigorous and beautiful, and she can give the name of all the more than 30 varieties in her garden. Our members are always welcome at her home.

Bob Pyle, who had charge of our Christmas count last year, is now in Hawaii working at meteorology for the government. He has joined the Hawaiian Audubon Society. In the August number of their "Elapaio" he has an article on the Least Tern seen on one of their field trips, the first time this bird has been reported from the islands. In the same number of the "Elapaio" Bob is spoken of as one of the "learned members of the club", and of holding a rare Bulwer's Petrel found on one of the trips till all had observed it closely. Bob has found time, too, to complete the booklet based on his extensive field notes, that is advertised on another page.

OBSERVATIONS

Ruby Curry

GROSSBEAKS, ETC.: 12 Black-headed, 4 adult and 8 immature Blue along highway to Palomar, Sept. 1 (W.K.); Sept. 8, Willow Goldfinch singing, Titmice and Wrentits vieing with one another in calling noisily and bathing, Eagle Rock (R.C.)

OBSERVATIONS, Continued

PELAGIC BIRDS: Aug. 30, near Anacapa Dorothy Groner reports 4 Pink-footed, 1 Black-vented Shearwater; Pomarine Jaeger, Sabine Gull; Kittiwake (immature); Fulmar, Black Oyster-catcher.

SHORE and WATER BIRDS: Sept. 1, Maxon Brown Sanctuary, 30 Wood Ibis, 9 in top of a eucalyptus tree, pulling at twigs and seed pods, others in shrubs and tules; 6 Avocets, 7 Black-necked Stilts, 50 Wilson's and 75 Northern Phalaropes, Shovelers and Cinnamon Teal (R.C.); hundreds of Northern Phalaropes, Sept. hundreds of Northern Phalaropes, Sept. 7-8 on Del Rey lagoon (W. Kent)

PIGEONS: Sept. 14, At 7:30 A.M. 7 Band-tailed Pigeons on telephone wires; six decided to come down to the feeding tray and swept down with heavily flapping wings. Fed for 20 minutes, making harsh, gutteral noises as if conversing. Next morning 4 ventured to the edge of the patio. (B.C.)

HAWKS, EAGLES: Aug. 30, 4 Bald Eagles near Anacapa Island (D.G.); Red-tailed Hawk Mount Palomar, Sept. 1 (W.K.)

OWLS: Sept. 3, at Eagle Rock, 1 Barn and one Pasadena Screech (R.C.).

KINGBIRDS: Sept. 1, 6 Arkansas near Pala, (C. Pflager).

SWALLOWS: Sept. 1, Tree along highway near Palomar (W.K.); Barn, Cliff and Rough-winged, Del Rey, probably preparing to migrate (Hastings) Sept. 7

RAVENS: Sept. 1, Four standing in grass near road, Laguna (W.K.)

CHICKADEES: Irma Rogers reports Aug. 24 and following days one feeding on walnuts cracked by jays, on Sept. 7 one at mouth of Fish canyon in 96 degree temp.; two at Hill Dr. and two in Las Colinas yard, Eagle Rock; all early appearances, possible driven down by fires (R.C.)

NUTHATCHES: Sept. 7, Monrovia, Slender-billed, (I.K.); Santa Monica, Sept. 10, (E.).

BLUEBIRDS: Sept. 1, 6 Western, 1 Mountain Palomar Observatory Grounds, (W.K.)

SHRIKE: Mrs. Margueritte Parker reports one in her Alhambra yard singing the more musical song usually given in the mating season.

WARDLERS: Sept. 2-5, 1 Golden Pileolated in yard, Eagle Rock, one found dead on N. Broadway, L.A. Sept. 7 (R.C.) 2 Virginia's, Sanctuary, 9-15, (B. Hawkins)

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY INCORPORATED
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Calendar for October 1953

Thursday, October 1. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING. At the Los Angeles County Museum,

Exposition Park at 1:30. Vacation Highlights from several members.

"The Bird of the Month", Dr. Kenneth Stager, curator of birds of the
Museum. Moving Picture - POWER BEHIND THE NATION.

Members and friends are invited to meet for lunch in the museum
cafeteria at 12, then spend the time before the meeting in informal
study of museum exhibits.

Thursday, October 8. MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD. At the home of the president,
912 Victoria Ave. Any member of the Society may attend this business
meeting.

Thursday, October 15. FIELD TRIP to Playa del Rey for the study of marsh and shore
birds. Most of the birds that spend the winter in the marshes are
back from their northern breeding grounds and some that stop on
migration will be there.

Take Playa del Rey bus at the Subway Terminal, 423 S. Hill Street
at 8:35, arriving at the Playa del Rey station at 9:35. Bring lunch.
Miss Linnean Blind, leader.

Thursday, October 22. STUDY CLASS Plummer Park at 10 A. M.

The first hour Mr. W. Scott Lewis will show kodachrome slides to
illustrate his new lecture - WATER AND LIFE.

The second hour will be a display of books from our library, with
brief reviews of several, led by our librarian, Mrs. Mary B. Salmon.
Take Pacific Electric, West Hollywood bus to Fuller Ave., walk one
block west to park entrance.

Sunday, October 25. FIELD TRIP. To study Pelagic Birds. The "Hawk" will leave
Port Hueneme at 6 A. M. promptly and go out 20 miles beyond Anacapa
Island where we hope to see albatross.

Fare \$5.00 to be mailed to Mr. James F. Clements, Times-Mirror Press,
110 S. Broadway, Los Angeles 12. Reservations must be in by October
14. Those wishing to spend Saturday night at Port Hueneme can obtain
very reasonable accomodations by writing directly to Capt. Les Roberts,
240 Main St., Port Hueneme. For information call No. 3-1012.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Alexander Sprunt, Jr. will present Wing Havens on

Tuesday, October 13 at Virgil Junior High School, 152 Vermont Ave. at 7:45

Saturday, October 17 at John Burroughs Junior High, 600 So. McCadden Pl. at 2 P.M.

SAN GABRIEL RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

664 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte Phone Forrest 0-1872

Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods, Assistant Director
Nature Museum open daily 2-5, except Sundays and Mondays
Guided Field Trips second Sunday of each month, starting at 9 A.M.
at gate. Led by Pat Gould and Bill Hawkins.