

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

T H E

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

Western Tanager



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

THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 21

September 1954

Number 1

OUR PLUMMER PARK HEADQUARTERS

When Plummer Park became county property in 1935, taken over from Don Eugene Plummer, our president, Mrs. Salmon, asked for and received permission to have the old home of the Plummer family, built about 1878, the oldest house in Hollywood, assigned to our Society for a headquarters. Before that time the Society had acquired a few books, some mounted birds discarded by the museum and other materials. At first all our possessions were stored in the home of Mrs. F. T. Bicknell, president from 1916 to 1924. After her death in 1935, Mrs. Salmon stored the material until it was moved to our new headquarters.

When Mrs. Elizabeth Burnell Smith resigned as director of nature study of the Los Angeles schools she sold a collection of bird skins and charts to the Society for a nominal sum. Recently she has given us more bird skins and a study collection of mineral specimens. Mr. W. Scott Lewis also gave us mineral specimens. Dr. William Lloyd gave us last year some bird eggs mounted in cellophane covered boxes and a large collection of shells, mounted and named. Mr. Walter Scott brought back from New Orleans the pictures of Audubon's home. From the county museum we received a large collection of birds' eggs. We have a collection of mounted insects, mostly California. Other specimens time to time by members. been given and we have our library now has over and other phases of October a catalogue of as a supplement to The specimens have been used years.

In 1949, our President, arranged our collections use and the building more house came into our possession, Mrs. Salmon has met groups of boy and girl scouts and their leaders for bird study. More than 200 young people have been helped every year and many scouts have won merit badges as a result of her instruction.

For the past seventeen years Mrs. Salmon has been our librarian and "museum curator". To our regret she feels that she must resign from the position she has filled so capably. Incidentally it was Mrs. Salmon who found in a second hand store and bought for our Society one of our most prized possessions - a mounted Passenger Pigeon.

Our new curator and librarian is Mrs. Irma Hecht. This past summer she has kept the house open two days a week and given talks to large numbers of children and adults. She has classified all the specimens, rearranged and made library cards for the books and done much to make the building more attractive. Both Mrs. Salmon and Mrs. Hecht have been helped by other members of the Society who have volunteered for this important work. More volunteers are needed to keep the house open other afternoons. All members are invited to drop in any Wednesday or Saturday afternoon, and to attend the teas served on the afternoons of our Saturday Screen Tours.

It's our Headquarters, - - let us enjoy it more this year!



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THE WESTERN TANAGER

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Editor - George T. Hastings, 517 Euclid Street, Santa Monica.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Organized 1910 Incorporated 1951
"To promote the study and protection of birds and other wildlife, plants, soil and water."

MEMBERSHIP

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

OFFICERS - 1954 - 1955

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A few years ago while on a field trip on Long Island in connection with the National Audubon Convention we suddenly saw a large flock of black-bellied plovers on a large lawn. Immediately the guide asked the driver to stop so we could get a close up view. As we piled out of the bus, nearly knocking each other over in our eagerness not to miss anything, I heard the driver say in such a very bored voice, "Well, it's good to have something to get excited about".

Now, I ask you, fellow Audubonites, what things have you found to get excited about this summer" Won't you write and tell us about them? I am certain there are many things that would be of interest to us all.

Did you know that in the past year we added one hundred and twenty-eight brand new members to our Society? Isn't that worthy of excitement? I think so. To each of you new friends we send a very special greeting.

You know the old saying that the biggest room in the world is the room for improvement. As we start our activities again this Fall may we enter that room and go forward to the best year yet.

Bessie Pope

Our especial thanks to those who have served so faithfully as officers and chairmen and who now feel obliged to give up their work for the Society. Mr. Hiram Beebe, Miss Treva Russell, Mrs. Elizabeth Fulton, Mrs. Ruth McCune, Miss Dorothy Bush, Miss Ethel Bass.

We appreciate their unselfish service to the Society. We know that their interest in and devotion to the causes for which it stands and in the Society will continue.

For work well done - again our thanks.

FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 TO SANTA BARBARA

This will be a joint trip with the Bird Group of the Natural History Museum of Santa Barbara with their leaders. The trip will be on the 3rd Sunday of the month instead of the usual 4th Sunday. Meet at 8:30 A.M. at the Museum, 2559 Mission Canyon Road, Santa Barbara.

9:00 to S.B. Botanic Garden, 1-1/2 miles from Museum

10:30 to Tucker's Grove on Highway 150, - 11:30 to Stow Ranch Lake

12:30 to Goleta Slough for shore birds and lunch.

Bring lunch, binoculars and friends. This promises to be an outstanding trip, so don't miss it. See you there!

Dorothy E. Groner

4038-1/2 Garden Ave., Los Angeles 39 - Normandie 3-1012

We Welcome the Following New Members:

Mrs. Ruth D. Allen,
3901 Cherrywood Ave., L.A. 8
Miss Julia Baker,
4918 Maplewood Ave., L.A. 4
Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Becker,
Box 1511, Glendale 6
Mr. H. H. Beisch,
229 Pasqual Lane, San Gabriel
Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Bennett,
1935 Lyans Dr., La Canada
Miss Esther V. Berger,
1824 N. Alexandria Ave., Hollywood
Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Bomberger,
2128 Winthrop Dr., Alhambra
Miss Helen Frances Brockmeier,
820-1/2 S. New Hampshire, L.A. 5
Mrs. Eileen Brooks,
896-1/2 N. Harvard Blvd., L.A. 29
Miss Susannah Bryant,
1337 D, Ocean Ave., Santa Monica
Mrs. Ava L. Calkins,
326 N. Queen St., Inglewood
Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Carter,
1414 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica
Miss Margaret L. Clifton,
4317-1/2 Avocado St., L.A. 27
Mr. Murdoch Coe,
252 So. New Hampshire, L.A. 4
Miss Claire B. DeBus,
7738 W. Norton, L.A. 46
Miss Evelyn C. Doane,
Box A, Camarillo
Miss Ruth H. Dudley,
565 Wildomar St., Pacific Palisades
Mr. Will S. Eberle,
503 No. Elm Dr., Beverly Hills
Miss Susan Gibson,
4978 Cromwell Ave., L.A. 27
Mrs. Helen H. Gold,
26 No. Boulevard, Newport 23, R.I.
Miss Ethel H. Griese,
1538 A, E. Wilson Ave., Glendale 6
Miss Hazel Anna Hayes,
500 W. Kelso St., Inglewood 1
Mrs. Gerald Hodgson,
393 So. Beverly Glenn Blvd., L.A. 24
Miss Esther F. Johnson,
260 So. Doheney Dr., Beverly Hills
Miss Katherine V. Keppler,
3046 Wynwood Lane, L.A. 23
Mr. and Mrs. B. F. King,
2415 Coniston Pl., San Marino 9
Mrs. Gilbert W. King,
846 Paseo Miramar, Pacific Palisades
Miss Esther Long,
220 So. Lake St., L.A. 53

Mrs. Richard W. Luhrsen,
9413 10th Ave., Inglewood 4
Mr. Robert J. Miller,
1915 6th St., Santa Monica
Miss Joyce Munson,
347 No. Beachwood Dr., L.A. 4
Miss Harriet N. Orr,
4743 Tujunga Ave., North Hollywood
Miss Lina B. Pierce,
1922 W. 79th St., L.A. 47
Mrs. L. K. Quiette,
10660 Wellworth Ave., L.A. 24
Mr. Charles F. Reiche,
1395 Bellwood Rd., San Marino 9
Mr. William M. Reithard,
826 C, 9th St., Santa Monica
Mr. Nick Rodes,
Route 4, Box 52, Saugus
Mrs. Henry W. Splitter,
28 Ave. 27, Venice
Mr. and Mrs. Charles K. Taubert,
510 No. St. Andrews Pl., L.A. 4
Mr. Robert M. Teeter,
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Mr. and Mrs. Howard A. Wagner,
1005 No. Genesee Ave., Hollywood 46
Mrs. Louise Waian,
818 E. Harvard Blvd., Burbank
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Mr. Harold B. Yeaton,
13442 Galewood St., Sherman Oaks
Mrs. Emil Ziehl,
3569 Griffith Park Blvd., L.A. 27

AUDUBON CENTER OF CALIFORNIA
664 No. Durfee Ave., El Monte

Phone FORrest 0-1872

Mrs. O. M. Stultz - Director

Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods - Asst. Dir.

Nature Museum open daily 2-5
except Sundays and Mondays

CALIFORNIA OFFICE
THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4, Calif.

William Goodall, Pacific Coast Rep.

Sandy Sprunt, Assistant Represen.

The smallest bird in the world is
the Fairy or Bee Hummingbird of Cuba,
with a length of 2-1/4 to 2-1/2 inches
(including the 1/2 inch bill), and a
weight of 1/200 ounce.

The largest bird in the world today
is the ostrich of Africa and Arabia,
with a height up to 8 feet, and a
weight of as much as 300 pounds.

Our Last Year in Retrospect

As we begin a new year it is well to pause for a moment to review what was accomplished in the year past. Of the excellent annual reports by the officers and chairmen those of our Registrar of Members and of the Treasurer are of greatest interest.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fulton, our Registrar, tells us that we now have 667 members, a gain of 52 for the year. Of these 479 have joint memberships with our Society and the National Audubon. Of the joint memberships 2 are life, 1 active and 29 sustaining, the rest regular members. Of the local members, 35 are life members, 2 patrons. We have given 7 honorary and 6 complimentary memberships to people who have rendered especial service to our Society or to the cause of conservation. During the year we have lost four members through death: Dr. William Lloyd, Mr. Vaughn MacCaughey, Mr. R. N. Shuart and Mr. John H. Wentz. We are the poorer for the loss of these valued members.

The Treasurer, Miss Treva Russell, reports that at the end of June, 1953, our bank balance was \$1902.55. Dues for the year amounted to \$1167.42, a profit of \$431.91 was received from the Screen Tours, interest and dividends came to \$167.50, special donations were \$42.35, and there were a few smaller receipts. Of expenses the largest item was \$746 for The Western Tanager. Our Year Book cost \$172.03. Scholarships to Nature Camps were \$260. Of course there were numerous other small expenses, but we had an excess of income over expenses of \$309.01. \$1000 was added to our endowment fund in the form of Savings and Loan certificates. This left us as of July 1 a bank balance of \$1221.50. Our endowment fund is now \$850.00. The treasurer's books were examined by the Finance Committee which found everything in shipshape order. The committee felt that the treasurer should be commended for the very efficient way in which the records were kept.

We have aided the cause of conservation as the chairman of the Committee, Mrs. Ruth McCune has contributed articles for the Tanager, written letters for the Society, and encouraged members to write to legislators regarding bills before Congress and the State Legislature

affecting the cause of conservation of natural resources. Mrs. McCune also lectured before Garden Clubs, Scout Leaders, Golden Years Club and at the Beverly Hills Hobby Show.

In the field of education we have given scholarships to the Audubon Camp at Norden to several teachers and leaders of youth. Several hundred boys and girls have been instructed in bird and nature study by members, especially Dr. William Lloyd, Mrs. Salmon and Mrs. Hood. Lectures, illustrated with our slides, have been given to church groups, garden clubs, scout groups and others.

For our members we have had 7 excellent Thursday afternoon programs and 7 study classes, planned by the Program Chairman, Mrs. Grace H. Phillips. The regular Sunday and Thursday Field Trips were held and in March a Saturday trip was tried as an experiment. This last was so much appreciated that other Saturday trips were held in succeeding months and will be continued this year, Miss Ethel Craig being the leader. The trips yielded the usual number of thrills. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet with its crest erected in the County Arboretum; the Ojai trip with many wild flowers in addition to the 50 birds listed, among them Bullock's Oriole, Long-tailed Chat, Phainopepla and our Western Tanager. At the Charlton Flats trip in June, following bird and flower walks and a lunch period, officers were installed for the coming year. Don Tómas Parker, under a sign reading, "Under New Management" conducted the exercises wittily. Miss Dorothy Groner reports that 2 of the 8 Sunday trips were ocean trips to study pelagic birds. Outstanding memories of these trips are of four California Condors circling overhead on the Mount Pinos trip; a flock of American Golden-eyes and Black Brant at Newport; Hooded, Bullock's and Scott's Orioles together in one tree; and on the ocean trips, 30 Fulmars in both light and dark phases, Murre, Pigeon Guillemots, Cassin Auklets, Xanthus Murres, and 2000 Sooty Shearwaters in sight at one time.

For the 16th year our Society took part in the Christmas Bird Count of the

Continued on
bottom of Page 5

LET'S BECOME KINGBIRD CONSCIOUS

Loye Miller

On April 7 of this year Mrs. Alice Addicott and I had a half-hour's visit with a tropical Kingbird (Tyrannus melancholicus) in the Topanga area of the Santa Monica Mountains. Of course the visit was pleasant. It revived an acquaintance made some years earlier in Panama and El Salvador. But to my mind it has a further and more lasting importance. In the first place I have seen during more than half a century of field work along our southern borders, a number of cases of northern advance and retreat of more tropical species populations. Like waves running up the sloping beach - some farther, some less far - only to retreat finally to the general average sea level. So do these northward extensions of range come and go at irregular intervals or cycles of years. Is the Tropical Kingbird advancing in such a wave?

A specimen was taken in Berkeley in October, 1947, another near Inverness in October of 1951. Two birds were seen at Pt. Lobos in October 1952. One was seen on the Colorado River in October 1952. Our bird makes a fourth record for California and the first so far reported in the Spring season.

Is there a real wave of the Kingbird advancing northward and sending flecks of foam over our borders, or is it more apparent than real? Are we just becoming more accurately discriminating? Let us hope for both!

"Oh yes, that's a kingbird but he doesn't look quite right. His outer tail feathers don't have the definite white stripe, and the tail is gray instead of black. There's a dark band through the eye. The gray of the throat blends more uniformly from the chin backward to the yellow of the belly region. He just doesn't look quite like our common kingbirds. Perhaps it is a visitor from Latin America."

Let's become kingbird conscious!

(Note by the editor--In our Peterson's Field Manual we will find Tyrannus melancholicus under the name of Couch's Kingbird. And the A.O.U. Check List gives the West Mexican Kingbird as Tyrannus melancholicus occidentalis, - but as Peterson says, "No apparent field differences".)

THE TANAGER HAS COME OF AGE

This issue begins the 21st volume of the Western Tanager. Looking back over past volumes it is apparent that the character of the Tanager was set by Mrs. Raymond Brennan who originated it and edited the first two volumes. Other editors, Mrs. Maude Murphey, Mrs. William T. Shelford and Miss Laura Greely largely followed the pattern set at the beginning and the present editor has endeavored to keep up to the standards set by his predecessors.

A CONSERVATION VICTORY

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT

This Monument of 500,000 acres has been set aside as the only high desert wilderness for the people of the United States for all time.

Its esthetic, recreational and scientific values are great and attract some 250,000 people every year.

Before the Monument was created in 1950 the area had been thoroughly prospected and mined out. Nevertheless certain interests have been of late clamoring to have it opened for prospecting and mining. The Audubon Society united with the Sierra Club, the Isaac Walton League and others to oppose what would largely destroy the values of the Monument.

A significant victory for the cause of conservation was registered when these demands were refused at a hearing last July in San Bernardino.

But we must ever keep on the alert as selfish and local interests endeavor to gain footholds in our National Parks and Monuments.

The Year in Retrospect - continued
National Audubon Society. Under the leadership of Herbert Clarke 122 observers reported 42,506 birds of 153 different species, making our count again one of the largest in the nation.

All in all it was a good year. Credit is due all the officers and committee chairmen who each and every one did such efficient work. With many of the same members continuing in office this year and with the help of newly elected or appointed ones, we look forward with confidence to another year of progress.

CHEEPS AND CHIRPS

MISS TREVA RUSSELL after serving in the exacting position of treasurer for three and a half years has felt obliged to give up this work. We owe a debt of gratitude to her. She has been a member of our Society for about twenty years. Her interest in nature was kindled by a general science course in the State Normal School and deepened by a summer course on How to Teach Birds given by Miss Elizabeth Burnell. As a teacher she always had a Junior Audubon Club and every term she took the members and her classes to visit the Audubon headquarters in Plummer Park and for nature walks, aided by Audubon Society members. June '52 and again this year - a week at the McCune cabin at Big Bear -- No need for binoculars - At the very doorstep the Cabanas, California and White-headed Woodpeckers feeding on suet. At other food trays close to the house, Robins, Jays, Green-tailed Towhees, Juncos, Slender-billed Nuthatch, Chickadees, Grossbeak, and others".

MRS. ELIZABETH FULTON also has felt obliged to give up her work for the Society, - Registrar of Members. We have never had a more efficient worker in this position. She has been a member of the Society for five years and has long been interested in birds and nature. At the feeders in her yard on Mount Washington she has every day birds not often seen in the city.

MRS. CHARLOTTE McBRIDE will serve this year not only as Registrar of Members, but also as Chairman for Youth Work. For nine years she has been living on top of the hill at Palos Verdes and has kept a systematic account of birds and other wild life she sees. Her records are a model of accuracy and completeness. She has organized two Junior Audubon Clubs. Some of her older boys are now acting as leaders for younger boys and girls. She is also helping boy and girl scouts with nature and bird study, visiting the troops and leading individual scouts on field trips.

OBSERVATIONS
Ruby Curry

EGRET: - A Snowy Egret with a leg band found at Crystal Springs, Griffith Park, taken to Echo Park and released. K. Hart

SHORE BIRDS: - the Los Angeles Times reported many Least Terns nesting on flats at Playa del Rey.

QUAIL: - Valley Quail, three families at Eagle Rock; on July 11, fifteen half grown young; July 18, eleven smaller young; Aug. 1 a pair with three tiny young.

PIGEONS: - 3 to 5 bandtails daily at feeding tray and eating green elder berries, Eagle Rock.

OWLS: - Aug. 10, a Barn Owl hunts wood rats along Hill Drive, Eagle Rock, making his hissing sound as he swoops.

POORWILLS: - Began calling at Eagle Rock on May 30, by late July calling loudly and antiphonally at dusk.

HUMMING BIRDS: - Black-chinned swinging in nuptial arc, making his whirring sound, July and August, Eagle Rock.

WRENS: - A pair of Bewick Wrens built in a decorated gourd hanging by an often used door. Lined the nest with cotton from a spray hanging on patio wall. Now preparing for a second brood. Mrs. A. West, Eagle Rock.

WRENTIT: - Has come daily thru the summer to feed in shrubbery and bathe near house.

MOCKINGBIRDS, ROBINS: - 1 pair Mockingbirds nested in a cork oak, another in a live oak across the street, having a lively time chasing jays. More Robins nesting in Santa Monica than ever before, many reported through the summer in Los Angeles.

GROSSBEAKS, ORIOLES, COWBIRDS: - Many Black-headed Grossbeaks feeding young which incessantly call "Murillo". Hooded Orioles taking sugar water from humming bird feeders (Hastings). K. Hart reports seeing Towhee raising young Cowbirds and driving adult Cowbirds away.

WATCH NOW FOR: -- Migrating Pacific and Red-throated Loons, Western Grebes, Semi-palmated and Black-bellied Plovers, returning Ducks, Audubon's Warblers, Gambel and Golden-crowned Sparrows.