

## Western Tanager

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## MEMORIES OF ASILOMAR

Ruth McCune

Asilomar! Until I attended a conference there under the auspices of the National Audubon Society, it had been only a name to me. Then it became a storehouse of memories,.... the surf rolling in, the sloping hills of white sand, beautifully landscaped and dotted with large brown buildings that provided shelter and dispensed food for the body and mind.

Since this is a recalling of memories and not a literary effort, I shall be anti-climax and first mention what to me was the most impressive of all. That was the wonderful inspiration gained from speakers from other groups interested in the conservation of our natural resources -- representatives of people with no ulterior motives, people who are giving their time and energy because they have the interest of our Country at heart. If you think it isn't inspiring to mingle with those who not only think about the future of their Country, but do something about it, - try it sometime.

The Audubon Center of Southern California had excellent displays, especially designed as teaching aids and for help with youth groups. "Eye-catching" conservation posters from different parts of the State were placed to good advantage, and there was a wonderful array of photographs of birds by professionals.

Was I torn between the desire for the enjoyment of a birding-trip or going on a tide-pool expedition? I did not need to worry; I widened my horizons, whichever I decided to do, because under skilled leaders each trip embraced the ecology of the region.

The wonderful trip down the peninsula was one of the highlights. Paths wound through native chaparral, much of it fragrant blooming ceanothus. On a small island off shore three species of Cormorants in breeding plumage, gracefully courting, made quite a different picture than that we usually have of them in their droopy fashion. Faintbrushes, poppies and other wildflowers grew about the nests of the birds. Brown Pelicans, Pigeon Guillemots, the Oyster Catcher, nesting White Swifts were among the many birds seen.

Is it just food that makes us so eager for the dinner gong? Or is it the warm fellowship, the exchanging of ideas with kindred minds -- if one is wise enough not to insist on always sitting with his own delegation? Nor is the food disappointing, served cafeteria style to one table after another by eager and interested cooks. Pleasant memories of the dining hall!

On the way home lush fields of wild flowers, seen all too infrequently now and so reminiscent of childhood in Southern California! And another memory that I shall never lose and which I wish might be duplicated for me. It might for you! We were seated at a table in Crawford's River Inn with windows opening on the Big Sur River, lined with gray alders just beginning to show tiny green leaves. Three Mallard Ducks floating down the little river gave it the atmosphere of a Japanese print, something really out of our mundane world.

My memories of an Asilomar conference -- I do not know what yours might be. Why don't you attend this year and see?

(Make a note - Audubon Convention, Asilomar, April 2-5)

### THE WESTERN TANAGER

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**THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
Organized 1910      Incorporated 1951  
"To promote the study and protection of birds and other wildlife, plants, soil, and water."

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From an old member:

Hello! L. A. Audubon Members - Do wish I could get in some birding with you all. As it is- I feed 3 magpies - no other birds around the house- but 24 Trumpeter Swans at the warm springs! Best of luck.

Grace Nelson, Jackson, Wyoming

With deep regret we record the death of Miss Mira K. Barker, of Gardena, a member for many years.

### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

While going through some old papers a short while ago I came across a faded manuscript which proved to be an essay that, as a teen-ager - I had written upon graduation from high school.

I smiled to myself as I read the opening paragraph - "It was spring in a far eastern country. The birds had come back from their winter homes and were again making their nests in the trees. The flowers were blooming again and every tree was putting forth new leaves and blossoms."

The far eastern country was Italy, for with the ambition of sixteen years, I was attempting to describe Caesar's crossing the Rubicon.

It was with a feeling of nostalgia that I looked at the paper, so yellowed with age and my mind jumped from the then to the now, over the years that had brought their joys and sorrows, their hopes and their disappointments.

Suddenly from the top branch of the Belle of Portugal rose, with its delicate pink blossoms came the sound of "Peter, Peter". It was Mr. Mocker, telling the world of today what he thought about it, and he found it good.

His solo voice was soon joined by a chorus of the lilting voices of the finches and I realized that it was spring again, that the past was gone - that the present was good.

Yes, the years bring many changes for all of us, but of one thing we may rest assured, that because of the perfection of God's creation, spring is sure to come again and with it the songs of the birds and the fragrance of the flowers.

Aren't you glad to be a part of an organization that helps to keep our songsters singing, by educating both young and old to realize their worth to the world!

Aren't you also glad we are having a get together at Asilomar again? What more beautiful spot could be found in which to spend a few days with others of like interests. Be sure to join us there.

Bessie Pope

WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY  
Olive Alvey...Historian

January 20, Field Trip to the Huntington Gardens. By courtesy of the superintendent of the grounds of the Huntington Library we were permitted to go through the gardens in the morning and into parts of the estate not open to the public. Thousands of aloes were in blossom, furnishing a rich feast for hummingbirds, but because of the very abundance of the flowers the hummers were widely scattered. Ripened fruits of cacti were furnishing food for scores of house finches and mockingbirds. A dozen or more other birds were seen, but if the number of birds was not great, the beauty of trees and flowers made the trip well worthwhile. After going through the cactus and succulent garden, around a back road past the Japanese garden, down the long lane of deodars we came to the white marble mausoleum on a knoll above the rest of the grounds, then out through a planting of camellias and the formal Italian garden to the parking lot. Members cars took all the party of 26 to Lacy Park where we ate our lunches and fed the scrub jays that came looking for handouts. Reading our list of birds was interrupted by a flock of western bluebirds that lit in the trees above us, flying down to the ground for food, then back to the trees. Before the bluebirds left a flock of chipping sparrows visited us, coming so close that binoculars were not needed to see all their markings. The leader for the day was George T. Hastings.

January 22 and 23, Field Trip to Mecca and the Salton Sea. Judging by the enthusiastic reports this was a wonderful experience. The attendance was good with 50 on Saturday and 70 on Sunday.

Included in the 66 species identified were many that the stay-at-homes are sorry to have missed. Most outstanding were mountain plover, snow geese and Canada geese. Desert birds were vermillion flycatcher, Crissel thrasher, verdin, cactus wren, ladder-backed woodpecker, gila woodpecker, burrowing owl, roadrunner, Abert towhee, Gambel quail; also seen were horned owl, golden eagle, mountain bluebird and a half dozen kinds

of ducks. Miss Dorothy Groner, the leader, reported a most unusual performance put on by two mountain plovers. They came over to the cars, lowered their fanned out tails, then fluttered them at the intruders, hoping to chase these monsters out of their territory, no doubt.

The success of the trip was due to the fine organization and leadership and the cooperation of Mr. O'Neill, Manager of the Fish and Wildlife Refuge. With someone like Mr. O'Neill, who knows all the habits of his charges, it is possible to see wonders in that beautiful country. Many of the birds were dispersed during the day but returned in the evening to favorite resting places. An unforgettable sight was the waves of snow geese, circling, then descending fluttering like snow flakes. As they settled on the ground they looked for all the world like great banks of snow.. The verdins' winter residences, not to be confused with summer nests, appeared to be nothing but bunches of grass and twigs. The snug little shelters with side entrances are where these tiny gray birds with their yellow heads and throats keeps warm and dry in winter.

January 27, Study Class at Plummer Park. Mr. W. Scott Lewis, showing color slides and specimens spoke on Broadleaf Trees of the Pacific Coast. He began by speaking of the importance of birds in controlling insects and the interest in them shown by their being pictures on over 8,000 postage stamps from many countries. Many broad leaved trees, as willows, sycamore, cotton woods and oaks grow on the coast. Some have commercial value, others only esthetic value and no money value can be placed on beauty. Trees by streams are of value as their roots hold the soil and prevent erosion. Some trees are difficult to identify because there is so much variation in their leaves. Low growing oaks make up part of the priceless chaparral of our mountains. A checking collection of twigs and leaves such as Mr. Lewis showed is useful and is simple to make. Use two squares, one cardboard, the other transparent plastic, about 6" on a side, put the specimen between these, fasten edges with tape and label.

Mrs. Ruth McCune, our former conservation chairman, spoke on Conservation miscellany.

What's Gone on in the Society - cont.

Countries may be lost or won by wars. No. country ever wins a war against nature. Cut down trees and denuded soil go hand in hand. The most valuable thing any country can have is soil. It can be used without depleting it. 300 to 500 years are required to make one inch of top soil. Down through the years civilizations which have cut down their trees have ceased to exist, as their soil has been washed away by floods or blown away by winds leaving no place to raise food. We have gone through our great resources quicker than any other nation. Our government is alert to the danger and is doing a lot to reclaim barren wastes and to conserve the good land.

February 3, afternoon meeting at the Los Angeles County Museum. Dr. Theodore Downs, Curator of vertebrate Paleontology, described the new hall of Evolving Life, then took us to the hall and explained the exhibits. The hall has a series of alcoves, each devoted to some phase of the subject. The first was of beginning life, simple plants and animals, represented by beautiful glass models of amoeba, paramecium, hydra, spirogyra, and others. The last alcove shows the development of man with reproductions of the skulls of early types of man and down to modern man. Between these are exhibits representing chapters in the complex story of the evolution of life: Embryology, Genetics, Comparative Osteology, Geographic Distribution, Paleontology and others. Charts, diagrams, cartoons and labels supplement the exhibits. Some exhibits are not yet in place but enough are on exhibit to tell the story well.

SINGING IN THE RAIN

Olive Alvey

Gambel's sparrow is singing in the rain. It is a January day of wonderful drenching rain. A fine-smelling, invigoratingly chilly day. Feeding trays, sheltered from the rain are crowded with customers. Baked sweet potato is fine food this weather. The only bird-noise, besides the sparrow's song, is the usual arguing chirp of linnets, or the occasional call of a towhee. Doves and mockers are eating, and a female flicker, but these are not talkative in the rain. There it is again, the clear, liquid song of this

trim little sparrow. The notes are lilting and gay. They are so right to be heard through the rain.

BIRD VICTIMS OF TELEVISION

The Topeka Audubon News (Topeka, Kansas) for December 1944 discusses the great number of birds found dead below a very tall new television tower two miles west of Topeka. Further information regarding this destruction has been received from Mr. L. B. Carson, Editor of the News.

The tower is an open structure, triangular in section, 1010 feet high with five cables running out from each corner. It stands on top of a hill approximately 1000 feet above sea level. It is lighted by a series of red lights, but indications were that birds were not attracted by these. Probably a regular migration route follows over the top of the hill.

Members of the Topeka Audubon Society were alerted by the finding of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, rare for Kansas, and a Sora Rail on September 7 when the tower was not quite completed. They began a systematic collection of the birds and continued it through October 30. The birds were taken to the Museum of the University of Kansas for study. During this period over 1000 birds of 68 species were found. More than half of them on the one morning of October 1 after a night of heavy overcast. Most orders and families of birds of the area were represented in the collections, but there were no Hawks (which migrate by day), Owls, Crows, Jays or Swallows. A surprisingly large number of species, 21, were of Warblers of which 579 individuals were found. Among these were several believed to be very rare in Kansas:-- Black-throated Blue, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Nashville (181 specimens found), and Mourning (95 specimens). The Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, the only flycatcher on the list, is also a very rare bird in Kansas, yet two were found.

If over 1000 birds struck the tower one can only imagine the numbers that passed over or to one side. And this tower was only one of the many hazards to the multitudes of birds in their migration. We can only hope that the toll will not be as great when the birds return in the spring.

## CONSERVATION NOTES

Robert Blackstone

Opponents of the San Jacinto tramway have gained ground with the introduction in the State Assembly of A.B. 3030 - to re-establish Mt. San Jacinto State Park as a Primitive Area, and to repeal the Winter Park Authority Act. The Bill has been referred to the Committee on Conservation Planning and Public Works of the State Assembly. It is evident that we cannot have both a Wilderness Area and a tramway. Let us preserve from commercialism one of Southern California's few remaining wilderness areas by writing to our representatives and urging them to support this legislation.

The opening of our state parks to hunting is the aim of Senate Bill 1793. This issue arose during the 1953 session as Senate Concurrent Resolution #19, and at that time the State Division of Beaches and Parks issued a statement: HUNTING IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH PARK PURPOSES. Briefly stated, their reasons for this stand are: That the total area of our state parks is too small to improve the hunting situation much if all Parks were opened. That the majority interest in park land is in its uses for park purposes rather than as a game shooting area. That parks are wildlife refuges. That hunting in parks would introduce a difficult policing problem for personnel not trained for this function. And that the use of long range rifles and the careless habits of some hunters would make remote portions of the parks unsafe for families, though those who use these areas deserve the same assurance of safety as those who use the more populous areas.

The Audubon Society is not anti-hunting, however we believe that our state parks are not the place for it. Therefore, I urge you to write your representatives, and ask them to vote against this bill.

Among the bills before the 84th Congress are these which are particularly important to conservationists:

H. R. 110 - Correction of Mining Claim Abuses - to prevent spurious mining claims and protect surface values of our National Forests.

H. R. 270 - Upper Colorado Storage Project. This, of course, is the bill that includes authorization for Echo Park Dam, and is opposed by all conservationists as an unnecessary invasion of our national

park system.

S. 73 - Wildlife and Recreation in national Forests. Earmarks 10% of the receipts from the National Forests for public use facilities and wildlife improvements in the Forests, providing automatic appropriations of the money. This legislation is long overdue.

These bills have been referred to committees, and you will be hearing more about them.

A list of National and State representatives to whom we should communicate our opinions on these and similar measures is given on the back of our Calendar sheet for this month. Save this list.

Articles you should read:--

Colliers, February 18, Dinosaur Monument  
Saturday Evening Post, Feb. 12 Editorial  
We've been Starving our Parks.

Feb. 19, Conservation.  
Readers' Digest, Jan. 25 Shocking Truth  
about our Parks.

ANTICS OF A CLOWN

Charlotte McBride

For the past four years, a Roadrunner has come and gone in our yard. I believe he lives on the chaparral covered slopes in front of our home. We named him "The Clown", for he certainly has the personality of a clown. The other day while I was sitting by a window, I saw him running back and forth across the yard, so stopped to watch him.

He was going underneath the shrubs and picking up snails, which he brought back across the yard to the sidewalk. Here he would hit the snail repeatedly on both the walk and the red bricks that border it. When the shell seemed to him to be sufficiently cracked, he would hole it and shake his head until all that was left was the snail itself. This provided him with what was evidently a tasty morsel, as he repeated this performance at least a dozen times. Each time deliberately bringing the snail out to the walk.

Later I went out and collected what was left of the shells. I wonder if he could have been taking just snails of a certain size or growth, as the color and texture of these shells seemed to be lighter in both color and weight, or thickness, than most of the snails in my yard.

## OBSERVATIONS

We will use in the future bird names as they are given in our complete (yellow) check list which are in a few cases changed from those formerly used.

From the Audubon Center at El Monte:--

With the coming of Spring, life is taking a new lease down in our woodland. The ground is covered with fresh new mosses, filaree and our ever present weeds which promise food for our bird population.

Great Blue Herons, Green Herons, American and Snowy Egrets are to be seen. Bald-pates, Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal and Shovellers were with us till recently. Turkey Vultures have been seen migrating. Last week, Feb. 2, over 200. Our Hawks remain about the same - Marsh, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered as well as Cooper and Sharp-shinned. The White-tailed Kite almost daily, at one time as many as 3. Yellow-legs and Least Sandpipers are still found at the river. California Quail and Pheasants are here. Our little Screech Owl is heard at night. We are seeing flocks of White-throated Swifts daily. The Kingfisher is seen only rarely. Hermit Thrush, Gnatcatchers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets are seen daily. Our Goldfinches, - American, Dark-backed and Lawrence, have been with us since the middle of January. We are seeing the Cardinals in pairs in the Woodland and hope they will soon be back at our feeding trays. Alma Stultz

LOONS: Common, Arctic and Red-Throated, in the ocean and pools near Point Hueneme, Jan. 24 (S.W.B.S.C.)

GREBES: hundreds of Western off Palos Verdes, Feb. 13 (C. McBride)

HERONS: 19 Great Blue on a cold day, Feb. 4, all crouched down with heads under their wings; over one hundred Snowy and American Egrets, Balboa Back Bay, (Delight Dodds)

DUCKS: at Johnson Lake, January 31, Ring-necked and Canvas-Back, (K. Hardt); very many Ruddy also Lesser Scaup, Fintails and Shovellers, Bolsa Chica, Feb. 14 (S.W.B.S.C.); about 70 Red-breasted Mergansers in ocean close to the breakers off Palos Verdes further out were others with one male American Merganser, Feb. 15. (C. McBride); 22 American Mergansers, Lake at Fairmont Park, Riverside, Feb. 15 (M. Parker).

HAWKS: Golden Eagle near Tapia Park, Feb. 4 (R. Blackstone); Peregrine Falcon, Indian Canyon, Feb. 12 (R.B.)

SHORE BIRDS: Long-billed and Hudsonian Curlews and at least 75 Avocets, Balboa Back Bay, Feb. 4 (D.D.)

OWLS: Short-eared coursing back and forth over the fields near Point Dume, Jan. 24 (Koehlers and Hastings)

WOODPECKERS: Williamson Sapsucker, Chilao Flat, Feb. 13 (D. Groner)

ROBIN: Flock of over 75, Santa Monica, Feb. 5 (Mary Jo Boyd); 500 or more eating berries of English Ivy in Brentwood, Feb. 11 (Mrs. C. W. Schaeffer); over 125, foothills of Burbank, Feb. 16 (K. Hardt).

GNATCATCHER: Blue-gray, on Feb. 4 in West L. A., almost the same date as first seen last year (Mrs. A. Koehler)

PIPIIT: Water, several at Bolsa Chica, Feb. 14 (S.W.B.S.C.).

WAXWINGS: Flock of at least 500, eating Toyon berries and roosting on wires and aerials, Laguna Beach, Feb. 14, (S.W.B.S.C.); hundreds of Waxwings and Robins together, Palos Verdes, Feb. 15, (C. McBride); 2 flocks of over 200, Sycamore Grove, Feb. 14, (K. Hardt).

BLACKBIRDS: Tri-colored, Red-winged, Brewer and Brown-headed Cowbirds in flocks, Dairies on So. Main St., Feb. 14, (South West Bird Study Club)

SPARROW: Rufous-crowned, a pair about the house daily, Laguna Beach, (D.D.)

The Whittier Audubon Society began last month what they hope to make a regular feature of their work - a field trip for the public. They plan these for the second Saturday of each month. The trips will be advertised in the papers and through their members. They hope in this way to create a greater interest in the aims of the organization.

## CARETAKERS NEEDED

Two people are needed to live at the Tucker Bird Sanctuary for two months this summer. The cabin is furnished rent free with all utilities. Any one interested in a rewarding experience with birds this summer should write to Tucker Bird Sanctuary,

Modjeska Canyon,  
Orange  
California

YOUR LEGISLATORS HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW YOUR VIEWS

Here are the names of National and State legislators to whom to write.

United States Senator William F. Knowland

Thomas H. Kuchel

Address: Senator \_\_\_\_\_ Senate Office Building, Washington 25, D.C.

Representatives: Donald L. Jackson, Santa Monica, parts of Los Angeles, Beverly Hills  
Gordon L. McDonough, parts of Los Angeles  
Cecil R. King, Inglewood, Palos Verdes, etc.  
James Roosevelt, Part of Los Angeles, Culver City  
Clyde Doyle, Hollywood, North Hollywood  
Glenard P. Lipscomb, Part of Los Angeles, South Pasadena  
Carl Hinshaw, Glendale, Burbank  
Chet Holifield, Part of Los Angeles, Monterey Park, Montebello

Address: Representative \_\_\_\_\_ House Office Building, Washington 25, D.C.

State Senate - Richard I. Richards, Senate Office Building, Sacramento 14, Calif.

Representatives Harold T. Johnson (of Roseville) Chairman, Comm. on Natural Resources

Edward E. Elliott	Los Angeles
Allen Miller	San Fernando
William F. Marsh	No. Hollywood
H. Allen Smith	Glendale
Herbert R. Klocksieim	Long Beach
Thomas J. Doyle	Los Angeles
Charles E. Chapel	Inglewood
Albert I. Stewart	Pasadena
Frank Lanterman	La Canada
Ernest R. Geddes	Claremont
Thomas M. Erwin	Fuente
William A. Munnell	Montebello
Frank G. Bonelli	Huntington Park
Montivel A. Burke	Alhambra
John L. E. Collier	Los Angeles
Vernon Kilpatrick	Lynwood
Seth J. Johnson	Los Angeles
Charles J. Conrad	Sherman Oaks
Joseph G. Shell	Los Angeles
Thomas M. Rees	Los Angeles
Harold K. Levering	Los Angeles
Lester A. McMillan	Los Angeles
Augustus Hawkins	Los Angeles
G. Delbert Morris	Los Angeles
Patrick McGee	Van Nuys
Jesse M. Unruh	Los Angeles
Charles H. Wilson	Los Angeles
Clayton A. Dills	Gardena
Vincent Thomas	San Pedro
Carley V. Porter	Compton
W. S. Grant	Long Beach

Address: Assemblyman \_\_\_\_\_, Assembly Office Building, Sacramento 14, California.

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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CALENDAR FOR MARCH, 1955

Thursday, March 3. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition Park, 1:30. Mr. Kenneth Stager will present "The Bird of the Month." Talk (with colored slides) - "THROUGH THE HEART OF EUROPE ON A TREASURE TOUR" by Mr. Burton Oliver, Thrift and Conservation Supervisor of Los Angeles City Schools. Meet for lunch with friends in the Museum Cafeteria at noon.

Thursday, March 10. MEETING OF EXECUTIVE BOARD, 7:30 at home of the president.

Saturday, March 12. FIELD TRIP TO TUCKER HUMMINGBIRD SANCTUARY. Modjeska Canyon. Go out Santa Ana Freeway to Santa Ana, continue on 101 to Niguel Road, left to El Toro & Cook's Corner, left to Modjeska Canyon. Or go to Orange, Chapman Avenue to El Madera, Santiago Road to Modjeska Canyon. Meet at the Sanctuary at 9 A.M.

Thursday, March 17. FIELD TRIP TO RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDENS, in Claremont. Our Tanner Bus will leave the Grand Ave. entrance to the Biltmore Hotel between 5th and 6th Streets on Grand Avenue at 8:30 sharp. Fare, round trip \$1.75. A conducted trip through the Gardens at 10 A.M. Lunch at picnic tables in the Community Center Park at Indian Hill and 8th Sts. Afternoon birding in the Park and Scripps College Campus. For Bus reservations call DU 8-7945 or HO 5-3335.

Thursday, March 24. STUDY CLASS. Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. 10 A.M. First Hour: Talk- "HELPING YOUTH LEADERS IN NATURE PROGRAMS by Mrs. Mary Hood. Second Hour: BIRD STUDY and Participation by members. Bring items of interest and questions - to be answered by a Panel of Experts, Mr. Hastings, Mrs. Hood and others.

Sunday, March 27. FIELD TRIP TO AUDUBON NATURE CENTER OF CALIFORNIA, 664 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte. From Garvey Blvd., turn left on Rosemead Blvd., the next signal will be Rush, the next San Gabriel Blvd. where you turn left one block to Durfee Ave., turn left and go one mile. Meet at gate at 9 A.M. Bring Binoculars and lunch. Leader James W. Huffman.

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AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Tuesday, March 22. Virgil Junior High School, 152 N. Vermont Ave. at 7:45 P.M.

Saturday, March 26. John Burroughs Jr. High School, 600 So. McCadden Pl. 2 P.M. Olin Sewall Pettingill -- "TIP O' THE MITTEN"

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AUDUBON CENTER OF CALIFORNIA

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, except Sunday, 2 to 5 P.M.