

Western Tanager



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

THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOLUME 22

APRIL, 1955

NUMBER 8

AN ADVENTURE IN LEARNING

Charlotte McBride

It was my very good fortune this past year to attend the last session of the Audubon Camp of California at Sugar Bowl. For several years it has been my desire to attend one of these sessions, and I can truly say it surpassed all my expectations. It was for me, an unforgettable experience. Not a small part of the fun and enjoyment of the trip, was having Alma Stultz for a companion. It was fun from the time we left Los Angeles until we returned.

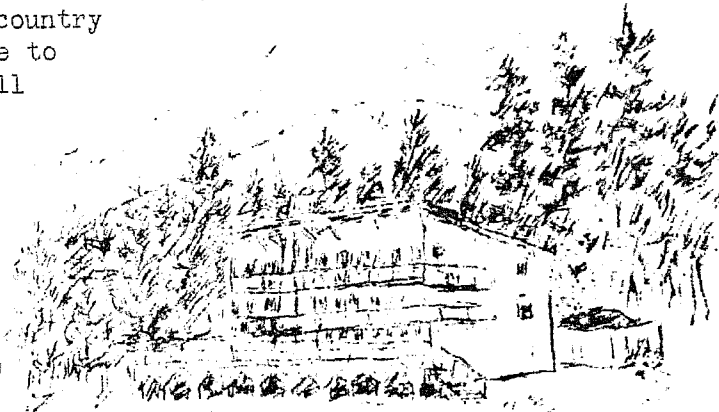
Everything at the Camp ran so smoothly and the days were so well planned, that one was liable to forget that it takes a lot of hard work and a capable guiding hand behind the scenes to run such a camp. Bill Goodall has such a guiding hand. He is a Natural Born Camp director, who expects all camp rules to be obeyed, and sees that they are, and yet could endear himself to all, by his antics at the evening Programs and his solo dance to his own singing at the Campfire.

I found it interesting, that all six of the instructors, while experts in their own fields, could talk and deal with all other subjects we were studying. When all groups and all the Staff were in the field together, it was wonderful to watch them toss the ball back and forth from one to the other. This gave your Camper a complete picture, not one of a number of small pieces he must try and fit together himself a little later on.

Details that helped make Camp life pleasant were - excellent food and plenty of it, lots of hot water for showers, comfortable beds and warm quarters when the nights turned cold. From the time the great brass Ski Bell in front of the Lodge rang to waken you each morning, until it rang at 8 P.M. calling you to the Chalet for the evening program, there was an air of expectancy coupled with enthusiasm. That we all started the day with this feeling of adventure, was evident in the way each person dashed for the Bulletin Board the moment he arrived down stairs to find his program for the day. It was also evident from the excited talk at the breakfast tables. And of course each day was an adventure. You were seeing and doing something new in the field with your instructor. It was strictly up to you whether you wished to look upon the time spent as a wonderful opportunity to learn more about nature, or as an enjoyable vacation in our beautiful Mountain country. It is always fun to vacation in the Mountains, but it is an unusual experience to spend so much time with those who know what the territory holds of interest and can point these things out to you. There is no pressure placed upon you to learn one single thing; tho' naturally they hope you do. There are no tests to pass.

We saw the territory all around the Donner country on both sides of the Sierras, from the highest mountains to the desert country around Reno. We toured from one life zone to another. There were half day trips as well as all day ones with all Instructors participating.

Continued
on
Page 44.



THE WESTERN Tanager

Published monthly, September - May by the Los Angeles Audubon Society, \$1.00 per year, free to all members. Editor: George T. Hastings, 517 Euclid St., Santa Monica, Telephone: EXbrook 5-1137.

THE 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

- President.....Miss Bessie Pope
1st Vice Pres.Mrs. Nurtha Dunn
2nd Vice Pres.Mr. Herbert Clarke
Exec. Sec'y.....Miss Elizabeth Patterson
Treasurer.....Miss Leoti Fisher
Registrar.....Mrs. Charlotte McBride

With great pleasure we welcome the following new members:

- Miss Irva Browne, 2521 So. Gaffey, San Pedro
Mr. Alexander Chisholm, 10569 Troon Ave., L. A. 64
Mrs. Mary R. Carver Christian, 1618-1/2 So. Hauser Blvd., L. A. 19
Miss Helen F. Connors, 1618 So. Hauser Blvd., L. A. 19
Mrs. R. H. Crary, 4000 Via Picaposte, Palos Verdes
Mrs. Eileen A. Creech, 1225 Arbor Dell Road, L. A. 41
Mr. Edwin Creutz, 4621 Blackthorn Ave., Long Beach 8
Dr. W. Harriet Davis, 1851 Crestmont Court, Glendale 8
Mrs. Harriet A. Decker, R.F.D. #1, 5333 Winterburg Ave. Huntington Beach
Mrs. M. C. Delaney, 386 So. Burnside Ave., L. A. 36
Miss Gladys Diesing, 1980 San Francisco, Long Beach 6
Mrs. John F. Duge, 642 Toyopa Dr., Pacific Palisades
Mr. P. O. Fry, 4822 Rosewood Ave., L. A. 4
Mrs. Ralph Hamlin, 2950 Overland Ave., L. A. 64

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are never too old to learn new words. I added one recently, a nice big jaw breaker. The word was "serendipity". Mary Hood read about it and passed it on to me, I, of course, exclaimed just as you have done, "now what on earth does that mean?" She then showed me an article in the November 1947 Nature Magazine about three princes of Serendip (somewhere in Ceylon) who were prone to set out for one thing and bring back another and Sir Horace Walpole coined the word serendipity to mean the substitution of one thing for another.

I decided then and there that such an art would be valuable to us all. We start out gaily on our field trips with the purpose of bringing back a long list of feathered friends many of them never seen before. And what happens? On that particular day the birds choose to spend their day light hours in some other spot, or a fog comes in making visibility nil. And homeward disgruntled go the bird watchers.

Was the trip a failure? Not for the "serendipity-ites". The trees hadn't moved away. The flowers and shrubs were still there. And what's more we had a delightful day, as the Spanish say, "in the free air". We were away for a few hours from the regular routine, whether home or business. What's more we had spent the day with friends and there is seldom a trip in which we have not made at least one new one.

And take it from me, Audubon folk make fine friends.

And how they are increasing! This is the best month for memberships we have had in many a day. There were thirty-four new members in this one month with a loss of only four. As I write our membership is about seven hundred and forty and I hope before the Tanager reaches you we shall have added still more.

Remember that goal of one thousand. We'll make it yet. Bessie Pope

COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Annual Meeting

At Asilomar, April 21 - 23. Besides the excellent scientific program there will be some outstanding movies, in color for the entertainment of those attending. Members of the Audubon Society will be welcome.

An Adventure in Learning, Continued. Each trip brought forth its own interests. On an all day outing to Bear Valley we watched hundreds of Robins, gathering for migration. Great numbers of Western Tanagers and Rufous Hummingbirds were already migrating. It was on this trip that I saw my first Water Ouzel. While we watched two Ouzels put on quite a show for us. Later we watched another in the stream in front of the Lodge. This one was as obliging as the other two and allowed us to remain close for some time. This was true of every bird which I added to my Life List, and there were quite a few, with the exception of a Rosy Finch at the top of the Squaw Valley Ski Lift, who refuse to come back. This was somewhat compensated for by a magnificent Swainson Hawk who didn't mind us at all and flew below as well as above us, giving a wonderful opportunity to study all his markings.

On the all-day trip to Reno, Lake Washoe and the Carson Range we enjoyed watching three Golden Eagles which soared near us for some time. Two White Pelicans against a very blue sky made a beautiful picture. Higher up on Mount Rose, the Clark Nutcrackers provided everyone with a good picture of life at home among the Nutcrackers.

One of the highlights of the whole stay at Sugar Bowl was the trip to Martis Valley to see the Beaver Dams. Any one who has seen Walt Disney's "Beaver Valley" will realize what a thrilling experience this was. This is a colony of some forty beavers, with seventeen dams on the stream. We walked out on the largest of these and inspected the large Beaver Lodge, in the middle of the pond. This had been repaired in several places and the earth was still damp. For a length of two blocks on each side of the stream all the Aspens had been cut down and were in all stages of branch stripping and cutting up. The beavers were very hard at work for winter was close upon them.

There were many things about my stay at the Audubon Camp that will never be forgotten. Such as cooking Rocks, under the watchful eye of Dorothy Treat in a demonstration of the forces of the earth. Playing Nature Detective, and learning to Stump Read. Peter Snyder's wonderful instruction on plant life, and his equally wonderful calling at the Square Dance.

Listening to a polite conversation (?) between Sandy Sprunt and Arnold Small as to whether an Accipiter that dashed past had a round tail or a square one. This sounded familiar to birders. Sandy's desire to see an Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, and Arnold's burning desire for a Ruffed Grouse, -Life Birds for each of them. These were seen by others at each session but not by our Bird Men. Jim Heath (who in places of more formal learning is known as Dr. Heath) has such a wonderful ability to bring humor into his discussions, whether about Rocks, Mountains or Mammals. John Harvill's terrific enthusiasm over his subject (his little critters he called them). Better known as Invertebrates.

John Harvill's statement to us when we arrived in regard to our learning. He said, "The Instructors are not trying to fill a bucket, but to light a lamp." I know this is what they did for me. I could not begin to remember all the information given me, but I came home a confirmed Conservationist, with an understanding of the Inter-relationships and Inter-dependence of all living things to each other and why Conservation means the survival of our standards of living on this continent.

AUDUBON CAMP OF CALIFORNIA

In the High Sierras near Donner Summit.
Five 2 week sessions.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. June 26 - July 9 | 3. July 24-Aug. 6 |
| 2. July 10 - July 23 | 4. Aug. 7- Aug. 20 |
| 5. Aug. 21- Sept. 3 | |

For illustrated folder and full information apply to Audubon Camp of California, 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4, Calif.

IDYLLWILD SCHOOL OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL SCIENCE

In the San Jacinto Mountains.

Upper division and graduate credit through Long Beach State College. Conservation Workshop, 2 units; Leadership Techniques, 1 unit; Field Nature Study, 2 units.

For descriptive folder write to Idyllwild Arts Foundation, Idyllwild, Calif.

WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY

Olive Alvey

Study Class held on February 24 at Plummer Park. Mr. Scott Lewis showed more tree pictures the first hour and described some of the broad-leafed trees of our area. He showed pictures of the California Laurel, Toyon, Big-leaf Maple, Elderberry, Ash and two cherries, Catalina and Holly-leafed, alike in the large cherries with very large pits and little flesh, of use only to birds. He also showed the Tree-of-Heaven, Ailanthus, which has become wild in some areas. He show pictures of some desert trees, the Smoke Tree which seen from a distance looks like a puff of smoke, and the Palo Verde which has dainty yellow flowers and compound leaves with tiny leaflets in spring. In hot months the leaflets fall leaving the long graceful green branches to carry on photosynthesis. The Smoke Tree has bright indigo flowers which few people see as it blossoms only in mid summer when few people visit the desert.

For the second hour "Don Tomas" Parker gave a discourse with songs, poems and drawings on the "Most Intelligent Bird in the World." This is the Crow, Corvus brachyrhynchos hesperis. This big black bird and its relative the Raven are among the best known of our birds. In flying the crow flaps its wings steadily but the raven flaps and sails. The birds are crafty, subtle and cunning and are said to have high intelligence and some imagination. Besides their familiar caw, caw, they have other calls and a sweet low song which is sung to themselves. Fields of grain may be greatly damaged by a flock of crows, but like other members of the family they consume untold amounts of insects, thus paying for the grain they eat.

Field Trip of February 27 to Griffith Park. Four undaunted persons found their way for the trip in the rain. Birding was done from the automobile window, with 29 species seen. Among them a Golden-crowned Sparrow and a Slate-colored Junco. Not an impressive list, but views of the birds were highly satisfactory and close-up.

Dorothy Groner, Leader.

Meeting of March 3 at the Los Angeles County Museum, The Bird of the Month was

presented by Mr. Kenneth Stager. He spoke on the FLICKER, showing skins of the Northern, Red-shafted, and hybrids of these. Once in a blue moon, and only in winter, do we have a Northern Flicker this far from its home. Hybrids produced when one of our Red-shafted breeds with a Northern are more common. The true Northern Flicker has lemon-yellow shafts and feathers in the wing and tail linings. It has a red nape patch and the male a black mustache. The under wing and tail coloring of the Red-shafted is reddish orange and the male's mustache is red and there is no nape patch. The hybrids show many combinations of the characters of the parents.

"Through the Heart of Europe on a Treasure Tour" was the subject of Mr. Burton Oliver's talk. All 45 of us went along with the Olivers on this fine tour. As we watched the beautiful color slides we imagined we were beside them seeing the treasures of those countries. It began with a train trip from Los Angeles to Montreal where they took ship, first stop Ireland, that lush green land. Then England steeped in tradition and history. Big Ben, changing of the guards at Buckingham Palace, the crown jewels in the Tower, all are part of England to us. Then to the spotless land of Holland, home of the Peace Palace in the Hague. Known for the cutting and grinding of diamonds, as well for the finest tulips in the world. Germany with the beautiful Rhine River and war ruins. Some of the new buildings are being made of brick made from ground up bricks from the ruins. Storks are not so numerous now as in the past. In Switzerland we saw towering snowy peaks and quaint villages in the flower-decked valleys. The country is noted for its excellent food. Italy with fabulous treasures of art and architecture, lovely churches and numerous cathedrals was the last country visited.

This winter Hermit Thrushes have been observed bathing first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening by Elizabeth Fulton and Kay Hardt near their homes. Mrs. Hardt says, "I even had one hop over the ice one morning till he found a thawed spot and took a satisfactory bath."

New Members, -continued

Mrs. Lucy C. Jenkins,
2500 Oregon Ave., Long Beach 6

Miss Clara Majorsack,
Sequit Canyon, Malibu

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur R. Mason,
4910 Arbor Road, Long Beach 11

Mr. William Ross Palmer,
P. O. Box 458, Ocean Park

Mr. Marvin M. Petker,
1134-1/2 So. Menlo Ave., L. A. 6

Mrs. Kenneth H. Rayl,
821 So. 6th St. Burbank

Miss Doris M. Redfield,
4951 Whitsett Ave., North Hollywood

Mr. Donald A. Reed,
334 W. 54th St., L. A. 37

Mrs. Ruth Rivenburgh,
324 W. 9th St., San Pedro

Miss Charlotte Rosengrant,
2681 Delta Ave., Long Beach 10

Miss Phyllis M. Seldon,
4822 Rosewood, L. A. 4

Mr. Myron W. Shomler,
9300 Reverie Rd., Tujunga

Mr. and Mrs. Henry F. Smith,
716 No. Durfee Ave., El Monte

Mr. Eric O. Sonntag,
4001 West Pico Blvd., L. A. 19

Mrs. Alan Stensvold,
5141 Sophia Ave., Encino

Miss June Stoner,
435 N. Formosa Ave., L. A. 36

Mrs. W. G. Tuers,
4343 Bakman Ave., No. Hollywood

Mr. Guy N. Tyler,
5601 Carlton Way, Hollywood 28

HUMMINGBIRD NOTES FROM THE NORTH

Loye Miller

Those multiple decades spent in Southern California never dulled my small-boy wonder at sight of my first hummingbird. (When "wonder" leaves us, old age has arrived). It was therefore a great pleasure to find an Anna Hummer's nest one hundred miles north of San Francisco - and in the dead of winter too (January 22, 1955).

Southern bird watchers soon learn to expect this resident species (*Calypte anna*) to start the nesting cycle before its migratory relatives have begun to feel the urge to move northward from their wintering grounds in the tropics. The male Anna's Hummer may indulge in courtship flights in Los Angeles County even at Thanksgiving time. But here we were on the shores of Clear Lake in Lake County. A long period of cold, wet weather had climaxed with two inches of snow at lake level and much more on the encircling hills. Skies cleared on January 22 leaving ice and heavy frost that remained on the ground till late in the morning. Yet here was a hummer's nest with one egg and the attendant mother who occupied the nest intermittently, raising its walls by tucking in additional material, sitting quietly, or buzzing off to feed among the abundant manzanita blossoms.

Dense live-oak cover was available within 15 feet but she had chosen to saddle her lichen covered cup on the stem of a leafless red-bud bush and about nine feet from the ground.

A single egg was present at the time of discovery and unfortunately we were obliged to leave the next day. Presumably a second egg was laid on the third day, for such is the procedure in this species.

How could so tiny a fragment of living tissue expect to generate and maintain the heat required for incubation of eggs in such a situation? I asked my younger colleague, Dr. O. P. Pearson, about it. He gave me an impish grin and replied "I have all the scientific data required to prove it can't be done."

Unfortunately he was right - but he had to call in the assistance of a blue jay. The next visit discovered the egg gone and the nest in partial disarray.

"The chant of the earth and sky and of living creatures is old. It sings in every green leaf. It is proclaimed again in every feather of the raven, in each hair of the mouse and every grain of sand upon the ridge. It sings through the veins of the living and in the dust of life that has passed by. In them all the prophecies of the forest are fulfilled and by them is Creation eternally made new.

In the chant plainly heard by all those of the forest, their lives joined together and indiseverable in the onrushing sweep of time and life that is neither accidental nor purposeless, but contains always the thought and destiny of creation!

THOSE OF THE FOREST, Wallace B. Grange

CONSERVATION NOTES

Robert Blackstone

Assembly Bill 3030, to repeal the Mt. San Jacinto Winter Park Authority Act, is scheduled to be heard this month by the Comm. on Conservation Planning and Public Works of the State Assembly. This Bill was introduced by Assemblyman H. Allen Smith of the 43rd District. Preservation of Mt. San Jacinto State Park as a Primitive Area is important to us in California just as preservation of Dinosaur is to the nation. If you have not done so, I urge you to write to the committee, to Governor Knight and your representative in the State Assembly to ask them to support this bill.

Senate Bill 1793 to open State Parks to hunting has been referred to the Committee on Governmental Efficiency. Write to this Committee and your representative in the State Senate, and let them know how you feel about it.

The House Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation is conducting hearings on the Upper Colorado River Project. The proponents of the project have been having their say, the arguments have revolved principally around the question of water rights. The question of needless invasion of our National Parks has hardly been mentioned. Most of us, I think, would rather see the issue decided on this basis. Since California's representatives are pledged to oppose the project, Rep. Hosmer suggests that we Californians try to persuade friends and relatives in other parts of the country to voice their opposition to it. We would do this, however, for the sake of our National Parks, not as Rep. Hosmer intended, in the interests of California's water rights.

Preservation of America's wetlands was the theme for National Wildlife Week, March 20 to 26. Three-quarters of the natural swamps, marshes and stream wetlands of our country have been destroyed by drainage, pollution or flooding by dams. Remaining wetlands are disappearing rapidly, with the wild animals that live on them. Nowhere is this truer than here in Southern California. We will have to act soon if we are to save some of our remaining wetlands as sanctuaries.

OBSERVATIONS

GEESE, SWANS: 8 Whistling Swans, Hughes Lake; 14 American Mergansers, Bouquet Reservoir, Mar. 6 (C. Daugherty). White-fronted Goose, Malibu Lagoon, Mar. 7 (B. Hoffman).

HAWKS, ETC.: First Turkey Vulture of season about same date as in past years, Palos-Verdes Estates, Feb. 25 (C. McBride); migrating Vultures passing over Sanctuary at El Monte daily, one day for an hour and a half without a break (A. Stultz); Marsh and Red-tailed Hawks going through mating flights, Palos Verdes., Mar. 9 (C. McB.); 2 pair of Red-shouldered (Red-bellied) nesting at Sanctuary (A.S.)

FLOVER: Mountain, Salton Sea area, Feb. 19 (D. Groner).

HUMMINGBIRDS, SWIFTS: Rufous Hummer, Palos Verdes, Feb. 26 (C. McB.); White-throated Swifts, Echo Park, Feb. 22 (K. Hardt), Point Firmin, Mar. 2 (R. Blackstone).

FLYCATCHERS: Western Kingbird, Palos Verdes, Mar. 5 (C. McB.)

SWALLOWS: 1 Tree at Sanctuary, Feb. 17, next day 18, Mar. 6 about 200 swallows flying low over river, 100 of them Violet Green the others Tree, Cliff, Rough-winged and one Barn (A.S.)

THRUSHES, ETC: Many reports of Robins, many hundreds at Palos Verdes in Feb. (Mr. and Mrs. A. McClain), in Los Angeles (K. McCune), Hollywood (Myfanney Lewis), Pasadena (Mrs. Shearer). Hermit Thrush, Ruby Curry says one flew against a window in Eagle Rock, Feb. 23 and was killed. A friend reported a similar occurrence in Glendale about the same time.

WAXWINGS: Cedar, many at Sanctuary thru Feb., and into March (A.S.); hundreds about her home in Los Angeles last weeks in Feb. (R. McC.); small flock, West Los Angeles, Mar. 3 (R.B.)

PIFIT: Water, over 50 in ploughed field near Bixby Slough, Feb. 26, between 100 and 200 Mar. 2 (R.B.)

ORIOLE: Hooded, Hollywood, Mar. 6 (M.L.)

FINCHES: All three species of Goldfinch about bird bath daily (Kay Hardt).

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Calendar for April 1955

Thursday, April 7. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING. Los Angeles County Museum, Exposition park, 1:30. THE BIRD OF THE MONTH will be presented by Mr. Kenneth Stager. "THE DESERT: FLOWERING OR BARE", a talk with color pictures by Mrs. Catherine Freeman. Mrs. Freeman's articles and pictures have appeared in such publications as Westways, Desert Magazine and Natural History. We are fortunate in having her give our Easter week program.

Saturday, April 9. FIELD TRIP TO FERN DELL AND GRIFFITH PARK. Meet at 8:30 in the Nature Museum. Take Western Avenue bus to end of line, where cars will meet Audubon members at about 8:30. Bring lunch.

Sunday, April 17. FIELD TRIP TO IRVINE PARK, TUCKER HUMMINGBIRD SANCTUARY and UPPER BAY BALBOA. Take Santa Ana Freeway, go to Orange, past the circle and follow highway signs. Meet 9 A.M. at entrance to Irvine Park. Bring binoculars and lunch. Leader Dorothy Groner.

Note: this is one week earlier than the usual date for our Sunday trips.

Thursday, April 21. FIELD TRIP TO ANTELOPE VALLEY. Our Tanner bus will leave from the Grand Ave. entrance to the Biltmore Hotel, between 5th and 6th Streets at 8:30. Round trip fare \$3.00. Bring lunch and binoculars. We will travel via San Fernando Blvd. to Weldon Jct. Turn right on Highway 6 to Solamint Jct. Right up Soledad Canyon to Vasquez Rocks Jct. Left to historical Vasquez Rocks. Stop an hour, then back to Soledad and on to Palmdale. Left on main highway in Palmdale to Lake Hughes, stopping at first large Joshua Forest on right to bird. On to Munz Lakes picnic grounds, for lunch and birding. Leave on return trip at 3:30. Charges for other than bus passengers: Vasques Rocks 10¢, Munz Lakes 25¢. For bus reservations call DU 8-7935 or HO 5-3335. Caroline Daugherty, Leader.

Thursday, April 28. STUDY CLASS. Flummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. 10 A.M. First hour, CURRENT CONSERVATION ISSUES. Our Conservation Chairman, Robert Blackstone will tell of legislation that would affect our wild life and recreational districts such as Dinosaur National Monument in Utah. Second Hour: A WEEK ON THE YAMPA AND GREEN RIVERS, IN RUBBER BOATS? narrated by Mrs. Effie Mahaffie. Those pictures, taken by Mr. and Mrs. Mahaffie, record their trip with the Sierra Club last year through the area now threatened by the proposed Echo Park dam.

Visitors are welcome at these meetings and trips.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Tuesday, April 12. Virgil Junior High School, 152 N. Vermont Ave. at 7:45 P.M.

Saturday, April 16. John Burroughs Jr. High School, 600 So. McCadden Pl., 2 P.M.

Telford H. Work -- "ARTIC TO THE TROPICS"

AUDUBON CENTER OF CALIFORNIA

664 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte
Mrs. O. M. Stultz, Director

Phone FORrest 0-1872
Mrs. M. Gertrude Woods, Assistant
Director

Nature Museum open daily, except Sunday, 2 to 5 P.M.