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Western



Tanager

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SALICORNIA

Most of us know this plant that characterizes our coastal marshes. The Venice and Playa del Rey marshes which we visit every year are Salicornia marshes. There in summer sparrows- Savannah, Belding, Thick-billed and Song, Killdeer, Rails and other birds make their nests. Short-eared and Barn Owls have also been found nesting there. Until the mosquito abatement work of the city did much work the Black-necked Stilts found it a suitable place to raise their young. On sandy places in or on the edges of the marsh Least Terns have nested for years. But it is in the fall and winter that the marshes are of most interest. From as far north as the Arctic Circle and places in between come thousands of birds. In early September and into October Phalaropes on their way to the Southern Hemisphere zigzag about on the water of the ponds and streams. From early fall till spring the Godwits, Curlews, Willets, Black-bellied and Semi-palmated Favers and the little Sandpipers called Peeps are in large companies on the mud flats or stream banks. To see Avocets and Stilts always gives one a thrill. Standing high above the plants of the marsh Great Blue Herons and pure white Egrets, Snowy and American, are sure to be seen. Always there but rarely seen are Bitterns and Clapper Rails. In the ponds and streams are Ducks, Coots and Grebes. And one is always hoping to see some rarer bird, a White-faced Glossy Ibis or Sandhill Crane that sometimes visit for a short time.

For bird lovers no places are of greater interest, but for others the marshes are wasted land to be reclaimed by draining or filling, or sites to be excavated for lakes. The Venice marshes we think of as peculiarly our own may shortly become a thing of the past if the plans for the Marina del Rey small boat harbor are carried out as they probably will be within a few years. The original plans for shore line development called for a water fowl sanctuary of over 100 acres between Ballona Creek and Culver Boulevard. Apparently this is not being considered at present and will not be unless it is urged by many interested people.

But to go back to where we started, to Salicornia. This plant is not only the dominant one of the marsh, but in many large areas, the only one. The name means "salt-horn" because the branches seem horn-like and

the sap contains considerable salt. Common names are pickle-weed, glasswort and samphire; the first because the plants are sometimes pickled for food, the second because formerly ashes from the burned plants were used in glass making, and the last is a corruption of the French *Herb de Saint Pierre*, or Saint Peter's plant as salicornia resembles a European plant of that name. The species of our marsh, chiefly *Salicornia pacifica*, is a much branched plant growing to two feet high, apparently leafless, as the scale-

like leaves closely pressed against the fleshy stems at the joints seem parts of the stems. The joints are from 1/4 to 1/2 inch long. The flowers - no one but a botanist would call them that - are tiny things under the scales of spike-like continuations of the

(Continued on page 9).

THE WESTERN TANAGER
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THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
Organized 1919 Incorporated 1951
"To promote the study and protection of
birds and other wild life, plants, soil,
and water."

MEMBERSHIP

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

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8133 Elrita Dr., Hollywood 46

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The season's meetings and field trips
resume this month. We will meet old
friends - and make new ones, as the So-
ciety's membership has now increased to
782. Let's bring it up to 1000 by the
end of the year.

On the Calendar Sheet, please note the
new Evening Meeting; also the change of
building on Exposition Park grounds for
the Thursday Afternoon Meeting.

The first Screen Tour comes Tuesday
evening October 25 and is repeated Satur-
day afternoon the 29 at John Burroughs
Jr. High School. This last will be fol-
lowed by a social hour, with coffee and
tea at our Audubon House in Plummer Park.
This will be a chance to meet the natural-
alist Walter Shackleton, who will have
taken us on a thrilling but inexpensive
tour through Kentucky, whose flower is
the goldenrod, the very name of which
causes some people to sneeze. But this
sort of attack is easily recovered from
or I wouldn't dare use it.

Looking forward to seeing you, one and
all in "October's Bright Blue Weather."

Grace Harvard Phillips

Christmas is coming! True it seems a
long way off in October, but it might be
well to plan now. What could make a bet-
ter present for any nature lover than a
season ticket to the Audubon Screen Tours?
The recipient of your gift would think of
you with gratitude at least five times.

OUTDOOR HAZARDS. A new book by our
Mary V. Hood. Mrs. Hood has given illus-
trated lectures on the subject - Outdoor
Hazards, Real and Fancied, to our Society
and to the Nature Leaders Workshop. Now
these are described in an attractive il-
lustrated book which will be of value to
everyone who goes into the open country,
and of special interest to us as written
by a friend and former president of the
Society.

Mrs. Margaret Shcolnek,
4510 Exposition Blvd., L.A. 16

Mr. Norbert E. White,
10501 So. St. Andrews Pl., L.A. 47

Mr. George H. Wickman,
5221 Vincent Ave., L.A. 41

WHAT'S GONE ON IN THE SOCIETY

On Sunday, September 11, 21 members and friends of the Society left Santa Barbara on what proved to be one of the most productive pelagic trips in recent years. From both the number of birds and the number of species seen the trip was a success.

The captain of the 50-foot fishing boat Speed King provided us with 80 pounds of anchovies, so we were able to start chumming from the moment we left port. The ship always was surrounded with gulls, shearwaters and pelicans. On several occasions Jaegers came right up to the boat to inspect the hordes of gulls.

New species to almost all on the boat were 65 Arctic Terns that were seen in flocks ranging from 3 to as many as 15. Four Shearwaters were seen, - Sooty, Pink-footed, Slender-billed and Black-vented. All were observed in some numbers; the first two numbering in the thousands, and about five each of the others. Other interesting species were 12 Pomarine Jaegers, 3 Parasitic Jaegers, 7 Sabine Gulls, 1 Barn Swallow far out at sea and 60 Red-throated Loons in the lagoon at Santa Barbara. A highlight of the trip home along the coast highway was seeing two White-tailed Kites at different locations.

In all 29 species were seen,
Jim Clements, Leader.

RESULTS OF BIRD BANDING

Bird Banding in North America is under the direction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the cooperation of the Canadian Wildlife Service and participation by state and provincial game departments and many licensed volunteers.

Reports on banding and recovery are the means by which information is obtained on migration routes, distribution to wintering and breeding grounds, mortality and other subjects important to regulation and management.

A Caspian Tern was recovered 26 years after banding. A ring-billed Gull and an Osprey after 21 years. A Mallard and a Pintail with known ages of more than 20 years.

Among the longest intervals between banding and recovery of the smaller land

birds are 14 years for Purple Martin and Blue Jay and 13 years for Chimney Swift.

Wild birds banded in North America have been recovered from Siberia, Africa, France and the mid-Pacific.

The Pintail is especially famous as a traveller: one banded in Labrador on Sept. 7, 1951 was recovered 18 days later in southern England, another banded at Tule Lake, California on Aug. 16, 1949 recovered at Cook Island, New Zealand on Nov. 15 the same year.

In the past about 7,000,000 birds have been banded and 500,000 more are being added each year. More than 500,000 recoveries and returns are now available for study.

JUNIOR AUDUBON

The Junior Club that meets at the Arroyo Seco Playground every Tuesday was written up in the paper a week or two ago. This club is sponsored by Mrs. Kay Hardt with the assistance of Mrs. Agnes Cordy and Mrs. Lura Lowe Wilcox. At present, according to the paper, the club members are making butterfly nets and bug houses. The latter are cigar boxes covered with nylon stockings that have seen better days in which the youngsters are keeping live insects for study.

SALICORNIA, (continued from first page)

stems. In these spikes the joints are no longer than broad, under each of the scales are three "flowers", each of two stamens and one pistil, or commonly of only stamens or pistils. All that can be seen of the flowers are the tips of the stigmas or the anthers that extend beyond the edges of the scales.

There are other plants in the marsh, - in more open places alkali weed with quarter inch long white flowers, a creeping mallow, knotweed, pig weed, marsh grasses and others; but everywhere Salicornia is the most noticeable.

By the edges of some ponds where the water is not too salty are patches of the giant bulrush, tule, Scirpus acutus, with leafless stems that may be as much as 10 feet tall, with clusters of flowers in small brown heads at the tip. But tules really belong to the fresh-water marshes.

A TRIP TO THE NORTH
Ethel B. Craig

This August three other Audubonites and I had a very enjoyable auto trip to Vancouver Island and back along the beautiful Washington, Oregon and California coast. We listed 125 species of birds we were able to identify.

Our first big thrill was seeing a dozen or more Great Blue Herons wading and feeding just north of Point Mugu. Then we saw the colorful flower fields around Lompoc where seedsmen grow plants for the seeds and watched a couple of dozen baby Quails feeding in the garden of the Purisima Mission while papa quail stood guard on a near-by fence post and called orders.

The next day over one hundred Yellow-billed Magpies were seen, flying in groups of from 10 to 25 from tree top to tree top as we ate our lunch under a huge spreading live oak on the Hunter Liggett Military Reservation near Mission San Antonio de Padua.

Swallows were seen daily darting here and there over fields, trees or marsh, morning, noon and evening. We checked off Bank, Barn, Cliff, Rough-winged, Tree and Violet-green Swallows and a Vaux Swift. There may have been others, -but they were too swift for us.

Night Hawks, at least a dozen, put on a beautiful diving show, with much zooming and chatter, for us the evening we strolled the university campus at Eugene, Oregon. The day before we had seen many Lazuli Buntings in a meadow as we drove down to Oregon caves. They are so dainty and blue. Their solemn stoop-shouldered friend, the Western Bluebird was often seen on wire or post.

The Clark Nutcracker ate our peanuts at beautiful Paradise Valley as we gazed at snow covered Mt. Ranier or the lovely avalanche lilies.

As we ferried through the San Juan Islands to Sidney, Vancouver Island, many Pigeon Guillemots were seen and on our return from Victoria to Port Angeles numerous Murres were bobbing on the water and quickly diving out of sight. The beautiful black and white Dall Porpoise gave us a thrill as they played around the boat. Gulls were not seen in great numbers at

any one place but many species were noted, from the big Glaucous to the tiny Sabine.

We all enjoyed the Olympic Park, but few birds were seen there. We agreed the Rain Forest might be more mysterious when dripping but the unbelievable two weeks without rain made it only spongy, not slippery underfoot and the shafts of sunlight and shadows through the mosses were lovely.

AUDUBON HOUSE NATURE MUSEUM
Irma Hecht

The little frame house in Plummer Park is the oldest house in Hollywood. It was the home of the Plummer family. Owned by the county, the Audubon Society has been given the use of it for a headquarters. Nicely sheltered by trees in which many types of birds like to nest, it is the center of a small Sanctuary.

Two tray feeders are kept filled with bird food and a new bird bath was recently given by the Audubon Society.

This little house has no kitchen, but once a month, after the Audubon Screen Tour lecture it blossoms forth with ladies, food and a tea party where members meet the lecturer.

The House has been open all year - from two to four o'clock every Wednesday and Saturday - for passers-by, playground children and Scout Troops. Some of our members give talks on conservation and nearly all phases of nature. The talks are planned to meet requirements for Girl and Boy Scout badge requirements. For troop visits appointments are made in advance.

Mounted birds and prepared skins, specimens of insects and shells, rocks and minerals, posters and lovely bird pictures are in the house.

Brownie and Cub Scouts are given a "look see" of many fields of nature before settling on a badge subject to work for.

A fine serve yourself library of nature books enables borrowers simply to write their names on the card in the book pocket, leave the card and return it to the book when it is returned.

Come visit us, won't you?

GOONEYBIRDS AND AIRPLANES
From the ELEPAIO of the Hawaii
Audubon Society

Two years ago our Screen Tours folder had a picture of a pair of Laysan Albatross in their curious dance. Last year the Military Air Transport Service reported that ten planes had been damaged on Midway Island by collisions with these birds, popularly called Gooneybirds. The M.A.T. asked assistance of the Fish and Wildlife Service in reducing the hazard to planes. (Nothing was said of the damage done to albatross by the planes).

Midway is an atoll with a coral barrier reef about 5 miles across with two moderate sized islands, Sand and Eastern. On the largest of these, Sand, is a naval station providing navigational communications and serving as a refueling station for vessels and aircraft.

Two biologists from branches of Wildlife Research spent a month on the island, studying the two species of Albatross, the Black-footed and Laysan, that nest there. "Even with all our reading about Midway, we were surprised upon our arrival to see so many ironwood trees and other luxuriant vegetation.

The studies showed that neither dense smoke nor loud noises caused the birds to move from their nests. When eggs were removed the birds continued sitting for an average of four days before deserting the nests."

The damage to aircraft is caused not by birds nesting on the runways, but by birds in the air over them, but below an elevation of 200 feet. Most planes taking off from Midway use a "short field" takeoff, a short run and a rapid climb, quickly rising above the 200 foot danger zone.

If by destroying eggs of the Albatross on Sand Island the birds can be persuaded to move across the lagoon to Eastern Island they will no longer interfere with aircraft and visa versa. The captain at the Air Transport Headquarters in Hawaii said he believed that within 5 years Midway will become inoperative for regular transport use. Then it can be left for the birds.

In *Outdoor California*, published by the State Department of Fish and Game we note that for the fiscal year 1953-54 some 193,000 Duck Stamps were purchased by the State's duck hunters and conservationists. It is also of interest that

74,776 deer (the number probably not complete) were harvested. This was the highest kill in the history of the Department. Probably for the deer being harvested is no different from being killed.

WHEN DO BIRDS BREED IN THE TROPICS

In Science News Letter of October 2, 1954 there is a short article by Dr. Alden H. Miller, professor of zoology at the University of California and President of the American Ornithologists Union on this subject. The tropic birds just nest all the year round. The breeding cycle appears to be determined by the time the individual hatches. When the bird becomes of age, no matter what time of the year he finds a mate. Then he rests for an appropriate period before breeding again. So in the tropics individuals of a single species may be found nesting at any time of the year, while others of the same species are resting instead.

ANNUAL BIRD SURVEY OF
THE DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY

For the past nine years the Society has prepared and published a year's survey. The last one, for 1953, the one for 1954 is presumably being prepared now, is of over 100 mimeographed pages plus a map of the area about Detroit. Notes on 255 species of birds tell of their status in the area during the year. There are summaries with explanatory notes for winter, spring, summer and fall. There is a special count of hawks. From 12 bird banding stations are reports on the numbers of birds banded, of returns, and notes on kinds of traps and bait found successful. 5669 birds of 115 species were banded in 1953. There is also a nesting summary and a breeding bird census. A report of the Christmas Count is lacking. We wonder if any other Audubon Society does such a fine piece of work in observing and recording the birds of their area.

A newspaper report from San Diego -- It's not news for a mail carrier to be threatened or even bitten by a dog, but one has now complained that he is regularly attacked by a hummingbird.

Every victory of science reveals more clearly a divine design in nature, a remarkable conformity in all things from the infinitesimal to the infinite.

From "Preview of the Next 25 Years," by David Sarnoff in Reader's Digest of March 1955.

AUDUBON CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE

This Golden Anniversary year of the National Audubon Society has a special Conservation Objective:--Save our National Bird -- The Bald Eagle. Since its founding the Society has carried on a vigorous campaign to protect species of wildlife threatened with extinction or seriously reduced in numbers. Our national emblem, the bald eagle, is not yet in danger of extinction, but its population has been decimated by illegal shooting and alteration of its habitat. As an example, in four Florida counties in which he has banded eagles for many years Charles L. Broley found 74 nests that raised young in 1945. This year only 10 nests raised young in the same area. It is estimated that there may be fewer than 1,000 pairs of bald eagles in the United States. Unless effective action can be taken to stem the decrease of our national bird, we may before long face the prospect of being represented by an extinct emblem. That would place the United States in the position of having denied freedom to the symbol of its freedom. The National Audubon Society is currently conducting a nation-wide inventory of bald eagles in the hope of obtaining data that will be a guide for future action.

BIRDS AT AUDUBON CENTER

Mrs. Alma Stults reports that they have had more birds at the Sanctuary than usual due in part to the fact that since the fire abundant food and water have been put out. Bullock and Hooded Orioles have nested in the area and raised young. Counted 16 at the feeders at one time. We estimate about 50% increase in orioles since last year. The following have nested and raised young since the fire: Blue Grosbeaks, a pair of White-tailed Kites, a pair of Red-shouldered (Red-bellied) Hawks, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Cardinals and Black-chinned Hummingbirds. The Black-chinned Hummingbirds are numerous. Anna's Hummingbirds have returned and the "battle royal" is on. Black-crowned Night Herons have been observed frequently since June. Mourning Doves are on the increase. Flocks of over 50 seen at the feeding stations. Very few Quail have been noted. There is a definite decrease in Song Sparrows due to the deep brush having been burned. The population of resident birds is approximately the same as in previous years.

OBSERVATIONS -- Mid Aug. to Mid Sept.
Ruby Curry

HERONS, IBIS: Green Heron, Amer. Bittern, 1
Audubon Center, Aug. 13 (A. Stultz);
Wood Ibis, 48 at Carlsbad, Sept. 7
(Georgie Ware)

QUAIL: Valley, Sept. 17, Eagle Rock, hills
and yards (R.C.)

SHORE BIRDS: Aug. 29, Venice Marshes, hundreds of Black-bellied Plover, mostly winter plumage, a few summer and some in transition; hundred of Northern Phalaropes, a few Wilson; Avocets; Black-necked Stilts (B.T.H.)

Wandering Tattler, Ballona Creek, Sept. 18 (G.T.H.)

TERNS: Royal and Forster, Venice Marsh, Sept. 18 (G.T.H.)

PIGEONS: Sept. 1 to 16, Bandtails, 4, 3 adults, 1 young on tray, young apparently being scolded by parents; Chinese Doves but no Mourning, Eagle Rock (R.C.) Bandtails at Helen Pratt's.

OWLS: Eagle Rock, Screech Owl calling (R.C) on tree in front of house, Studio City, Sept. 7 (R.Julian); Burrowing, 6 together, apparently one family, Aug. 17, Playa del Rey (B.Hoffman).

POORWILL: Eagle Rock hills, calling every night, Aug. and Sept. (R.C.)

HUMMINGBIRDS: Sept. Anna and Black-chinned at commercial feeders (J. West, Gardiner, Hardt); Rufous at Tucker Sanctuary, in mid July on return migration from north (B.H.)

HORNED LARK: Aug. 29, small flock at Del Rey (G.T.H.)

CROWS: 50 on new golf course, No. Hollywood, Sept. 15 (R.J.)

TITS: Thru Aug. and Sept. Titmice and Wren Tits calling and bathing, Eagle Rock (R.C.); Mountain Chickadee, small flock Glendale Sanitarium (M.Yost) Sept. 4 flock of Bushtits working on Toyon shrub (R.C.)

THRASHER: California, singing and probing for ants (R.C.)

WARELER: Aug. 30, Pileolated, near Sycamore Glen (K. Hardt)

TOWHEE: In Sept. more Spotted than Brown, Eagle Rock (R.C.)

SPARROWS: No White-crowned have been reported but they should be here this month.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
OFFICERS -- 1955-1956

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CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER, 1955

Thursday, October 6, 1:30 P.M. AFTERNOON PROGRAM MEETING. Note new location.

Exposition Community House, 3990 Menlo Avenue, corner of Santa Barbara on Park grounds, reached by #5 and #6 buses.

Short Vacation Reports. Talk - ONE LITTLE JUNIOR AUDUBON SOCIETY AND HOW IT GREW by Miss Lura Lowe, with exhibits of handicraft. Miss Lowe has been for years Director at Arroyo Seco Playground, a popular and attractive place for youngsters. Film -- BIRDS OF THE MARSH.

Saturday, October 8. FIELD TRIP TO PLAYA DEL REY. For the study of shore and marsh birds. Take Metropolitan Coach Company bus at 5th and Olive Streets at 8:50, arriving at Playa del Rey at 9:30. Meet at south end of lagoon. Bring binoculars and lunch. Leader, Miss Ethel Craig.

Tuesday, October 11. EVENING MEETING, 8 P.M. in Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard. An excellent program has been prepared for this, the first evening meeting. Come out and get this series of meetings off to a good start.

Thursday, October 20. FIELD TRIP to Marineland at Portuguese Bend. Served by Palos Verdes Shore Line bus. Admission with the group \$1.00. Picnic tables and lunch counters available.

Meet at 8:45 at end of #6 bus line, 116th and Vermont, where autos will pick up those needing transportation. "Birding" along the way at the sloughs, on the beach in the afternoon. Leader, Mrs. Mary V. Hood.

Call Miss Edna Burt, PLeasant 1-6984 or REpublic 2-1772 for reservations.

Sunday, October 23. FIELD TRIP to Mt. Pinos. Meet at 9 A.M. at Frazier Park cutoff just beyond Gorman on the Ridge Route. Those who wish may start Saturday and camp over night at Frazier Park. Leader, Mr. Herbert Clarke. For further information call James Clements, TOpaz 2-3374.

Thursday, October 27. STUDY CLASS at 10 A.M. in Long Hall, Plummer Park. Mr. Robert Blackstone will talk about SOMEBODY IS DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THE WEATHER -- and answer questions about how the weather is forecast. Mrs. Nurth Dunn will lead a discussion on WHAT BIRDS TO LOOK FOR NOW.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME TO ALL THESE MEETINGS AND TRIPS

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

RHAPSODY IN BLUEGRASS -- Walter H. Shackleton.

Tuesday, October 25 at 7:45, Virgil Jr. High School, 152 No. Vermont Ave., L.A.

Saturday, October 29 at 2:00 P.M., John Burroughs Jr. High School 600 So. McCadden Place, Los Angeles.