

T H E

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

# Western Tanager

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# Tanager

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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Number 2

## A MALE CALIFORNIA QUAIL RAISES A BROOD

By C. V. Duff

There are very few published records of a male California quail raising a brood. In 1918, Grinnell, Bryant and Storer wrote in Game Birds of California on page 529, "The male bird will assume the duties of incubation if the female is done away with, but otherwise seems only to perform the duty of sentinel." In 1938, Volume 40, Number 2, March-April issue of The Condor, John B. Price reports an incubating male California Quail with photo showing male quail on the nest. Later in the same year in Volume 40, No. 6 of The Condor, Ben Glading reports on "A Male California Quail Hatches a Brood." This situation may occur more frequently than supposed, but opportunity for observation may not be possible. Because of the paucity of accounts of a male quail raising young without assistance from a female, it seems that our observations may be of interest.

In the spring of 1956, four pairs of quail fed regularly on the back lawn of our home in Bel-Air. One of the females walked with quite a limp in the right leg so could always be distinguished from the other females.

On the morning of June 8th, a male and the female with the limp came up over the hill and on to the edge of the back lawn, accompanied by seven chicks that appeared to have hatched quite recently. This group fed every day on the lawn and in the area where we put feed for the birds. On June 20th, another pair appeared with eight chicks which also appeared to have hatched quite recently and fed daily in the feeding area.

About 10 o'clock on the morning of July 16th, a male quail and nine chicks about a day old appeared on the edge of the front lawn and fed for nearly an hour. He would feed with them a few minutes and then fly up on to a post just above the feeding chicks to do sentinel duty for a few minutes and then return to feed. He watched over them with the greatest of caution and was noticeably doing duty both as male and female. We watched in vain for the female to appear. When they had finished feeding, he led them up the hillside and they disappeared in the brush. In the afternoon, he returned to the same spot where they had fed in the morning but still no female accompanied the group. The next day they followed the same pattern as the day before, and we watched them closely, but no female appeared. This went on every day until July 22nd, when they failed to appear, and we did not see them until 7:30 in the morning on July 30th, when the male arrived with only six chicks. During the days of their absence, two Roadrunners were quite active on our front and back lawns, so it may have been that this was the reason for the male not bringing his chicks there to be fed. We did not see them again until the morning of August 4th, when the male and five chicks appeared and fed on the edge of the lawn. They had spent about

(continued on Page 9)

## THE WESTERN TANAGER

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 Editor Emeritus.....George T. Hastings  
 Editor.....Mrs. Fern Shelford  
 3315 W. 41st St., L.A. 8.....AX 4-0410

## 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 National Audubon Society in-  
 cludes subscription to Audubon Magazine.  
 Regular \$5; Sustaining \$10; Active \$25;  
 Supporting \$50; Student \$2.

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 Thurs. Morn. Program....Mrs. Olive Alvey  
 Sunday Field Trips.....Mr. James Huffman  
 Thursday Field Trips.....To Be Announced  
 Saturday Field Trips....Miss Ethel Craig

## AUDUBON HOUSE

Headquarters of L. A. Audubon Society,  
 7377 Santa Monica Blvd...HO 7-9495  
 Open: Wed., Thurs., Sat...2-4 p.m.  
 3rd Wednesday....7:30-8 p.m.  
 4th Thursday (members only) 9-10 a.m.,  
 1-4 p.m. Groups by appointment.

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This Society has grown considerably since I first joined some five years ago. With this growth has come added responsibility to participate in civic affairs. This season, already, we have taken part in the Plummer Park Fiesta and have helped to maintain an exhibit at the Los Angeles County Fair. We may expect to be called upon more and more to take part in such activities.

This work, as well as the more routine work of the Society, is done by the Standing Committees, whose names and chairmen you will find listed on this page. Though perhaps less pleasurable than other activities of the Society, this work is very necessary. Many people too, derive a great deal of satisfaction from doing a worth-while work for a cause in which they believe. If you would like an opportunity to take part, by all means get in touch with me or with any of the chairmen of committees, and we will do our best to put your talents, whatever they may be, to work for the Society.

This is a democratic organization; each member is given the opportunity to exercise his voting rights on every important matter. In practice, only a relatively small proportion of the membership avails itself of this opportunity, and the affairs of the Society are decided by the comparatively small number of interested individuals. At our regular meetings in October (third Wednesday evening and fourth Thursday morning) certain proposed changes in the Society's by-laws will be voted upon; I hope many will welcome this opportunity to have a voice in the government of the Society.

I wish all members would feel that this Society is THEIRS; if you have any ideas about extending or improving the activities of this organization, I would like to hear about them. In concluding, may I say again, come on out and join in the Society's activities; you'll be glad you did.

Robert E. Blackstone.

## CALIFORNIA QUAIL (continued)

fifteen minutes feeding when they were frightened by the antics of a roadrunner chasing after a grasshopper at the other end of the yard. Immediately, the quail flew off over the side of the hill.

Every day from then on the male and the five young fed on our lawn until the five were fully fledged and eventually mingled with the other quail until we could not distinguish them any more.

We observed the other quail as they brought their chicks to maturity, and the only flock to lose any chicks was the one raised by the male who lost four of his original group of nine. As the male had to do double duty, it seemed to us that he performed all tasks very well.

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A HEARTY WELCOME TO THESE NEW MEMBERS

Miss Beverly J. Beane,  
2659 Centinela Ave., Santa Monica  
Mrs. Edward Q. Cordner,  
P.O. Box 5, Sierra Madre, Calif.  
Mr. Oscar R. Fuss,  
9091 Wonderland Park Ave., L.A. 46  
Miss Syra R. Gold,  
18031 Falda Ave., Torrance, Calif.  
Mrs. Almira P. London,  
10938 W. Pico Blvd., L.A. 64  
Miss Dorothy M. Mock,  
4247 Sutro Ave., Los Angeles 8  
Mr. I. O. Parker,  
4147 W. 61st St., Los Angeles 43  
Mrs. I. O. Parker,  
4147 W. 61st St., Los Angeles 43  
Mr. Edwin Parks,  
5702 Bucknell Ave., No. Hollywood  
Mrs. Edwin Parks,  
5702 Bucknell Ave., No. Hollywood  
Mrs. Ernestine Putnam,  
8133 Eirita Dr., Hollywood 46  
Miss Laura C. Smith,  
1050½ Ingraham St., L.A. 17  
Mrs. Martha P. Sprong,  
4126 Linden Ave., Long Beach 7  
Mr. Walter A. Roberts Jr.  
2004 Magnolia Ave., Manhattan Bch.  
Mrs. G. Everett Miller,  
1119 Calle Vista Dr., Beverly Hills

## FIESTA

Plummer Park, the busiest little Park in Los Angeles, held true to its reputation on Sunday, September 15. People began to arrive in the early afternoon and by 7:30 p.m. when the program began, there were at least 1000 in the north patio. The program consisted of songs, dances and other numbers done by members of groups who meet in Plummer Park each month. Supervisor John Anson Ford was on hand to crown the Fiesta Queen. The Friends of Plummer Park, an organization of groups meeting in the Park, presented Mrs. Wyckoff, our fine Park Director, with a rotisserie in appreciation of her fifteen years of service, which will terminate at the end of this year.

We wish to thank Mr. Robert Sandmeyer for his work in preparing the Los Angeles Audubon Society's exhibit. His poster work is outstanding. Those attending the Screen Tours will have the opportunity of seeing it as we plan to have it set up in the foyer of Virgil Jr. High School.

Our thanks to Miss Ida Kizler, who spent the entire afternoon supervising the sale table where leaflets, cards and hummingbird feeders were sold.

Hostesses who gave their valuable time to serve at the exhibit and at Audubon House were: Mrs. Ruth McCune, Mrs. Mary Hood, Mrs. Irma Hecht, Miss Elsa Schwartz, Mrs. Fern Shelford, Miss Esther Johnson and Miss Dorothy Goddard. There were over 100 visitors at Audubon House, among them our President and his family.

Thanks to Mrs. Elizabeth Fulton, Mrs. Olive Alvey and others we are well supplied with hummingbird feeders. These will be on sale at Audubon House for fifty cents plus tax.

---Mrs. Russell Wilson

\* \* \* \* \*

We regret to report the passing of Miss Anna Dudley.

## BIRDING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By far the most exciting ornithological news of the fall season has been the reports of wonderful pelagic birds near the southeastern end of San Clemente Island. Observations made there during early September by Ben King Jr. et al; included 3 species of Petrels (Black, Beal's and Ashy), 3 species of Shearwaters (Sooty, Pink-footed and Black-vented), as many as 19 Black-footed Albatross, 1 Skua, 75 Elegant Terns and a single Red-billed Tropic Bird. A return trip on September 9 yielded more Albatross, Petrels and Shearwaters in addition to an Arctic Tern and no less than 5 Red-billed Tropic Birds (some resting on the water), (B.K. Jr., John Tramantano, Richard Holmes). Wood Ibis were not found at the Lt. Maxton Brown Sanctuary after the third week in August. Only a small number of Wood Ibis were in the Imperial Valley near the south end of the Salton Sea September 14 (Pat Gould).

The shorebird flight appeared to be good with the numbers of Phalaropes improving, particularly near Ocean-side. Red Phalaropes were very scarce along the coast. Avocets and Black-necked Stilts were very numerous at Upper Newport Bay (260 Avocets, 60 Stilts - Sept. 4, Francis Raymond) and at Lt. Maxton Brown Sanctuary-350 Avocets, 50 Black-necked Stilts-Aug. 31, Vivian and Dudley Ross, Peter Lodge). Elegant Terns had a moderately good flight this year with as many as 450 at Bolsa Chica Aug. 29 (F.R.). Compare this with nearly 1100 there in 1951. Elegant Terns began to withdraw from our shores by the first week of September.

A flight of 15 Ospreys at Morro Bay Sept. 16 was most interesting (J.T.). Dudley Ross, Peter Lodge (who is a visiting British amateur ornithologist) and I experienced the wonderful but rare sight of from 25 to 30 California Condors at or near the summit of Mt. Pinos August 24. As many as 17 Condors were visible at one time. Some Condors were in view almost continuously from about 12:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m., many coming very close. They

may have withdrawn from the Sespe Canyon area due to the chaparral fire in that vicinity. It was difficult to convince our British friend of the actual scarcity of Condors.

--Arnold Small, 3028 Cavendish Dr., Los Angeles 64 -- VE 7-2272

Note: In case of rare or unusual birds, please contact me so that the good word may be spread via the Rare Bird Alert to other members. More about this Alert in the next issue.

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"ANTING WITH FIRE"

We have all, doubtless, read of the strange phenomena of "anting", a bird catching ants and rubbing them under its wings and tail. In the Illustrated London News of July 5th, 1957 is a story of a tame Rook that used fire instead of ants. Another Rook had done the same thing a few years ago in the aviary of the author, Dr. Maurice Burton. To quote a few paragraphs -- "My daughter took a match from the box and struck it. The moment it burst into flame Niger (the rook) became excited, snatched the light match. Holding it in his beak, he spread his wings forward and twisted his tail to one side and under his body, at the same time holding the lighted match under one wing. A small pile of straw was set on fire. Niger literally leapt on the flames and, almost literally, wallowed in the flames. Whether flames or smoke, Niger still wallowed. He might jump off a moment but he came back immediately with the attitude of spread wings and twisted or spread tail. From time to time he would snatch at a flame or a wisp of smoke with open beak. The one thing that surprised us during the whole of this performance was that the flames seemed to have no effect on Niger's feet or his feathers. It was as though he were immune to fire."

The experiment of lighting straw in the aviary was repeated, always with the same result - the rook showing an apparent frenzy at the sight of fire, just as it and its predecessor had done

previously at the sight of ants. Afterwards the sight of anyone outside the aviary with straw or a match caused him to fly to the side of the cage and try to reach out. The article is illustrated with eight photographs of the rook indulging in its fire orgies.

---George T. Hastings.

#### SCREEN TOURS PROGRAM

Tuesday Evening Meetings - 7:45 p.m. at Virgil Jr. High School, 152 No. Vermont.

Saturday Afternoon Meetings--2:00 p.m. at John Burroughs Jr. High School, 600 So. McCadden Place.

"Forgotten Country"--Bert Harwell  
Tues. October 22--Sat. October 26.

"Adventure in Africa"--Murl Deusing  
Tues. December 3--Sat. December 7

"Yukon Indian Summer"--Cleveland Grant  
Tues. January 7--Sat. January 11

"Penguin Summer"--Dr. O.S. Pettingill Jr.  
Tues. Feb. 4--Sat. February 8

"Monsoon Mosaic"--Dr. Telford H. Work  
Tues. April 22--Sat. April 26.

Adult Season Ticket.....	\$3.00
Junior Season Ticket.....	1.00
Family Season Ticket.....	6.00
Adult Single Admission.....	.90
Junior Single Admission.....	.25

Mail application and remittance to:

Miss Bessie Pope  
912 Victoria Avenue, Los Angeles 19

Have you heard of Hummers' Heaven on Hummingbird Hill? That is what the Hummers call it, I'm sure, for the red cellophane "Come and get it" flags are scattered all over this lovely wooded garden, where flaming red hibiscus, golden yellow lions tail and varicolored fuchsias grow in wild profusion. A group of us were privileged to spend an afternoon there on Mt. Washington with our Publicity Chairman, Elizabeth Fulton. We

were enchanted by observing these tiny-winged jewels darting overhead and feeding. There were Black-chinned, Annas and the amethyst-throated Costas. To just sit quietly watching them or to stroll up and down the paths so alluringly strung with these colorful red and yellow feeders reminded me of a tropical garden dotted with tiny Japanese lanterns.

Thanks again, Elizabeth, for a delightful afternoon with your lovely collie "Lady" and your hummers.

--Elsa F. Schwartz

In the spring it was reported that a large number of dead gulls were found along the coast from Point Mugu south. It was thought it might be the result of eating insects killed by insecticides, by eating spoiled bait thrown away by fishermen or by the micro-organisms which cause "red water" during the day and phosphorescence at night and which develops in great numbers in early spring. The State Department of Fish and Game made tests on many of the birds but could not determine the type of poison responsible.

A shipment of Gulf Coast Shoal water plants from Texas was planted in the Salton Sea last spring in an effort to establish an attractive habitat for ducks and cut down on the damage they do feeding in nearby alfalfa fields. The barren Salton Sea has no vegetation at present.

From "Outdoor California".

The WESTERN TANAGER is published for the benefit of its members, to keep them informed of the activities of the Society. Why not share your nature experiences by sending contributions to the editor? The deadline for copy is the 15th of each month.

When you move, please send us your new address promptly.

## COVER ON THE LAND

It may be a patch of weeds, or a marsh, or swamp or even a bog, - perhaps it is a field of wheat or potatoes; or a stand of aspen, or maple. Whatever it may be, it is cover on the land. It is land's pleasant counterpane.

Land, we know, is our basic resource, our common denominator of all that is material. However high man may elevate himself on the stilts of modern living, he must at all times be aware that his props have their bottoms poked into the earth. Men cannot, must not, forget this, ever.

Likewise, man must at all times consider cover on the land. Without this cover, be it swamp, maple, potatoes or whatever, land is virtually worthless and so, too, is man.

Cover on the land is abode to the pheasant, the cottontail, the fox, the coyote, the deer, bear, hawk, robin. In a sense, it is fundamental to the existence of the bluegill, the pike, the bullhead, the rainbow, the muskie. Cover on the land is home to countless creatures, food to all that lives.

Down through the years man, on occasion, treated cover on the land with abuse and greed. Man was a loser in these conflicts. Dust storms, erosion, abandoned farms, denuded forests- these were results along with famine and poverty. No victories here, certainly, for man or land.

It was not until man learned to treat land's cover with respect and consideration that optimism became associated with the land-man relationship. We have that optimism now. It is reflected in soil conservation practices, in a return of the forest, in sound management of vast areas of game cover, in the protection of water resources, in the progress of agriculture. In short, we see it more often than ever before in the wise use of cover on the land.

In this wise use there can be no relaxing of man's respect for and consideration of land and its cover. A constant awareness of his total subservience is essential if he is to enjoy life, or rather, if he is to continue existing.

--John Gray, in "Michigan Conservationist."

A REMINDER - Books available in our Sales Department:

"Birds of the Pacific States" Ralph Hoffman  
 "Trees of Santa Monica" George T. Hastings  
 "Field Guide to Western Birds" Roger Tory Peterson  
 "Outdoor Hazards-Real & Fancied" Mary V. Hood

Other titles will be ordered on request. All profits go to the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

--Miss Ida Kizler, Sales Chairman

Additional current books available at the Pacific Coast Office of the National Audubon Society, 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4, California:--

For the teacher and youth leader:  
 1. EXPERIENCES WITH LIVING THINGS (Vessel & Applegarth) \$3.50  
 A guide to understanding the common Western plants and animals.

2. HOW TO STIMULATE YOUR SCIENCE PROGRAM, (Vessel and Wong) \$1.00  
 A guide to simple science activities.

3. CALIFORNIA WILD LIFE REGIONS, (Vinson Brown) \$2.00  
 An introductory guide to the common plants and animals of California. Excellent condensed presentation for the beginner.

For the special interest:  
 AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO FOSSIL COLLECTING (Richard Casanova) \$1.50  
 This book includes a brief history of past discoveries, classification, how to collect and locations where they may be found.

For the young naturalist:  
 THE RAINBOW BOOK OF NATURE (Donald Culross Peattie) \$4.95  
 A magnificent introduction to the secrets of the sea and forest, meadow and marsh, beautifully illustrated.

All purchases at the Audubon Office directly aid Audubon Conservation Programs.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
OFFICERS.....1957-1958

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Historian. . . . Mrs. Olive Alvey  
Registrar of Members. . . . . Miss Iola R. Moore, 278 Bronwood Avenue, L.A. 49

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 1957

October 10, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, Thursday, 7:30 p.m., 10363 Calvin Ave., L.A. 25.

October 12, SATURDAY FIELD TRIP to Playa del Rey for the study of shore and marsh birds. Take Metropolitan Coach Co. bus at 5th and Olive at 8:50 a.m. - arrive at Playa del Rey at 9:36. Meet at south end of lagoon. Bring binoculars and lunch. All welcome. Leaders - Clara Splitter--Ethel Craig.

October 13, The THURSDAY MORNING PROGRAM Committee is hostessing a tea honoring our President on Sunday afternoon, October 13, from 3 to 5 o'clock, at 2220 North Berendo St. (off Los Feliz Blvd.) Hollywood. Plans of the Thursday Morning meetings for the coming year will be announced. Old members and friends are cordially invited and new members of the Society will find a warm welcome and an opportunity to become acquainted with our program and meet the officers of the Society.  
R.S.V.P. NOrmandy 1-8036, NOrmandy 2-9966, WEBster 9-7403, CApitol 5-4093.

October 16, WEDNESDAY EVENING MEETING at Great Hall in Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. "The Conservation Story" - an excellent film in color with narration by Thomas Mitchell.

October 17, THURSDAY FIELD TRIP to Fern Dell, Griffith Park. Meet at 10:00 a.m. Take bus marked Western & Hollywood and get off on Western at Russell, where autos will pick up those needing transportation. Following lunch, Miss Edna Burt will tell about her recent trip to Alaska.

Chairman - Miss Edna Burt, PLymouth 5-1044.

October 24, THURSDAY MORNING MEETING at Long Hall in Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., 10:00 a.m. Speaker, Mr. Frank Gander of Escondido. Subject, "Birds in my Garden," illustrated by koda-chrome slides made by the speaker, who is an expert on nature subjects. Mr. Gander, a graduate of San Diego State College, has been caretaker at San Diego Zoo, Curator of Botany at the Museum of Natural History in that city, teacher of natural history and a writer of note for many magazines, including Audubon Magazine. This will be a rare treat for everyone, so be sure to come and bring a friend.

October 27, SUNDAY FIELD TRIP will be to the Condor Refuge in Sespe Canyon. Group will meet at 8 a.m. at Tip's Restaurant at the intersection of U.S. Highway 99 and State Road 126 (the Fillmore Road). Leader - R. Dudley Ross, GLadstone 4-2332.