

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, II

T H E

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

# Western Tanager



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## BIRDING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Arnold Small

The brisk fall weather accompanied by clear blue skies made birding during late October and the first part of November all the more inviting. No matter where afield the birder chose to go, whether it were seashore, chaparral, canyons, mountains or desert, birds and weather were agreeable.

Sea birding, although in a between season lull, was none-the-less rewarding. A long-day sea trip taken to San Clemente Island and waters beyond (to 60 miles southwest of Newport) on November 2 found the ocean moderately calm although rain squalls could be seen all around the boat. The more exotic species (i.e. Skua, Albatrosses, Tropic-birds, etc.) were not in evidence and it would seem that late summer (mid-August, September and early October) would be the best choice for these. However, such species as Sooty Shearwater (40 est.), Pink-footed Shearwater (150), NEW ZEALAND SHEARWATER (poss.3), Black Petrels (30 est.) and Ashy Petrels (45 est.) made the trip most worthwhile. In addition we had the good fortune to come close upon schools of three kinds of marine mammals (Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphins, Striped Dolphins and Scammon Blackfish). The latter allowed a very close approach and since these animals reach a length of 28 feet, this was most exciting. Shore-birding was more rewarding during this period as winter arrivals such as Red-backed Sandpipers, Long-billed Curlews, Black and Ruddy Turnstones and Surfbirds appeared at suitable places along the coast.

Three hundred and fifty Sandhill Cranes were at Soda Lake October 19, as were about 100 Mountain Plover (on the east side of the lake) and 3 Golden Eagles (2 of them feeding on the carcass of a crane)-(R. Dudley and V. Ross.)

Almost 50 Surfbirds and about 30 Black Turnstones were at Ballona Creek Breakwater November 3, and 2 Elegant Terns were the remnants of a fairly good flight (A. Small). Short-billed Gulls and Glaucous-winged Gulls in small numbers began to arrive in early November. Caspian Terns all but disappeared but the transient Royal Terns arrived to take their place. Ben King, Jr. and I had an excellent opportunity to study Rails at leisure at Lake McGrath, Ventura Co. on November 9. Two Virginia Rails and at least 4 Sora Rails (as well as 2 Black Gallinules) were feeding on the shore of the lake at 11:30 a.m. (an unlikely time for rail study). No doubt the lake to their fore and the marsh immediately to their rear gave them a sense of security. Large numbers of waterbirds (gulls, terns, waterfowl, shorebirds, herons) gathered at the Point Mugu marshes during early November but no Black Brant were seen. The flight of Waterfowl was somewhat lighter than last year at this time but large numbers of Pintail could be seen at the Ventura County Game Preserve and other similar places. About 2000 ducks were at Lake Norconian November 11. The breakdown was as follows: Pintail - 900, Baldpate - 500, Mallard - 300, Shoveller - 100, Canvasback - 50, Green-winged Teal - 50, Ringnecks - 20, Lesser Scaup - 10, and Redhead - 4. A single Bufflehead was present. This is one of the finest lakes for waterfowl obser-

(continued on page 21)

#### THE WESTERN TANAGER

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Editor Emeritus.....George T. Hastings  
Editor.....Mrs. Fern Shelford  
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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."

#### 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

It goes without saying that an organization such as this will be very much what we, the members, make it. The moral and financial support of your membership, of course, is in itself a substantial contribution to the purpose to which this society is dedicated, "to promote the study and protection of birds and other wildlife, plants, soil and water,..." No doubt many members, however, would like to know how they could do more toward furthering these aims.

An obvious answer is to offer to serve on one of the committees, one or another of which could certainly use your services, even though the time you have to spare may seem to you too little to bother about. This Society depends entirely on volunteer workers, none of the officers or members of the executive board receiving any compensation except the satisfaction of doing a good work. People to serve on the Conservation or on the Headquarters Committee are particularly needed at this time. There are no special requirements, only a willingness to serve.

Perhaps you are a busy person and have no time to spare, but would be able to contribute something in the way of funds to aid the Society's work. At present money is needed to have some very necessary work done at our headquarters in Plummer Park. Another need at this time is for more books for our library. A large proportion of the Society's income from memberships goes toward publishing the TANAGER, a very worthwhile and necessary expense. We find, however, that funds are lacking for many worthy projects. So contributions for either of the above purposes, or others, would be most welcome. So, too, would be gifts of books themselves, either older standard works or current best sellers in the field of natural history for our library.

Finally, I personally would welcome your ideas as to how the Society's activities might be improved or expanded. If you think you have a worthwhile suggestion, drop me a postcard and let me know about it. I assure you it will be given serious consideration, and will be tried out if possible.

Robert E. Blackstone

BIRDING - continued.

vation it has been my experience to find. There is great variety, the birds are not hunted here, and visibility is excellent.

Winter land-bird flocks are gathering to feed on weed seeds and with the influx of fall migrants, winter visitors, and uncommon species, land-birding will become more interesting as winter progresses. Probably as many as 100 wintering Starlings were at Ventura County Game Preserve November 9 (B.K., A.S.) which is 1000% increase over last year, and greater than that over the year before. As yet the Starlings are a winter visitor here (hundreds winter in the China Lake area) but we can expect breeding records for the southern portion of the state at any time. They are now known to be established in all 48 states. Five California Condors and an EASTERN PHOEBE were found in Sespe Canyon October 27 by members of the trip led by R. Dudley Ross.

A Painted Redstart returned to the feeder of Roberta Cushing near Redlands on October 8 and might be the same individual that wintered there in 1953, 1954 and 1955. These birds have been suspected of breeding somewhere in the San Bernardino mountains but evidence is not conclusive. A WHITE-THROATED SPARROW was found at her feeder by Betty Meyerfeld of south Los Angeles on October 6.

For information about rare birds or regarding rare birds, call Arnold Small at VErmont 7-2272, or R. Dudley Ross at CLadstone 4-2332.

AUDUBON HOUSE

People have asked if we still see birds at Audubon House since the area has been built up and more children and adults are coming to the Park. Yes, we still see birds if we are there early in the morning. On Wednesday when I go in at eight o'clock, the birds are waiting for seeds and fresh water. The Mourning Doves, Chinese Spotted Doves, Mockingbirds, Brown Towhees, Scrub Jays, English Sparrows and House Finches are regular visitors. This fall the following were seen on their way south: Pileolated Warblers, Orange-crowned Warblers, Black-throated Gray Warblers.

Our winter visitors are with us again: Robins, Gambel Sparrows, Hermit Thrushes and Waxwings. Monday, November 4th, there was a flock of over one hundred Waxwings sitting on the wires trying to get into the pyracantha berries. A Spotted Towhee has been heard but not seen. Other birds which have been seen from time to time are California Thrasher, Titmouse, Bewick Wren, Warbling Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Flicker, Oriole and Downy Woodpecker.

We wish to thank Mrs. Paul D. Dodds for contributing to our bird mounting fund. Also Richard Bartlett, a 12 year old, for money to mount the Violet-green Swallow which Mr. & Mrs. Julian found and brought to us from the Mt. Pinos area.

We are looking for members who are professional carpenters and cabinet makers who would be willing to serve on our House Committee as consultant and workers on projects which we now have under way, and others we hope to take up in the near future. We want to make our museum a place where young people can come for information and help on many subjects. We are hoping to have exhibits on conservation, native flowers and trees as well as birds, and will welcome any suggestions and help our members are able to give.

All members are invited to visit Audubon House to see what we have and learn about our future plans. We are building up your library and hope that you will take advantage of the books available.

---Mrs. Russell Wilson, Curator

At Mt. Vernon High School in Rutherfordton, N.C. they decided to suspend basketball practice for a while. A female Barn Owl took residence and hatched three eggs in a stairwell of the gymnasium.

Basketball practice interfered, Coach Ken Griffin said. The school decided to let the owls have the gym until the family grows a bit.

TO WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Miss Edna B. Buckley,  
106 So. Edgemont St., Los Angeles 4  
Mrs. Paul W. Hiller,  
6436 Via Canada, San Pedro, Calif.  
Mr. A. W. Hood,  
138 So. Wilton Drive, Los Angeles 4  
Mr. Arthur Kechler,  
1959 Thayer Ave., Los Angeles 25  
Mrs. Elizabeth A. Lawrence,  
131 Bonita Ave., Apt. 2, Long Beach  
Miss Lyla Mason,  
211 So. Vendome St., Los Angeles 57  
Miss Dorothea Pattison,  
1810-3/4 New England St., L.A. 6  
Bessie B. Phillips,  
5646 La Mirada Ave., Los Angeles 38  
Miss Lorraine Poulson,  
1258 E. Elmwood Ave., Burbank, Calif.  
Mr. Edward Reining,  
2707 Thomas St., Los Angeles 31  
Mr. David V. Robison,  
4370 Colfax Ave., Studio City, Calif.  
Mr. Theo Ross,  
2239 Canyon Drive, Los Angeles 28  
Miss Irene Streeter,  
980 Parkman St., Altadena, Calif.

CHRISTMAS SUGGESTIONS FROM THE  
SALES DEPARTMENT

Now is the time to purchase for yourself, family or friends one of our carefully selected books.

"Audubon Western Bird Guide"	-Pough	\$4.95
"Birds of the Pacific States"	-Hoffman	5.00
"California Wildlife Region"	-Brown	2.00
"Field Guide to Mammals"	-Burt & Grossenheimer	3.75
"Field Guide to Western Birds"	-Roger Tory Peterson	3.75
"Outdoor Hazards"	-Mary V. Hood	3.95
"Trees of Santa Monica"	-George T. Hastings	2.50
Educational games for children are also on the list:		
Animal Lotto or Bird-O		1.00
Nature Games - including birds, mammals, flowers, trees, butterflies.		1.30
--Ida Kizler, Sales Chairman		

AUDUBON HOUSE LIBRARY

Acknowledgement is due two Los Angeles Audubon Society members for their response to a recent plea to assist financially in having certain Audubon House library books rebound. Dr. Roberta Crutcher and Mr. John V. Frederick have each come forth with support. As a result, three volumes by Arthur Cleveland Bent on life histories of various birds have been bound and are available to all members.

As the holiday season approaches and the customary giving of gifts is observed a suggestion is offered, to members who are able, that they remember their Society with a gift. It is a constant aim that the library be expanded. Book contributions need not be new, but subject matter related to the interests of the Audubon Society is desired. Donations of money, if so specified, will provide members with the satisfaction of other books rebound, among them the remaining volumes by Bent which the library possesses. Book contributions may be sent directly to Audubon House; money to the Treasurer, Miss Esther Johnson.

The American Ornithologists' Union (A. O. U.) Check-list of North American Birds, a 1957 publication is now available to the membership as a reference book at the Audubon House library.

From time to time members who have a collection of Western Tanagers have contacted Mrs. Russell Wilson, Curator at Audubon House, either to offer their copies for the Society's file or to request a certain issue to complete their own records. At the present time some 1956 copies have been requested by members. Since no duplicates of that particular year are available to be given away from the Society's file, members who have no wish to keep their Tanagers, are urged to inform Mrs. Wilson by calling Hollywood 7-9495.

--Helen Sandmeyer

"Vacation on a Tropical Island", in the November Tanager, was written by Dorothy E. Groner.

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Annual Christmas Bird Count will take place in Los Angeles on Sunday, December 29th. This is the 58th Audubon Christmas Bird Count, and on this day conservationists all over the country will be out from dawn to dusk counting and checking on one of our most beautiful natural resources, the wild birds of America. Last year Los Angeles was fifth on the national list with 147 species and 65 participants. We need twice that number of people this year to cover our territory adequately, and also to get a higher place on the national list. The Christmas Count has been called "the World Series of bird-watching," and like the World Series, it is exciting and lots of fun. All members and friends of Audubon are urged to participate.

---Count Chairman, Tom Goodman  
732 South Mansfield, L.A. 36  
WEBster 6-3590

Our field trip of October 27 to Little Sespe Canyon for the purpose of seeing the Condors, drew a total of over 50 people who arrived in 20 cars. The birding was very dull on our way up to Squaw Flat but the weather was fine and the scenery beautiful. That our group was determined to see condors was evidenced by the remarkable patience shown by everyone as they settled down to wait for the bird's appearance. Finally, two birds were seen and later, three more. Three of the birds were close enough for the white wing linings to be clearly visible and for one to get an idea of their immense size. The Condor is a "chancy" bird; you take your chances on whether you will see it or not and on its coming close enough for a satisfactory view. It is an impressive bird, one of our country's rarest, and it is well worth the effort.

In a sense, the real highlight of the day was the finding of an Eastern Phoebe at Squaw Flat; a lifebird for most of those present. The records of this species in California are few and far between.

Other birds seen were Cooper's Red-tailed and Sparrow Hawks, Mountain and California Quails, Roadrunner, Steller's and Scrub Jays, Bush-tit, Wren-tit and all three Goldfinches.

One does not usually see many species on a Condor trip. The area is not conducive to a large list and some birds are undoubtedly missed through concentrating on the "big one."

---R. Dudley Ross.

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FIELD TRIP, PLAYA DEL REY, OCTOBER 12. A hazy sun shone for the 23 birders who journeyed to the beach for this trip. 53 species were recorded, the most numerous being countless numbers of Willets, swirling up the channel from the beach. Eared and Western Grebes and 15 to 20 Black Turnstones.

THE TEA, OCTOBER 13, at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Neil Lewis. The rain kept many friends away from the tea which was arranged by the Thursday Morning Program Committee, but what it lacked in numbers it gained in friendliness. Dr. and Mrs. Lewis were most gracious hosts. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Blackstone greeted old friends and made new members welcome. Refreshments were enjoyed before a cheerful fire.

FIELD TRIP, FERN DELL, OCTOBER 17. Twenty members enjoyed this, the first field trip of the season. Not many varieties of birds were seen, just the usual inhabitants, with the exception of the Audubon Warblers who sang as though they were happy to be back.

Miss Edna Burt told of her trip to Alaska where the conducted tour took in all important places of interest, from the most modern cities with up-to-the-minute hotels to the primitive Kotzebue and its anything but modern inn. They traveled in all sorts of conveyances, big planes and narrow gauge railroads; these last used to bring ore from the mines.

THURSDAY MORNING MEETING, OCTOBER 24. Thanks to the efforts of the program committee and to the fact that Mr. Gander is well known, there were more than 130 in the appreciative audience. These intimate nature studies made by a man who understands his subjects so well were a joy to see. Seeming to sense how the wild creatures think, Mr. Gander is trusted by his

visitors so that he can bring them to us in his excellent pictures.

Mr. Gander's unusual Kissing Rocks garden at Escondido is planted to drought resistant plants from all over the world which are especially attractive to different birds. During the time he has lived on this acre sanctuary he has had seven kinds eat from his hand and has counted 154 varieties.

Our President, Mr. Robert Blackstone, read the by-laws of the Society with the changes that have been made for the coming year.

---Olive Alvey.

SATURDAY FIELD TRIP, NOVEMBER 9  
Eighteen members on this desert trip identified 30 species of birds. The wind was blowing but the sun bright and warm. There were many Phainopeplas and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, some Robins, Desert Sparrows, Verdin, Oregon Juncos, White-crowned Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Chickadees and a few Shrikes and Flickers. Only one of each of the following: Red-naped Sapsucker, White-throated Swift, Pinon Jay, Raven, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Turkey Vulture, Gambel Quail and two Woodpeckers and one unidentified dove.

#### IT'S FOR THE BIRDS

Often folks wonder what food to put out for the birds. Here are a few suggestions. If you have others, send them in.

Raisins, especially for Mockers and Finches.

Grapes. - for all.

Sugar water (one part sugar to three parts water. Boil it five minutes. Cool and add red vegetable coloring) in feeders for Hummers. In a dish on the feeding tray for others. Thrashers, Orioles and Linnets relish it.

Cracked wheat bread (or any other) spread with crunchy peanut butter. Impale it on a dowel attached to the feeding tray. Make it a three-decker. Doughnuts are popular served thus on a stick, or stale coffee cake.

Combine melted bacon fat or other drippings with corn meal; pour into paper cups and set this out when cool.

Tomato, cantaloupe seed and all connecting tissue.

Baked potatoes.

Pudding - Into any cooked cereal add anything left over - bacon fat, bits of meat or suet, vegetables, fruit, bread or crackers. Pack in small cups. Store in refrigerator. When wanted, unmold on feeding tray. Make crumbs of any stale cake or bread. Serve straight or add to grain. Dry oatmeal may also be used.

Our Conservation Chairman, Betty Meyerfeld, urges that those who have a little time to spare, and in order to learn what the encroachment of cities is doing to our wildlife, take an area close at home and visit it as often as possible, keeping notes on the habits of resident birds, migrants, nesting periods, feeding habits, etc. One can not only gain a wealth of enjoyment for themselves, but valuable information for the Society.

#### SPEED OF BIRDS

In the days of the oxcarts, birds were pretty fast travelers, but in the jet age they're strictly pikers.

The champion is probably the swift. It reaches speeds of two hundred miles an hour, pretty fast for wings made of feathers.

Most birds stay well under the sixty-mile limit. Duck speeds usually range from forty to seventy, geese range up to sixty and the loon can hit around fifty miles per hour.

Mourning doves are fairly fast. They have been clocked at fifty-five. Starlings hit forty-five, pigeons thirty-five, and most cardinals, meadowlarks, woodpeckers and flickers about twenty-five. The English sparrow is perfectly content with its twenty-mile-an-hour flights.

---From "National Motorist", 1957

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

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1st Vice-President . . Mr. James Huffman Exec. Sec'y. . . . . Miss Dorothy Goddard  
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Treasurer . . . . . Miss Esther Johnson Curator. . . . . . Mrs. Russell Wilson  
Historian. . . . Mrs. Olive Alvey  
Registrar of Members. . . . . Miss Iola R. Moore, 278 Bronwood Avenue, L.A. 49

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 1957

December 3 - SCREEN TOUR, Tuesday, December 3 at Virgil Junior High and  
and 7 Saturday, December 7 at John Burroughs Junior High. Subject,  
"Adventure in Africa" by Murl Deusing. A color motion pic-  
ture of Africa's exciting birds and big game. An entire  
wildlife community filmed on the move in search of water -  
wildebeeste, gazelle, zebra, ostrich and baboon. A vivid  
and gripping account, by a masterful speaker.

December 5 - THURSDAY, ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in  
Fiesta Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Mr. and  
Mrs. Glissman, who last year delighted us with their sing-  
ing, will again be on hand to conduct the musical part of  
the program. Alma Stultz will tell us of her trip to Panama.  
Bring gifts of food--seed, nuts and raisins--for the Birds'  
Christmas Tree, and take advantage of the variety of gift  
items that will be for sale, including Audubon Christmas  
cards for 1957. Gifts for children will include: Books,  
Lotto-type games, Records, Bird Calls, State Bird and Flow-  
er Maps. For adults: Books, Stationery, Playing Cards,  
Feeders, Book Covers, Membership Pins -NAS and Membership  
Arm Emblems-NAS. Money derived from sales is applied direct-  
ly to support National Audubon Society program of conserva-  
tion of all our natural resources. There will be an oppor-  
tunity to visit with friends old and new. Take West Holly-  
wood bus on Santa Monica to Fuller.

December 12 - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. at 912 Victoria  
Avenue.

December 14 - SATURDAY, FIELD TRIP to Bolsa Chico, 9:00 a.m. Meet on  
Highway 101A east of Long Beach. Look for leader's car.  
Bring lunch and binoculars.....Ethel Craig, Leader.

December 18 - WEDNESDAY EVENING MEETING, at 8:00 p.m. in Great Hall, Plum-  
mer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard Bakker  
of Los Angeles City College will present a colored motion pic-  
ture, "Living Lands to the South." This is an account of their  
trip to Central America, 9-1/2 weeks and 10,000 miles by pas-  
senger car, where they photographed tropical birds, flowers,  
primitive Indians and spectacular volcanic eruptions.  
---Arnold Small, Chairman.

December 29 - SUNDAY, ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS. From midnight to mid-  
night, rain or shine. All members and friends of Audubon are  
urged to take part in the count. If you have not received a  
card, write or call the count chairman for a territory.

---Tom Goodman, Count Chairman  
732 So. Mansfield, L.A. 36  
WEBster 6-3590