

T H E

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

# Western Tanager

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## CHARM AND WONDER OF NEW ZEALAND BIRDS By Leo Fanning in New Zealand Free Lance

"It has been remarked by a celebrated naturalist that 'New Zealand is the most interesting ornithological province in the world'; and in a qualified sense this is no doubt true," wrote Walter Buller in his famous bird book, "A History of the Birds of New Zealand," first published in 1873.

Widespread indiscriminate destruction of native forests and introduction of bird-killing pests have brought tragedies for many species of wonderful birds. Protective legislation and the reservation of sanctuaries are partial amends for horrible blunders of the past. New Zealanders have to be thankful to the Forest and Bird Protection Society for its effective campaigns during many years.

Many New Zealanders, who are not pleased with the present official National Anthem, believe that a much better one could come from a poet inspired by a Tui's song. Johannes Andersen, a keen student of bird song, firmly declared his belief that the Nightingale came a poor second to the Tui.

Zane Grey, author of many novels, and with a wide-ranging knowledge of America's birds, spent some months in New Zealand many years ago. Resting by the Tongariro River after some exciting play with rainbow trout he heard a Tui's song. "It was the purest, the sweetest, the wildest and most melancholy and most melodious that I have ever listened to," he wrote in his "Tales of the Angler's Eldorado, New Zealand." He gave similar praise to the Bell Bird's chiming.

The Tui and the smaller green Bell Bird are clever mimics. Old-time Maoris taught Tuis to talk. One of the best Tui songs the author ever heard was a Bell Bird's perfect imitation. Songs of native Robins are given supremacy by some expert listeners.

Most lovable birds are the little Grey Warbler and the tiny Fantail. Both are well distributed throughout the country, as they do not have to depend on native forests for their living.

The Warbler was named Riroriro by the old-time Maoris from notes of its heart-touching, soft-trilling song, not limited to the mating season. The neat nest is skilfully swung from small branches of a shrub or tree. Though the entrance near the top is usually protected by a small porch and is less than an inch wide, the female Shining Cuckoo (pipiwarauroa) awaits an opportunity to sneak an egg in. The duped warblers are doomed to rear the greedy monster which heaves their own offspring from the nest. They have a very busy time feeding the big scrounger with grubs and insects. Happily the great majority of the warbler couples do not have to suffer such imposition. These warblers have no fear of mankind. One can stand quite close while they are singing and they will flash their brilliant crimson eyes, seeming to know they are pleasing.

Similar friendliness is shown by the little Fantail, pied or black. With their long tails spread out and short, fluttering wings they do very clever twists, turns and somersaults in catching insects, their main diet. Fantails raise two and sometimes three broods in a year. Usually they begin the second or third nest while feeding the fledglings of the previous brood. Piwakawaka, the Maori name of Fantail, means fluttering squeaker, because of the bird's squeaky twitter when chasing winged insects.

## THE WESTERN TANAGER

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 Editor Emeritus.....George T. Hastings  
 Editor.....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 - \$6.50, Husband & Wife - \$10.00,  
 Sustaining - \$12.50, Sustaining-Husband  
 & Wife - \$20.00, Active - \$25.00, Support-  
 ing - \$50.00, Contributing - \$100.00,  
 Life - \$300.00.

## OFFICERS 1958-1959

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AUDUBON HOUSE -- Headquarters of the Los  
 Angeles Audubon Society, 7377 Santa Monica  
 Blvd...HO 7-9495. Open Wednesday, Thurs-  
 day and Saturday - 2-4 p.m., 3rd Wednes-  
 day - 7:30-8 p.m., 4th Thursday, (members  
 only) 9-10 a.m. - 1-4 p.m.

Librarian...Mrs. Robert Landis--HO 3-9336.

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To all Southern California con-  
 servationists must occasionally come,  
 with something of a shock, the realiza-  
 tion of how "last ditch" for the most  
 part are our efforts to preserve natural  
 areas in this part of the world. With  
 the unprecedeted growth of population  
 here, pressures on these areas and on  
 our wildlife are tremendous and manifold.

Though it is true that some  
 types of wildlife habitats are not as  
 yet on the critical list, experience has  
 shown that, even in these cases, we can-  
 not afford the luxury of complacency.  
 Highly desirable areas which, not too  
 many years ago, might have been compara-  
 tively easily acquired for sanctuary use,  
 either by organizations such as ours or  
 by public agencies, are now much too ex-  
 pensive, or have already been "developed."

We cannot stem the tide of  
 change, even if we would. However, we  
 can work to preserve natural "islands"  
 in the midst of the changes being made  
 by man. I believe our society, and other  
 similar organizations, should aim to ac-  
 quire and maintain one or more sanctuary  
 areas of its own. This is the most satis-  
 factory way, since we can make the pre-  
 servation of the wildlife values of an  
 area our primary concern; this a public  
 agency cannot always do. We should,  
 nevertheless, give every aid and encour-  
 agement we can to public agencies (and  
 individuals) in setting aside land for  
 sanctuary purposes.

"Last ditch" too is our de-  
 fense of the integrity of our national  
 monuments and other public lands in  
 Southern California. We cannot afford to  
 give an inch to the demands of the spe-  
 cial interests who would like to have  
 Joshua Tree National Monument opened to  
 mining or bisected by a high speed high-  
 way, or who would like to have our State  
 Parks opened for grazing or hunting, to  
 mention only a few cases in point. Our  
 best weapon here is the pen; we must not  
 let our national monuments and other pub-  
 lic lands be sacrificed to special inter-  
 ests because we have failed to wield it  
 to let our legislators know how we feel  
 about these things.

---Robert E. Blackstone.

## AUDUBON HOUSE

Our exhibit of birds common to the Los Angeles area is proving helpful and interesting not only to youth groups but to the general public. We now have the following birds in this particular exhibit: one pair English Sparrows, one pair Cowbirds, one immature and one adult Gambel Sparrow, male Audubon Warbler, male Linnet, Brown Towhee, a Violet-green Swallow, Red-breasted Sapsucker, male Western Tanager, Kingfisher, (the last four were brought in by members and friends), Acorn Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Red-shafted Flicker, Kestral, Scrub Jay, Black-headed Grosbeak, Hermit Thrush, California Thrasher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Stellar Jay, Bullock Oriole, Hooded Oriole, Spotted Towhee, (the last four need replacing).

We want to add a Mockingbird, Black Phoebe, female Audubon Warbler, female Linnet, Cedar Waxwing and pair of Brewer Blackbirds. If any member finds one of these in good condition please wrap immediately in wax paper, put in plastic bag and place in freezer and call HO 7-9495 or PO 1-7635.

Among the larger mounted birds in the Museum are an American Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Barn Owl, Geese, Cranes, Herons and other water birds all loaned by the County Museum many years ago. One of our finest exhibits is the Passenger Pigeon given by Mrs. Salmon and used to show our youth groups why we need to work for conservation of all wildlife and natural resources.

Our new birds require money for mounting so we now have a mounting fund box at Audubon House and our first donation was made by Brownie Troup 2055 while visiting here. This group is forming an Audubon Junior Club and will use the current material for their monthly projects throughout the year.

Anyone wishing information about Audubon Junior Clubs or appointments for youth groups may call headquarters Monday, Wednesday and Thursday between

one and four. Folder will be sent on request.

On Sunday night, November 16, the Audubon Junior Clubs were featured on the Lassie Show in the "Egret" episode, KNXT, Channel 2, sponsored by the Campbell Soup Co. We are sorry we did not have advance notice in time to announce this episode in the last Tanager, but hope that regular watchers of this program did see it and will give us their reaction by writing Los Angeles Audubon Society, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A. 46. If you know of others who saw the program, we would appreciate hearing from them, too. The only way we can have more programs about nature and conservation for children is to express our approval of such programs whenever possible. There will be another episode along this line in the near future, using material from the Audubon Junior Club project "Adopting a Tree." Watch for it.

Our thanks to Mr. Will Gould, script writer, for his interest in our organization and conservation and to Campbell Soup Co. for sponsoring these programs.

---Marian Wilson, Curator

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. L. R. Carter,  
613 Pacific St., Santa Monica, Calif.  
Mr. L. R. Carter,  
613 Pacific St., Santa Monica, Calif.  
Mr. James J. Perley,  
2673 Dundee Place, Los Angeles 27  
Mrs. Adelia Sandstrom,  
6545 Nancy Road, San Pedro, Calif.  
Mr. Dexter G. Davis,  
5820 Camerford Ave., Los Angeles 38  
Mrs. Walter Gastater,  
1104 Crest Drive, Los Angeles 35  
Miss Nelle Hightower,  
7814 Torrayson Drive, Los Angeles 46  
Mrs. Marian McMahon,  
15333 Jenkins Drive, Whittier, Calif.  
Mrs. Eunice E. Mead,  
7360 W. 87th Place, Los Angeles 45

CONSERVATION  
By Otis Wade

Field hearings on the all important Wilderness Bill will have been completed by the time this issue of the Tanager is received and all that remains is to follow its laborious advance to what we may certainly expect to be presidential signature. In lieu of a representative of this Society being present in person at the hearing in San Francisco, a written statement was submitted for the record stating our belief that the bill in its present revised form was ready for enactment.

The continuing efforts of the Big Tujunga Conservation group to secure a recreation area are at this writing concerned with proper representation from interested parties before the City Council when that body acts on appeal against gravel-mining zoning. This Society has lent support with letters and telephone calls and it is our sincere hope that this project which has occupied the time and energies of so many people will come to a successful conclusion shortly. There are, incidentally, three other reservation-type recreation areas to be voted into the County's Master Plan by the County Supervisors on December 4th. Besides the Big Tujunga Basin there is the Devil's Punch Bowl, 1100 acres near Valyermo, Neenack Park, 3500 acres 22 miles west of Lancaster and the Fairmount Joshua Trees, 99 acres 17 miles west of Lancaster.

And here is a sign we can all understand, used in many National Parks and Monuments:

"Take nothing but photographs -  
Leave nothing but footprints."  
(Courtesy Sierra Club Bulletin).

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The Editor of the Topeka Audubon News speaks of the pleasure of reading publications of Audubon Societies from other parts of the country, and especially mentions the Western Tanager. In our October issue Ben King wrote much of the account of the pelagic trip of Labor Day. As Ben was formerly from Kansas and a member of the Kansas Ornithological Society, he is claimed as a member of the Topeka Society.

BIRDING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
By Arnold Small

Early fall weather in Southern California this year was not conducive to much field work as the weather persisted abnormally warm and smoggy until mid-November. Mid-November weather was in sharp contrast with expected fall weather. Cold winds and temperatures below freezing in the valleys and mountain areas (together with snow flurries in the higher mountains) brought winter-like conditions to the southland with an unexpected rush. This was the result of a Canadian continental air mass which moved into the western states out of the Arctic. Our winter weather generally is generated in the Gulf of Alaska and involves precipitation and somewhat lower temperatures but an arctic high pressure area forced cold, dry winds into Southern California in mid-November which dropped the temperatures rather abruptly. Rainfall was below normal in October and November and even in the mountain areas, which received some precipitation, the totals were less than 50% of normal for this time of year.

Very few pelagic observations were made during the fall, but a few are noteworthy. A dead Xantus' Murrelet was seen floating near the Santa Monica pier November 11 and on that same date a single gray-phase Fulmar was photographed at the Malibu pier. This is the first sighting of a Fulmar in these waters in five years. The bird was not observed on November 15. The Elegant Tern flight can be classified as very good this year with a few birds still present at Bolsa Chica in mid-November. Numerous Jaegers could be seen during September and October pi-rating the Elegant Tern and Brown Pelican. The waterfowl flight was spotty and light in September and October as bluebird weather prevailed over most of the Pacific Northwest at this time. The cold snap later in November encouraged many ducks and geese to move to Southern California waters.

A single Snow Goose was at Bixby Slough late in October and remained for several weeks. Numbers of Scoters increased rather suddenly along the coast in late November as did the Loons and Grebes.

Some 100 Lewis Woodpeckers could be seen on the road to Greenhorn Mountains (Kern Co.) near Glenville late in October and a single Goshawk was observed on Greenhorn Mt. at that time together with numerous Williamson's Sapsuckers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Golden-crowned Kinglets.

A single American Rough-legged Hawk was present near Lake Henshaw in late September and more than 25 White-tailed Kites gathered near the Ventura County Gun Club in September. If anyone knows of other Kite roosts of this size please inform the writer. Another large roost of White-tailed Kites was found near Upper Newport Bay early this fall.

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THURSDAY FIELD TRIP - NOVEMBER 20

Under the leadership of Miss Edna Burt some thirty-five members of the Society and their guests gathered at the new Los Angeles County Park - the William S. Hart Ranch in Newhall - for a day of bird walks and visiting the museum. A fine warm day after the recent cold spell, with gusty winds and great visibility.

Twenty-five species of birds were identified and listed within the confines of the park by Mrs. Leona Hoogenboom and Mr. Otis Wade, as follows: Cooper Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Calif. Quail, Band-tailed pigeon, Red-shafted Flicker, Acorn Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Scrub Jay, Plain Titmouse, Wrentit, Bewick Wren, Rock Wren, Mockingbird, Western Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Audubon's Warbler, English Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, House Finch, Green-backed Goldfinch, Spotted Towhee, Brown Towhee, Oregon Junco and Gambel Sparrow.

We especially wish to express our thanks to Mr. Scott Thompson for his hospitality and help in transporting some of the members from the picnic area up to the museum. Mr. Thompson, Superintendent of the Park, has done extensive planting and under his guidance the whole area promises to become one of the outstanding additions to the county.

---Otis Wade

On NOVEMBER 20, Dr. Richard Boo lootian of the Zoology Department, UCLA, showed his excellent film of the Otter, that most lovable and amusing sea mammal. Long before the gold-rush days sea otters were hunted for their valuable hides. By 1920 they were thought to be extinct, but now there is a herd of approximately 650, some of which can be seen in the Kelp beds off Santa Barbara to Monterey. This is due to efforts of interested persons and agencies such as Fish and Game and the Hopkins Marine Station in Pacific Grove.

Sea Otters have the distinction of being the only animal besides man that uses a tool for eating. His tool is a rock which he lays on his chest and against which he hammers shell fish.

Killer whales and man are his only enemy. It is a federal offence, with a penalty of \$1000.00 for molesting them. Scientists from all over come here to study them.

---Olive Alvey

SALES DEPARTMENT

Some things new have been added and just in time for Christmas! "Christmas Greeting" Calendars, stationery items of Bird Notes, Letterettes and boxes of assorted stationery. Save for the last these are all one dollar items, as are the boxes of Party Matches. We also have the Audubon Christmas card for 1958. There is not a large supply on hand of any of these - so shop early! There are many other gifts which we will be happy to order for you from the National Audubon Society catalogue. Allow two weeks for delivery.

We also have on hand all three of the Pough books. Individually, these books make a welcome gift. However, to have maximum benefit from the use of these guides all three should be available. We suggest as a thoughtful gift the completion of a set already started. There are also for sale post cards of Whooping Cranes, actual photographs, which would be suitable for mailing to anyone planning a trip through the area where these birds might be observed, or to friends who live in the area.

TREES PLANTED AND DEDICATED BY THE  
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY 1918-1939  
Compiled by Mrs. Jesse L. Morain

1. California Live Oak (*Quercus Agrifolia*).  
Dedicated to the "Birds".  
Exposition Park, April 13, 1918.
2. Deodara - Dedicated to relatives of  
members who were in the Service.  
Griffith Park, Western Ave. entrance.  
March 7th, 1920.
3. California Live Oak (*Quercus Agrifolia*).  
Dedicated to Mrs. E. P. de Normandie.  
Western Avenue entrance in canyon.  
May 5th, 1921.
4. California Live Oak. Emblem of Society.  
Vermont entrance to Griffith Park.  
December 12, 1922.
5. Cherry Holly (*Prunus Illicifolia*).  
Dedicated to Mrs. Robert Fargo.  
East of gate in Griffith Park Bird  
Sanctuary, March 4th, 1926
6. Cherry Holly (*Prunus Illicifolia*).  
Dedicated to Mrs. F. T. Bicknell.  
East of gate in Griffith Park Bird  
Sanctuary, March 4th, 1926.
7. Ceonothus (*Cyanous*).  
Dedicated to Mrs. Harriet Wm. Meyers.  
West of gate in Griffith Park Bird  
Sanctuary, March 4th, 1926.
8. Ceonothus (*Cyaneus*).  
Dedicated to Mrs. George H. Snyder.  
West of gate in Griffith Park Bird  
Sanctuary, March 4th, 1926.
9. California Live Oak (*Quercus Agrifolia*).  
Dedicated to Mrs. G. S. Hall.  
West of gate in Griffith Park Bird  
Sanctuary, May 19th, 1927.
10. Grevillea Robusta.  
Dedicated to Miss Mary Ann Miller.  
Hillside of Mrs. Griswold's canyon  
home, Sierra Madre, June 1st, 1928.
11. Red Mulberry.  
Dedicated to Mr. Luther Wyman.  
Canyon near Palisades, Arbor Day, 1929.
12. Magnolia Grandiflora.  
Memory of George Washington.  
Lincoln Park, February 4th, 1932.
13. Deodara.  
Dedicated to Mrs. Robert Fargo.  
Near Shafter.
14. Japanese Flowering Peach (*Prunus  
Persica*). For Mrs. Robert Fargo.  
Mrs. Griswold's summer residence,  
Sierra Madre, June 2nd, 1934.
15. California Redwood (*Sequoia Gigan-  
te*). Dedicated to Mrs. O. M.  
Stultz. South of Audubon House in  
Plummer Park, November 24th, 1939.
16. Persian Mulberry (*Morus Tetrach*)  
Dedicated to Mrs. Mary B. Salmon.  
East of Audubon House in Plummer  
Park, November 24th, 1939.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

This year's will be the 59th Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the 21st for the Los Angeles area. Sunday, December 28, has been selected as the day for our count, and all members and friends of the Los Angeles Audubon Society are invited to participate.

These counts are of value in providing information regarding the midwinter numbers and distribution of birds, but they are an enjoyable, competitive sport as well. Last year Los Angeles was seventh in the nation as to number of species, with 148. We had only 72 observers in the field as compared with over 100 in 1953, when we had one of our highest counts. We really need 100 or more participants in order to cover our area adequately.

So come on out and get in the fun, and help us to get back up to the top of the list again.

Count Chairman, David Duval  
843 No. Sierra Bonita Ave., LA 46  
WEBster 4-5446

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

President. . . . Mr. Robert E. Blackstone, 10363 Calvin Ave., Los Angeles 25

Registrar of Members. . . . Miss Iola R. Moore, 278 Bronwood Ave., L.A. 49

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 1958

December 4 - THURSDAY, ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in Great Hall (NOT Fiesta Hall where it was formerly held) Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. This annual party is sure to please members and friends. The program, in the spirit of the season, was selected by Mrs. Mary Hood and will be a symphony of pictures and music by Mr. Ralph Platt. Mr. Platt is a well-known whistler of bird calls, a photographer and recording artist. The combination of color slides and whistling promises to make a most delightful program. Mr. Platt will also direct the singing of Christmas Carols.

The Staff from Audubon Center in El Monte will have books, games and many other gifts for sale and as our Sales Chairman suggests - "Let's buy, buy, buy" as the profits from these articles go to swell the conservation fund.

Remember to bring gifts for the birds in Plummer Park - raisins, grain, peanut hearts, etc.

Refreshments will be served. Let's make this the gala event of the season.

Chairman - Olive Alvey

December 9 - EVENING MEETING - Tuesday (note that all subsequent meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month from December through May) 8:00 p.m. sharp in Great Hall in Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. (Due to work to be done in Great Hall during January, our January meeting will be held at the West Hollywood Playground for that month only. Watch for detailed announcement in the January Tanager.) Our Speaker for December will be Mr. J. S. Fassero (of the Pasadena Audubon Society) who will present a program entitled "The Romance of Eagles." Mr. Fassero is Chief Engineer in Research and Development at Magna Mill Products, Inc. who is presently engaged in the design of rapid celestial navigation instruments to be used in high speed planes and other high speed vehicles for travel inside and outside our atmosphere. Mr. Fassero's accomplishments include the design of the drive and control mechanisms of the Hale 200 inch Mt. Palomar telescope. He is an accomplished bird photographer and has made outstanding motion pictures of eagles and condors at the nest. The program will feature some of the finest photography of these birds ever achieved. Don't miss this one!

Chairman - Arnold Small

December 11 - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. at 10363 Calvin Avenue.

December 28 - SUNDAY, ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS. From midnight to midnight - rain or shine. All members and friends of the Society are invited to take part. Cards have been sent to former participants; if you have not received a card, and wish to participate, write or call for an assignment to a territory to David Duval, Count Chairman, 843 No. Sierra Bonita Ave., L.A. 46, WEBster 4-5446.