

## Western Tanager



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

THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 25

MAY - JUNE 1959

Number 9

### LOS OSOS IN THE SPRINGTIME

By Alma Stultz

Early morning when we look at Los Osos Valley there is usually a soft haze that gives it a silver sheen and from another window Morro Bay and the ocean beyond are of the same mystic hue. It is so quiet that the cottontails come close to our front door to top off their breakfast with the pansies and other rabbit delicacies. We have counted as many as ten visible at the same time and occasionally a jack rabbit hops down the slope, big black-tipped ears disappearing into the chaparral. Since all wildlife is welcome here, we will either have a low fence to protect some special plants and lawn or settle on a ground cover of mesembryanthemum in the immediate vicinity of the house.

On two sides of our lawn a ceanothus hedge has been full of fragrant blue blossoms that attract many of the birds and bees. Looking out the kitchen window with the rising sun bringing everything into sharp focus, shows the early bird visitors, flying over, under and through the hedge. About equal numbers of Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows, several Fox Sparrows in a rich dark phase, a pair of Lark Sparrows and Song Sparrows. The Brown and Rufous-sided Towhees are numerous, too. The feeding tray and ground beneath it is soon covered with birds and a dawn chorus greets the early riser. There is a great splashing in the bath when the Thrasher arrives. He bathes, sings and then eats a hearty breakfast. The Wren-tits come for raisins and bounce like rubber balls adorned with long tails across the lawn. The Hermit Thrushes also shared the raisins before they migrated. Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Bushtits, Gnatcatchers and a pair of Bewick Wrens get their own breakfast in the ceanothus hedge, and the only visitor to the hummingbird feeder is an occasional Anna's Hummer. The Allen's prefer the fuschias. Four Scrub Jays really own the place and are helping plant sunflower seeds all over the area. Days go by without seeing or hearing the House Finches but we often see and hear California and Cassin's Purple Finches. There are no English Sparrows so far. We hear and see California Quail all over the place and are establishing a special drinking and feeding place for them.

For a while in January we had a Black and Say's Phoebe and always in the clear blue sky we have some birds flying or soaring. White-throated Swifts and Tree Swallows are often seen and we are sure the pair of Red-tailed Hawks are nesting in the big Eucalyptus grove to the east of us. Occasionally Gulls and Great Blue Herons and other shore birds fly over. As I am keeping a guest book for bird visitors I claim the birds of the air also, as we feel we own the sky above us and to the far horizons in every direction. In reality we have two and one fourth acres of chaparral-covered and gently sloping hillside with a background of green rolling hills. There are many shrubs and wildflowers - wall flowers, sticky monkey flowers and poppies are now at their best, also the manzanita and several shades of ceanothus cover the landscape.

(continued on Page 51)

**THE WESTERN TANAGER**

Free to members...Others \$1.50 annually  
 Editor Emeritus.....George T. Hastings  
 Editor.....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."

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 cludes subscription to Audubon Magazine.  
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 \$50., Contributing - \$100., Life - \$300.

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**AUDUBON HOUSE** --Headquarters of the Los  
 Angeles Audubon Society, 7377 Santa Mon-  
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 Thursday and Saturday - 2-4 p.m., 3rd  
 Wednesday - 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**

This is to be my "farewell message"  
 as president of the Los Angeles Audubon  
 Society. I am afraid I cannot point to  
 any great accomplishments during the two  
 years that I will have served as such,  
 for which I can take the credit. We have  
 however, maintained a steady, if slow  
 progress, and this in itself, I have come  
 to realize, is something of an accom-  
 plishment, for which I can claim some small  
 share of the credit. Certainly I, person-  
 ally, have felt myself greatly enriched  
 by this experience.

Not the least of the rewards is the  
 privilege of associating with some of the  
 finest people I have ever met. I refer  
 to all Audubon people in this, but most  
 especially, of course, to the members of  
 the Executive Board of this society dur-  
 ing my term of office. I wish I had  
 space to pay tribute individually to every  
 member, each of whom has served to the  
 full extent of what time he had to devote.

I cannot let this opportunity pass to  
 say a few words, however, in praise of  
 our Curator and Headquarters chairman,  
 Mrs. Russell Wilson. She is fortunate  
 enough to have free time which she has de-  
 voted unstintingly to Audubon work. Few  
 members can be unaware of what she has  
 accomplished at Audubon House.

Much deserving of our praise too is  
 Mrs. Donald Adams, who took over the  
 chairmanship of the Screen Tours Committee  
 in 'midstream', so to speak, and has done  
 an outstanding job of handling this pro-  
 gram, helped of course by Don, who is our  
 excellent Treasurer.

A very special tribute is due our ed-  
 itor of the TANAGER, Mrs. Fern Shelford.  
 She was set to retire at the end of last  
 season, but good editors are hard to find  
 and so she continued out of loyalty to  
 the society, and I believe, as a personal  
 favor to me.

Though I shall be retiring as presi-  
 dent in June, I anticipate continuing to  
 serve in some capacity or other for some  
 time to come.

Robert E. Blackstone

Los Osos in the Springtime - continued

The peaceful Los Osos Valley is still mainly grazing land, with here and there a few ponds where we always see Cinnamon Teal and Dowitchers on our weekly trips to San Luis Obispo. Here we see Red-shouldered, Red-tailed, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks.

Some day soon we hope to explore the canyons and the beach. Morro Bay and the State Park are famous for their bird life and we expect to spend many rewarding hours there. In the meantime our own area fascinates us and keeps us busy.

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#### ASILOMAR - 1959

At least twenty-five members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society were among the record number who attended the Audubon Biennial Convention at Asilomar March 21-24.

Mr. John Baker, president, and Mr. Carl Buchheister, senior vice-president of the National Audubon Society, and Roger Tory Peterson were chief among the notables present.

An unscheduled attraction was an immature male King Eider which was discovered near Cypress Point on the 17-mile Drive on the first day. It was doubtless the best observed King Eider ever to visit California.

At the opening session, Saturday evening, Alma Stultz was presented with an original Roger Tory Peterson painting in token of appreciation for her years of loyal service at the Audubon Center of Southern California. Roger Tory Peterson promised that the revised edition of his Western Field Guide would be "put to bed" by summer.

Sunday was given over to interesting field trips and informative sessions and the Feature Dinner in the evening. At this last the awards for the Audubon Nature Photography Salon were presented. First Prize in the "Mammals" category and Winner of the Grand Prize was Los Angeles Audubon Society member, Antonio Gamero's

fine photograph of desert bighorns. The day's finale was fittingly provided by Roger Tory Peterson's presentation of his film, "FLAMINGOS ON FOUR CONTINENTS."

Between sessions on Monday morning, the Los Angeles Audubon Society provided a "coffee break," and several members were there to greet the delegates. In the afternoon there was a choice of field trips to Point Lobos or to Elkhorn Slough, and in the evening Carl Buchheister presented the film, "PASTURES OF THE SEA."

Tuesday brought the convention to a close with a choice again of two field trips; a half day pelagic trip, or a trip to the William Hatton Ranch in Carmel Valley. Four boatloads of birders put to sea for the pelagic trip, and for most of these the highlight was the excellent view that was had of three Black-footed Albatrosses.

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#### AUDUBON HOUSE

Anyone interested in purchasing rare books or paintings may list their name at Audubon House. We have information about an original James J. Audubon painting available in Los Angeles and will be happy to pass this information on to interested persons. Call Headquarters HO 7-9495 or PO 1-7635 evenings.

Three new birds have been added to the Museum Exhibit; a mockingbird, donated by Mrs. Paul Dodds; a Bullock Oriole and Cedar Waxwing given by Mr. Herman Beck who does the fine work of mounting our birds. Hostesses and visitors have placed in the bird mounting fund box over \$5.00 to help the cost of this exhibit.

New books added to the library; National Audubon Society publications THE WHOOPING CRANE, Research Report No. 3, THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR, Research Report No. 4, United States National Museum Bulletins LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN WOOD WARBLERS, LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, TANAGERS AND THE HONEY GUIDES. The above publications are paper bound. We have three other paper bound life histories in the library: NORTH

AMERICAN GULLS AND TERNS, NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS OF PREY, Part 2, NORTH AMERICAN WOODPECKERS. Contributions to the book-binding fund may be sent to Don Adams, 705 26th St., Manhattan Beach. Make checks payable to the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

There are three more life histories in the library which have already been bound and it is the desire of the book committee that other life histories be added. Those now available to members are: NORTH AMERICAN FLYCATCHERS, LARKS AND SWALLOWS, NORTH AMERICAN NUTHATCHES, WRENS AND THRASHERS, NORTH AMERICAN WAG-TAILS, SHRIKES AND VIREOS. Any one wishing to donate a life history please contact the Librarian, Bettie Landis, HO 3-9936.

----Marian Wilson.

The \$100 voted by the Executive Board for contribution to the cost of Warden Service at the Condor Refuge has been sent to Mr. John Baker. We have nearly enough to match this in contributions from members. In hopes that this can be done we are holding the fund open until May 31 for additional contributions which will then also be sent to Mr. Baker.

#### CONSERVATION - AND ASILOMAR By Otis Wade

Of the many thousands of words filling the air at Asilomar during the recent convention some particularly formed themselves into thoughts which pretty well stuck. One program - one of the best - was Conservation for Californians. One of the speakers made considerable of the point that Audubonites, as he put it, were no longer thought of in conservation circles as being exclusively bird-watchers. Also, on this same program, it was stated that most important from the conservation standpoint was the critical problem concerning waste disposal and water pollution. From the first thought we learn that the Audubon Society's activities in the field of conservation have brought wider appreciation of the fact that we aren't entirely given over to bird-watching. On the contrary, it is the stated object of this Society to conserve and to protect as well as enjoy "our fields and mountains

- our streams and ponds - our forests and grasslands - the fish that weave beauty into our waters - the birds that play with the clouds - and the furred animals that inhabit our hills and hollows". And, as the speaker pointedly observed, of these the protection of our streams and ponds would now take top priority. Good pollution control is very necessary as people do have the right to dispose of waste. The responsibility of seeing that water is not being unnecessarily polluted should rest with the disposer. Congress will take up the matter of a water pollution control program, however, there will have first to be public testimony upon the financing of such an agency. Hearings are as yet not completed.

The California Legislature has a Bill No. 2286, introduced by Mr. Lowrey, which would add the Yellow-billed Magpie to the list of nonprotected birds. The Department of Fish and Game is in opposition to this measure. Persons suffering depredations from these birds have adequate protection under present laws. They are an interesting component of the bird population of this state, occurring nowhere else in the world and in only a very restricted area. This last makes it extremely easy to control in the event it is doing damage. It would help to advise your representative in the Assembly of your opinion on this Bill.

Another piece of legislation, SB-Slattery, is a bill designed to put the Sea Lions on the totally unprotected list. Senator Slattery has also further introduced SCR-46 which directs the Dept. of Fish and Game to reduce the Sea Lion population to not more than 5000 mammals, including reduction in refuges, if necessary. This resolution has been passed by the Senate with present wording "ordering" the Fish and Game to enforce the killing. Efforts should be made to advise your representative in the Assembly of your opinion and desires.

A third resolution - ACR-96 brings up again the issue of multiple use in State Parks and requests the Division of Beaches and Parks to permit hunting and grazing in State Parks. Contact your Assemblyman and let him know your opinion and desires on this likewise.

Conservation of the Big Tujunga as a reservation type recreation area is progressing on two fronts, we are advised

by Dr. Rutledge. The City Attorney is preparing for Superior Court suit by Consolidated Rock Products which is asking for an injunction to prevent the City of Los Angeles from enforcing its zoning law under which the City Council denied their application for gravel zoning. Secondly, the City Appraiser promises completion of city's appraisal by April 23.

What can happen to the landscape when gravel and sand interests take over may be readily observed at Asilomar where an abomination of vast proportions makes a depressing eyesore of an area which should certainly have been preserved in some manner from such destruction.

#### THE BIG DAY IN MAY

By Arnold Small

It has been called the "grim grind", the "lethal tour", the "century run", "ornithogolfing" and other colorful synonyms. It is the "piece de resistance" of the birding year for serious birders from Maine to Florida and from Texas to California. It is the one day of the year when all the stops are pulled out for 24 hours, and birders engage in a frantic race to locate and identify as many species as possible within a single 24 hour period. The choice of the date depends upon local conditions, but it is carefully chosen so that the largest list may be achieved which includes birds at the height of the spring migration as well as those which have lingered over from the winter season. This overlap period is very brief (and may not come at all), but if it does, then chances are excellent for a really big list.

This race against time and birds was started many years ago by Ludlow Griscom and Charles Urner in New Jersey and subsequently has become an annual fetish for active birders all over the country. The largest list achieved by these early groups was 164 species and this record held for many years. Increased interest and planning has led to higher lists (a group including Howard Cogswell, Rolf Mall and Arnold Small had a brief moment of fame when in 1949 they scored 187 species - the highest to that date), and some groups have managed to better 200 species more than once.

It has been suggested that the lower Rio Grande Valley near Brownsville

would ultimately yield the highest return, but this has yet to be done, although the potential is certainly there.

Noel Perley of the Texas Ornithological Society has made it a personal project to record and tabulate the results of these counts over the years, and he notes that a single party from the Philadelphia area once counted more than 220 species in a single day. These counts are held strictly for fun and reflect no contributions to scientific ornithology, but they do test the planning and skill of the participants.

The ground rules are simple and quite unofficial - each group varying somewhat in its approach. However, some common basis must be used so that these counts can be somewhat competitive. There is no limit as to area - as long as it can be covered in a single 24 hour period. Naturally one would want to include as many habitat-types as possible, and here in southern California we are most fortunate in having a great variety on our route. The party must be limited to one carload (about 5 people is optimum) and all species identified must be verified by at least two of the participants. Split-second timing is essential because of the frantic pace and the leader must constantly urge the group to assemble and move on to the next station. Naturally, meals are taken on the move. Black coffee is the staple on such excursions, and is consumed in great quantities.

All birds, both seen and heard are counted - but the emphasis is on species-numbers rather than total numbers of all birds seen. Some interesting questions come to mind when setting up criteria for determining what is ethical to count. For example: if one comes upon a well-known nest (say a Mountain Quail) and the bird is not seen, but the eggs, which are quite distinctive, are visible in the nest - shall we consider them to be an extreme form of immature plumage of this bird? Other possibilities come to mind to test the conscience of the birder. Suppose we are seeking the Long-eared Owl at a known nest and come upon it at night. In the light of the flash we see an eye glowing from the vicinity of this well-known nest - but no more. In a flash it disappears. Was it Mother Long-ear?

If we see a Jaeger too far away to identify as to species, but see no other

Jaegers all day - may we not add Jaeger to our list? A bird is spied sitting in the road at night, but only the eye-shine is seen before the bird is struck (and badly mauled so as to be quite dead). Upon examination it proves to be a Poor-will (no others having been seen or heard on the trip so far) and was not correctly identified until it was quite dead. How strong is the conscience of the party? These and other intriguing problems arise during the course of the day, but all add to the drama and enjoyment of the trip.

Some years ago we charted a route through southern California which gives a maximum number of habitats for the time invested. For those who would like to enter the race, I invite you to inspect the course. We start in Modjeska Canyon at about midnight for owls (especially the Long-ear and Pygmy), then on to Irvine Park (for the Screech, Barn and Great-horned) through Peter's Canyon (where there is a colony of Tricolors) in the hopes of hearing the Sora and Virginia Rails, and the Gallinule. By dawn we are at the marshes near Sunset Beach listening for the Clapper Rails (our list should now be well over 50 and we have not yet seen a bird). near Bolsa Chica making the most of our shore-birding since once we leave this area there will be virtually no other opportunities. For birds of the ocean and rocky coast we head for the cliffs at Corona del Mar. We must leave here no later than 8:00 a.m. Then on to Upper Newport Bay for more shorebirds, Blue Grosbeaks, Burrowing Owls, Roadrunners and the like. Now a long run through Santa Ana Canyon (stopping briefly at Sycamore Park and Gypsum Canyon where we add most of our Warblers, Orioles, Tanagers, and other lowland birds) to Norco and Lake Norconian.

If luck has been with us we should find many of the winter ducks still here. When we leave for the Santa Ana River (and birds like Chat, Hutton Vireo and Bell Vireo) our list should be nearing 150.

Noon finds us crossing birdless country between Norco and Redlands (lunch is usually wolfed down on this stretch). We take the road to Big Bear Lake up City Creek Canyon (first stopping in the desert-like alluvial fan for Costa Hummingbirds and Bell Sparrows). At Big Bear we concentrate on birds of the mountains which we have not yet listed. Again if luck is with

us and the road is free of snow, we head for Moonridge and the Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch forests at 7000 feet where we find (we hope) the Williamson's Sapsucker, Solitaire and similar Canadian Forest birds. Now return to Baldwin Lake (seeing Pinon Jays in Big Bear Village on the way) and hope for some missing species of ducks and perhaps an eagle on this body of water - perhaps even a Solitary Sandpiper.

It is now about 4:00 p.m. and we must hurry on to the desert near Box-S Springs before dark. With luck we add the Scott Oriole and Rock Wren on the way down. The desert oasis should give us Black-throated Sparrow, Gambel Quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker and similar birds. Just at dusk the Lesser Night-hawks will begin to fly. For the first time all day we can now relax to a quiet dinner in Lucerne Valley and total our count. It is nearing 200 but we still lack a few owls so after dinner we return to Big Bear and Moonridge in hopes of the Saw-whet and Flammulated Owls. It is now well after 10:00 p.m. but we still haven't gotten the Spotted Owl, so its down the rough road from Moonridge to Camp Radford and with luck and a little whooping on our part, we succeed in arousing a pair and we head for home as the owls continue to whoop it up in the canyon behind us. No-doz and hot coffee sustain us until we get home. Care to try it? (P.S. If we lack a couple of reaching 200 there might be time to get over to Pershing Sq. or the L.A. City Library before midnight and rout out the Turtle Doves; or we might head down to El Monte and whistle up a Cardinal before time runs out.)

#### WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Dr. J. Douglas French,  
Univ. of Calif. Medical Center, LA 24  
Miss Gertrude Hirth,  
3355 Wilshire Blvd. L.A. 5  
Miss Florence Morrison,  
9490 Hoback St., Bellflower, Calif.

This is the last issue of the TANGER until September. The Editor wishes to thank all who have contributed articles and help in various ways with its publication, with a special "thank you" to Mr. George T. Hastings.

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., Los Angeles 49

CALENDAR FOR MAY - JUNE 1959

May 9, SATURDAY FIELD TRIP to Tapia Park. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Drive up Coast Highway past Malibu Lagoon, turn to right and follow Malibu Canyon road to Tapia Park. Bring lunch and binoculars. Birding at Malibu Lagoon on return.  
Leader-----Ethel Craig

May 12, TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p.m. sharp at Great Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Program: MR. JOHN WINTERSTEEN of the Zoology Department at UCLA will present his excellent colored motion picture "ANIMALS OF AFRICA". Mr. Wintersteen has made a wonderful film on many of the familiar and unfamiliar birds and animals while on extended safaris to Africa. DON'T MISS THIS ONE.  
Chairman-----Arnold Small.

May 14, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

May 21, THURSDAY FIELD TRIP to Tucker Bird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon. Bus will leave Grand Ave. entrance to Biltmore Hotel between 5th and 6th Sts. at 8:30 a.m. sharp. Fare \$2.50. Please have exact amount. We will go Harbor Freeway, Santa Ana Freeway to Chapman Ave. in Orange. East on Chapman to Santiago Rd., turn right and go 8 miles to Silverado Canyon road, turn right and go 5 miles to Modjeska Canyon fork, turn left 1 mile to Sanctuary. We will have our lunch in O'Neill Park.  
Leader---Edna Burt, PL 5-1044

May 23, SUNDAY FIELD TRIP will be an overnight camping trip to GREENHORN MOUNTAIN PARK.

24, Group will meet at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, May 23, at the Salad Bowl Restaurant in Bakersfield. There are two Salad Bowl Restaurants in Bakersfield, meeting will be at the one on Route 99 at the south side of town before reaching the Bakersfield Archway. Group will caravan to Greenhorn Mountain Park to camp Saturday night. Return to Los Angeles Sunday will be via Lake Isabella and Kern River Canyon. There should be good foothill and mountain birding and possibly condors. Bring food for two days.  
Leader - Jim Huffman, FRontier 2-7124

May 28, THURSDAY MORNING MEETING at 10:00 a.m. in Long Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. MR. KENNETH STAGER, head of the Ornithological Department of Los Angeles County Museum will be speaker. Mr. Stager has recently returned from a collecting trip to India, Cambodia and other places, to secure specimens of birds and mammals. It is always an important day for Audubon when Mr. Stager comes to tell us of his adventures. His talk will be illustrated. Don't miss it.  
Chairman---Olive Alvey

June 10, ANNUAL DINNER AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS - JUNE 10 (note the day) 6:30 p.m. at Cafe de Paris - see enclosed notice. Dr. Tilden W. Roberts of the Walt Disney Studios will present a colored motion picture - "Parallels in Nature", one of the most unusual and unique films ever made. Please send in your reservations as soon as possible.

June 11, THURSDAY FIELD TRIP to Charlton Flats. Fare \$2.25. Leave Biltmore Hotel Grand Ave. entrance at 8:30 a.m. sharp. Travel Angeles Crest Highway.  
Leader---Edna Burt - PL 5-1044

June 13, SATURDAY FIELD TRIP to Charlton Flats. For information phone Ethel Craig.  
AX 1-1524

# LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Annual

## Dinner

MEETING . . .

(Note the  
day)

★ WED. JUNE 10, 1959

6:30 P.M.

★ CAFE DE PARIS

Sunset Blvd, just east of La Brea  
Hollywood... \$3<sup>00</sup> incl. tax & tip

★ PROGRAM: color motion pictures ...  
"Parallels in Nature"

Dr. Tilden W. Roberts

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