

T H E

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

Western



Tanager

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BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

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A SOUTHERN ARIZONA BIRD QUEST

Ernest J. Willoughby

Eugene N. Anderson, Jr.

(Concluded)

The junior author visited the same area later in the summer (September), found that rains had come and that the bird life had changed completely. Sparrows, wintering, dispersing, and migrating, had flooded the country; Baird's Cassin's, Botteri's and dozens of Rufous-winged were observed, as well as hundreds of Lark Buntings, migrants from the northern Great Plains. But the Mexican birds, such as the Becard, had either gone completely or become less in evidence; where in June the calls of the Elf Owl had been the most obvious and universal of night sounds, in September the tiny owls had fallen almost completely silent, and the Guadalupe Canyon specialties had gone. A Lucifer Hummingbird was seen at a feeder in the Chiricahuas.

Although we had some great success, we also had some failures. One of our prime targets was the Huachuca Mountains which we attempted by two roads. One road soon led to a gate and "Private No Trespassing" sign, while the other, known as the Reed Road, was so steep that the overloaded little English Ford Zephyr couldn't go up it in the 100-plus degree heat. Vapor lock plagued us on even moderate slopes. Another prime target was the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson, where we hoped to see Brown-throated Wrens and Olive and Red-faced Warblers. On our way up the mountains we were dismayed when the transmission refused to go into third gear. We crept back to Tucson in second gear and were assured by the garage that it would take only three days to receive the parts to repair the synchro-mesh. The third day came - no parts. On the sixth day parts arrived from Los Angeles - the wrong parts. On the tenth day the rush order came through and the car was repaired. But by then we had spent most of our money, and the rains had set in daily in the Santa Catalinas, so we had to cut our trip short.

On the basis of this trip and the subsequent one by the junior author, we can recommend that the birder in south Arizona concentrate on the areas we have specifically mentioned, and that he go in early summer - May or June. Going in full moon, to find owls, is highly recommended. Another supplementary trip later in the year, during winter or migration, considerably helps to fill in the picture of south Arizona birds. The birds are in general fairly easy to observe if one knows where to look for them; and it is very helpful to know habitat preferences and pair locations in advance. Southern Arizona in the summer, although sometimes quite hot, is very productive of birds and well worth a visit.

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

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 cludes subscription to Audubon Magazine.  
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Headquarters, Library and Nature Museum  
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 nesday, Thursday and Saturday. Groups  
 by appointment. Open for members and  
 guests before and after each meeting.

A report by the National Park Service  
 on a year-long survey of the public  
 seashore needs on the Pacific Coast  
 urges immediate broad-scale planning  
 to protect and preserve the few re-  
 maining undeveloped Pacific seashore  
 areas which are still in the pure  
 wilderness or primitive state.

The survey team said that five areas  
 considered to be worthy of national  
 status are Cape Flattery, in northern  
 Washington; Sea Lion Caves and Oregon  
 Dunes area in northern Oregon; Point  
 Reyes Peninsula in northern California  
 and San Miguel Island and Santa Cruz  
 Island, both in Southern California.  
 Congressional action would be required  
 to give them national status.

Then follow eleven specific recommen-  
 dations: among them the following -  
 The Channel Islands constitute the  
 greatest single remaining opportunity  
 for the conservation and preservation  
 of representative seashore values;  
 including areas of interest to biology,  
 geology, history, archeology and pal-  
 eontology, and wilderness recreation.  
 Serious consideration should be given  
 to adding suitable portions of out-  
 standing marine biotic communities to  
 adjacent public parks and administering  
 them as marine preserves. Other areas  
 rich in marine life, though not adja-  
 cent to existing public parks, should  
 be preserved and protected from ex-  
 ploitation. One of the most pressing  
 problems associated with the waters  
 of the Pacific seashore is abatement  
 of pollution. The future of sport  
 fishing, coastal and aquatic recrea-  
 tion, coastal wildfowl abundance and  
 commercial fishing may well depend on  
 prompt action being taken on this  
 problem.

From OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA for  
 November, 1959  
 Submitted by George T. Hastings

## MOUNTAIN LILAC

At this time of year and up till mid-summer, species of Mountain Lilac are blooming on our hillsides and mountains. Of course, these are not related to true lilacs which belong to the genus *Syringa* of the Olive Family and are natives of Persia and China. And, as a matter of names, the shrubs most people call syringa, the mock orange, belong to the genus *Philadelphus* of the Saxifrage Family. Our Mountain Lilacs belong to the genus *Ceanothus* of the Buckthorn Family. There are some 55 species of *Ceanothus*, all natives of temperate North America, mostly western, with more in California than anywhere else. Some have blue or purple flowers and these gave the name Lilac to the plants, but others have white or pink flowers. Some are tall shrubs or even small trees, others are low bushes or prostrate mats, some grow near sea level, others only high in the mountains. While all are grouped as Mountain Lilacs some species go more commonly by other names. The one for which Linnaeus named the genus was the small eastern shrub - Jersey Tea - which was sometimes used by the Indians to prepare a beverage and was a substitute for tea for the colonists at the time of the Revolution when the use of tea was unpatriotic. It did not become a popular substitute and its use was stopped as soon as Chinese Tea could be obtained.

Another species is called Oregon Tea Tree. Our commonest species near the coast and in our local canyons is the Greenbark or Redheart which is in blossom from early February till mid-summer but usually not with such a profusion of blossoms as other species. With this species the flowers are pale blue or white and the twigs are thorny, which reminds us that the name given by Linnaeus was the Greek name of a spiny shrub of Europe and Asia, though the eastern Jersey Tea which he knew is not thorny. Other species are White-Thorn, Snow Bush which grows in the high mountains, Deer Bush, Black Brush and a prostrate form that spreads over high mountain slopes called Squaw Carpet.

The prostrate form seen on slopes of road cuts in Yosemite is a similar species better called, from its scientific name, Fresno Carpet. Whatever its local name or its habit of growth, <sup>(THE</sup> all species of *Ceanothus* have tiny flowers that are alike in structure - five small sepals making a star, between these five petals that are spoon-shaped, that is have very slender bases and expand at the end to a "spoon bowl", with five stamens in front of the petals. The real beauty of the flowers is not realized till they are examined through a magnifying glass, when they seem almost as delicate as snow crystals. Incidentally, a pocket magnifier is almost as important to the botanist as field glasses to the bird watcher. The flowers are always in crowded clusters, flat-topped or pyramidal, that often almost completely cover the bushes, making them among the most beautiful shrubs to be seen anywhere.

Some species, especially those with deep purple or blue flowers, have long been in cultivation, and many new forms and hybrids have been developed more showy or better suited to gardens than the original species.

Perhaps the cultivation of *Ceanothus* is more popular in Europe than in its native country. Species of *Ceanothus* make important parts of the Chaparral on our hillsides and mountain slopes, and like most true Chaparral plants are not killed by fire, unless very severe, but will send up new shoots after the tops have been burned off. The fruits are three seeded, somewhat three lobed capsules resting on a flattened disk-like base somewhat resembling a cup and saucer.

The first use made of *ceanothus* in California was by the Indians who used the flower clusters like soap in making a lather in water. The Spanish Padres learned to use them in this way, being more concerned with their usefulness than their beauty.

The Botanical Garden in Santa  
(concluded on Page 40)

Barbara has a very fine collection of *Ceanothus*, practically all the species that will grow at that elevation. A very complete description of the whole genus is given in the book "Ceanothus" by Van Rensselaer and McMinn, published by the Botanic Garden.

GEORGE T. HASTINGS

FIELD TRIP TO FERN DELL  
January 21

Mocahuenga Canyon. It sounds like a location in the interior of New Guinea, or, what it once was, a meeting ground for Chief Cahuenga and his people, the Indians of the vicinity. More familiarly known as Fern Dell, this part of Griffith Park combines plantings of exotic tropical undergrowth with an overhead canopy of native trees, chiefly Sycamore, Canyon Live Oak, White Alder and Coast Redwood.

Here Chieftess Edna Burt and her Thursday Audubon tribe met and immediately became interested in the dozens of Goldfinches, Common and Lesser, that clung to, while they pecked at, the pendent catkins of White Alder, a member of the birch family. Anna Hummingbirds, occasionally heard, could surely find something delectable from the exquisite Fuchsia Flowering Gooseberry sprays growing near Fern Dell stream amidst Giant Tree Fern.

At the picnic tables near the edge of the steep brush-covered hillside the group assembled, with Mrs. Ruth McCune to help them with bird identification. Grain and chopped apples had been spread as lure and all eyes were on that. Down came the birds, skimming swiftly over the top of chaparral, disappearing into dense shrubbery, then suddenly appearing again at the clearing. Many were Gambel Sparrows with Golden-crowned Fox and Song Sparrows in lesser numbers; quantities of House Finches, more rarely a Purple one; several Audubon Warblers, Brown Towhees, a California Thrasher, Mockingbird, Mourning Dove and Hermit Thrush; a pair of Spotted Towhees, beautiful but very much preoccupied with securing a few bites in the shortest time possible; then what nobody had expected, a Western Tanager after this favorite winter fruit for which it had

perhaps foregone the pleasure of going south with its companions.

On large trees were seen an occasional Downy Woodpecker, Redshafter Flicker, Hutton Vireo, Plain Titmouse or Ruby-crowned Kinglet and flocks of Bushtits plus the ever-present Scrub Jays. A Bewick Wren showed itself but the many Wrentits in low bushes were only heard.

For better coverage of the area it was advisable to go in smaller groups. One of these halted to watch a lone Robin gulping Toyon (California Holly) berries when Park Foreman Joe C. Judd stopped and inquired if they had yet seen any quail. "They're spooky around here. If you want to see some, better come into my office," he said. And there just outside the window on a hillside feeding station were a select collection of surely the brightest and most privileged birds of the park including both male and female Valley Quail.

Lunch at the picnic tables completed a perfect field trip, although, due to illness, Mr. John Peebles' lecture and slides, scheduled for the afternoon at Fern Dell Museum, had to be postponed.

DOROTHY F. LILLY

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ADVANCE NOTICE!

DECEMBER 1, CHRISTMAS  
PARTY AND CHRISTMAS  
BAZAAR.

It is not too early to begin to plan now for the Bazaar. Things made and donated by members will be appreciated. Money made at this time will be for a special fund for Audubon House, the particular project to be announced later.

At the Thursday Meeting in February there will be more said on this subject.

OLIVE ALVEY  
Chairman

TUES. EVE. MEETING FEB. 9th

There was a good turnout for the Tuesday Evening Meeting on February 9 when the program was devoted mainly to a symposium "Adaptations for Life in the Desert". The panel covered the subject very thoroughly and interestingly: Mrs. Warren Flock discussed the adaptations of plants; Mr. David Duval those of insects and reptiles; Dr. Wm. Lehmann of birds and Mr. Ernest Willoughby of mammals. Mr. Russell Wilson served as an excellent moderator to this very competent panel. Mr. Robert Sandmeyer prepared some attractive charts and maps which helped illuminate the subject. The audience joined in the discussion at the end and I believe all found the evening most instructive and enjoyable.

BOB BLACKSTONE

The Chatsworth Reservoir field trip on Sunday, January 24, was a complete success even though the group of 46 missed seeing several Whistling Swans and Snow Geese by only a few days, according to the caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. Herschy.

From around 8:30 in the morning to mid-afternoon 71 species were identified in a variety of habitat - lake, open fields, woodland, nearby mountains, etc. featured by 9 White-Fronted Geese, a Lewis Woodpecker, a Peregrin Falcon, several hundred Canada Honkers and a spectacular flock of about 150 American Mergansers, mostly females as only 16 males were counted. A total of 14 species of ducks and geese were seen.

A great many Horned Larks fed over the open fields, one flock in particular being quite large. Kinglets were scarce compared to this same trip last year, when they were in abundance.

The shallow marshy pond to the north of the lake was dried up, or had been drained, leaving only the lake-shore to attract the waders, of which only four species were seen.

It was noted with considerable regret that industry is encroaching on

this noted sanctuary-like area. A large electronics plant with several buildings has sprung up adjacent to it on the south just west of the gate which heretofore was the habitat of White-tailed Kites. Needless to say, none were seen nor have any been there since the beginning of the construction work, according to caretaker Herschy.

Mr. and Mrs. Herschy retire on July 1, 1960 after many years as caretakers of this unusually fine birding area. As they go our best wishes for them are mingled with the hope that a successor of equal concern for the wildlife will take over. There are rumors of a Recreational Area being made of the Chatsworth Reservoir!

REG. JULIAN

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FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

At this meeting Gudrun Pepke's resignation as Historian was regretfully accepted. Press of activity in many other fields forced "Goodie" to this. Her enthusiasm and success in the office of Historian will be sorely missed.

AUDUBON LIBRARY

By Mrs. Robt. Landis, Librarian

The library would like to thank Audubon Society members for 27 "new additions" in 1959. This brings the number of volumes on our shelves to 538. We are never satisfied, however. If anyone has books he has read and enjoyed, we would like to take care of them for him. We will keep them dusted and share them with members of the Society. The library is located in Audubon House at Plummer Park. Members may check out books for one month.

Newest books in the library are:

- How to Watch Birds                    Barton
- A Guide to the Most Familiar Birds
- Bird Watchers Anthology            Peterson
- King Solomon's Ring                Lorenz
- Webster's Dictionary
- (Gift of Southwest Bird Study Club)

## BUENA VISTA LAGOON

For the past 20 years interested individuals and organizations have tried unsuccessfully to secure permanent protection for the Buena Vista Lagoon. For various reasons the local County, State and Federal agencies have by-passed the issue and offered no acceptable solution.

The most recent threat to the Lagoon was an effort to fill in a large portion and build on it a trailer court. So far, this has been defeated - but the time has come when permanent protection must be obtained. The Buena Vista Lagoon Association and the Buena Vista Audubon Society are working with The Nature Conservancy, a non-profit organization which has preserved and helped to preserve many outstanding areas in the United States.

The majority of those who own submerged lands are gladly giving their portions to the Conservancy. A few individuals have not yet cooperated and others are asking remuneration. As soon as the requirements are known, a pamphlet stating the situation and the amount of money to be raised will be published and circulated.

The Buena Vista Lagoon attracts many people from various parts of the United States. It is not only considered the last area of its kind in Southern California, but it is an important link in the Pacific Flyway. To save the Lagoon we shall need much, much publicity and financial help.

LAURA R. SHAW, Secretary  
Buena Vista Lagoon Association

## AUDUBON CAMP

Remember, Audubon Camp of California.

June 19 - August 27

Five 2 week sessions.

Write Audubon Camp  
2426 Bancroft Way  
Berkeley 4, California

## TREE PLANTING IN MARCH

A tree planting is being planned for a Saturday or Sunday in March under the supervision of the Forestry Department who will supply the trees. The Los Angeles Audubon Society, the Sierra Club and other conservation organizations will participate. We all talk conservation and here is an opportunity to help with the actual labor while enjoying a day in the mountains with people of the same interest.

As soon as the Forestry Department sets the date we will notify all those who have sent their names and telephone numbers to our Headquarters. Please contact us as soon as possible and plan to have a grand day working and meeting old friends and making new ones. Call Hollywood 7-9495 Mondays and Thursday 8:00 to 4:00 P. M. and Wednesdays 1:00 to 4:00 P. M. Evenings POplar 1-7635.

MARION WILSON

## SUNDAY FIELD TRIP

(Continued from Calendar)

SUNDAY FIELD TRIP will be to the Tucker Hummingbird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon. Group will meet at 8:00 A. M. at the entrance to Irvine Park. To get to Irvine Park go south on Santa Ana Freeway to Orange turn-off. Turn east and take Chapman Ave. through city of Orange. Continue on Chapman Ave. a few miles east to Irvine Park.

BILL LEHMANN, Leader  
FR 7-2635.

According to the "Topeka Audubon News" Black Swans, native of Australia, hatched 5 young in the Garden City Zoo in December of last year. December is summer time in Australia and the usual nesting season for the swans, so apparently the birds were following their usual seasonal period without regard to the change in climate.

GEO. T. HASTINGS

# Western Tanager



PUBLISHED MONTHLY, SEPTEMBER TO MAY  
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THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF THE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

President: Mr. James W. Huffman 2912 Manhattan Ave., Manhattan Beach  
Registrar of Members: Mrs. Robert Sandmeyer 355 Elm St., Burbank

## CALENDAR FOR MARCH, 1960

- March 3 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
- March 8 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - 8:00 P.M. in Great Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. This meeting will occur during California Conservation Week and will concern itself with the theme of this observance, "Californians' Year of Decision". The program feature will be a film on this theme.  
Bob Blackstone, Chairman
- March 12 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP to Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens at Claremont. Go out Foothill Blvd. to College Ave. entrance. Meet in parking lot at 9:00 A.M.  
Leader: Otis Wade, NO 1-9853
- March 15 SCREEN TOUR - SECRETS OF THE SEA, G. Clifford Carl, Tuesday Evening 7:45 Virgil Junior High School, 152 No. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles.
- March 17 THURSDAY FIELD TRIP TO TUCKER BIRD SANCTUARY in MODJESKA CANYON. Bus will leave Grand Ave. entrance to Biltmore Hotel between 5th & 6th Sts. at 8:30 A. M. sharp. Fare \$2.75. Please have exact amount. We go via Harbor Freeway, Santa Ana Freeway to Chapman Ave. in Orange. East on Chapman Ave. to Sandiego Road, 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. Reservations 1 week before trip.  
Leader: Edna Burt, PL 5-1044
- March 19 SCREEN TOUR - PUERTO RICO, U.S.A. - Fran Wm. Hall, Saturday Afternoon 2:00 o'clock. John Burroughs Junior High School, 600 South McCadden Place, Los Angeles.
- March 24 THURSDAY MORNING MEETING, Plummer Park, Long Hall, 10 to 12 o'clock. Mr. Charles Bishop, retired head of Board of Education in Madison, Wisconsin, and Vice-President of the South West Bird Club, will present a study on "Migration". This subject, ever-engrossing and always baffling to students of bird behavior, will be well presented by Mr. Bishop. Mrs. Neil Lewis, a former President of Audubon Society, and Director of the South West Bird Club, will speak of a few of the migration trails to be found in this vicinity.  
Olive Alvey, Chairman
- March 27 SUNDAY FIELD TRIP (See Page 42 for details) or call FR 7-2635