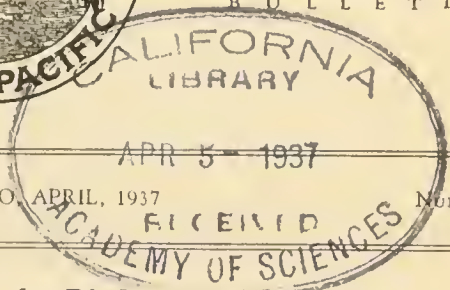


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### Catering to the Birds

"What shall I plant in my garden to attract the birds?" is a question often asked. This article is an endeavor to answer the query. Although the information applies to gardens in general, the plant material herein mentioned is particularly adapted for the San Francisco Bay region.

Wild currant, fuchsia-flowering gooseberry, twin-berry, and manzanita are favorites with hummingbirds. These native plants make good garden shrubs and blossom early when there is little food available for these dainty creatures. Their flowers are followed by fruits enjoyed by members of the sparrow and thrush families. Fuchsias, cestrums, honeysuckles, trumpet vines and the iochroma have a long season of bloom and together with herbaceous plants such as coral bells, penstemon, columbines, montebretias, gladioli, and cannas, just to mention a few, will furnish the needs of hummingbirds throughout the year. *Cestrum elegans* will thrive in a neglected corner of the garden when protected from the frost. I have seen hummingbirds gather food from its flowers at Christmas time when the plant had lost most of its leaves on account of the cold.

In spring when the flowering fruit trees are so gay, every gardener makes a mental note to have some of his own in the garden because of their great beauty. He will be glad to know that they are also appreciated by his avian visitors. Again the hummingbirds go to their blossoms and the fruits of many of them are eaten by finches, towhees, sparrows, grosbeaks, robins, cedar waxwings and tanagers. One of the finest trees in my garden is a crab apple, *Pyrus spectabilis*. The little apples begin to attract birds in August and for several months all day long robins and cedar waxwings are flying in and out of the tree. The greenish females and immature tanagers often tarry here for a week or more in middle September.

Cherries of the early fruiting variety bring a host of birds. This is fine if you are planting the trees for the birds but not so good if you want the fruit for human consumption. My neighbors have two such trees that are a joy for bloom in March and it is from their branches that we get the songs of grosbeaks, robins, finches, and occasionally a Bullock oriole finds the trees. It has been found that in orchards, where the grower must protect his fruit, some relief from the depredations of birds can be had by planting mulberry trees in the waste corners or along the fences. Their fruiting season is long and most birds are very fond of the fruit. When I am traveling in regions where native mulberries grow, I go to such a tree to make observations, being sure to see a large variety of birds feeding.

For fall color in the garden we plant many berried shrubs and these furnish quantities of food. In the opinion of some persons the birds are all too fond of these berries and strip the plants when the owner wants them for house decoration. There is little one may say on this score except to plant more so that there will be enough for birds and decoration. I have tried spraying the plants with whale-oil soap or some other harmless but strong-tasting material. Although I think this helps for a few days, the taste soon wears off and the birds are feast-

ing again. Some people cover a particularly fine spray of berries with cheese cloth. I have gotten to the place where I consider my garden a large natural aviary and take for decoration whatever is left. No berries are wasted; when those cut for house decoration begin to shrivel I throw the branches into the garden and the birds use them for food.

Among the best berry plants for the purpose of attracting birds are the native toyon, pyracanthas, cratagus and cotoneasters in variety, barberries, ligustrums, snowberry, elderberry, mountain ash and among the vines Virginia creeper and English ivy. Many of these plants are attractive in the late spring when covered with flowers. By planting the following pyracanthas and cotoneasters, berries can be had from August until spring. In the order of maturing their fruits they are: *Pyracantha crenulata*, *P. coccinea lalandi*, *P. coccinea*; *Cotoneaster francheti*, *C. pannosa* (not quite so popular with birds until other varieties have disappeared); *P. formosiana splendens*, *P. crenulata yunnanensis* (which often holds its berries until February or March, when Cedar Waxwings finish them up) and *C. harroviana*.

The orange berries of the Mexican orange, *Choisya ternata*, are relished by hermit thrushes. As this plant is dioecious both the pistillate and staminate ones must be planted. The same holds good for the English holly. The ligustrums (privets) hold their berries through the winter. When birds eat these fruits, the drupes of fuchsias (robins have a liking for these), the berries of *Berberis darwini* or any other of the dark berries, the droppings will be blackish and stain the cement walks and paint of houses. The stain does, however, wash off with the rain.

When the sparrows, towhees and finches come to dine on the various berries, they are not interested in the pulp so much as in the seeds and they peck at the fruit, trying to get the seeds, many of which drop to the ground. All during the winter these same birds can be seen scratching under the bushes salvaging this supply. The robins, thrushes and waxwings swallow the berries whole, leaving the plants looking much neater, and void the seeds. These having thus been cleaned of pulp, germinate readily, and seedlings of all sorts of plants will make their appearance in the garden, especially under the night roosts of the birds. Under my crab apple tree fox sparrows scratch all winter, getting the apple seeds that have fallen out of apples knocked down by other birds while feeding in the tree earlier in the season.

During the winter, 1936-37, most of the flowers upon which the Anna Hummingbirds usually depend froze. On the Berkeley campus a large loquat tree, protected by the overhanging branches of a eucalyptus tree, was covered with its pale but fragrant flowers, and hummingbirds were feeding there. This tree has handsome foliage and its fruit makes fine preserves, but it is suitable only for large grounds.

Intermediate white-crowned (Gambel) and golden-crowned sparrows as well as purple finches are very fond of eating the buds of fruit trees and wisterias. They spell destruction of the Japanese quince in my place. Each year when I see the crowned sparrows descend upon my wisteria and the ground becomes covered with scattered bracts I just know that there cannot possibly be a floral display; yet each year the wisteria is beautiful. There are enough buds for sparrows and myself. Not until these two species have left for their breeding grounds is it safe for me to plant out my seedlings. Everything has its compensation. On many a cool, cloudy day their songs make my garden a companionable place.

Bush-tits, warblers, kinglets and other insectivorous birds come to eat their share of the insect pests that develop in the gardens. Thus, as soon as we plant anything at all we invite these foragers. If one wishes to have birds nest in the garden one must not be too tidy. The tangle in vines and shrubs affords safe home sites; also the old brush pile gives safe retreat to ground-feeding birds when danger threatens. Old flower heads of sunflowers, marigolds and cosmos supply Green-backed Goldfinches with ideal food. Flocks of these "wild canaries" will thus add interest in the fall of the year.

There are many plants I have not mentioned that are equally successful in attracting birds. The garden furniture should include a bird bath, feeding shelf



and a few bird boxes if you live where House Wrens, bluebirds, flickers and other cavity-nesting birds abound.

Junea W. Kelly, Alameda, California. March 21, 1937.



### March Field Trip

Point Bonita was the objective of our walk on Sunday, March 14th. The weather was pleasant, though the sun was not very bright until afternoon.

The rocks along the water front at Sausalito were smeared with the widely spread oil from the wrecked tanker, Frank H. Buck. Here only a few gulls were present.

Road construction into Fort Baker and the consequent dumping of debris over the slope, apparently had frightened away all bird life at that point. On other visits we usually found Titmice and warblers in the oaks below the road and once a Townsend Solitaire.

On the beach at Fort Baker was a large flock of gulls, mostly Glaucous-winged and California. Many of these were plagued with oil, some being in a hopeless condition. Resting on the water was a gull so completely coated with oil that at first we were unable to recognize it.

The marsh beyond the tunnel, where we usually have enjoyed good birding, yielded only one species — a Wilson Snipe — and this thanks to Mr. Thomas's scouting. We were glad to see that wary individual again whose take-off from its hiding place is always so sudden and erratic.

The thrill of the day was a male Old Squaw Duck on Rodeo Lagoon. This was a new bird for most of the group and also for the Audubon life-list. Here also we found grebes, ducks and Brown Pelicans. Two Western Grebes were pretty badly smeared with oil but seemed, in spite of their misfortune, to be able to swim about, though we did not see them dive. Later we met two soldiers, Sergeant Van Frank and Private Bert Smith, from Fort Barry, who told us that they had rescued the grebes in a pitiful condition at the beach and had washed them with laundry soap and water and liberated them at the lagoon. The soldiers had with them a Farallon Cormorant badly covered with oil, which they were taking to the barracks for similar treatment. The kindly impulse which prompted these men to try to save these poor birds from a cruel and slow death was highly commended by our group. We hope to hear later whether the birds survived.

We were unable to get to the lighthouse owing to a recent slide which had carried away a strip of the path leading to it, making the approach very narrow and dangerous. In consequence we probably missed seeing several species which we had usually observed flying over the waters below the lighthouse.

The list for the day numbered fifty-four, as follows: Red-throated Loon 2; Eared Grebe 10+; Western Grebe 6; Brown Pelican 2; Farallon Cormorant 50+; Brandt Cormorant 3; Mallard 17; Canvas-back 6; Scaup 3; Old Squaw 1; White-winged Scoter 1; Surf Scoter 10+; Ruddy Duck 15+; Red-breasted Merganser 1; Turkey Vulture 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk 1; Red-tailed Hawk 4; Sparrow Hawk 1; Quail 2; American Coot 33; Killdeer 1; Wilson Snipe 1; Glaucous-winged Gull; Western Gull 3; California Gull; Anna Hummingbird 1; Allen Hummingbird 7; Red-shafted Flicker 1; Western Flycatcher 1; Horned Lark 6+; Nicasio Jay 4; Raven 3; Crow 6; Nicasio Chickadee 1; Bush-tit few; Wren-tit 3; Nicasio Wren 2; Western Robin 1; Hermit Thrush 2; Western Bluebird 10+; Pipit 25+; Lutescent Warbler 2; Audubon Warbler 2; English Sparrow 13; Meadowlark 25+; Red-winged Blackbird; Brewer Blackbird; Purple Finch 1; House Finch 6+; San Francisco Towhee 1; San Francisco Brown Towhee 2; Savannah Sparrow 1; Nuttall Sparrow 15+; Song Sparrow 3.

Seventeen members attended: Messrs. and Mesdames Andrews, Stephens; Mesdames Bracelin, Clear, Kelly, Mexia; Misses Danz, Gallagher, Papina, Taylor; Messrs. Power, Thomas, Webb; Masters Berliner and Kirker; with three guests: Mrs. Thomas and Misses Dickinson and Roberts.

Albert B. Stephens, Historian.

## Audubon Notes

**April Meeting:** The regular meeting will be held on Thursday evening, the 8th, at 8 o'clock, in room 19, Ferry Building.

Speaker: Mr. Joseph Dixon, whose subject will be "The Wild Life of Some of Our National Parks of California." The lecture will be illustrated.

Members may bring guests.



**April Field Trip** will be taken on Sunday, the 11th, to Lake Merced. Take either No. 12 Mission Street car marked "Ocean" or Municipal car K, transferring to No. 12 car at Sloat Boulevard, and getting off at entrance to Fleishacker Playgrounds, where party will meet at 9:30 a. m. Bring luncheon. Leader, Gordon Bolander.



**March Meeting:** The 235th regular meeting was held on the 11th, in room 19, Ferry Building, twenty-eight members and guests being present. President Junea W. Kelly presiding.

The following new members were elected: Mrs. T. H. Brown, Miss Rachel Markley, Mr. Chas. B. Andrews and Erwin Berliner, all of San Francisco.

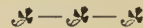
The following observations have been reported:

Gordon Bolander: Lake Merced, February 17th, Pigeon Hawk, Red-bellied Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, 2 pairs Cinnamon Teal, female American Golden-eye, Varied Thrush, Gadwall; March 10th, Sora Rail, 1 pair Florida Gallinules, American Bittern, Tree and Barn Swallows; 19th, 1 pair Ravens, Turkey Vulture, Bank and Cliff Swallows.

Mrs. Kelly: A Harris Sparrow was seen January 12, 1937, at a feeding shelf at 1398 Scenic Drive, Berkeley. It was also reported from a neighboring garden, 1370 Euclid Avenue, and seems to spend its time between these two feeding stations, being still present on March 17th.

Mrs. Stephens: North Lake, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, February 13th, two Tree Swallows, a new record for the park; 20th, Dusky Warbler; March 6th, Rufus Hummingbird and a pair of Willow Woodpeckers.

Mr. Thomas: St. Mary's reservoir, Contra Costa County, March 3rd, 1 pair Ring-necked Ducks.



**Directors' Meeting:** There will be a meeting of the Directors preceding the regular meeting at 6:30 p. m. in room 714, 245 Market Street.

## Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

### For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President..... Mrs. G. Earle Kelly.....1311 Grand Ave., Alameda, Calif.  
 Corresponding Secretary..... C. B. Lastreto.....260 California St., San Francisco  
 Treasurer..... Mrs. A. B. Stephens.....1695 Filbert St., San Francisco

Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

Address Bulletin correspondence to Mrs. A. B. Stephens, Editor, 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco.

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00.

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.