

14. *Icteria virens longicauda*. LONG-TAILED CHAT.—A summer resident in the western part of the State; not uncommon. In habits and actions it resembles the Yellow-breasted Chat, but its note and song are slightly different. The birds were reported by Prof. F. H. Snow, in Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science, Vol. VI, p. 38, as "Taken along the Smoky Hill River, in Western Kansas by S. W. Williston, in May, 1877"; but by oversight omitted from my first Catalogue. Attention was immediately called to the same (see Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, Vol. VIII, p. 227). June 2, 1885, I shot two of these birds on Crooked Creek, in Meade County, and saw several others.

15. *Thryothorus bewicki bairdi*. TEXAN BEWICK-WREN.—Resident; not uncommon in Southwestern Kansas. Nests in deserted Woodpecker holes, hollow logs, or any nook it may fancy; nest composed of sticks, roots, straws, and grasses, and lined with fur and a few downy feathers; quite bulky, generally filling the space, but in no case, I think, roofed over. Measurements of five eggs, taken at Corpus Christi, Texas, May 9, 1882: .63 × .50; .63 × .50; .63 × .50; .63 × .49; .62 × .49. Eggs white, speckled with light and dark shades of reddish brown, thickest around the larger end. The bird was entered in my first Catalogue as *T. bewicki*.

16. *Merula migratoria propinqua*. WESTERN ROBIN.—See Auk, I, Jan. 1884, p. 100,

The following species have been found breeding in Kansas since the publication of my Catalogue.

1. *Podilymbus podiceps*. PIED-BILLED GREBE.
2. *Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*. BLACK TERN.
3. *Sterna antillarum*. LEAST TERN.
4. *Spatula clypeata*. SHOVELLER.
5. *Gallinula galeata*. FLORIDA GALLINULE.
6. *Porzana noveboracensis*. LITTLE YELLOW RAIL.
7. *Rallus virginianus*. VIRGINIA RAIL.
8. *Aquila chrysaetos*. GOLDEN EAGLE.
9. *Pica pica hudsonica*. AMERICAN MAGPIE.
10. *Passerina ciris*. NONPAREIL.
11. *Ammodramus caudacutus nelsoni*. NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW.
12. *Vireo atricapillus*. BLACK-CAPPED VIREO.
13. *Icteria virens longicauda*. LONG-TAILED CHAT.
14. *Troglodytes aëdon parkmani*. WESTERN HOUSE WREN.
15. *Thryothorus bewicki bairdi*. TEXAN BEWICK'S WREN.

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### THIRD MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

THE third meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union was held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York

City, November 17 and 18, 1885. Rather more than one-third of the Active Members were present—the same number as last year—and quite a number of Associate Members, several of whom presented papers and took part in the scientific discussions. The Secretary and Treasurer in presenting his official report referred especially to the flourishing condition of the Union, and its improved financial status over that of last year. He stated that but one death had occurred among its members since the last meeting,—that of Dr. H. A. Atkins, of Locke, Michigan, an Associate Member, well known among ornithologists for his work on the birds of Michigan.\*

The report of the Council referred to the completion and acceptance of the 'Code of Nomenclature and Check List of North American Birds,' in accordance with resolutions adopted at the last meeting of the Union. The report of the Committee on the European House Sparrow, and the documents relating to the work of the Committee, had been received by the Council, and the material gathered by the Committee had been placed at the disposal of the Department of Agriculture, and, it is expected, will be shortly published as a 'Bulletin' of the Department, under the supervision of the Ornithologist (Dr. C. Hart Merriam) in charge of the work on Economic Ornithology. The report from the Council stated, regarding memberships, that there was no vacancy in the class of Foreign Members, and only three in the class of Active Members. In view of the small number of vacancies in this class, and the fact that a desirable change in the Constitution affecting the manner of electing members to the Active list had been suggested, the Council deemed it advisable to defer further elections till the proposed constitutional amendment could be acted upon. Prof. Fernando Ferrari-Perez, Naturalist of the Mexican Geographical Exploring Commission and President of the State University of Pueblo de Saragosa, and Gustav von Hayek, Secretary of the International Ornithologists' Union, Vienna, Austria, were proposed for Corresponding Members. Both were elected, as were the candidates recommended for election to the class of Associate Members.

The amendments to the Constitution proposed last year † were all adopted.

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\* See Auk, II, p. 391.

† See Auk, I, p. 370.

The reports of Committees comprised two only—that on the Geographical Distribution and Migration of North American Birds, and that on the Protection of Birds. The Chairman of the first-named Committee, Dr. C. Hart Merriam, presented a very full report, detailing at length the progress of the work and its present status, only an abstract of which can be here presented. Last fall a new and much improved form of circular was prepared and sent out, in provision for the spring migration of the present year. A special circular was also sent to keepers of lighthouses and lightships, and schedules for returns were distributed to all of the Committee's observers, some 1200 in number. These schedules, it is gratifying to observe, have been received with so much favor abroad that they have been translated and republished in several European languages, and reprinted in full in 'Ornis,' the organ of the International Ornithologists' Union.

Final reports have been received from Prof. W. W. Cooke, Dr. J. M. Wheaton, Mr. L. S. Foster, and Mr. William Dutcher; and Mr. L. Belding has in preparation a very elaborate report on the birds of California.

It became apparent more than a year ago that the work of this Committee was fast assuming such formidable proportions that the Union would soon be unable to sustain the financial burden thus entailed, and at the meeting of the Union last year the Council was instructed to prepare a memorial to Congress asking for Government aid. In considering this matter the Council decided to advise the establishment of a Division of Economic Ornithology under the Department of Agriculture, which should not only carry on the investigations necessary to a thorough understanding of the movements and distribution of our birds, but should also enter upon a systematic inquiry into their food-habits and practical relations to Agriculture. The Chairman of the Committee was accordingly requested to prepare and present a draft of a memorial, embodying this plan, to the Council, which was in due time received and approved by the Council.\* The Chairman, on presenting this memorial to Congress, was accorded a hearing before the House Committee on Agriculture, through the assistance of Prof. C. V. Riley, Chief of the Division of Entomology of the Department of Agriculture. Prof. Spencer F. Baird had the kindness to appear before the Agricultural Committee and

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\* This memorial will be found printed in full in 'Ornis,' I, 1885, pp. 60-67.

personally urge the practical importance of the investigations thus proposed, while Senator Warner Miller, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, not only brought the memorial favorably to the notice of the Committee on Agriculture, but afterward made an influential speech in its behalf on the floor of the Senate, and secured for the work contemplated an appropriation of \$5000, after the item had been dropped in the House. It is thus to Senator Miller that ornithologists are indebted more than to any other person for the appropriation, as without his efficient aid the appeal to Congress would have been in vain. The House Committee on Agriculture, however, placed the work under the Division of Entomology, instead of creating for it an independent division, as contemplated in the memorial.

The appropriation became available July 1, 1885, at which time the investigations in Economic Ornithology now in progress under the Department of Agriculture were begun. The Council of the Union was invited by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Professor Riley—in recognition of the interest in the work manifested by the Union, and of its efforts in securing the appropriation from Congress for these investigations—to nominate a person to take charge of, and conduct, the work. This the Council did at a meeting held in Washington on the 21st of last April, unanimously and very fittingly selecting for this position the Chairman of the A. O. U. Committee on the Migration and Geographical Distribution of North American Birds, Dr. C. Hart Merriam, to whom also had fallen the labor of presenting the memorial and securing favorable action upon it. These investigations, now in progress under Government auspices, are thus the direct outgrowth of the work of the Union, and especially of that of its Committee on the Migration and Distribution of Birds. The vast amount of valuable material gathered by this Committee has now been turned over by the Union to the Department of Agriculture, for elaboration and publication; and the returns of the A. O. U. observers are now directly sent to the Department of Agriculture, which defrays the considerable expense necessarily involved in the preparation, distribution, and collection of the schedules, as well as the preparation of the returns for publication. The very elaborate and voluminous report prepared by Professor Cooke, with the assistance of Mr. Otto Widmann and Prof. D. E. Lantz, upon 'Bird Migration in the

Mississippi Valley,' is now ready for the press, and will be issued soon as Bulletin No. 10 of the Division of Entomology.

The investigation of the food habits of birds, in reference to their relation to agriculture—a subject well recognized as of the highest practical importance—has now been in progress for several months, and the amount of material already gathered for this purpose amounts to more than 1600 bottles of contents of birds' stomachs, later to be microscopically examined by competent experts in such investigations. The method adopted for the collection of data relating to what birds eat contemplates, in addition to the collection of birds' stomachs, the employment of competent observers in the field; the enlistment in the work of intelligent farmers throughout the country; and the collation of data already published. With this object in view a circular has been issued soliciting information on various points therein specified, and the assistance of those willing to aid in the collection of birds' stomachs. Copies of these circulars were sent to about 1000 of the regular observers of the Migration Committee, and also to the editors of agricultural papers and journals, and many farmers, throughout the country. From the Committee's observers alone, it is proper to note, have come eighty-seven per cent of the replies thus far received. The Department of Agriculture has already in preparation, and will soon issue, a Bulletin devoted to this branch of inquiry. The very cursory examination already made of the material gathered shows that results of great importance may confidently be anticipated from its final elaboration.

Mr. Allen, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Geographical Distribution, said that this division of the Committee was awaiting the data collected by the Subcommittee on Migration to become available for use in conjunction with that already accumulated, before attempting the preparation of a final report, which it was expected would largely take the form of maps prepared to show the range of each species, so designed as not only to indicate its entire North American range, but its breeding range, its area of winter residence, and the portions of country over which it occurred merely as a migrant. He called on Mr. Chadbourne, a member of the Committee, to whom was assigned the district comprising New England and that portion of Canada lying south of the St. Lawrence River and Gulf, to exhibit and explain a

series of provisional maps he had already prepared for his district. This led to a very interesting discussion of methods to be pursued in this kind of work, which was participated in by Dr. Merriam, and Messrs. Chadbourne, Allen, Brewster, and Sennett.

The report of the Committee on the Protection of Native Birds was made by Mr. Brewster, who stated that owing to ill health and the pressure of other duties, he had been prevented from entering actively into the work originally contemplated by the Committee, and had been obliged to resign the chairmanship. Owing to this and other adverse circumstances, the Committee had been unable to develop a systematic plan of work. He hoped the Committee would be continued, and would reorganize by choosing a chairman who could give the matter the attention and time its high importance demanded. The discussion following the report showed there was no lack of interest in the subject, and that active measures will be immediately taken towards the enlightenment of the public and the creation of a proper sentiment in relation to the wholesale slaughter of birds now going on for millinery purposes. Dr. Merriam regarded the work of this Committee as the most urgent now before the Union. The discussion, eliciting remarks also from Messrs. Brewster, Sennett, Allen, Dutcher, and others, not only led to the presentation of some startling statistics relating to the enormous destruction of bird life for hat decoration, but suggested certain lines of operation for the suppression of the evil.\*

In addition to the reports of Committees, a number of interesting papers were presented, but lack of space prevents a proper notice of them in the present connection. Some of them, however, are given in the present issue *in extenso*, and others will doubtless appear in later numbers of 'The Auk.' Mr. E. P. Bicknell presented and explained by means of a chart a graphic method of representing the duration of the song-periods, and also the periods of migration, of the birds of Westchester County, New York, based on a long series of observations. The President called attention to the advantages this method obviously possessed for delineating the seasonal presence of species successively at different localities; and Dr. Merriam spoke of its ap-

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\* In this connection attention may be called to a paragraph under the head of 'Notes and News' in the present number of 'The Auk,' showing that the Committee has promptly and earnestly entered upon its work.

plicability on a large scale for the tabulation of data on bird migration.

Mr. G. B. Sennett explained his system of a card catalogue for ornithological collections, which led to remarks by Messrs. Allen, Brewster, and Merriam on the advantages of the card system in general, and its convenience for recording field notes and other observations, resulting in an interesting discussion of such practical matters as the preservation and arrangement, not only of miscellaneous notes, but of clippings and pamphlets.

Mr. L. S. Foster, superintendent of the District of Spanish America under the Committee on Bird Migration, gave some interesting statistics respecting the destruction of birds by striking against the lighthouse at Cape San Antonio, Cuba.

Mr. Brewster gave an account of his recent visit to Point Lepreaux, on the west shore of the Bay of Fundy, including very detailed observations of the manner in which birds strike the light-towers, the influences governing their movements at night, and of the way in which certain species start on their day-journeys to distant points. He also gave a very interesting account of his recent ornithological explorations in the mountains of North Carolina.\*

Col. N. S. Goss presented a paper† on recent additions to the bird fauna of Kansas.

In the way of miscellaneous business an amendment was proposed; to be acted upon at the next meeting, affecting the method of election to Active membership. Resolutions of thanks were passed to Senator Warner Miller, and to Prof. Spencer F. Baird, for their efforts in securing from Congress an appropriation of \$5000, for the prosecution of investigations in Economic Ornithology; to Mr. George B. Sennett for his interesting stereopticon exhibitions of colored slides of birds (formerly the property of Mr. R. Bowdler Sharpe, of the British Museum), painted by the celebrated artist Keulemans, which he had given at the close of each day's session; and to the Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History for their kindness in placing rooms at the disposal of the Union for its meetings, and for their cordial invitation to accept similar hospitality next year.

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\* This paper will be given in 'The Auk,' the first part appearing in the present number, pp. 94-112.

† Given in abstract in the present number of 'The Auk,' pp. 112-115.

In accordance with a recently adopted amendment to the Constitution, respecting the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, it became necessary to elect a new Treasurer. The election for officers resulted in the choice of Mr. Charles B. Cory, for Treasurer, and the re-election of the previous incumbents.

After a very satisfactory two days' session, the Union adjourned to meet in Washington, the third Tuesday in November, 1886. The only regret seemed to be that the session was not allowed to occupy another day, a regret especially shared by members who had made a long journey to attend the meeting. A pleasant feature of the occasion was the presence of a number of Associate Members, and their active participation in the proceedings of the Congress. As less time will be necessary in future than heretofore for routine business and reports of Committees, future meetings will doubtless be devoted more largely to scientific papers, the presentation and discussion of which, it is already evident, will form an attractive feature of these annual gatherings of the American Ornithologists' Union.

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Murdoch on the Birds of Point Barrow, Alaska.**—Of the 'Report of the International Polar Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska,'\* recently published by order of Congress, the report on the 'Natural History,' by Mr. John Murdoch, occupies upwards of one hundred pages, of which twenty-three (pp. 105-128) are devoted to birds. Of the 54 species noted, 42 are water birds. With few exceptions, all were collected "within a circle of fifteen miles from the station at Point Barrow." There is, however, a supplemental list (p. 200) of 18 species "noticed at Plover Bay, Eastern Siberia, August 21 to 25, 1881." The period of observation at Point Barrow covered very nearly two full years. Considering that the locality is at the northern extremity of this continent, in latitude  $71^{\circ} 16'$  north, and far remote from any other where continuous observations have been made for any consid-

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\* Report of the International Polar Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska, in response to the Resolution of the House of Representatives of December 11, 1884. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885. 4to, pp. 695, map, and numerous plates, mostly unnumbered. Part IV, Natural History. By John Murdoch, A. M., Sergeant Signal Corps, U. S. Army. Pp. 89-200.