

## NOTES AND NEWS.

CHARLES K. WORTHEN, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at his home in Warsaw, Illinois, during the last week in May,<sup>1</sup> 1909, in the 59th year of his age, he having been born in Warsaw, September 6, 1850. His father, Amos H. Worthen, was for many years State Geologist of Illinois, residing at Springfield, where young Worthen was educated in the public schools. In 1867, he became associated with his father as draughtsman, and the ten years following this date he was engaged in illustrating the reports of the Illinois Geological Survey, and was also employed in a similar capacity on the reports of the Wheeler Surveys West of the One Hundredth Meridian. One winter was spent at the Agassiz Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, making drawings of the teeth of fossil sharks under the direction of Mr. Orestes H. St. John. Naturally, under such associations, he became strongly interested in natural history, but appears to have never seriously entered upon research work, and has hence published very little. His knowledge of the subject, however, was considerable, and his tastes led him to engage in the collection and sale of natural history specimens, in this way becoming well known to the naturalists of the country, and especially to museum curators, who found him always intelligent and trustworthy. For a number of years he was a member of the school board of Warsaw, and at the time of his death was one of the directors of the public library. Personally he was genial and companionable, of an optimistic temperament, and widely respected by his fellowtownsmen. He was married in 1873, and is survived by his widow, a son and two daughters. The press of Warsaw has paid high tribute to his memory as a valued citizen.

THE June issue of 'British Birds' (Volume III, No. 1) propounds a 'British Birds' scheme for marking ('tagging' birds, as an aid in acquiring definite information regarding the movements of individual birds, and thus obtaining light on some of the imperfectly understood features of bird migration. In an editorial on the subject, reference is made to results thus achieved in Denmark and Germany, and instructions are given in reference to the marking of birds and reporting their subsequent capture. In short, a system is proposed very much like that in vogue in this country (see Auk, XXVI, April, 1909, pp. 137-143), although no reference is here made to the American records or methods. Mr. H. F. Witherby, the editor of 'British Birds,' has prepared the following circular on the subject, for which we gladly give space in the present connection.

"A short while ago a Stork was shot in Rhodesia bearing upon its leg a metal ring, which proved that the bird had been marked in Prussia, when it was a nestling, by the Rossitten Bird Observatory, while more recently a Stork similarly 'ringed' in Hungary was shot in the Kalahari Desert.

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<sup>1</sup> Exact date not yet received; the funeral was on May 29.

"Mr. H. F. Witherby, the Editor of *BRITISH BIRDS*, is inaugurating in connection with his Magazine a scheme for marking birds in a similar way in this country. It is hoped by this means to gain a more exact idea of the movements of individual birds than has ever been possible by any other method, and this should not only throw light upon the more general aspects of migration, but it should tell us a great deal that is at present obscure with regard to particular points. For example, while we may know the general distribution of a species in winter and summer, we do not know the extent of the migration of individual birds; or, indeed, whether in such cases as the Song-Thrush and Robin, certain individuals migrate at all. The movement of sea-birds are very little understood, and much might be learned from marking a large number. This plan might also tell us what influence age has upon plumage, etc.; where a young bird, whose birth-place is known, breeds; whether individuals return to previous nesting haunts, and whether pairs come together again in successive breeding seasons.

A number of the readers of *BRITISH BIRDS* are taking the matter up, and it is expected that a large number of birds of all kinds will be ringed this summer. The rings are extremely light and do not in any way interfere with the bird's power of flight, each is stamped "Witherby, High Holborn, London," and bears a distinctive number, which in the smaller sizes is stamped inside the ring, and it is hoped that anyone into whose hand should fall a bird so marked will send the bird and the ring, or, if this is not possible, then the particulars of the number on the ring, the species of bird, and the locality and date of capture to the address given."

Of special interest to ornithologists, as well as to students of biogeography in general, is Dr. Philip P. Calvert's map of the distribution of mean annual temperatures in Mexico and Central America, recently published in the Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (Vol. LX, 1908, pl. xxvi). The map is colored to indicate five temperature zones, ranging from 10° to 30° C. (50° to 86° F.), each zone covering thus a range of 9° F., and distinguished by a different color. It is shown that a given mean annual temperature reaches a much higher latitude and a higher elevation on the Pacific coast than on the Atlantic; and that the mean annual temperature of the plateau region of Mexico (59°-68° F.) extends continuously but in narrowing width to about latitude 18° in southern Mexico, and thence in small and distantly separated areas to Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

A NEW natural history journal, entitled, 'The Midland Naturalist devoted to Natural History and primarily that of the Prairie States,' has made its appearance, the first number bearing date April, 1909. It is an octavo, and the first number, consisting of 28 pages and 3 plates, is mainly botanical. It contains, however, the beginning of a nominal 'Tentative List of the Birds of St. Joseph Co. Ind. and Vicinity,' which

indicates on the part of the author a considerable degree of conservatism in matters nomenclatural, or lack of familiarity with any standard authority later than the first edition of the A. O. U. Check-List. The magazine is published at Notre Dame, Indiana, under the editorship of J. A. Niewland, C. S. C., Ph. D., who is also apparently the publisher. (Price, \$1 a year, single numbers 20 cents.) The plea for the existence of this new aspirant for journalistic honors is the alleged want felt by the editor "for some ready means of publication" for students of the biota of the 'Midland States.'

A NEW French periodical devoted to ornithology is the 'Revue Française d'Ornithologie Scientifique et Pratique,' the first number of which bears date 7 Mai, 1909. It is in royal octavo, the first number comprising 16 pages. It is to be devoted not only to birds, but to everything relating to birds. It is published by Louis Denise, 14 Rue Antoine-Roucher, Paris; price, 7 francs per year, 60 centimes per number. The acting editor is M. A. Menegaux, and it has the promise of support from other well-known French authorities.

THE Bureau of Science of the Government of the Philippine Islands has announced 'A Manual of Philippine Birds,' by Richard C. McGregor, to be published in two parts of about 350 pages each, the first part being already in press. It will give descriptions of all the species of birds known to inhabit these islands, with much hitherto unpublished matter relating to their nests and eggs and habits. It is intended to meet the needs of bird-students, both professional and amateur, and will contain keys to the species, genera, and higher groups, as well as diagnoses. The work may be ordered in this country of the Macmillan Company, New York; price of the complete work, \$4.

INDEXES to periodical literature are so useful that it is a pleasure to call attention to the index to the first ten volumes of 'The Condor', prepared by Mr. H. B. Kaeding and just published as No. 6 of the 'Pacific Coast Avifauna'. 'The Condor, as is well known, is the 'Bulletin of the Cooper Ornithological Club', the first volume of which carried this title only. The present index is prepared on much the same lines as the twenty-year index to 'The Auk', compiled under the direction of Dr. Dwight, except that there is no attempt to discriminate the different kinds of information under the citations of species.

THE Provincial Museum of Natural History and Ethnology, Victoria, British Columbia, has recently issued an illustrated guide to the collections of Mammals, Birds, Reptiles and Fishes, prepared by the Curator, Mr. Francis Kermodé. It is profusely illustrated with half-tone plates of groups of mammals and birds and other exhibits in the Museum, and forms a large octavo brochure of nearly 100 pages, of which pages 21-74

are devoted to the birds. The text consists of annotated lists of the Vertebrates of British Columbia, so far as they are represented by specimens in the Victoria Museum. The birds of British Columbia are apparently quite fully shown, and the annotated list of the species gives briefly the manner of their occurrence in the Province, with often a short account of their habits. It is thus not only a Visitors' Guide to the collections but a source of information respecting the vertebrate fauna of the Province. As said by the Curator: "The Provincial Museum (being essentially a British Columbia Museum) necessarily contains only those specimens obtained within its borders, hence none of them were procured by exchange with other parts of the Continent, so that the value of a collection so truly local in its formation is incalculable."

THE June number of the 'Bulletin' of the New York Zoölogical Society is designated as the 'Wild-Life Preservation Number,' and is devoted to a summary of recent efforts for game protection and an attempt to promote further interest in this too long deferred awakening to the wholesale depletion of 'wild-life.' This number of the 'Bulletin' contains a paper by the President of the Society, Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, on 'The Zoölogical Society's Work for Wild Life,' and another by Madison Grant, the Secretary of the Society, on 'The Future of Our Fauna,' but most of the twenty pages that make up the number are by the Director, William T. Hornaday. Readers of 'The Auk' who recall Mr. Hornaday's paper on 'The Destruction of our Birds and Mammals: a Report on the Results of an Inquiry,' published in 1898 (Second Ann. Rep. New York Zoöl. Soc., for 1897, pp. 80-126), will not be surprised at meeting with exaggeration in the present connection, but will hardly be prepared for statements to the effect that scientific societies, scientific institutions, and scientific men have, with one or two mentioned exceptions, done little or nothing for the protection of birds and game; or to hear that: "Even down to 1896, the scientific ornithologists of America, as a body, had done *absolutely nothing* in the cause of bird protection." (Italics as in the original.)

As is well known, at the second meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, held in 1884, the protection of birds was considered at length by the leading members, with the result that a 'Committee on Bird Protection' was appointed, and its report at each annual meeting of the Union in subsequent years was always a prominent feature of its sessions. Furthermore, as early as 1886, this Committee published the first 'broadside' in behalf of bird protection, under the title: 'American Ornithologists Union. Bulletin No. 1 of the Committee on Bird Protection. Destruction of our Native Birds.' It appeared originally as a supplement (16 pages, 4to) in 'Science' (for February 26, 1886), and was reprinted as a separate in large editions and widely distributed gratuitously. A few months later appeared 'Bulletin No. 2 of the [A. O. U.] Committee on Bird Protection,' dealing with 'Protection of Birds by Legislation.' This was originally printed in 'Forest and Stream' for November 11, 1886, and reissued in a large edition

(8 pages, 4to.) for gratuitous distribution. In this 'Bulletin' the then existing New York law for the 'Preservation of Song and Wild Birds' was analysed and criticised, and a 'revised draft' presented as a substitute. The Committee's draft later became, in substance, not only the law for the protection of birds in the State of New York, but has now been adopted by nearly every State and Territory in the United States, and is everywhere known as the 'A. O. U. Model Law.'

The A. O. U. Committee on Bird Protection is also the parent of the now widespread Audubon movement which was originally started in 1886 by members of the American Ornithologists' Union. The reports of the A. O. U. Committee and of the National Association of Audubon Societies were published in 'The Auk,' the official organ of the Union, until five years ago, the last report forming a document of 112 pages with numerous half-tone illustrations. Further comment on what "the scientific ornithologists of America, as a body," have "not" done is unnecessary, although it may be added that the present directorate and the principal officers of the National Association of Audubon Societies are all members, and nearly all of them Fellows, of the American Ornithologists' Union.