

### NOTES AND NEWS.

LOUIS DI ZEREGA MEARNS, formerly an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, died of diphtheria at the Sydenham Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, April 3, 1912. He was born at Fort Verde, in central Arizona, November 5, 1886. He was graduated from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, at Troy, New York, in the class of 1909, with the degree of C. E. After graduating from the Institute he spent a year and a half at the Dudley Southern Observatory, at San Luis, Argentine Republic, and after his return from South America, he was employed for some time in the observatory at Albany, New York. Shortly before his death he accepted a position with the Baltimore Sewerage Commission.

Throughout his life he was deeply interested in nature studies and was especially devoted to biology. His observations were recorded with fidelity and clearness. In the field he was a delightful companion, an accurate and quick shot with shotgun or rifle, and a clever and successful mammal trapper. He began a collection of plants when four years old, and collected his first mammal at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, May 18, 1891, sending the latter to Dr. J. A. Allen, who acknowledged the little white-footed wood-mouse as coming from the youngest contributor to the mammal collection of the American Museum of Natural History. Mr. Mearns's specimens were of excellent quality, carefully recorded, with detailed measurements. For many years his collection was stored in the United States National Museum, at Washington; but, about a year before his death, it was donated to the museum, to which it forms a valuable addition.

Although much interested in the study of botany, the few published writings that he has left relate solely to mammals and birds. Following is a complete list of his biological publications:

1. On the Occurrence of the genus *Reithrodontomys* in Virginia. *The American Naturalist*, vol. 31, February 1, 1897, p. 161.
2. Notes from Newport. Notes on Rhode Island Ornithology, vol. 1, No. 3, July, 1900, pp. 13-15.
3. Spring Arrival and Departure Notes, 1900. Notes on Rhode Island Ornithology, vol. I, No. 3, July, 1900, p. 18.
4. Birds observed at Chepachet, R. I. Notes on Rhode Island Ornithology, vol. I, No. 4, October, 1900, pp. 21, 22.
5. Notes from Newport, R. I. Notes on Rhode Island Ornithology, vol. I, No. 4, October, 1900, p. 22.
6. Arrival and Departure Notes, 1900. Notes on Rhode Island Ornithology, vol. I, No. 4, October, 1900, p. 22.
7. Arrival and Departure Notes, 1900. Notes on Rhode Island Ornithology, vol. II, No. 1, January, 1901, p. 8.
8. Birds Observed on Prudence Island, Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island. Notes on Rhode Island Ornithology, vol. II, No. 4, October, 1901, pp. 18-19.

9. A List of the birds Observed on the Island of Rhode Island and the Adjacent Waters. Notes on Rhode Island Ornithology, vol. III, No. 2, April, 1902, pp. 6-12; vol. III, No. 3, July, 1902, pp. 13-14; vol. III, No. 4, October, 1902, pp. 17-23.

10. The Louisiana Water-Thrush in Minnesota. The Auk, vol. XX, No. 3, July, 1903, pp. 307-308.—EDGAR A. MEARNS.

THREE years ago 'Recent Literature' in 'The Auk' was extended to include a brief review of the ornithological magazines and ornithological articles in other periodical publications, beginning with January 1, 1912. Space usually allows only a quotation of the titles of the more important articles and a citation of the new forms proposed. Even this, however, enables the reader to consult all the publications bearing upon his special line of work, while the index to the volumes will contain references to practically all the new species described by ornithologists, in every part of the world.

The resources of the library of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia render it possible to make this record nearly complete and it is interesting to check up the list of new forms recorded for 1912 in 'The Auk' with those catalogued in the 'International Catalogue of Scientific Literature.' The vast number of Australian genera, species and subspecies proposed by Mr. Gregory M. Mathews were not listed in 'The Auk' although all of his papers are noticed. One paper by Mr. Robert Ridgway containing 14 new genera, published in the 'Proc. Biol. Soc. of Washington,' was not sent to 'The Auk' and was overlooked, as it was presumed that all ornithological publications of this society had been received for review. Outside of this only nine new names were missed, two of which were in publications which did not reach either 'The Auk' or the Academy library. The benefit of having these new species, etc., listed, usually within three months of the time of publication, instead of waiting nearly two years for the appearance of the 'International Catalogue' is, we trust, worth the labor of compilation.

On the evening of January 7, 1915, the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding with an informal dinner at The Roosevelt, Philadelphia. Sixty-six members and eight guests were present; Stewardson Brown, president of the Club, presided, and Dr. Spencer Trotter acted as toastmaster. The speakers were, Dr. A. K. Fisher and John H. Sage, president and secretary of the A. O. U.; Charles F. Batchelder representing the Nuttall Ornithological Club of Cambridge; John T. Nichols, of the Linnæan Society of New York; Dr. T. S. Palmer of the U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C., Prof. Robert T. Young of the University of North Dakota, a former active member of the Club; and several of the local members.

The 'D. V. O. C.' represents a type of organization which does much to advance the interests of bird study. Organized in 1890 by seven young

men interested in recording bird migration data, it has aimed to recruit its members so far as possible from those of high school and college age and to encourage the active participation of young men in all its work. Its field has been broad and discussion on any phase of ornithology is welcome, while the spirit of good fellowship which has always characterized its meetings has been carefully preserved.

Twenty-five years make great changes in the development of the members of any organization, and gathered around the anniversary table on January 7 might be seen doctors and lawyers of eminence, college professors, men high up in business corporations, and officers of banks and trust companies, mingled with the younger members who go to make up the bone and sinews of the Club today — all preserving their interest in bird study, ready to advance it in any way, and no doubt better for the existence of the 'D. V. O. C.'

A REVIEW of Joseph Grinnell's 'Mammals and Birds of the Lower Colorado Valley,' by Francis B. Sumner which appears in 'Science' for January 8, 1915, should be read by all who are interested in zoögeography, both for the interesting discussion of some of the points raised in the paper, and as an illustration of how far apart the systematists and experimental biologists stand in their consideration of evolutionary problems.

Prof. Sumner it should be said is much more lenient to the systematist than many of those who approach the subject from his point of view and who, as some one has put it, look upon systematic work as a disease, like the measles, from which everyone suffers at some time or other but from which one is expected to recover rapidly. Nevertheless some of his statements will doubtless astonish readers of 'The Auk' who have been brought up on zoögeography. For instance he says: "It would seem *a priori* that in traveling along a uniform gradient from a region of higher to one of lower average temperature or vice-versa, one would continually pass into and out of the ranges of species which found their limits of physiological adaptability at different points along the line. One would scarcely expect to encounter critical points, where the fauna and flora as a whole, or at least the most characteristic members of it, were suddenly replaced by quite a different assemblage. Yet this is the essence of the 'life-zone' conception.

"It would be foolhardy, indeed, for a zoölogist of limited field experience to criticize this conception. It is doubtless based upon extensive and accurate observations and represents real facts. But unfortunately they are, in a high degree, facts which, by their very nature, are scarcely communicable to most biologists. Before the life-zone conception can be of much service to the average student of evolutionary problems it will have to be expressed in terms which he is able to comprehend without making extended explorations, under the personal escort of one of the initiated. Until then such expressions as 'Upper Sonoran,' 'Transition' and the like will be to him mere empty names, or at best, they will recall to his mind certain colored areas, on a map of North America, the boundaries of which seem to have been chosen quite arbitrarily."

The "average student of evolutionary problems" is not a very definite term but it would seem that many systematists might be included in this category and were one of them to pick up a current work on Mendelism we think he might readily be pardoned if he made a similar plea for the "personal escort of one of the initiated."

The fact of the matter is that the two classes of investigators know too little of the work of one another. The majority of our biological schools are so thoroughly under the influence of the experimental biologists that students are trained and graduated with little or no conception of zoögeography or of the true nature of systematic research. The museums, on the other hand, foster the development of systematic workers, who are not inclined to consider seriously experiments based upon artificial domestic strains of animals, the origin of which may be unknown, or to admit that results so obtained have much to do with the evolution of natural species, which usually do not give similar results when used for experiment.

Careless work has been done on both sides but this does not discredit the vast amount of valuable contributions that each has made to the general problem of evolution. Systematic and zoögeographic research will not get to the bottom of the problem, unaided; neither will it be solved solely in terms of "zygotes" or "gametes."

Systematic nomenclature has also been a target for the experimental biologists, who are exasperated at the variety of names for the same species, or genus, and who fail to see the need of complicated rules of nomenclature. They are, however, threatened with precisely the same trouble and will have to take refuge in the same remedy. The terminology of Cytology, for example, is becoming so burdened with names, nearly or quite synonymous, that they are bewildering even to those fairly well "initiated."

MR. SAMUEL N. RHOADS accompanied by Mr. Earl L. Poole, both of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, left early in January for several months' collecting in Guatemala.

As we go to press we learn of the final arrangements for the A. O. U. Meeting in San Francisco, May 18-20, 1915, and once again urge all members, both on the Pacific coast and in the country to the eastward, to make every effort to be present.

The eastern contingent will leave New York on May 6 reaching San Francisco on the evening of May 15. Two days, May 10-11, will be spent at the Grand Cañon, and two days and a half at Los Angeles.

From the San Francisco Committee of the A. O. U. and Cooper Club comes word that the sessions will be held at The Inside Inn, within the Exposition Grounds, with the annual dinner on the evening of the 18th. Friday the 21st will be devoted to a trip to the Farallon Islands, on the U. S. Fisheries steamer 'Albatross,' and other trips will be arranged in accordance with the number of visitors and their inclinations.

From Los Angeles, Mr. J. E. Law, Chairman of the Entertainment Committee of the Southern Division of the Cooper Club, writes that arrangements will be made to escort the eastern visitors to the Santa Barbara Islands, Mt. Lowe, or other points of interest during their stop in that city.

The splendid program that is thus offered and the cordial hospitality of the California ornithologists should be sufficient inducement to cause every member in the east or middle west who can possibly arrange to do so, to join the A. O. U. party and communicate as soon as possible with Mr. John H. Sage, Portland, Conn.