

NOTES AND NEWS

THE admirable work being done by the National Association of Audubon Societies is familiar, in a general way, to most of the members of the A. O. U., but the work is today so varied and far reaching that much of it is not fully appreciated. One of the most important features of the Association's activity is the educational work accomplished through the Junior Audubon Classes.

Eleven years ago Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, now president of the Association, conceived the idea of organizing children into "Audubon" Classes on a large scale, and supplying them material, double the value of what their fees would amount to. He induced Mrs. Russel Sage to give \$5,000 a year for three years in order that the plan might be tried out. Later others were interested, especially one anonymous contributor who for many years past has provided \$20,000 annually for carrying on the work. The Clubs or classes are organized chiefly in the schools and each teacher who succeeds in forming a club of twenty-five or more receives a free subscription to 'Bird-Lore' for one year.

In exchange for a ten cent fee each child receives a series of Educational Leaflets with colored pictures of birds, and an Audubon button. The children are taught that all useful wild birds and their nests and eggs should be protected. They are taught also to make bird-boxes in the schools and erect them for the use of hole-nesting birds. In this way there have been built and erected, as many as 175,000 bird boxes in one year. Entertainments, consisting of songs, plays, and recitations about birds, are given by hundreds of Junior Audubon Classes throughout the country. In the winter the children are taught to feed the birds by tying suet to the limbs of trees and scattering crumbs, seeds and broken grain where the birds can get them. The extent of the children's activities depends only upon the interest and resourcefulness of the teachers heading the clubs.

Since the work began eleven years ago 66,709 Junior Clubs have been formed, with a total membership of 1,676,743, while during the year which closed June 1, 1921, 5,851 clubs were enrolled with 229,787 children as members. These Clubs were organized in every State in the Union and many of the Provinces of Canada. Unfortunately the funds at the disposal of the Association were not sufficient to furnish material for all applicants and during the past two years the fees of many thousands of disappointed children have had to be returned. Within the past few weeks matters have taken a turn which will make it possible during the coming year to have material sufficient to supply at least 300,000 children. This is due to an increased number of subscribers to the undertaking and to a decrease in the cost of paper.

Many of the State Audubon Societies and local Bird Clubs give this work their hearty support. Some have contributed financially and some send representatives into the schools to assist in carrying on the work of instruction, which is also done by the regular agents of the Association. During the past year Mrs. Mary S. Sage, field agent for Long Island, worked in more than 100 communities, giving in all, 206 lectures to audiences aggregating more than 20,000, while Messrs. Forbush and Packard and Dr. Eugene Swope rendered similar service.

The public press during the past year has contained hundreds of notices of the organization and activities of these Junior Clubs. This elementary instruction in bird-study besides educating the coming generation in the principles of conservation, constitutes probably the most extensive scheme for developing an interest in natural history among the children, that has ever been attempted in any country.

Another important result of the work is the development of ornithologists. It is hardly conceivable that among the thousands of children who are made acquainted with wild bird life there will not be many who will continue the study of birds throughout their life, becoming competent observers of bird migration, intelligent bird banders and members of the American Ornithologists' Union.

WILLIAM JAMES BENNETTS, an Associate of the Union since 1901, died at the Washington Sanitarium, Takoma Park, Md., Sept. 13, 1920. He was born at Cornwall, England, May 20, 1865, and when four years of age came to America with his parents who took up their residence at Port Perry, Ontario. His early education was received in the public schools of Ontario and later he attended the University of Toronto. In 1890 he settled in Milwaukee, Wis., and while there became Secretary of the Natural History Society of that city. In 1902 he moved to Washington, D. C., where he was employed in the Navy Department, in charge of the mechanical section in the Bureau of Construction and Repair. Mr. Bennetts was much interested in birds, had a library of ornithological works, and in addition to his membership in the Union he was a member of the Biological Society of Washington. He is survived by his widow, a son and a daughter.—T. S. P.

OWING to conditions beyond the control of the editor and publisher, 'The Auk' is again delayed. We deeply regret this fact but hope to bring the publication up to date early in the ensuing year.