

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY.

BY T. S. PALMER.

IN spite of serious handicaps inevitable in a period of reorganization and reconstruction such as that through which we are now passing, the year 1921 has been one of the most prosperous in the history of the Union. The membership is larger than ever before and losses through resignation and delinquency have been small. The net gain after deducting all losses on account of death, resignation, delinquency and failure to qualify was 209 members. We have been in correspondence with organizations and ornithologists in other lands and are keeping in touch with such projects as the 'Systema Avium' undertaken by the British Ornithologists' Union and the new 'Check List of Birds' of Australia which is being prepared by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union. Work has been begun on a new decennial index of 'The Auk' and for the first time the Union is in a position to award a medal for meritorious work on American birds.

*Membership.*—The present membership of the Union is approximately 1350 with at least one representative in every State except Mississippi; in Alaska, Hawaii, the Phillipines; six Provinces of Canada and a number of foreign countries. In November 1920 the total membership was 1142. The distribution in each year is shown by the following statement:

Year	Fellows	Retired Fellows	Honorary Fellows	Corres- ponding Fellows	Members	Associates	Total
1921	46	4	20	80	91	1110	1351
1920	49	3	19	75	86	910	1142

The gain during the year comprised the election of 13 Corresponding Fellows and 306 Associates at the last annual meeting but this apparent increase of 319 was offset by the loss of more than 100 members, including 19 by death, 19 by resignation, 30 by failure to qualify and 42 by delinquency. The deaths, counting 5 which occurred in previous years, but news of which was delayed included those of 3 Fellows, 1 Honorary Fellow, 6 Corresponding Fellows and 9 Associates.

The effort to increase the number of life members has made some progress but not as much as was anticipated and has been offset by the loss through death of 1 life Fellow and 1 life Associate. The Union has nearly 50 life members including 5 Fellows, 7 Members and more than 30 Associates. The foreign membership includes 20 Honorary Fellows and 80 Corresponding Fellows. During the year special efforts were made to obtain information regarding several Corresponding Fellows who had not been heard from for some time. After considerable correspondence extending over a period of many months information was finally obtained from Russia regarding some of our Fellows in that country who had been out of reach of communication since the war, with the result that deaths were reported of Sergius N. Alpheraky, and Dr. Valentin L. Bianchi, both of Petrograd. Through the kind offices of the Greek Legation in Washington news was also obtained of the death of Dr. Theobald J. Kruper of Athens, Greece.

*Service.*—In addition to answering a large number of miscellaneous inquiries and requests of various kinds, efforts have been made to assist members and public libraries in completing sets of 'The Auk' and in furnishing full names and biographical data regarding members or other ornithologists.

*The Journal.*—The total number of complete sets of 'The Auk' now known is 185 of which 76 are in public libraries and 109 in private ownership. It seems doubtful whether the total can be very greatly increased. Several owners of complete sets have died recently and their sets have changed hands or have become dispersed. At present there are at least 6 complete sets (only one of which belongs to the Union) and several incomplete sets on the market.

*Objects of the Union.*—Recently some study has been given by the Secretary to the objects of the Union as set forth in the certificate of incorporation. These are briefly stated as:

1. The advancement of the members in ornithological science;
2. Publication of a journal of ornithology;
3. Acquisition of a library;
4. Care and collection of materials relating to the above objects.

The Union has thus far confined its energies to the first two objects and has made no effort to acquire a library or a collection.

The progress of its journal, 'The Auk', has been reported from time to time and the details regarding the volume for the present year have been given by the editor.

The 'advancement of the members in ornithological science' offers a problem which may well command the serious thought and best energies of the Union. With the present high cost of paper and printing it may be questioned whether anything will do more to advance the interests of the membership than to provide a medium of publication with reasonable promptness for investigations of the members. Aside from the larger special books and reports and the publications of the larger museums, most of the shorter papers and notes on birds now appear in periodical literature. During the year 1920 the number of octavo pages of leading American ornithological journals was 1682, distributed as follows: Auk 677; Bird Lore 428; Cassinia 55; Condor 218; Oologist 146; and Wilson Bulletin 158.

An increase of 300 pages would go far toward relieving the pressure for the publication of most of the shorter contributions now awaiting printing, or if 'The Auk' could be increased by even 100 pages it would provide a medium for many of these papers. The printing of State lists presents a more difficult problem but in spite of high prices the Cooper Ornithological Club has successfully issued an excellent list of the Birds of Montana, the Geological and Natural History Survey of South Dakota has recently published a paper on the birds of that State; the Birds of California by W. L. Dawson is now appearing in parts, and a report on the Birds of Alabama is in course of publication by the Biological Survey. There are now in manuscript awaiting printing, reports on the birds of New Mexico and Texas and in the near future manuscript lists of birds of several other States will doubtless be ready for publication. No comprehensive lists of the birds of Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma or Tennessee have thus far appeared, while the lists for Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Utah were published more than 20 years ago and require revision in the light of modern methods and present information.

Many years ago the Union established the nucleus of a research fund the income of which was not to become available until the

principal reached the sum of \$5000. This limit has not as yet been attained but it is highly desirable that during the coming year, if possible, contributions be made to this fund to bring it up to the requisite amount and thus make available for current needs an income amounting to \$250 annually or \$500 biennially. Only recently an opportunity to cooperate in a valuable piece of research work has been lost through lack of a small sum which might have been provided had the income of this fund been available.

*Activities of Members Abroad.*—During the past year two of our members who have been residing abroad, Zimmer in British Papua and N. Gist Gee in China, and Beebe, Field, Peters and Wetmore who have been in South America, have returned home. Bullock has spent some time in Argentina, Beck is still collecting in the South Pacific, Cherrie has been at work in Ecuador, Raven has recently undertaken work in Australia, and Dr. Casey A. Wood has sailed for Barbados. One of the Corresponding Fellows, M. J. Delacour left for the West Indies and Venezuela in September, last summer Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain headed an expedition sent out by the University of Oxford to Spitzbergen, and in Africa Geo. L. Bates has been conducting explorations in northern Cameroon in the vicinity of Lake Chah.

#### DECEASED MEMBERS, 1920–1921

JOEL ASAPH ALLEN,<sup>1</sup> Founder and first President, aged 83, died at Cornwall on Hudson, N. Y., August 29, 1921.

CHARLES BARNEY CORY,<sup>2</sup> Fellow, died in his 65th year at Ashland, Wis., July 29, 1921.

WILLIAM PALMER,<sup>3</sup> Fellow, died in his 65th year in New York City, April 8, 1921.

ALPHONSE JOSEPH CHARLES DUBOIS, Honorary Fellow, aged 82, died at Coxyde sur Mer, Belgium, June 1, 1921.

SERGIVS NICKOLAEVICH ALPHERAKY,<sup>4</sup> Corresponding Fellow, aged 68, died at Petrograd, Russia in 1918.

VALENTIN LVOVICH BIANCHI,<sup>5</sup> Corresponding Fellow, died in his 63rd year at Petrograd, Russia, Jan. 10, 1920.

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<sup>1</sup> For obituary notice, see Auk, XXXVIII, pp. 490–492.

<sup>2</sup> “ “ “ see Auk, XXXVIII, pp. 492–493.

<sup>3</sup> “ “ “ see Auk, XXXVIII, pp. 493–494.

<sup>4</sup> “ “ “ see Auk, XXXVIII, p. 495

<sup>5</sup> “ “ “ see Auk, XXXVIII, pp. 497–498.

- HENRY WEMYSS FEILDEN,<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Fellow, died in his 83d year at Burwash, England, June 18, 1921.
- THEOBALD JOHANNES KRUPER, Corresponding Fellow, died in his 92d year at Athens, Greece, March 23, 1921.
- FREDERICK HERSCHEL WATERHOUSE,<sup>2</sup> Corresponding Fellow, died in his 74th year in London, England, March 12, 1919.
- MRS. W. H. BARROWS, Associate, (elected in Nov. 1920), died at Pittsfield, Mass., in January, 1921.
- WILLIAM JAMES BENNETTS,<sup>3</sup> Associate, aged 55, died at Washington, D. C., Sept. 13, 1920
- STEWARDSON BROWN,<sup>4</sup> Associate, died in his 54th year in Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa. March 14 1921.
- DUDLEY BOWDITCH FAY, Associate, aged 61, died at Boston, Mass., Feb. 7, 1921.
- WILLIAM HENRY FOX, Associate, aged 64, died at Washington, D. C., Nov. 3, 1921.
- NATHANIEL ATWOOD FRANCIS, Associate, died in his 63d year at Brookline, Mass., June 10, 1921.
- JAMES CLARENCE QUIGGLE, Associate, aged 69, died at Washington, D. C., June 21, 1921.
- FREDERIC SCHENCK, Associate, died at Lenox, Mass., Feb. 29, 1920.
- MRS. CECIL STEWART, Associate, died at Boston, Mass., early in the summer of 1921.

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### GENERAL NOTES.

**The Kittiwake in Florida.**—I shot a Kittiwake, (*Rissa tridactyla tridactyla*) on the beach at Jupiter on the east coast of Florida on January 24, 1921.

The feathers of the lower surface were very heavily coated with crude oil but as the bird was in fair condition the accident must have been of recent occurrence.

When first observed it was sitting among some Herring Gulls near high water mark, as it rose I saw it was not a Bonaparte's Gull, which I had taken it for, and shot it. It proved to be a male in the plumage of the second year and is now in the State Museum at Gainesville.

I was struck with the pronounced emargination of the tail—much more evident than in the adult.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagen Landing, B. C.*

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<sup>1</sup> For obituary notice see Auk, XXXVIII, p. 496.

<sup>2</sup> " " " see Auk, XXXVIII, pp. 496-497.

<sup>3</sup> " " " see Auk, XXXVIII, p. 622.

<sup>4</sup> " " " see Auk, XXXVIII, pp. 316-317.