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IN MEMORIAM: RICHARD C. MCGREGOR
ORNITHOLOGIST OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Plate 7

RICHARD Crittenden McGregor was born in Sydney, Australia, on February 24, 1871. He died in Manila, Philippine Islands, December 30, 1936, thus passed sixty-five years of age. At the time of his death he was editor of the 'Philippine Journal of Science' and Chief of the Publicity Division of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. He had been connected with the Bureau of Science practically continuously since its establishment in 1902, thus over a period of nearly thirty-five years. While during most of this period carrying the title of Ornithologist, he served from time to time also as Acting Director; but he avoided executive advancement, always preferring to expend his outside time and energy in pursuit of his major field of interest, ornithology.

When McGregor was one year old his father was killed in an accident. His mother, Charlotte Crittenden McGregor, had been born in Rochester, New York, in 1841. Until her death shortly after he entered Stanford University, the two were inseparable companions. They had come to California in the 1880's, living first, it seems, at Santa Cruz. Then there was a period of residence in Denver, Colorado, where they lived with his grandfather. There he attended high school, from which he graduated in 1893. At Stanford, according to the Registrar's records, McGregor matriculated in the academic year 1893-94. His attendance was interrupted, for example, by his fish-collecting trip to Panama, in 1896, with a group of Stanford zoologists and by his joining one of the A. W. Anthony expeditions to Lower California in 1897, so that he did not receive his A.B. degree until September, 1898. His degree was received in Philosophy, although he had started out in Zoology. Rumor has it that he and his major professor in the latter subject failed to agree in certain matters; and McGregor had a will of his own! Years later, after his achievements in the Philippines



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had become widely recognized, he was accorded an honorary Master's degree.

Happily, a glimpse of an early segment of McGregor's life and an appraisal of his character are available from an authoritative source. Wilfred H. Osgood was one of that earliest group of students who matriculated at the newly founded University at Palo Alto, and he contributes to this biography the following reminiscences of those college years.

"I first met McGregor in 1894 on an opening day in the zoological laboratory of Stanford University. Among strange boys, we came together as if by magnetism. We worked at adjoining tables dissecting earthworms and crayfishes or cutting sections of chick embryos; but any conversation was always of birds and outdoor zoology, with the implication that a course in college zoology was perhaps necessary and important but comparatively no fun. He gave me quite a shock one day when he said bluntly that he cared nothing whatever for science as such, that he liked birds better than anything in the world and that was all there was to it for him. At that time, cytology and embryology were in the ascendancy and experimental zoology and genetics had scarcely begun. However, he didn't quite mean all he said, for he worked with great enthusiasm in the laboratory and easily extended his love for birds to other animals.

"We found as our seniors in the same laboratory two especially congenial spirits in John Van Denburgh and Flora Hartley (Greene). This was at the time the Cooper Ornithological Club was in its infancy, and within a week McGregor was staying the night with me at my home in San José to attend his first meeting. He was slightly older than the rest of us and much more experienced, so he was looked upon as a great acquisition. Largely through him, Walter Bryant, A. W. Anthony, and other still older men became interested in the Club and we began to feel established and confident. Up to that time our small numbers and our consciousness that we were only juvenile egg-collectors gave us a feeling of uncertainty and modesty. We all knew what we wanted to do, but we didn't know how to do it. McGregor then, at just the right time, supplied a good deal which none of the rest of us had. Already he was an accomplished bird-skinner and had a considerable private collection of skins, including many species from Colorado and Florida which were unfamiliar to us. Both he and Bryant gave us instruction in making skins and, thereafter, a number of us definitely graduated from the egg-collecting stage of our careers.

"As a young man, McGregor was fun-loving and was endowed with those intangible qualities usually summarized as charm. Everybody 'liked' him. At my home in San José, where he was a frequent visitor, he was called 'Little Mac' or 'Dickie' by members of my family, who usually referred to my other friends derisively as 'those bird-egggers.' At one of the San José

meetings of the Cooper Club I remember that McGregor was missed about midway of the program. Having heard some suspicious sounds, I threw open a door leading to an adjoining room, when the whole meeting was greatly amused to see him in there gaily dancing with my oldest sister.

"Just before I knew him, McGregor had been living with his widowed mother in a most charming relation in which he collected and studied birds while she occupied herself in exercising a talent for painting. In a few instances she made small ornithological drawings for him. They were devoted to each other and moved about somewhat, from Florida to Santa Cruz, California, and then to Colorado; and when he came to Stanford she came with him, but she passed away soon after. I don't remember mention of his father, but I met his mother who impressed me as a very frail but charming and cultivated woman. In Colorado, he seems to have been acquainted with most of the ornithologists of that State, and I remember his speaking warmly of Fred Dille, C. E. Aiken, W. G. Smith, and others.

"The only collecting trip I remember taking with McGregor was to Pine Ridge, in the Coast Range southeast of San José, where he was to collect birds and fishes while I trapped for small mammals. It was an ill-fated expedition in which a balky horse, an overturned buggy, and poor collecting conditions were features, but it served as the subject of many a quip in later days. He had a delicate sense of humor and was always a delightful companion. He was given to strong attachments in which he displayed more downright affection than is usual with boys. He never gave up a friend, but always had someone who took a particular place. For a time he and I were almost inseparable. Then he was intimate with John Van Denburgh and then with Theodore Hoover."

As recording the friendship last alluded to by Dr. Osgood, we have in our check-list of Californian birds, *Dendroica coronata hooveri* McGregor, a western race of the Myrtle Warbler.

The results of McGregor's early collecting, in Colorado, various parts of California, in Lower California, Hawaii and Alaska, are now widely distributed through the major museums of America. The type specimens of the new birds he named from America he wisely at once placed on deposit in the U. S. National Museum; thence, ultimately, they went to the American Museum of Natural History. Already in the late 1890's, McGregor had decided to specialize on the fringillids. Representatives of other families that he collected, he exchanged for fringillids, sold, or gave away to interested bird students. Eventually, after becoming thoroughly established in the Philippines, McGregor sold his American collection of 2500 skins, nearly all finches, to Jonathan Dwight, Jr. This transaction took place in March, 1913. The collection had been stored in Palo Alto, and McGregor asked me to see to its packing and shipment, which I did, send-

ing Charles D. Holliger down from Berkeley to do the job. The Dwight birds are now, of course, part of the great collection at the American Museum. Only one, I think, of McGregor's types is not now in New York City,—that of the non-fringillid, *Dendroica coronata hooveri*, which was presented to Theodore J. Hoover and went with the latter's collection by gift to the California Academy of Sciences.

McGregor's summer-time trips to Alaska in 1900 and 1901 were made when attached to the U.S.S. 'Pathfinder.' After the second of these seasons this famous 'cutter' was ordered to proceed to Manila, from which it has never returned. On the way, between Japan and the Philippines, a *Calliope* flew aboard, and McGregor collected and stuffed it. As soon as he got to Manila, he took the bird to Dean C. Worcester, whose well-known interest in ornithology prompted quick action on his part in employing McGregor as collector. At first, the latter worked in a small house in the rear of Worcester's house. David P. Barrows was then Chief of the Bureau of Ethnology and took interest in McGregor's advancement in position and equipment, so that before long he was well established. [For this bit of his early Philippine history, gotten from McGregor himself in 1930, I am indebted to Major L. L. Gardner.]

McGregor was an excellent correspondent. I prize highly my long series of letters from him, beginning in 1897. The extreme accuracy he observed in all matters relating to his ornithology and to his editorial vocation extended to his own handwriting. The letters may be read as effortlessly as one reads pages of clear typewriting.

The idea of incorporating the Cooper Ornithological Club was in the air as long ago as 1901. McGregor writes under date February 23, that he will bring a lawyer friend to the next meeting, and urges that I "bring Hoover if you can snare him." After the death of Chester Barlow in November, 1902, deeply mourned by McGregor in common with all others who had enjoyed his cheerful companionship, the latter writes: "We will miss him indeed. Save the 'Condor' if you can. It was Barlow's great interest and it would be a pity that it go under. . . . There is such a dead load of work that doesn't show. If I were there I would be into it with both feet. I send you and Fisher my very best wishes. . . ."

McGregor returned to California late in 1905, in part "to do a little fish work for Dr. Jordan." But by February 11, 1906, he was on his way back to Manila, to resume his official and ornithological work there. By August 27 of the latter year he had visited the island of Bohol, finishing "a very satisfactory job" there and getting "about 140 species where there were only 55 recorded before." But once in a while nostalgia gets him. "I would like to see a Cactus Wren or a Road-runner. These birds here are mostly so wrong I feel uncomfortable." "I don't enjoy these birds near as

much as I would a good bunch of sparrows" (September 15, 1907). Yet, on another occasion (1911), he writes that "they [friends] once offered to try to get me a place in the Brooklyn Museum under Lucas. I like Lucas and it would be fine to be near Washington, Philadelphia, etc.; but I am too long wild; I like to get into new places. Think of the unexplored parts of the Philippine Islands, and the ripe, juicy regions near-by! No U. S. for me. . . ."

The American Ornithologists' Union at its annual meeting in December, 1907, elected McGregor a Fellow of that organization. With characteristic self-depreciation, he wrote me under date March 8, 1908: "I received my notice from [Secretary John H.] Sage before your letter came. . . . It was a great surprise to me and I still wonder at the action, particularly as I am practically out of the American field. . . . I am greatly pleased, as it shows I must have some good friends in the A. O. U."

On the A. O. U. 'Check-list,' *Carpodacus mcgregori* Anthony, from San Benito Islands, Lower California, commemorates his name and also the fact of his visiting that part of Mexico in 1897 in company of A. W. Anthony and Henry B. Kaeding. Incidentally, a marine fish from Panama is named *Halichaeres mcgregori* Gilbert and Starks.

In his various letters from Manila, McGregor shows that he is keeping track as best he may with "questions of the day." In 1902 he says: "I wonder what Sharpe and others across the water will say when they see your list with *Tyrannus tyrannus tyrannus*. . . . They certainly don't understand subspecies as we do. I mean their ideas are different."

In 1916, he is concerned over trends in economic ornithology. He is undertaking some local work in that field himself, and is not sure of its worthiness. "I think that the whole trouble is that the problem is too complex; with few exceptions, I don't believe the information [from stomach examinations] regarding a given species can be made of practical use. If a man steals a ham we jug him, no matter how much good he may do on the other 364 days of the year. If we dealt with birds . . . in the same way there would be some use in proving that they eat cultivated grain or fruit. But it can't be handled that way. . . ."

In 1919, McGregor writes: "I am glad to see you attack the monotypic genus idea as exhibited in its most rabid form by Mathews. I am willing to split species to any extent they can be used, but I can see no use in further division of genera. . . ." In the same year he argues strongly for giving up the trinomial altogether—employing the purely binomial construction of name for all forms recognizable at all.

Ornithologically inclined visitors to the Philippines were always warmly and helpfully welcomed by McGregor; testimony to this effect is afforded in my correspondence with a number of people. And McGregor, in turn, se-

questered most of the time as he was, from ornithological contacts, greatly valued such visits. Under date October 29, 1926, he writes: "Dr. Casey Wood has been here for nearly a month. I am enjoying him very much." On September 9, 1927: "I am having lots of fun here with Capt. [now Major] L. L. Gardner; we get out twice a month, the only two Sundays that he is off duty." And again (October 29, 1929): "I am pleased to be a co-author with Gardner because I think a lot of him and he is going a long way." Captain L. R. Wolfe was another American whose sojourn in the Philippines meant much to McGregor.

It was my fortune, on August 23, 1927, to write a letter introducing The Marquess Hachisuka to McGregor. This was on the eve of Hachisuka's first visit to the Philippines, a visit which initiated his deep interest in the avifauna of the archipelago; and there eventually resulted Hachisuka's admirably illustrated, four-volume work, 'The Birds of the Philippine Islands.' In Part I, in course of a historical review of the ornithology of the islands, Hachisuka renders full praise to McGregor on score of the fundamental soundness of the latter's systematic work as well as on other scores. Incidentally, Hachisuka finds that McGregor named thirty-nine new kinds of Philippine birds; of these, four forms are now rated as full species. Also, he named two new genera. *Edolisoma mcgregori* (Mearns) from Mindanao was named after him.

In his official work in the Philippine Bureau of Science, McGregor became more and more closely occupied with the editorial function. Latterly he was managing editor of the 'Journal' as well as informally editor of many less regular contributions from the Bureau. And with many contributors not superiorly qualified to write in the English language, this must have been an extraordinary chore! On June 13, 1923, he writes me: "I haven't looked at a bird for years, it seems, as there is always some MS. that needs to be combed." His official associate, Eduardo R. Alvarado, writes (Memorial Supplement to 'The Philippine Journal of Science,' vol. 62, 1937): "I had the privilege of working with him for the last four years, and during this intimate association I have come to realize that a man can be great without the pomposity and popular acclaim that generally accompany modern greatness. For McGregor was great in his own modest and unobtrusive way. . . . He devoted the last half of his life to a field of human endeavor not appreciated and almost unknown in this country—scientific journalism. . . . Every page of the 'Journal' bears the stamp of McGregorian simplicity, thoroughness, scientific accuracy, and painstaking labor." Combined with these essential qualities of an editor, so well defined by Alvarado, were still rarer qualities: "Human understanding in dealing with his co-workers; keen sense of modesty; . . . serenity, fortitude and sense of humor under adversity."

Under date July 20, 1903, McGregor wrote me: "Dr. Jordan once said that mediocre men went into places where the standard was lower than where they failed, and found their place. I guess that's me." A wisely prophetic comment, as his career unfolded itself.

I have experienced much difficulty in obtaining a photograph of McGregor to go with the present memorial. Major Gardner tells me that he very much doubts that McGregor had ever had any formal photograph taken of himself, at least he had not in the last twenty years. This again illustrates the tendency in the man to avoid publicity. The picture presented as part of the present memorial is the best one I have seen out of numerous snapshots taken by friends. It was furnished me by Professor Canuto G. Manuel of Manila, who had it enlarged from a group photograph taken more than fifteen years ago.

Of McGregor's long series of published contributions as catalogued at the end of this memorial, the one most widely valued and constantly used not only in the Philippines but no doubt in museums all over the world, is his 'Manual of Philippine Birds.' As The Marquess Hachisuka says (*Ibis*, April, p. 419, 1937), this at once (1909) became the basis for all subsequent study of the Islands' ornithology. Its lasting authority rested in part upon the exhaustive collections McGregor and his native assistants had industriously and discriminatingly gathered during the preceding eight years since his first arrival in Manila.

Indicative of an irrepressibly active mind, a huge amount of mental labor is represented in McGregor's 'Index to the Genera of Birds,' published in 1920. This is, of course, of world scope, and in its 180 octavo pages there are included 8839 names and some 24,000 references. Meticulous accuracy is a proven quality of this contribution. "W. S." reviews it in 'The Auk' (vol. 37, p. 471, 1920) and says: "A recent letter from the author states that his editorial duties seriously interfere with his ornithological research work, but if his time and opportunities permit only of the preparation of such valuable compilations as the one before us he need have no fear of being charged with neglecting his favorite science. Anyone who has had experience with the dreary monotony of compiling a list or index will fully appreciate the labor involved in Mr. McGregor's modest publication and will recognize the indebtedness that all those interested in systematic ornithology must feel toward him for his helpful work. McGregor's 'Index' will henceforth take the place of the familiar 'Waterhouse' ['Index Generum Avium,' 1889], and the fact that a publication of this sort bears the imprint of Manila is a tribute to the good judgment of those who direct the Philippine Bureau of Science." In this nomenclatorial work of his, McGregor through correspondence received much important help from the late Charles W. Richmond, at that time America's foremost authority in that

troublesome province of research. On October 14, 1920, the former writes me: "I have just received a very kind letter from Doctor Richmond. . . . I hope some day that I can meet him and tell him in person how much I appreciate the help he has given me."

The appended bibliography of 137 titles has been gathered by the present writer first-hand; each and every item has been taken by him from the original source, with pains for accuracy. But it is unsafe to claim completeness in such an undertaking. Moreover, rumor has it that McGregor left at least one unpublished manuscript, likely yet to be printed in Manila. It will be seen that a period of forty-five years was covered; the titles and citations give a pretty definite idea of McGregor's trends of interest and the theaters of his activities during that long period. It is clear that his college training at Stanford where systematic zoology was then fostered, and his few years of field work and writing concerning west-American birds in an arena where rivalries were keen and wits thereby sharpened, all together gave him the best possible background from which to launch work in an entirely new region. Arriving in the Philippines, with then modern methods and ideas at his command, with ability to plan long-time productive programs of exploration, and with tireless resolve to put these programs through to completion, McGregor found his niche and occupied it with almost unique success. From first to last, Richard McGregor was consistently an ornithologist. And the essential segment of world ornithology which he contributed pertained to the Philippine Islands. Ever will his name and that of this region be associated in the annals of natural science.

NOTE.—In assembling materials for this memorial, I had available an abundance of correspondence, which my wife, Hilda Wood Grinnell, went through and abstracted for me. Then I had essential helps from McGregor's junior colleague in the Philippines, Professor Canuto G. Manuel, and from The Marquess Hachisuka whose own work in those islands gives him authority to speak in technical matters. Additionally, I received very much in the way of reminiscence from Major Leon L. Gardner, Captain Lloyd R. Wolfe and Doctor Wilfred H. Osgood.—J. G.

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