

REPORT OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE FOR 1960

The Research Committee during the past year has been concerned with two matters of special interest: the abstracting of current literature and the Van Tyne Research Awards.

Current literature. The modern bird student needs the help of bibliographic services to keep up with the current literature that is being published in increasing volume each year. The question of importance is how the citation or abstracting of this current literature can be done most efficiently and completely, and at the same time be made easily available to all who are interested.

The Recent Literature section in *The Auk* is of interest to many persons, yet in 1959, it contained only 471 citations, compared with 1,215 citations dealing with birds in *Biological Abstracts* and 2,506 in *Zoological Record*. During the same period, 329 abstracts of bird articles appeared in *Wildlife Review* and 310 in *Bird-Banding*. Many citations were duplicated in these five periodicals, yet each periodical contained citations not found in the other four. Many hours of work on the part of a large number of people are required for compiling this literature, and it is wasteful of time and energy to have the compiling done over and over independently for each journal. It is also wasteful of publication space that otherwise would be available for new research, symposia, or special review articles.

The A.O.U. Council recognizes the problem and directed the Research Committee to investigate the possibilities of coordinating the efforts of the various journals into a central abstracting or citation service that would be available to all.

Van Tyne Research Awards. The accumulated interest on the Josselyn Van Tyne Memorial Fund, or approximately \$600, was made available by the treasurer for distribution in 1960, its first year of operation, as awards for the promotion of research. Announcements of the availability of this sum were made in *The Auk*, *Wilson Bulletin*, *Condor*, and *Bird-Banding*. Eight applications were received for amounts varying from \$75 to \$600. The awards were made at the A.O.U. meeting in Ann Arbor to Mrs. Frances Hamerstrom of Plainfield, Wisconsin, for field studies of the Marsh Hawk, Mr. James Enderson of the University of Wyoming for field studies of the Prairie Falcon, and Mr. D. F. Owen of the University of Michigan for study of the color phases of the Screech Owl.

Criteria used in rating the projects included the usual factors of originality, promise of results, fundamental importance of the subject,

knowledge and background of the investigator, and organization and modesty of the request. Of special importance in the minds of the committee was how the funds could be made of unique or unusual significance for the advancement of ornithology. Nearly all committee members agreed that where the projects were of approximately equal importance, preference should be given the young investigator, rather than the established university professor or museum man, and to investigators without good opportunities of securing financial aid elsewhere.

On the basis of this first year's experience, it appears that this fund may come to serve a very useful and important function for the advancement of ornithological research. A sum of money at least three times that available this year could have easily been assigned with promise of bringing worthwhile results. An increase of the capital investment in this fund would be desirable.

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