

COMMUNICATIONS.

THE BIRDS OF CALIFORNIA.

To Cooper Club Members:

It has seemed to me that California is rather backward in ornithological work of a general nature. We have many local lists and a great quantity of biographical literature, but this is scattered about so widely, that it is difficult for a person to find out just what has already been done in any line. Colorado has inaugurated a system of compiling and indexing its bird literature in a State List, which seems to me comprehensive and useful. The original publication compiled by W.W.Cooke has been followed at intervals by supplements, and through these one is enabled to keep up with the progress of ornithology in Colorado. I believe that a similar system is greatly needed in California.

A STATE LIST.

I have therefore undertaken the compilation of a State List, including an index to all the available literature pertaining strictly to California Birds. This I realize is assuming a very difficult and tedious task, for California is ornithologically, without any doubt, the biggest state in the Union. But even if I cannot bring such a thing to publication myself, I shall keep the bibliography and citations systematically arranged, so that anyone else can take up the work where I leave off.

A good scheme presents itself for the determination of the known breeding ranges of the various species of birds in California. To this end, the Cooper Club has recently had printed a map of the State, drawn to show the streams, lakes, valleys and principal mountain ranges.

DISTRIBUTION MAPS.

These maps are 12x15 inches, and printed on paper that will take a light water-color wash. It is our idea that each active member should procure a quantity of these blank maps, and, devoting one map to each species, indicate all points where he knows that species to breed, *from personal experience*. I think the more active collectors would find this very interesting and instructive; and moreover, after a time the maps could be turned in to myself, or whoever had charge of the State List work, and from them could be compiled a set of maps to show our entire knowledge of the distribution of each species in summer within the State. I would suggest that at least 50 of these maps would be necessary, so as to include the usual breeding species of a section. One map might be used for several species, by choosing a different color for each. In or-

der to meet the expense of the plate and paper for these maps which do not properly come under the head of Club publications, it will be necessary to charge extra for them. They can be obtained at 2½ cents each (\$2.50 per 100) from the Club Business Manager, C. Barlow, Santa Clara.

In spite of the amount of field work already accomplished in California, there are many sections, which have been scarcely touched. The California side of the lower Colorado River offers a most inviting field for a season's collecting, for it has never been carefully worked.

INVITING FIELD-WORK.

Heermann has made almost the only records from there. I will venture to say that a single season's energetic collecting in the vicinity of old Fort Yuma, would add at least twenty species to the list of California birds. Other little known portions of the State, are the Pitt River region of north-eastern California; the Humboldt Bay region, and the Santa Lucia mountain region of southern Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties.

Our hypothetical list as constituted up to date numbers nearly a third as many species as the main list. Numerous birds have been accredited to California without sufficient evidence. As an example, we have two records of the Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*), but each has been challenged, as probably being misidentified *Numenius hudsonicus*.

INFORMATION WANTED.

Our water birds are least known. Mr. Loomis of the California Academy of Sciences has done almost the only thorough work with them, but his base of observations has been chiefly at Monterey. We need information from numerous points along the Coast. Every Cooper Club member should go over his collection of water birds, and compile from it the dates and detailed accounts of the rarer captures. Be absolutely certain of your identifications, paying particular attention in this respect to the gulls, terns and waders. Send doubtful ones to some authority so as to *be sure*. Finally send these notes to Barlow for publication in THE CONDOR, so we can all have the benefit of your knowledge.

Respectfully,

JOSEPH GRINNELL.

Palo Alto, California, April 12, 1901.

BITING BIRD-LICE (MALLOPHAGA) OF PACIFIC COAST BIRDS.

To the Editor:—

In handling dead (and live) birds collectors will often notice small, flattened wingless, swift-running insects among the feathers, especially on those of the laral regions of the head. These insects are biting bird-lice (Mallophaga) and this reference to them is made in the hope