

THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine
of Western Ornithology

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JOSEPH GRINNELL, Editor, Pasadena.
H. T. CLIFTON, Business Manager, Box 404, Pasadena
WILLIAM L. FINLEY } Associate Editors
JOSEPH MAILLIARD }

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EDITORIALS

We have been frequently criticized of late for three things; namely: (1) For not using the metric system exclusively thruout THE CONDOR. (2) For using amended spelling to the small extent recommended by Roosevelt and others. (3) For not using a capital for the initial letter of all vernacular bird names, even where occurring in the body of a sentence.

1. We have always been in the habit of printing articles just as they are submitted to us as far as unit of measurement employed is concerned. Our esteemed fellow-member, Henry B. Kaeding, now of Sinaloa, has been particularly persistent in keeping us informed of our inconsistencies in regard to this matter. He urges us to adopt the metric system uniformly and exclusively. His arguments are sane, and we are agreed with him on all but one point: We would not want to work a hardship on our readers, if a majority of these were used to the English system and would find the metric system confusing.

2. We are in receipt of the following terse reply to a subscription notice sent out in January of this year, and this from one of our oldest subscribers: "When you spell like others, I will renew my subscription, but I will never help any publication which uses the form of spelling you do; the only way to reform cranks is to let them alone." The latter is our own sentiment too! We are personally strongly in favor of simplified spelling, consistently and authoritatively used. Our readers are surely familiar with the arguments *pro* and *con*.

3. It is claimed that a capital initial gives the bird name a prominence in the text justifi-

able because of its importance, and because it makes the name easier to find in making up indexes and in searching out references. On the other hand the text looks to us typographically smoother and easier to read. For instance, "The habitat of the Chestnut-backed Chickadee overlaps that of the mountain chickadee."

Now, we propose to put these matters to a vote of Cooper Club members. (1) Shall we use the metric system *exclusively* in THE CONDOR? (2) Shall we continue to use the authorized amended spelling? (3) Shall we continue to use small initials for vernacular bird-names occurring in the body of sentences?

Write on a postal card "Yes" or "No," following each numeral, however you wish to vote, and address it at once to *Editor The Condor, 576 N. Marengo Ave., Pasadena, Calif.* We will govern ourselves in these regards in the future according to the majority vote of those Cooper Club members who are sufficiently interested to respond before May 1st. THE CONDOR is a Club affair and should meet the wishes of the Club. Results will be announced in our May issue.

We were alarmed and dismayed a month or so ago by the appearance in local papers of a dispatch from Washington to the effect that the Bureau of Biological Survey was in danger of being denied its yearly appropriation.

President F. W. D'Evelyn promptly telegraphed to Senator Perkins the Cooper Club's views as to the great value of the Biological Survey; and he has recently received a cordial and favorable acknowledgement from the Senator. Doubtless scientific societies all over the country sent similar protests. For the loss of the Survey would be felt in almost every branch of science, tho in none more than in ornithology. At any rate we are now partially relieved by learning that the Survey's appropriation for the coming year was finally voted, tho with a twenty per cent reduction.

We cannot see why such a narrow policy should have received even a modicum of consideration even in the name of extreme economy. Let anyone who suspects extravagance read the 1906 Report of H. W. Henshaw, Acting Chief of the Biological Survey, and see just how the fifty-odd thousand dollars was expended.

And as to the practical value of the Bureau's work, it seems to us that no branch of the Department of Agriculture could be canceled with more loss to commercial interests than the Biological Survey.

Battleships, antequated in five years, ten million dollars; a scientific and practical bureau, appropriation fifty thousand, and this threatened on the plea of *economy!* Is this national progress in civilization?

The collector who visits Arizona must now provide himself with a permit. The following in reply to a request for information on the subject explains itself:

"Recognized collectors for reputable colleges who wish one or two specimens of each kind of bird are charged a nominal fee—\$1.00. Collectors who are selling and shipping to every-

body are not wanted, and are charged \$25 per year." (Signed) W. L. Pinney, Fish and Game Commissioner of Arizona Territory.

We don't propose to make these editorial columns a table of contents of the issue, as is often the custom of magazines. Yet we cannot help calling particular attention to the last pelican photo with Finley's article, page 41 of this number. Aren't the purely artistic merits of this picture to say the least exceptional?

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stephens and Mr. Joseph Dixon are leaving the first of April for a season's collecting in southeastern Alaska. Their work is in the interests of a private party, and will pertain mostly to mammals. Yet birds will not be altogether neglected.

An effort was recently made in Oregon by the fruit growers in the southern part of the State to amend the Model Bird Law to such an extent that the legislation for song birds was practically annulled. They introduced a bill in the House to the effect that farmers, gardeners and orchardists could shoot any bird providing that it was considered detrimental to crops. The bill passed the House and also the Senate on February 21 by a narrow margin. But thru the Oregon Audubon Society, such a sentiment was raised in favor of the birds that Governor Chamberlain vetoed the bill on February 25.

The Portland, Oregon, Public Library has been presented by Mrs. W. S. Ladd with an original set of the four-volume elephant folio edition of Audubon. It is thought this is now the only complete set on the Pacific Coast. The set was purchased somewhere in the East in 1879 by Mr. William Ladd for \$1800. Mr. W. L. Finley has examined the work and finds these volumes of the "Birds of America" to belong to the same edition as those in the Library of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, as described by Stone in *The Auk* for July, 1906.

Mr. C. B. Linton, of the Southern Division has been visiting in turn this spring the various islands along the southern California coast. He reports many new records for San Clemente and San Nicolas.

We are informed that it is now the intention of the California Academy of Sciences to locate their new building, to cost about \$250,000, in Golden Gate Park. This will be a vast improvement over their former location in the dark and grimy business section of San Francisco.

Mr. Bradford Torrey of Boston is again spending the spring in southern California watching ouzels, solitaires and condors thru his 12-power Busch binocular.

The Cooper Club, both Divisions, has voted an increase in the subscription price of THE CONDOR. This was a warranted move for several reasons. The dollar rate did not meet the cost of publication. Even at the increased

rate, \$1.50 per year, ours is yet the lowest priced of ornithological magazines. We believe that our subscribers appreciate the value received in THE CONDOR, and will continue their support, the result of which will be an extension in its size and number of illustrations. Whether or not our expectations are well founded remains to be proven. It must be remembered, however, that THE CONDOR receives considerable of its support from the dues of the Cooper Club (which includes subscription), and these remain unchanged.

COMMUNICATIONS

SLAUGHTER OF BLUE JAYS

Editor THE CONDOR:

A double-column display header in a Sacramento paper lately published announced, "Killing of Jays, the Destroyers of Quail Nests." This charge conjoined with the detailed reading matter, which was written with an intensity which curdled one's blood, foretold that "there will be an awful slaughter of blue jays during the early spring months." Subjoined was a subscription list wherein was donated various sums from \$1.50 to \$10, concluding with a very noble determination on the part of the individual who distinguished himself last year by killing the greatest number of jays "to strain every muscle and exercise every effort to uphold his reputation and win first prize this year."

Mr. Editor, rightly or wrongly the reading of this sent a creepy reflex thru my sympathetic, and I wondered if this slaughter was either intelligent or justifiable.

I remember as a boy in my native land the bad name the common magpie (*Pica caudata*) had as a destroyer of chickens, and a robber of nests. Indeed I even recollect seeing "sucked eggs," but never did I know of a pre-arranged slaughter, and yet the farmers of that region were careful of their own interests. But to return to the 'Jays', I wrote up to the district where the campaign was being organized. I received some information which convinced me that in some cases at least, the execution was wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart. One of the subscribers honestly admits that "he had never given the matter of blue jays any personal attention, but was guided solely by the report of others." The heavy donation was from a dealer in sporting goods—a sportsman, and of course a close observer of nature! A third gentleman, who has the local reputation of being the best authority on birds said "that the jay is no good, he destroys eggs all the time," and that he "had actually seen a jay robbing a dove's nest, and flying away with the egg in his beak." The sportsman with the ambition for perennial premierships "is a farmer, an old gentleman" who had one thousand scalps to his credit for last season. One could, Mr. Editor, be a Christian and yet wish that the right hand of the 'old gentleman' might at least soon lose its cunning, and not