

THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine
of Western Ornithology

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JOSEPH GRINNELL, Editor, Berkeley, Cal.
J. EUGENE LAW, Business Manager, Hollywood, Cal.
W. LEE CHAMBERS, Business Manager, Santa Monica, Cal.

HARRY S. SWARTH } Associate Editors
ROBERT B. ROCKWELL }

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EDITORIAL, NOTES AND NEWS

This issue contains the "Directory of Members of the Cooper Ornithological Club", an annual feature of our magazine which we are repeatedly assured is a very useful one. It will be noted that the list is much larger than ever before, including 302 names. We would be glad of information as to any errors or changes in addresses, so that the secretary's card index may be kept up to date.

In a paper concerning the "Introduction of the Hungarian Partridge into the United States" (=separate from Yearbook of U. S. Dept. Agr. for 1909, pp. 249-258, pl. xiv) Mr. Henry Oldys of the Biological Survey concludes with the following significant remarks: "Not only is acclimatization of an exotic species difficult, but it may, if successful, lead to unexpected results:" the bird may become a nuisance to agriculturists and it may crowd out our native species. "Hence it would seem wise to devote less energy and money to the establishment of this and other exotic species and give more attention to the restoration and maintenance of our native game birds." We heartily agree with this last suggestion and would respectfully recommend it to the consideration of our zealous State Fish and Game Commissioners.

Our thanks are due Mr. H. S. Swarth for assuming the entire work of getting out the last

two issues of our magazine, during the time the regular editor was absent afield. Mr. Swarth is spending the summer in the northern part of Vancouver Island where he is a member of Miss Alexander's party which is making collections there for the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California.

Mr. H. W. Carriger spent the first two weeks of June in the vicinity of Lake Tahoe. He and Mr. M. S. Ray, who is devoting a larger part of the early summer to the same region, were successful in finding some extremely rare birds' nests. We are not at liberty to announce what these finds were, any further than to remark that they are new for California, and that the descriptions of them will appear in due time in *THE CONDOR*.

We learn from the *Auk* that the long-promised new edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-List of North American Birds will probably be ready for distribution about the end of July. Altho it will differ somewhat in typography and in the character of the matter from previous editions, the arrangement and numeration will be the same. As most of the changes in nomenclature have been added in the numerous Supplements issued since 1895, we are assured that there will in this respect be few surprises. The geographical distribution of the species and subspecies have, however, been entirely rewritten and greatly amplified. Besides being given in greater detail and with more definiteness, the new arrangement will show not only the general range of the forms, but also the breeding and winter ranges, so far as these are at present known. This single feature has meant the expenditure of a vast amount of work on the part of those members of the Committee having this subject in charge. We are further informed that an abbreviated edition of the Check-List, consisting only of the English and technical names, numbered, is in preparation and will be issued at about the same time as the regular edition. Copies of both publications may be obtained thru the Business Manager of the Union, Dr. Jonathan Dwight, Jr., 134 West 71st Street, New York City.

Bird-Lore has lately devoted no less than 64 lines of its surplus space to rather shallow ridicule of *THE CONDOR* for adopting simplified spelling. The nature of these aspersions serves chiefly to advertize the astonishing ignorance of its editor and "T. S. P.," of the principles of a subject with which every educated man in this day of economic advance ought to be familiar. The Editors of *THE CONDOR* are not attempting to originate any new fad, as is implied, but are merely falling in line with a wide-spread movement which is essentially progressive, and which is rapidly gaining ground because of its obvious merits.

The extensive oological collections of F. M. Dille, of Denver, and G. H. Messenger, of Linden, Iowa, have been merged by their

owners into a single "Messenger-Dille Collection." This combined cabinet contains choicely selected sets of 682 species and subspecies of North American birds. It is thus one of the largest collections in the United States, and not only this, but the component sets have been selected with extreme care to secure perfectly prepared and typical representations of each species.

Mr. John E. Thayer, owner of the Thayer Museum at Lancaster, Massachusetts, has sent an expedition to Wrangell Island, which lies in the Arctic Ocean northwest of Alaska. The party will winter there, and thus be on the ground at the opening of the spring of 1911. The special object of this quest is the discovery of the eggs of the rare Spoon-billed Sandpiper. Mr. Thayer will also have a man in the delta of the Mackenzie River at the break of next spring, on the look-out for the breeding places of certain water birds.

Mr. C. W. Beebe, of the New York Zoological Park, is now in the far East studying fescants for a projected monograph of that group. He writes us from the Himalayas under date of May 27 that his party had been camping for a month above tree level as close to Mt. Everest as possible, making studies of *Ithagenes* and *Lophophorus*. It is found that the correlation of dry, damp and humid climates with pale, dark and iridescent plumages is very prominent among the fescants, as with many other birds. Mr. and Mrs. Beebe will return home late the coming autumn by the way of California.

We have learned that the MS of Part V of Ridgway's Birds of North and Middle America is approaching completion. Mr. Ridgway has finished with the hummingbirds, and is now at work on the trogons.

The American Bird Banding Association has been organized in New York City, with Dr. Leon J. Cole as President. The object of this society is "the banding of wild birds and the recording of accurate data on their movements." The metal band attached to a bird's leg, bears a serial number and the inscription "Notify the Auk, New York." Record is kept of the number of each band used, and should the bird ever fall into anyone's hands, it is expected that the fact be reported together with the locality of capture. It is believed that important data bearing on the study of bird migration will thus be obtained. It is highly desirable that this work be carried on at many widely separated points. Persons interested and desiring further information or wishing to join the Association, should address the Secretary, Mr. C. J. Pennock, Kennett Square, Pa.

Mr. Malcolm P. Anderson writes us from Han-chung-fu, Shensi, China, under date of February 13, 1910, that his party had crossed the Pe-ling, or backbone of China, twice. "This is no great feat," he says, "but in crossing the mountains we have found several excellent

collecting grounds and discovered a considerable number of new mammals. We are pioneers in the zoological line in the parts we are visiting. One of the best collecting grounds I have seen in China is around a mountain called Tai-pei-san, 13,400 feet elevation, in western Shensi. We found this mountain half by accident, as reports of its whereabouts and the way to reach it were very indefinite. Once found, we camped at its base and made many trips up its slopes. Hunting was difficult in places, owing to the extremely slippery sides of the mountain. After arming our straw sandals with huge spikes to aid us in clinging to the snow we finally managed to secure three fine specimens of the 'goat-ox'. Besides this strange beast we got specimens of deer, wild boar, the 'goat-antelope', and a ripping collection of the smaller things." It will be remembered that Mr. Anderson, with two English assistants, was sent out by the British Museum a year or more ago, for the purpose of securing mammals in the interior of China. This is known as the "Bedford Expedition." Mr. Anderson expects to return to his home in California the coming winter.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

THE DISSEMINATION OF JUNIPERS BY BIRDS. By FRANK J. PHILLIPS. Reprint from *Forestry Quarterly*, vol. VII, no. 1, pp. 1-16; April, 1910.

Definite information on so-called matters of common knowledge is often much needed, but often also vainly sought. In this paper Phillips fills a long-felt want with his excellent demonstration of the importance of birds in the distribution of seeds, a topic burdened with much general but very little specific knowledge. He selects junipers as favorable to the study of avian dissemination, since the fruit is rather conspicuous and hangs on the tree a long time. Analysis shows juniper berries to have a high nutritive value, and observation and records from various sources prove that large quantities of them are eaten by birds. Mammals are of slight importance in spreading the seed.

In dense natural stands of juniper, birds are said to be responsible for from 60 to 90 percent of the total distribution, and in various localities where junipers are scattered it is shown that the entire reproduction is due to birds. Those who have seen the fence rows of the southeastern states marked with lines of red cedars and the barren, stony fields of certain eastern states dotted with them, will not question 100 percent bird dissemination of juniper.

Cedar birds and robins are indicated as the most important juniper distributors. A few names may be added to the list Phillips gives, of birds the Biological Survey has found to eat juniper berries. They are: for *Juniperus*,