

THE CONDOR

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Western Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art has recently received from Mr. G. Allan Hancock, owner of the La Brea Ranch, the exclusive right, for the next two years, to exploit the exceedingly valuable and interesting deposits of fossils found upon that estate. CONDOR readers will recall the various publications of Dr. Loye Holmes Miller dealing with the birds discovered in these tar beds in the excavations of the University of California. In the new work now under way, begun early in July, a fair proportion of bird remains has been found among the more abundant large mammals, though so far of no species not already recorded by Miller.

Mr. G. Willett, under the auspices of the Biological Survey, spent two weeks during June in the vicinity of Roosevelt, Arizona, studying conditions on the bird reservation at that point. After a brief stay in Los Angeles he then departed for Puget Sound on a similar mission. From there he goes north to inspect certain of the Federal bird reservations in Alaska.

A letter was recently received from Joseph Dixon, who is a member of an expedition to Alaska in the interests of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. It is dated at Dutch Harbor, April 24, and contains much of interest, especially as bearing upon the conditions under which zoological collecting is carried on in that region.

"We are too early for stuff on this side, and have had beastly weather all the time, either blowing fifty to seventy miles outside, or snowing so that we couldn't feel our way when we got close inshore. . . . We have quite a series of song sparrows, rosy finches, and snowflakes, and about fifteen ptarmigan. Willow Ptarmigan were still in the winter plumage at Glacier Bay and very wild, so that we did not get any. Rock Ptarmigan . . . were very plentiful (I saw about 200 in half an hour) just back of Muir's old cabin at Glacier Bay . . . I saw more ptarmigan in two minutes than I saw in the other two trips to Alaska. We could not get within ten miles of this place in 1907. There was scarcely any ice in the bay at all this time.

" . . . From a collector's standpoint we will be restricted in several ways. Our stops will be uncertain as to length on account of wind and weather, and we will not know if we can set traps or not, . . . but on the whole we are getting our share of stuff, and although cramped on board the boat, we have more than our share of space.

" . . . The official photographer has the worst time. His films rub when developing, and plates freeze solid in the pan when he washes them on deck. He has some good films now, taken with the moving picture camera.

" . . . We expect to leave here for Bogoslof Island tomorrow. We had a fine view of a smoking volcano on Unimak Island as we came by yesterday. . . . We are planning to fix up a drying screen in the galley, as our chests are full."

The fact disclosed in the last sentence is evidence of results, however unfavorable the conditions!

As we go to press the sad news reaches us of the death of Henry B. Kaeding, one of our oldest members. Mr. Kaeding passed away in Los Angeles early in June. A more extended notice will appear in an early issue.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF BIRDS. By Junius Henderson (University of Colorado Bulletin, vol. 13, no. 4, 1913, pp. 1-48).

Most of us are apt to discount a publication which contains no original work beyond that of compilation. Yet the attractive paper at hand entitled "The practical value of birds" by Junius Henderson, Professor of Natural History and Curator of the Museum in the University of Colorado, presents so many admirable features that all such criticism is forestalled.

After the continued use of the word "economic" in publications of this kind the word "practical" found in the title is an acceptable

variation. The emphasis on the aesthetic in the very first paragraph: "Whatever tends to make the world happier and better is of direct material value though its value may not be measurable in dollars", is a little out of the ordinary for a purely economic paper, but is a good innovation. The many papers now being published dealing with the purely economic point of view have a tendency to over-emphasize the "dollars and cents value" at the expense of other values.

The introductory divisions of the bulletin treat of the usual subjects to be found in papers of its kind: The Balance of Nature, Rescue of Crops, Foliage and Forests by Birds; and Necessity of Protection. Two divisions a little more out of the ordinary are entitled: Quantities of Food Required by Birds, and Methods of Investigation.

The systematic discussion makes up the greater part of the paper. A general discussion of the food of the more important groups (orders) of birds is given with more detailed results of the stomach examination of the most important members of each group.

Two things are noticeable in this discussion. First, the numerous citations of the literature quoted (208 in all), and second, the tables (ten of them) summarizing the results of the stomach examinations made by different investigators. A few paragraphs on the literature of economic ornithology and a bibliography of one hundred and forty-nine papers on economic ornithology concludes the bulletin.

We recommend this paper as being the best brief summary on the subject which has come to our notice. No more valuable bulletin is available for the teacher who desires to know something of the economic relations of our common birds and the available literature on the subject, or for the beginning student in economic ornithology who desires a general idea of the work accomplished.—H. C. BRYANT.

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

SOUTHERN DIVISION

MAY.—The regular meeting of the Southern Division of the Club was held at the Museum of History, Science and Art, Thursday evening, May 29, with twelve members present: Messrs. Chambers, Daggett, Fitzpatrick, Howell, Hubbs, Kimball, Law, Layne, Miller, Rich, Willett, and Swarth. President J. E. Law was in the chair.

The following were elected to membership: H. C. Ohl, Los Banos, California; Thomas Trenor, San Francisco, California; E. P. Rankin, El Monte, California; George F.

Sykes, Corvallis, Oregon. New names proposed were: L. H. Duschak, San Francisco, presented by J. Grinnell; Philip Pierpont, Nordhoff, by D. R. Dickey; George H. Stuart, Philadelphia, by W. L. Chambers.

A letter was read, received by W. L. Chambers from Mr. Robert Ridgway, giving many interesting details in regard to the publication of his new book of colors. Mr. Law entertained the members with an account of his recent collecting trip to southeastern Arizona. Adjourned.—H. S. SWARTH, *Secretary*.

JUNE.—The monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Club was held at the Museum of History, Science and Art, Thursday evening, June 26, with the following members present: Messrs. Bryant, Chambers, Daggett, Fischer, Hubbs, Law, Zahn, and Swarth. Mr. Paul S. Radir and Mr. Carruthers were visitors. As the president was absent during the early part of the evening Mr. Zahn took the chair. The minutes of the May meeting were read and approved. The following were elected to membership in the club: L. H. Duschak, San Francisco; George H. Stuart, Philadelphia; Philip Pierpont, Nordhoff, California.

Mr. Bryant spoke at some length regarding the activities of the Conservation Committee during the session of the State Legislature just ended, summarizing the final results, and considerable discussion followed. Mr. Bryant then entertained the meeting with an account of some of the methods followed in an economic study of the food of birds. Adjourned.—H. S. SWARTH, *Secretary*.

DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

Revised to July 1, 1913

(Residence in California unless otherwise stated. Year following address indicates date of election.)

HONORARY MEMBERS

- Allen, Dr. J. A., American Museum, of Natural History, New York, N. Y. 1910.
- Beal, Prof. F. E. L., Biological Survey, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 1910.
- Belding, Lyman, Stockton. 1896.
- Merriam, Dr. C. Hart, 1919 16th St., Washington, D. C. 1909.
- Ridgway, Robert, Route 7, Olney, Ill. 1905.
- Stephens, Frank, 3756 Park Blvd., San Diego. 1912.

ACTIVE MEMBERS

- Adams, Ernest, 298 S. 11th St., San Jose. 1896.
- Alexander, Annie M., Seaview and Union Aves., Piedmont. 1908.