

# THE CONDOR

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J. GRINNELL, Editor. Berkeley, California

HARRY S. SWARTH, Associate Editor

J. EUGENE LAW }  
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## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

It is an undisputed fact that the waterfowl of California are rapidly decreasing in numbers. Even such species as the Mallard and Cinnamon Teal, which used to breed numerously in many parts of the state, occur no longer in summer in much of their former breeding range. It is of very great importance that each ornithologist in the state place on record what he has learned in regard to our native game birds. If the material is of sufficient quantity to warrant a general article in *THE CONDOR* it ought to be thus presented. But even if only a few lines can be offered, these should be sent in for publication, as a field-and-study note. Such items as the following will constitute valuable additions to our knowledge: Exact dates of nesting, numbers of eggs or young, manner of nesting, time of donning eclipse plumage in ducks, food of young and of adults, exact dates of arrival and departure in the migratory species.

Mr. A. B. Howell has undertaken the preparation of a summary of all that is known concerning the birds of the Santa Barbara Islands. This will appear in due course of time as one of the Cooper Club's *Avifauna* series. Mr. Howell invites all observers who have Island information as yet unpublished to either place it on record at once, or send in their manuscript notes to him—in either event making their knowledge available in time to be incorporated in his forthcoming treatise.

Messrs. Witherby & Company have been appointed European agents for "The Emu", the organ of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, and copies of that publication can now be obtained at 326, High Holborn, London.

Dr. Reuben M. Strong, of the University of Chicago, is at work upon a monograph of the anatomy of the Tubinares. Material is especially desired which is of a nature to be used in dissecting the soft anatomy of the Pacific albatrosses. Correspondents in a position to furnish such material should inform Dr. Strong of the fact.

Students of western birds will be interested to know that the United States Biological Survey is resuming its field work in Arizona. Mr. E. A. Goldman has been carrying on work there the past summer under the auspices of the Bureau; and Mr. E. W. Nelson, who is in charge of the biological investigations of the Survey, will take the field for a time this fall. We may look forward to a final report upon the fauna of Arizona, compiled along similar lines to the excellent state reports already put out for Texas, Colorado, and other western areas.

A field party from the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology returned on August 25 from three full months of zoological exploration in the coast district of California north from Marin County to the Yolla Bolly district of Trinity County. The party consisted of Mr. Walter P. Taylor, in charge, with Mr. Charles L. Camp, Mr. Alfred C. Shelton, and Mr. George Stone, of the University of California, as assistants. Mr. G. F. Ferris, of Stanford University, accompanied the expedition in the interests of Prof. V. L. Kellogg, for the purpose of gathering bird and mammal parasites. The results of the season's work, as far as now apparent, consist in a greatly increased knowledge of the distribution of the vertebrate elements in the faunal areas traversed.

Since Mr. W. P. Taylor's report in our May issue (pages 125 to 128) of accomplishments in California in the line of wild life conservation, the fortunes attending this worthy cause have been varied. For reasons neither explained, nor readily inferred, the Governor failed to sign a number of the important bills passed by the legislature. Thus out of the list of 13 items as given by Taylor, numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13 were lost, save that the separate bill included under number 13, providing protection for Sea Otter alone, was signed. The hotly contested no-sale and no-shipment bill was signed; but enemies of the regulation, namely the San Francisco Hotelmen's Association, have subsequently succeeded in securing the requisite number of signatures to the appropriate petitions invoking the referendum on this law. The enforcement of the measure will therefore be

postponed at least until the next general election, in November, 1914, when the people of California will be called upon to vote directly upon the issue.

Meanwhile, through the enactment of the Federal migratory bird law, California is likely to secure in no small part what it was hoped to gain through state legislation. The details of the Federal regulations have been in the hands of a most competent committee, consisting of T. S. Palmer, A. K. Fisher and W. W. Cooke, of the United States Biological Survey. The regulations as finally announced in a Circular of the Survey will go into effect October 1, 1913.

As regards California birds the following restrictions will now become operative. A five-year closed season on: Band-tailed Pigeon; all Cranes; Swans; all Rails; Curlew and all shorebirds *except* Black-bellied and Golden Plover, Wilson Snipe and both species of Yellowlegs. The open season on ducks and geese will extend from October 15 to January 16, thus cutting the shooting season much shorter at the spring end, as compared with the provisions of the State law. The open season for Black-bellied and Golden Plover, Wilson Snipe and both Yellow-legs

will be from October 15 to December 16. The Coot and Florida Gallinule will be subject to an open season from September 1 to December 1. The latter two species thus become recognized as game birds.

These federal regulations are of the utmost importance as a step toward retarding the spectacular diminution of our game resources. But we must not rest here. Much wider accomplishment is necessary, especially in the line of public education, if the stock of game birds on the Pacific Coast is to be preserved in the face of the present high rate of immigration and consequent enormously increased toll levied upon all of our natural resources.

HERBERT BROWN, one of the few resident ornithologists of Arizona, died at his home in Tucson, May 12, 1913. He was 65 years old at the time of his death, having been born in Winchester, Virginia, March 6, 1848. He was twice married and left a widow and one son.

In 1883 he located in Tucson where he made his home throughout most of the remainder of his life. During the early years of his residence in Arizona he lived a more or less adventurous life, making long pro-



Fig. 51. HERBERT BROWN, HOLDING ELF OWL; PHOTO TAKEN BY WILLIAM L. FINLEY AT TUCSON, ARIZONA, IN THE SPRING OF 1910