

# THE CONDOR

A Magazine of  
Western Ornithology

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Cooper Ornithological Club

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## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The latest etymological authority, Webster's New International Dictionary (G. & C. Meriam Co., 1913, page 1814) defines the word resident as follows: "Dwelling, or having an abode, in a place for a continued length of time; . . . opposed to *nonresident*; . . . 2. Of birds, not migratory; nonmigratory." In essence the word means *sit*, or stay, and is allied to *sedentary*, as opposed to *migratory*. Birds are either *resident* or *migratory*; if they migrate they can *not* be resident; hence such an incongruity as *winter resident* is impossible! We admit that the term summer visitant, for a migratory species *breeding* in a given locality, is open to criticism; but *summer resident* is worse. Perhaps some one can suggest a correct term for this seasonal category, which will be acceptable to all of us. See Dawson, *antea*, page 119. Why do not the terms transient or sporadic visitant serve in all cases where the birds are not regular winter or summer visitants?

The one thing that perturbs the Editor more than any others of his worries is receipt of a manuscript from some well-meaning contributor, the appearance of which corroborates his accompanying note that he has "dashed down a few lines for our magazine", or that he "submits some space-filler" which can be "consigned to the waste-basket

if not needed". It is presumed that THE CONDOR prints only matter of scientific value or of popularly educative function. The magazine's pages had better be left blank than devoted to mere "space-filler", as such. The Editor welcomes and solicits well-considered, well-composed articles, whether of ten lines or ten pages.

The Cooper Club's membership, as shown in the roster concluding the present issue of THE CONDOR, numbered on April 1st, 1914, six honorary and 433 active members.

Dr. Barton W. Evermann, for many years connected with the Bureau of Fisheries at Washington, has been appointed Director of the Museum of the California Academy of Sciences. Dr. Evermann is a Cooper Club member, and his name is associated with the development of ornithology in California during the early 80's. From 1881 to 1886 seven articles were contributed from his pen to the *Ornithologist and Oologist* and to *The Auk*.

Mr. J. Eugene Law spent three weeks in the latter part of February and early March in the vicinity of Silver City, New Mexico, where a large part of his time was occupied in bird study and collecting.

### CONVENTION OF AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS IN SAN FRANCISCO IN 1915

It will be good news to members of the Cooper Ornithological Club that at the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, held last month in Washington, it was decided to hold the next annual meeting in San Francisco in May, 1915. As to how many members will respond it is, of course, impossible at this early date to state, but that a considerable number will avail themselves of the opportunity to attend the convention, and the Panama Pacific Exposition also, is reasonably certain.

To a large degree it is up to the Cooper Ornithological Club to make the visit of our friends from the eastern states as pleasant and interesting as possible. One way to do this will be to hold a meeting jointly with the A. O. U., and to make it a record one. Many will remember the special joint meeting held here in 1903, which was such a success, and during which some friendships were made that have kept green ever since. Undoubtedly many members of the Southern Division of the C. O. C. can arrange to come up here to see the exposition at the time of holding this joint meeting. Every one must get to work and boost this proposition and make it a memorable success, for it is the chance of our young lives!

Few of our eastern cousins realize the great diversity in climatic, and hence in faunal and floral, conditions in California, and the great changes thereby brought about in our bird-life within comparatively short distances. We should plan so as to make this phase of our avifaunal conditions on the Pacific Coast of especial interest to our visitors. We must show them that

within a few miles there is quite a variety of "zones",—nearly all makes and brands of zones, in fact, except the extremes of Arctic and Tropical,—and let them see in person why the Pacific Coast is so attractive to the ornithologist who knows it, and why it is so important to know it well. We must make them see with their own eyes—not through the eyes of others—that a few hours on a train will take them from one zone to another in a way they never dream of east of the Mississippi.

We ought to have a joint meeting here in San Francisco with the whole of the C. O. C., and then one afterwards with the Southern Division for those who take in that part of the state. It is our duty to write to all the ornithological friends we have and impress upon them the advisability of their attending the convention here in 1915, to write *now*, and to keep on writing until we get them here.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *Chairman of A. O. U. Committee on Arrangements.*

#### THE REFERENDUM, THE INITIATIVE, AND THE WILD LIFE

The present outlook in California, as regards wild life conservation, is sufficiently serious to set one to thinking. It will probably set most Cooper Club members and CONDOR readers not only to *thinking*, but to *resolving*. These two effects, in conjunction with a third response to which they should naturally lead, that of *acting*, if experienced by a sufficient number of people, will bring our state safely through the crisis with regard to the wild life situation which confronts us.

The state legislature, in its last session, passed by a large majority the Flint-Cary bill prohibiting the sale of ducks and other game. The bill was then duly signed by Governor Johnson, and was thus in line to become law.

Only a comparatively short time had elapsed before certain interests, centering for the most part in the city and county of San Francisco, had successfully invoked the referendum on this law, which is now held up pending the final decision of the people in November.

Emboldened, perhaps, by the ease with which the referendum petition was drawn up and signatures obtained, a group of San Francisco commission merchants and market-men banded themselves together and organized the "People's Game Protective Association," ostensibly dedicated to the noble object of saving the wild game for the people.

Unfortunately the personnel of the executive committee of the People's Protective Association does not impress one as calculated to recommend it as a sincere and bona fide game protective organization. Barclay Henley, elected president, was at the time of his election attorney for John F. Corriea, commission merchant and game dealer. Mr. Corriea himself very generously allowed his

name to be used as vice-president. The secretary of the executive committee was Mr. F. M. Bailey, who, by a strange coincidence, was secretary also of Corriea's game corporation. Other members of the executive committee were John Campodonico and Cecil Raymond, San Francisco game dealers.

The next point of interest concerns the scheme whereby this group of market-men propose to administer the wild game of the state. To make a long story short, it now appears that by carefully placing the emphasis on other aspects of game legislation, and by earnestly insisting on strict regulation in other respects than those most intimately concerning themselves, the game dealers' organization has been able to propose that all game—deer, trout, quail, ducks, doves, grouse, everything—that all game be sold on the market, without arousing the opposition which is bound to arise, as soon as the people realize what is implied in the market-men's new game measure.

The San Francisco *Examiner* at once espoused the cause of the new organization. An initiative petition was drawn up, and at last accounts was to be taken to the people for signature. The present status of the petition is unknown, but there seems to be a considerable likelihood that this measure will appear upon the ballot in November along with the non-sale law.

A perusal of the stories apropos the activities of this organization, which have appeared in the San Francisco *Examiner*, indicates that the campaign in behalf of the sale-of-game initiative is being cleverly prosecuted. For example, it is proposed to cut down the bag-limit, to prohibit the baiting of ponds, to lay a heavy tax on gun clubs, as well as to permit everybody to buy game on the market. As a matter of justice, runs the argument in favor of the sale of game, the poor man who is unable to go shooting should have the privilege of buying on the market the game that he desires. Game is said to be chiefly valuable for its food content, and it is submitted that to freely permit the sale of game on the market will reduce the cost of living!

There is something to be said on the other side of this question. Prominent San Francisco butchers and market-men have asserted that could venison be sold on the market at the present time it would bring from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per pound. Quail were sold in San Francisco last year at \$1.00 to \$1.20 a pair, as was discovered by representatives of the Fish and Game Commission, who apprehended the violators and brought them to justice. A large proportion of all the ducks which enter the metropolis, and most of the ducks which are marketed are sold in the big cities, were purveyed by the highest class hotels and restaurants, canvasbacks and mallards being sold for from \$4.00 to \$5.00 per pair.

Under conditions like these there will have to be considerable evidence submitted,

and it will have to be far more cogent than any evidence heretofore put forth, before the advocates of the sale of game can be said to have proven their position as champions of the poor man. There seem always to be more lazy men with money, who insist upon their right to eat game regardless of conservation, than there are vigorous men with guns who appreciate the game more for its recreative than for its food value, and who believe in careful conservation.

Since the weight of practically all authority, governmental and scientific, is unequivocally in favor of laws prohibiting the sale of game, and since non-sale laws have become popular as game laws the country over, it is anticipated that the people, if warned as to the significance of these measures, will record their decision aright. The danger lies in the possibility that many voters will not adequately understand the propositions as they appear on the November ballot. Here lies the opportunity of all interested in the wild life.

The Referendum holding up the law prohibiting the sale of ducks and wild pigeons, in addition to other game, stands, and will appear on the ballot in November.

Efforts are now being made to place on the ballot an Initiative measure providing for the sale of deer, quail, trout, doves, ducks, grouse and other game.

What are we going to do in behalf of California's Wild Life?—WALTER P. TAYLOR, *Chairman Northern Division Committee on Conservation, C. O. C.*

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

A DETERMINATION OF THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*) IN CALIFORNIA. By HAROLD CHILD BRYANT. (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 11, no. 14, pp. 377-510, pls. 21-24, 5 text figs. Published February 27, 1914.)

For some years past the Western Meadowlark has been a subject of contention in the California legislature, there having been several attempts, strongly supported, and as strongly opposed, to deprive the bird of its legal protection, leaving it subject to the onslaughts of the farmers who claimed that it was harmful, and of the hunters who wished to regard it as "game". Mr. Bryant's studies, carried on under the auspices of the California State Fish and Game Commission, were designed to ascertain the truth or falsity of the many contradictory statements that have been made regarding the bird, primarily in order that the Commission could shape its course intelligently in the future, in guiding any pertinent legislation. How thoroughly this work was done is shown in the published report here under consideration.

There are but few species of birds that have been given as close and critical scrutiny and study as has the subject of this paper, or that have had any one phase of

their existence reported upon in such detail. The results here tabulated and commented upon obviously represent an immense amount of painstaking labor and observation, and apparently leave little or nothing further to be said upon the subject. Many points in connection with the methods pursued are of decided interest, and in one regard at least, the author was exceptionally favored by the circumstances under which his studies were pursued. Working with the backing of the State Fish and Game Commission, he was enabled to call upon the entire force of wardens to supply him with material, hence he had the unusual advantage of extensive series of specimens obtained from whatever points, and at whatever seasons, seemed most desirable. This study, therefore, is noteworthy in that it is the result of observations on the food of a single species of bird, based on a large amount of material carefully and systematically gathered at the same localities at regular intervals throughout the year, many points within the state being represented in the collection.

The paper throughout presents every evidence of careful and painstaking work, intelligently directed, and Mr. Bryant's conclusions will probably be accepted unhesitatingly by every unbiased reader of his report. Of the methods used, examination of stomach contents is of primary importance, nearly two thousand Meadowlark stomachs having been subjected to scrutiny and analysis in the course of the work; this supplemented by careful field observation of wild birds. Although experimentation with caged birds is mentioned as sometimes desirable, we do not understand that anything of the sort was attempted in the present study, the nearest approach being the observation, weighing, etc., of nestlings.

Altogether, to one who has not specialized on the food of birds, it would seem as though the author had approached his subject from every possible angle, and had given due weight to every conflicting element, and due prominence to every different phase of the Meadowlark's existence. His verdict is that the bird deserves the protection at present accorded it, the damage done by the species being of small moment, at restricted localities, and for but a short period of the year, while the eating of insects goes on through all the seasons. Although the paper is primarily concerned with the food of the Western Meadowlark, it also has much to say on related subjects, the introductory chapters containing many pages dealing with the different methods used in the study of economic ornithology, and with the evolution of the study.

Of adverse criticism, but little suggests itself. The work evidently was most carefully done, and the results presented accurately, and in a fair and unbiased manner. To the non-specialist, however, several questions are sure to suggest themselves,