

THE CONDOR

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Western Ornithology
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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

As the regular meetings of the two Divisions of the Cooper Ornithological Club are, with rare exceptions, held at the same places and at the same time, month after month, it seemed advisable to have a notice in each number of *THE CONDOR* calling attention to the fact. In this way out-of-town members who do not receive notices of the meetings, if occasionally in a position to attend, will have at hand the necessary information. Accordingly there will be found in this issue and in succeeding numbers, a brief statement of the usual place and time of meetings of the two Divisions, together with instructions as to ways of reaching the places. See page 192.

We wish to call attention to, and emphasize the importance of, careful note-taking on the part of all students of natural history. Even the merest beginner in bird study should at once put into operation some adequate and lasting system of recording his field observations. Unfortunately, as pointed out by Mr. A. Brazier Howell in his forceful "Plea", in the present issue of *THE CONDOR*, there are well-known ornithologists who have been lamentably careless in this duty. In certain instances much of the value of a life-time of gifted effort has been

lost to our science because of failure to keep up, in permanent form, a daily record of observations and inferences.

The Oregon Sportsman for June, 1914, under the editorship of Mr. William L. Finley, stigmatizes the common house cat as the "greatest enemy of the birds." We heartily concur in this statement, and take the liberty of quoting the following aphorisms from the same live exponent of conservation. The cat is the arch enemy of all song and game birds. Cats probably destroy more birds than all other animals combined. In one case a "family owned a cat which was well cared for and a particular pet. They watched it through one season and found that it killed fifty-eight birds, including the young in five nests." The boy with the air gun is not in the same class with the cat. Why arrest a man for killing one bird and allow a cat to kill fifty? As a general rule a good cat is a dead cat. *Always kill the stray cat.*

The California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology has been represented in field work this season as follows: Mr. H. C. Bryant, with J. N. Kendall as assistant, put in the month from May 11 to June 11 in exploring the breeding grounds of ducks within the state of California from Merced County to the Oregon line. All sorts of information was gathered, and efforts were made to secure censuses of the various species in given areas. A special paper is in preparation by Bryant summarizing the results of his trip. Mr. Chase Littlejohn spent a like period in similar work in the vicinity of Eagle Lake, Lassen County. With the rapid settling up of the country, it has seemed highly desirable that special efforts be expended in the directions above indicated. The Museum is fortunate in having been provided through private gift with the means enabling it to work along this line. One of the objects in view is the publication of a popular book on the game birds of California, to appear under the authorship of Grinnell and Bryant.

At the Thirty-second Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, held in Washington, D. C., April 6 to 9, 1914, the following committees (for the 1915 meeting in California) were appointed. *Auditing:* Joseph Mailliard, Louis A. Fuertes, Walter K. Fisher. *Arrangements:* Joseph Mailliard, Joseph Grinnell, Walter K. Fisher. *Communications:* Walter K. Fisher, Joseph Grinnell, Joseph Mailliard.

Mr. Alfred C. Shelton was appointed in February last, field collector in the department of zoology of the University of Oregon. His duties consist in gathering birds and mammals for a departmental museum and in participating in the biological survey of Oregon now being conducted under the joint auspices of the University of Oregon, the

Oregon Fish and Game Commission, and the United States Department of Agriculture. Mr. Vernon Bailey, of the United States Biological Survey, is directing the field operations.

Mr. Tracy I. Storer, Secretary of the Northern Division, C. O. C., is giving a course on "The Birds of California" during the Summer Session of the University of California, June 22 to August 1, 1914. The course consists of lectures upon the more general phases of the subject, field work with the birds found on the campus, and laboratory study of specimens contained in the University collections.

At the recent meeting of the Pacific Association of Scientific Societies at the University of Washington, Seattle, a small but enthusiastic band of Cooper Club members met and considered matters of interest to ornithologists in the Pacific Northwest. The Club is indebted to Professor George F. Sykes, of the Oregon Agricultural College, for arousing interest and arranging for the meeting.

Mr. George Willett is spending the summer on Forrester Island, southeastern Alaska, where he is acting as warden of the Federal Bird Reservation constituted by that island.

Mr. A. C. Bent toured the western states during the spring and early summer gathering material for his "Life Histories of North American Birds." While in California he made a special point of visiting various bird collections, both public and private, for the purpose of examining specimens of water-birds showing molt.

Mr. Adriaan van Rossem collected in parts of Kern County, California, during the spring months, in the interests of the Mailliards. Among the specimens sent in is something brand-new in the red-winged blackbird line, announcement of which will shortly be made by Mr. Joseph Mailliard.

Parts of May and June were spent by Mr. Chas. L. Camp in exploring zoologically the eastern section of the Mohave Desert centering at Turtle Mountain. The resulting maps, notes and specimens have been contributed by Mr. Camp to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

It is a satisfaction to be able to announce in these columns that California is to have a state-wide campaign against the impending referendum, and threatened initiative, which have for their combined object the legalization of the *marketing* of all game and fish. Authoritative testimony, among the sources of which is no less an institution than the United States Department of Agriculture, insists that free marketing can only lead to the prompt extermination of our wild game species. The proposed campaign will be under the immediate manage-

ment of Mr. Walter P. Taylor, whose previous experience in conservation work brings confidence that success will attend his efforts now. A considerable fund has been placed at Mr. Taylor's disposal for the purpose of defraying the cost of the various measures planned to secure publicity. Indeed, such a campaign as this, resolves itself into a matter of *educating the public* as to the facts in the case and correct interpretations therefrom. The campaign will occupy the three full months immediately preceding the November election, and Mr. Taylor's headquarters will be at the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley.

COMMUNICATIONS

THE CONDOR: A MAGAZINE OF VERTEBRATE NATURAL HISTORY?

Shall the scope of THE CONDOR be extended to cover mammals, reptiles and amphibians, *as well as* birds? An informal vote from Cooper Club members is hereby requested by the undersigned. The proposition will not be presented for formal consideration before the two Divisions of the Club unless a straw vote indicates general consent among all Cooper Club members. The following ideas bearing on the proposition have occurred to the writer.

There is now no one medium for the publication of natural history notes concerning all these vertebrate classes.

Interest in other vertebrate groups than birds would tend to be developed in our specialized bird students, and a knowledge of birds would be brought to the attention of specialists in the other groups. The broadened horizon would be to the advantage of all.

Interrelations, ecologic and economic, between the several vertebrate classes are so close that to secure a general familiarity with all assists to a better understanding of any one of them. Many of the problems in bird study will be more efficiently handled upon a basis of knowledge outside the group as well as within it.

THE CONDOR would become of interest to a much wider circle of readers. The circulation would be correspondingly extended.

The increased subscription list would warrant increased size of the magazine, so that eventually there would be added bulk. We would then have a more important and valuable magazine, provided always that an ideal standard of scientific accuracy combined with general interest be striven for.

The total amount of ornithological matter would not be diminished, except as subject to fluctuations resulting from the varying supply of suitable contributions.

As a vehicle of conservation propaganda, THE CONDOR of expanded scope would become more useful than at present, because game