

THE CONDOR

A Magazine of
Western Ornithology

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J. GRINNELL, Editor

HARRY S. SWARTH, Associate Editor

J. EUGENE LAW

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

We believe our readers will find the announcement of Mr. Dawson's new museum project of especial interest not only because of friendship for Mr. Dawson himself and sympathy with any undertaking he may inaugurate, but because of the many poignant suggestions he makes as to the intrinsic value of careful study of birds' eggs and nests. We heartily agree with Mr. Dawson in his vigorous defense of the scientific value of the groundwork in oology upon which important research may be based. There is no doubt whatsoever but that the study of birds' eggs may be made to yield very much larger returns than any that have so far been secured.

An institution of the sort projected by Mr. Dawson, with rigid adherence to the *highest standards of scientific accuracy* in both field work and curatorial methods, could not fail to be a wonderfully effective instrument in the development of American ornithology. Doubtless all Cooper Club members will join us in extending well wishes for the successful accomplishment of the undertaking.

The annual Cooper Club Business Managers' report for 1915 as recently presented to the Club divisions by Messrs. Chambers and Law shows a very gratifying condition of finances. The total receipts for the year amounted to \$1581.43, from the following sources: Dues \$894.85; Condor subscriptions \$186.08; advertising \$22.96; sale of back Condors \$57.54; sale of Avifaunas \$205.00; life memberships \$215.00. Expenditures were as follows: Printing of Condor \$618.53; half-tone cuts \$127.38; payments on Avifauna account \$631.39; Editorial expenses \$17.50; Managerial expenses \$255.80; Division expenses \$56.61; purchase of back numbers of Condor \$8.00. On January 2, 1915, cash in bank was \$221.86; on January 1, 1916, \$88.08. As usual at all times there are some bills due to be paid on both Avifauna and Condor accounts, not more in amount, however, than the Managers consider wholly proper. The publication of Avifaunas is considered to be in the nature of an investment upon which through sales at least five per cent per annum may be confidently expected.

THE CONDOR for 1915 contained 252 pages and 78 illustrations, and 1100 copies of each issue were printed. Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 11 was issued in October, with 217 pages and three maps, and the edition was 1500. The Club's membership on January 1, 1916, numbered 561.

We have before us the February, 1916, number of *Bird-Lore*. In perusing the "Sixteenth Christmas Census," which occupies a large share of this issue, we are led to offer the following comments. These comments are based primarily upon those censuses emanating from California, with which area we happen to be best acquainted. In scrutinizing certain of these, we cannot help but seriously doubt the identifications alleged in quite a number of instances; and the question arises as to the real function of the type of census here put on published record. Do they constitute dependable records of species, which can be drawn from in studies of geographic distribution and migration? Or are they merely the informal output of amateurs, to be considered only as of passing interest, as a sort of incitant to popular activity in bird study?

Undoubtedly, on the latter score, the appearance in print of neighborhood bird lists has a stimulating effect; people like the competitive idea. If this is all that is intended, well and good; and let it be understood that the censuses are not subject to inclusion in ornithological bibliographies, and are not to be cited in any part as distributional evidence.

But shall we thus, from the scientific standpoint, condemn altogether the census idea as exemplified in *Bird-Lore's* sixteenth exhibit? Is it not possible to com-

bine the two functions above outlined, by the strict elimination of such censuses as emanate from the obviously untrained observer, or at least of the names of those species of doubtful occurrence in the localities concerned from such lists as are published? True, this would require a high grade of editing; but if the first function above indicated is to be served at all, such expert editorial service must be performed unflinchingly.

Shall *Bird-Lore's* censuses be accepted in the future as contributions to ornithology?

As already announced in these columns, the California Fish and Game Commission about two years ago established a Bureau of Education under the directorship of Mr. Harold C. Bryant who had been previously connected with the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. This departure from the purely police function of the Commission was undertaken in the belief that an enlightened public sentiment might go far toward securing popular recognition of the need for game protection and thus eventually do away with the necessity for maintaining a large force of wardens. There seems to be no doubt whatsoever today but that the plan is going to succeed, and Mr. Bryant is to be highly commended for his earnest efforts in developing the idea.

One of the instruments for reaching the people of the state has been the periodical called *California Fish and Game*. Volume I of this journal has lately been completed. There were five numbers in this volume, the first issued in October, 1914, and there were 261 pages and 58 illustrations. The departments regularly appearing were: General articles; editorials; hatchery and fishery notes; conservation in other states; life history notes; wild life in relation to agriculture.

The general articles of particular note pertained to the following subjects: Recent game legislation; crude oil, a trap for birds; bird life as a community asset; the Wood Duck in California; books and pamphlets relating to California birds; the California Valley Quail; and early nesting of ducks.

As may be inferred from the above list of subjects there is much of real scientific value included in the columns of *California Fish and Game*. The editor has, and properly so, taken pains to select only authentic contributions for publication. The danger with any periodical in a popular field is that it will become the vehicle for more or less imaginative, or hearsay tales. Very little criticism can be offered on this score and it is to be hoped that even more rigid censorship will be exercised in future volumes.

The following are some of the sentiments we find expressed editorially on different pages, and with which we most heartily

concur. "The effectiveness of game protection is governed by the interest of the people and the spirit of those who hunt and fish." "Proper knowledge on the subject of game preservation is not yet possessed by the people as a whole in any western state." "The recognition of scientific truths combined with a practical knowledge of the working of correct laws are essential things in game administration."

INFORMATION WANTED FOR THE "LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS"

COURTSHIP: Of Mexican Grebe; any of the Loons (except Red-throated); any of the Alcidae; any of the Longipennes (except Kittiwake, Herring, Ring-billed, Heermann or Ross gulls; Gull-billed, Royal and Sooty terns; Noddy, and Black Skimmer); any of the Fulmars, Shearwaters and Petrels; any of the Steganopodes (except Gannet, Anhinga, Cormorant, and Double-crested Cormorant); Florida and Mottled ducks; and Gadwall.

NESTING HABITS: Of Whiskered Auklet; Marbled Murrelet; Kumlien and Nelson gulls; Slender-billed Fulmar; Greater, New Zealand and Pink-footed shearwaters; and White-bellied Petrel.

FEEDING HABITS: Of Mexican Grebe; Pacific Loon; Craveri Murrelet; Red-legged Kittiwake; Kumlien, Nelson, Slaty-backed and Vega gulls; Elegant, Aleutian and Bridled terns; Yellow-nosed Albatross; Pink-footed, Audubon, Townsend and New Zealand shearwaters; Black, Scaled, Least, Kaeding, Guadaloupe and Hawaiian petrels; Cinnamon Teal; and Florida and Mottled ducks.

VOCAL POWERS: Of Rhinoceros Auklet; Whiskered Auklet; Kittlitz Murrelet; Mandt Guillemot; Red-legged Kittiwake; Kumlien, Nelson, Slaty-backed, and Vega gulls; Elegant and Bridled terns; Pacific and Slender-billed fulmars; Cory, Pink-footed and New Zealand shearwaters; Black-capped, Scaled, Guadaloupe and Socorro petrels; Red-faced Cormorant; Florida and Mottled ducks; and Cinnamon Teal.

WINTER HABITS: Of Kittlitz Murrelet; Long-tailed Jaeger; Red-legged Kittiwake; Nelson, Slaty-backed, Vega and Franklin gulls; Elegant, Aleutian and Bridled terns; and Noddy.—A. C. BENT, Taunton, Massachusetts.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

NATURAL HISTORY OF HAWAII, Being an Account of the Hawaiian People, the Geology and Geography of the Islands, and the Native and Introduced Plants and Animals of the Group. By WILLIAM ALANSON BRYAN, B. Sc., Professor of Zoölogy and Geology in