

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

We are not infrequently asked why *THE CONDOR* is not printed on a highly surfaced quality of paper such as will give a greater brilliancy of contrast and more detail in the photographic illustrations. There are two reasons why we adopted the present dull-finish, uncoated paper. Durability was the first consideration. The distant future should be considered in that our magazine is a repository of recorded facts which we want to be available in libraries 200, 500, years hence; and the lasting qualities of surfaced paper are very much in doubt. Just dampen a copy of *THE CONDOR*, indeed soak it over night, and do the same with a glossy-papered periodical, then dry them both, and compare results! Furthermore, and an immediate concern, as it happens, of those of us who have to do a great deal of close reading, the eyestrain is very much more trying on the reader in the case of glossy paper than with a dull surfaced stock. The Editor admits that he now rarely undertakes to read any publication in which surfaced paper is used—simply because of the personal, physical factor of eyestrain. On the whole, and lacking the resources for running separate "plates", we decided in favor of the present paper. Even so, did not our printer get admirable results with the halftones in the January *CONDOR*? Is there not something appealing as well as restful about those gray-toned Solitaire pictures?

From the very beginning of our interest in the names of birds we have been accustomed to use the generic name *Falco*, and this name has come to attach itself conveniently and with apparent scientific exactness to our ideas of the relationships of the raptorial birds. Now comes a school of genus splitters which is attempting to get the ornithological public to accept generic refinements which provide us with the name *Hierofalco mexicanus* for the Prairie Falcon, *Rhynchodon peregrinus* for the Duck Hawk, *Tinnunculus columbarius* for the Pigeon Hawk, and *Cerchneis sparveria* for the Sparrow Hawk. This is merely one instance in illustration of the tendency of the times in certain taxonomic circles. We have thought about the matter a great deal, and we have read the current literature relevant to these specific cases. We hereby challenge somebody or anybody to advance adequate grounds, either profoundly scientific or utilitarian, in justification of such ultra generic splitting! It is apparently the line of least resistance, when group relationships are in question, to subdivide, rather than unite; and hence the tendency. What we need is the higher plane of ornithological scholarship which will go at the expression of *likenesses* as

well as differences between groups of species with a view to most exactly representing genetic relationships. Meanwhile, it seems to us that the general use of these questionable generic names had better be avoided, in the interests of uniformity and of clarity of understanding.

Many accounts of the damage done to rice by ducks have recently appeared in the newspapers, but gross exaggeration is manifest in the majority of these. Furthermore, the attitude taken by many sportsmen in their attempts to vindicate the birds has done more harm than good. The real facts in the case are now before the United States Department of Agriculture, as a result of the investigation by Mr. Alexander Wetmore, he having spent two months the past autumn in the four counties of California which lie in the Sacramento Valley, where large quantities of rice are grown. Dr. H. C. Bryant, Game Expert for the California Fish and Game Commission, has also been on the ground. The reports of these two men have shown that ducks do destroy rice after it has matured and also after it has been cut and is in the shock. The duck responsible for the damage is the Pintail. Although the ducks will not drop down into a thick stand of rice, they will seek out thin rice or places where there is open water. From such places they work out into the good rice, stripping the grains from the head and doing serious damage. Bombs have proved to be an economical means of driving ducks from rice fields. A few bombs properly handled will drive the birds from a large area and the birds are so frightened that they rarely return to the same place the following night. The rice grower who studies the situation and decides that he will outwit the birds need not suffer from depredations. The grower who says much and does little is the one who loses most. The United States Department of Agriculture has taken proper steps to give the rancher a fair chance to protect his crops.

MILITARY SERVICE RECORD

This list contains all the names which have come to the attention of *THE CONDOR* staff. The dates in parentheses indicate when the last word was received; in most cases this came direct from the one named or from a near relative. A few names with data have been taken from the last *Auk*, in which cases it is so noted. So far, no word has come of any casualty to a Cooper Club member.

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