

Mar., 1921

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

around. On our approach the parent bird dived with the young one on her back and carried it several yards under water. The young bird came up first and seemed bewildered or lost. We paddled up to it and my friend answered its plaintive peeping, whereupon it swam up to the canoe and into his open hand. We admired the curiously colored little fellow a while and then turned him loose.—A. D. HENDERSON, *Belvedere, Alberta, December 20, 1920.*

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The Cooper Ornithological Club, by amendments to its constitution duly approved by both Divisions in January and February, 1921, has created an executive body to be known as the Board of Governors and to consist of the ex-presidents and the acting officers of the Club. This reorganization seemed expedient in view of the gratifying growth of the Endowment Fund, in order to insure this Fund to the purpose for which it is being created, namely, for the publication of contributions to ornithological knowledge. The Fund itself will insure continuity of output.

Dr. Miller raises some questions in his "communication" in another column which have important current bearing. He urges that great care be taken in levying criticism, either privately or in print, to couch one's terms in courteous phraseology, so that no feeling of personal resentment can possibly be aroused. With this ideal we heartily agree. But it is not an easy thing to accomplish in practice, no matter how carefully one may strive with this very point in view. We believe that honest, outspoken criticism *does* function usefully, even when published (and, we believe, Dr. Miller would readily grant this). Direct, clear criticism is needed now and then, from one authority, of the writings of another. This is stimulating and beneficial, to the lesser students in the same field as well as to each of the principals themselves. If the nicer proprieties have been observed in mode of expression, so much the better. We will welcome contributions to *THE CONDOR* which are wholesomely critical in nature.

Part one of *The Birds of California* has appeared, and parts two and three are announced to come out shortly, with others up to 30 or so to follow. Thus the work so long in hand by Mr. William Leon Dawson has begun to bring tangible results. And no subscriber who has seen this first installment, of 64 pages and a full complement of colored plates, photogravures and text-illustrations, will be disappointed. This is far and away the best thing, from an artistic standpoint at least, that has ever been published concerning western bird-life; and the text is informational and entertaining to a

gratifying degree. We congratulate the author upon the high merits of this initial installment, and extend our earnest wishes that nothing will interrupt the continuity of issue until the entire work is published, with the same plane of excellence maintained throughout.

The natural history collections of Mr. Harold H. Bailey, formerly of Newport News, Virginia, have been moved to Miami Beach, Florida. They will there form the nucleus of a museum soon to be established in conjunction with a zoological park. Exhibits of mounted birds and mammals are planned, as well as a study collection. Five acres of ground have been allotted to the new project, and work has been started on the museum building. Mr. Bailey will be at the head of the museum and of the zoological garden. In connection with his new activities he already has well under way a book upon the birds of Florida, to be of similar nature to his "Birds of Virginia".

A letter received from Dr. Alexander Wetmore, now engaged in field work in Argentina for the United States Biological Survey, contains a suggestion of the many interesting discoveries he is making. Dr. Wetmore arrived at Buenos Ayres on June 21, in the winter season, and proceeded at once to extreme northern Argentina. There his work lay in "the strange and interesting area known as the Chaco, lying west of the Rio Paraguay and extending from northern Argentina north into Bolivia". Later he returned southward with the advent of spring, encountering various Argentine species then on their spring migration *southward* to their breeding grounds, and, still later, toward the end of July, certain North American shorebirds just arriving at their winter home. Brief mention of a falcon with "well-developed powder downs", of an "odd-looking Mimid" with "broad lateral apteria in the feather tracts of the sides of the neck that in life are bright orange yellow in color", and of a teal that habitually perches in trees, gives promise of future accounts of the anatomical peculiarities of tropical birds even more interesting than some Dr. Wetmore has already discovered in certain of our better known North American birds.



Fig. 14. ARETAS A. SAUNDERS

Mr. Saunders' "Distributional List of the Birds of Montana" was issued by the Cooper Ornithological Club under date of February 1, 1921, as no. 14 of the Pacific Coast Avifauna series. The author was for some years connected with the United States Forestry Service in Montana, and he was also for a time at the University of Montana Biological Station at Flathead Lake. His account of the birds of Montana consists largely of his own first-hand observations, but are supplemented by the published writings of other ornithologists. Three hundred and thirty-two species are listed as native to the state, as well as several others that have been introduced. The "List" is mainly concerned with the manner of occurrence of the various species, in just what part of the state they are found, and at what season of the year; but there are also extensive notes on migration, and descriptive accounts of the nesting of most of the birds. A number of half-tones figure many of the species, their nests and eggs, and also illustrate the character of the country in the life zones and faunal areas that are discussed.

Mr. J. A. Munro, of Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, has recently been appointed chief officer in charge of the enforcement of the Migratory Bird Convention Act in the western provinces of Canada. Mr. Munro's years of study of the avifauna of his region have rendered him peculiarly fitted to un-

derstand the problems involved in his new position. It will be gratifying to the ornithologists of the country to learn of this most appropriate appointment.

### COMMUNICATION

#### A PLEA FOR PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

Some time ago, my studies in a certain field led to a discovery quite unexpected to me and of a more or less surprising nature to other men of similar interests. An account of the facts and a statement of conclusions was written for publication, but the manuscript was submitted to another investigator to whom I was personally a stranger. He examined the manuscript and returned it with helpful criticism and a most cordial expression of interest and of willingness to render aid in furtherance of the cause—a willingness which he has since repeatedly proven genuine. His assistance was publicly acknowledged with great pleasure on my part, a cordial relation between two fellow workers was established, and the scientific public was spared any controversy in print.

A few months ago I received a most courteous and friendly letter from an older and better known scientist offering suggestions on a brief note published over my signature. Instead of writing to me he might have published his criticism and done so in less friendly terms without violating the law of precedent. He took the more courteous way and spared the public a possible controversy.

Why are not all scientists as large as these two men? Why is there not among scientists that fraternal bond that exists among reputable physicians and is called professional courtesy? Why can not the reviewer present an honest difference of opinion and not impugn the motives or deride the conclusions of one who happens not to agree with him? Why can not the reviewed author be less sensitive or less inflammable, and measurably profit thereby? Or, failing in either of these points, would not our over-worked editors be justified in throwing out manuscripts that are controversial until the parties concerned had reached some agreement (to disagree, perhaps)?

If authors would settle their disputes between themselves and give us in our journals either the benefit of their conclusions or an amicable statement of points of divergence, we would feel that the scientific fraternity was reaping the benefit of cooperation rather than the whirlwind of dissension. May we not get together outside