

Aside from the vital statistics on birds which it contains, the report spells tribute to the energy of a large corps of voluntary workers, whose efforts are thus already yielding dividends. Lincoln's own work with the ducks, and that of Osler, Pulitzer and others are spectacular in the results which accrued from them. Only by a deliberate perusal, page after page, does one gather the full significance of this type of work, as yet only fairly begun.

It is, perhaps, only natural that almost no returns, in the accepted application of this word to banding, are recorded for the larger non-passerine birds. Of this class approximately 750 ducks and 52 of other species were retaken at localities other than the one where they were banded. While the larger portion of the ducks merely record local flights, conceivably those of ducks flushed from one shooting ground after another, many longer flights are indicated, involving the entire length of the Mississippi drainage. The retaking of Common Terns, banded in the New England section, on the west coast of Africa and on the northern coast of South America are notable.

Of the passerine birds, on the other hand, and the small arboreal non-passerines, the record of returns is multitudinous, with few (32 individuals of 16 species) retaken at other localities. Only four of the latter, a Crow, a Cow-bird and two Robins, can fairly be considered to have registered at opposite ends of a long migration flight. Among the returns is a Chimney Swift recovered by Mr. Baldwin in five out of eight years that it has worn a band.

Banding work in the Western Province was only starting on June 30, 1923, when the period of this report closed, and a scant dozen returns are recorded from this section. Of interest is the retake of two of the Glaucous-winged Gulls banded as juvenals in the Gulf of Georgia, British Columbia, by Mr. Theed Pearse. Both were retaken in their first winter and neither had wandered out of the general district of its birth. A White Pelican banded at Yellowstone Lake, Wyoming, turned up in southern Mexico, as did a Snowy Egret banded in Utah.

No mention is made of the persons who were responsible for the recapture of birds in other localities, a very vital part of the record, and one in which collaborators are humanly interested. It would seem, too, that the use in headings of a binomial alone, for a species which embraces subspecies, is distinctly ambiguous, and that such binomial should be followed parenthetically by "subsp.". This ambiguity will be increasingly apparent in the next report when the western banders begin to score.

We confess a distinct shock when we found that we must wait another year, at least, to learn what our co-workers accomplished during the year and a quarter now past. May we venture the hope that the "government mill" can be speeded up so that the 1925 report will include data more nearly recent?—J. EUGENE LAW, *Altadena, California, November 27, 1924.*

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

Despite several decades of oological activity in California, there remain quite a number of our breeding birds the eggs of which appear not to have been "taken"—in the oological sense. At least, if taken by any one, said discoverer has failed to share his knowledge with other oologists through any *published* channel. The following are the land birds whose eggs have not, to our knowledge, been authentically recorded from California: Oregon Ruffed Grouse, Sage-hen, Western Goshawk, Ferruginous Rough-legged Hawk, Great Gray Owl, Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, Mearns Gilded Flicker, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Hammond Flycatcher, Wood-

house Jay, Oregon Jay, Gray Jay, Clark Nutcracker, Pinyon Jay, Bobolink, Sierra Crossbill, Cooper Tanager, Canada Nuthatch, Oregon Chickadee, and Lead-colored Bush-tit. We consider the chances of finding any one of these birds nesting within the state limits to be good, if all the known facts of seasonal and geographic occurrence be carefully taken into consideration and heeded. In other words, here is where some enterprising and energetic oologist can "score" this coming season, and incidentally, if he publishes his discoveries, contribute materially to the ornithology of California.

Much can be said for the automobile as an aid to faunal exploration. Many interesting parts of the country have been reached by collectors and observers, and been reported upon, which would long have remained unknown without the development of the auto and of auto roads. On the other hand, there seem to us to be some unfortunate results of the auto's present well-nigh universal employment by field naturalists. A tendency manifests itself to skip about blithely over a state or a tier of states; to stop now and then where camping facilities happen to be attractive, but only for a day or two; to keep going, to "cover ground"—all of which is pleasurable, but means a superficial sort of faunal observation, hardly the most profitable type. Furthermore, we think we detect a resultant laxity of precision in designating places of occurrence of birds and other animals. An example, possibly unfairly extreme, came to our attention last year, when someone made published record of two White-throated Sparrows "while en route to San Diego" (from Los Angeles)! Is it possible that, as a result of the influence of the auto, the day of intensive study of a single locality, with its accompanying thoroughness of observation and accuracy of record, is gone by?

Under the auspices of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, French, Belgian, and Luxembourg societies for the protection of birds have planned an International Congress for the Protection of Birds, to take place at Luxembourg, April 13-16, 1925. All who are interested are urged to attend, or to contribute papers to be read. Membership dues are 15 francs (French or Belgian money) for active members, who can take part in the meetings and who will receive the printed "proceedings;" and 5 francs for associate members, who are merely privileged to attend. Papers to be read must be submitted before March 1, 1925. Any inquiries should be directed to the secretary, Mr. Jean Morbach, 34 Rue de l'Industrie, Esch, Luxembourg.

Mr. Wm. B. Mershon's "Recollections of My Fifty Years Hunting and Fishing" (The Stratford Company, Boston, 1923, 8vo, pp. iv + 259, 21 halftone illustrations) is a book that is well worth reading from the natural history standpoint as well as from that of the sportsman.

Mr. Mershon writes an intimate, vivid story, full of accurate information. Scientifically valuable record is here made of the former abundance and distribution of game birds and other animals now sadly reduced or gone altogether.

Bird students residing in or near San Francisco should be aware of the opportunity afforded them of learning something of foreign birds. San Francisco ranks with New York as one of the two principal ports of entry of exotic birds into the United States; the several large dealers in animals in the Bay region import thousands of birds annually, including, during the past ten years, several hundred species. Entry into California is mostly from Hong Kong and Manila; importations from Australia, formerly of some importance, have ceased of late years, because of laws there restricting export. The species brought in are largely kinds that are native to the regions about the ports named; but this is not always the case. They are evidently gathered at the points of shipment from widespread areas, and thus, not infrequently, interesting rarities turn up, from out-of-the-way corners of Asia or the East Indies. Familiarity with the bird stores, obtained through visits every month or so, will enable one to become acquainted with a surprisingly large variety of bird-life. This, inevitably, will result in a more intelligent comprehension of ornithological problems near at hand, in a wider outlook upon bird-life at home. Incidentally, it is not bad practise to try to identify these unfamiliar birds. Write a description of some strikingly marked bird, hopping about in a cage, and then, having ascertained the species either through examination of a museum specimen or from some book, see how many of the really important specific or even generic characters you have overlooked! The result will generally be a surprise, even to one who believes he is a fairly accurate observer. As suggestive of the possibilities lying in a regular inspection of the bird stores, some figures from the records at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology covering the species identified over a period of years are of interest. Twenty-two species of ducks and geese are included, some thirty gallinaceous birds (including gorgeous Fire-backed Pheasants, tiny Button Quail, Curassows, and the Ocellated Turkey), thirty-five kinds of pigeons, and about sixty kinds of parrots. There is

some excitement, too, in looking for species not before encountered. A long series of disappointing visits is well repaid by the sudden sight of an Argus Pheasant, a Kagu, or a Bower-bird.

An exceedingly neat brochure has recently been issued by the Nuttall Ornithological Club, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of that organization. In its early years the Nuttall Club was the only ornithological society in America and included within its membership all those men who were later identified with the inception and early growth of the American Ornithologists' Union and who molded the course of ornithological development during that period. The major portion of the present anniversary volume is taken up with an able address by Witmer Stone, entitled "The Ornithology of Today and Tomorrow." We take the liberty of quoting from this admirable review of questions of the day some expressions of Dr. Stone's opinion in certain matters, with which opinion we find ourselves essentially in sympathy. "Taking up another phase of this subject, we view with alarm the present tendency to *exterminate* so-called pests. The Prairie-dog has been exterminated by Federal and State agents over large parts of Arizona, and now the large Hawks and the Coyotes, which formerly preyed upon them, descend upon the ranches and steal chickens, and the cry goes out for their extermination as well. They have changed their habits! So, too, a deliberate campaign is now being made against the Crow. Yet he is doing no more harm today than he did fifty years ago, if as much. But when we find the powder and ammunition makers at the back of the propaganda, we begin to see light. All these things hinge upon one question: what are we conserving—wild life, or man's dollars and cents? It would seem that anything in nature that adversely affects man's worldly gain must be exterminated—the most dangerous policy that could be adopted! I feel convinced that no species should be exterminated without the most far-reaching investigation,—disease carriers of course must be destroyed, and big game is apparently doomed with the advance of civilization; but in other cases, while man should be allowed to protect his crops and stock against individuals, the extermination of a species should be prevented. The

resultant upset to nature's balance can never be checked; one step brings on another like a falling row of blocks. Here again education is our only hope, and the knowledge must, moreover, be spread by ornithologists, by nature lovers, by bird-banders, for so much of this work must of necessity be carried on as a business, and so much support be obtained from National or State Government, where results are demanded in terms of dollars and cents, that the real conservation of nature is lost sight of."

#### SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE PITTSBURGH MEETING OF THE A. O. U.

This year, for the first time in its history, the American Ornithologists' Union convened for its annual meeting in Pittsburgh; heretofore, almost without exception, New York, Washington, Philadelphia or Boston had been the meeting place. The sessions were held November 10 to 13, 1924, at the Carnegie Museum, and the auspices there afforded proved to be most favorable; the rooms assigned for the gatherings were well adapted in all respects, so that speakers and hearers were able in comfort to get fullest returns on their efforts. To W. E. Clyde Todd, Chairman of the local committee on arrangements, and representative of the Carnegie Museum, is due full credit for insuring that element of hospitality which is so essential to the success of an affair of this kind.

Monday, November 10, was fully occupied in meetings of the Council, of the Fellows, and of the Fellows and Members. Business transacted included the following more noteworthy items: Designation of Witmer Stone as chairman of a new Committee on Nomenclature, with power to select his own committeemen and to apportion the work of the committee as he sees fit—said committee being charged with immediately getting under way the compilation of a new Check-list of North American Birds; election of new members, resulting in the addition of Mrs. Walter W. Naumburg and Mr. Herbert L. Stoddard to the class of Members; election of officers, which resulted in the re-election of the previous year's slate; and selection of New York as the meeting place for 1925. In the latter connection, the Cooper Club's invitation, initiated in the Southern Division, that the Union meet next time in