

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The Annual Membership roster of the Cooper Ornithological Club appearing in this issue shows a total enrollment of 905. This is a 5 per cent increase over last year, and it is, of course, a larger membership than ever before. From this we may properly conclude that the general interest in ornithology is ever increasing.

A serious loss to the Cooper Club occurred in the recent death of John Burnham at his home in San Diego. Here was a man who was a good naturalist, a loyal member of the Club, and an active supporter of various other agencies for the promotion of popular interest in birds and wild-life generally.

A fitting form of recognition, on the occasion of the 70th birthday (March 21, 1926) of our honorary member, Dr. Albert Kenrick Fisher, has been by the issuance of a list of his publications. This bibliography, compiled by Messrs. T. S. Palmer and W. L. McAtee (*Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash.*, vol. 39, 1926, pp. 21-28) lists an even 150 titles and covers a period of almost exactly 50 years comprised in Dr. Fisher's service to ornithological science.

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB, LOS ANGELES, APRIL 8-10, 1926.—As a result of the well-directed efforts of certain Southern Division members, this, the first assemblage of the Club-at-large, was successful to a degree that ensures a repetition of such meetings in future years. Three of the five sessions were held in the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art, in Exposition Park. The other two, on account of the need of special facilities for the exhibition of moving pictures, were held in the State Building, but a stone's throw from the Museum.

Average attendance was from thirty to forty members, with numerous visitors; there was a marked increase in the membership present toward the end of the meeting. The torrential rains that occurred just before and at the beginning of the sessions doubtless had some effect upon the attendance; some out-of-town members were known to have started, but were kept away by the condition of the roads.

The forty-two papers formally listed for presentation made really too full a pro-

gram, had they all been presented; but, with one or two exceptions, the papers of absentees were read by title only. This permitted of time for discussion of those that were read, and this impromptu development of the program proved to be so profitable and enjoyable a feature that it should certainly receive fullest allowance in the plans of similar meetings in the future. The twenty-six papers actually read covered a fairly wide range of subjects. There were some of historical interest, some relating to field work and observations, and some of subject matter economic, educational, and systematic; some of paleontological interest, some dealing with molt, with migration, and with evolutionary speculation. In the cases of illustrated papers, the accompanying slides or moving pictures were of the highest order.

The remarkable exhibition of work of American bird artists, shown in connection with the meeting, owes its success to two factors, the enthusiastic energy of Mr. Harry Harris, and the facilities offered by the art department of the Los Angeles Museum. Three rooms were required to show the 282 pictures that made up the exhibition. Twenty-seven artists were represented. Special mention should here be made of the "Ridgway exhibit", as of great interest to ornithologists from the historic as well as the artistic side. Here were drawings made by Robert Ridgway as a small boy, the colors ground and mixed by himself in his father's drug store, and the birds that served as models shot with gunpowder that was also of home manufacture. Studies of various grades were comprised in this exhibit as well as finished paintings; and there were also early letters and notebooks.

In any such meeting as this the social features will perhaps linger in the memory longer than technical discussions or even beautiful pictures. There was abundant opportunity each day for individuals to get together, and there were informal gatherings of various sorts throughout the sessions. President and Mrs. Bishop received members and friends of the Cooper Club at their residence in Pasadena, the evening of April 8. On the evening of April 9 the Board of Governors of the Club met at the residence of Mr. Donald R. Dickey, with an attendance of fifteen members, and despite certain

distractions managed to get through with the required amount of business.

Altogether, the Cooper Club may congratulate itself upon the success of this first general meeting. Those who were present will, we believe, make every effort to attend the next one, and they will also impress those who were absent this time with the desirability of attending in the future.

THE RIDGWAY MEMORIAL.—The American Ornithologists' Union, in coöperation with the Cooper Ornithological Club and the Wilson Ornithological Club, is actively forwarding plans for a suitable memorial to the work and services of Robert Ridgway, the dean of American ornithologists. This memorial will, it is proposed, take the form of a sanctuary for birds and other wild life. A tract of land comprising eighteen acres, situated near Mr. Ridgway's home at Olney, in southern Illinois, and named by him "Bird Haven" on account of its attractiveness to bird life, is admirably adapted to this purpose. Its varied topography of little hills, ravines, streams, woods, and open grass-lands accounts for its remarkably large number of different trees, bushes and flowering herbaceous plants, and for its variety of bird life. Nearly 150 species of birds have been recorded from this area.

Mr. Ridgway has offered to donate this property for a wild life sanctuary if a fund sufficient for its maintenance can be obtained. This is therefore an unusual opportunity to save this area for the preservation of birds and plants, and at the same time to erect a fitting memorial to America's great bird lover.

A committee has been appointed to raise a fund of \$35,000 to carry out this project. This committee consists of Dr. Harry C. Oberholser, of the United States Biological Survey, Washington, D. C., chairman, representing the A. O. U.; Mr. Harry Harris, Box 123, Eagle Rock, California, representing the Cooper Ornithological Club; and Mr. Percival B. Coffin, 39 South La Salle Street, Chicago, representing the Wilson Ornithological Club. All bird lovers and all persons and organizations interested in conservation are urged to coöperate in raising the fund necessary to establish the *Bird Haven Wild Life Refuge*. Remittances should be made to the "Ridgway Memorial Fund", and may be sent to any member of the committee above named, or to the First National Bank, Olney, Illinois, which is acting as trustee.

THE SUBSPECIES QUESTION.—As the result of our request in the last issue of *THE CONDOR* for a straw vote on whether or not to employ species to the exclusion of subspecies in the next Avifauna, we received a total of just 27 replies within the thirty days allotted for the vote. Our first conclusion is inescapable—that the subspecies question is not, after all, a very vital matter to most persons, since only 3 per cent of the entire Cooper Club membership proved enough interested to send even a postal card. Indeed, the six members in the same building with the Editorial Office of *THE CONDOR* failed to vote!

Of the 25 who voted definitely, 15 were for retention of subspecies, 10 for discarding them—in a state list. So it seems that, as in a good many of the movements of the day, the large amount of noise we have heard recently merely indicates a clamorous minority. While we are thus to continue to employ subspecies, according to the system prevalent heretofore, it will be quite proper to subordinate them typographically, as in the 1910 edition of the A. O. U. Check-list. This will make it possible for those who so desire to ignore them altogether and to deal only with the full, Linnaean species; and all should be happy!

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

MANUAL OF THE BIRDS OF CEYLON. By W. E. WAIT. Pp. 1-496, map, 20 plates. Colombo (published by the Director, Colombo Museum), 1925. Price 15 shillings.

The avifauna of Ceylon, as here presented, consists of 372 species and subspecies of birds, a sufficiently long list, it would seem, for an island only some 260 miles long. Mr. Wait's manner of treatment of this array of birds appears to be happy and well-considered in every respect. The visiting ornithologist, confronted with unfamiliar species, will find here answers to practically all the questions he might think of asking, and the book is as well fitted to teach the resident beginner. It is, as the title claims, a "manual", and it is an excellent one.

There are keys to the species, grouped under families or subfamilies, and these keys, together with carefully worded descriptions of old and young of each species, should suffice for identification in nearly all cases. "Habits" are given relatively slight notice; that is, the paragraph so designated is no longer than the sections given to other phases of the subject. This is as it should be in a manual that is designed to give explicit information