

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

within limited space, rather than to serve as an exposition of attractive phrasing of the reactions produced by any given bird upon the writer. Altogether, Mr. Wait's "Manual of the Birds of Ceylon" would be a most creditable piece of work for a professional ornithologist, able to devote most of his time to its accomplishment, and it is all the more so, as the production of a busy government official whose days are occupied with other things.

The book is open to criticism in one regard, in the choice of paper used, which is coated and very heavy. A lighter weight paper would be more durable and would have greatly reduced the size and weight of the volume.—H. S. SWARTH, *Berkeley, California, March 30, 1926.*

SIMMONS' BIRDS OF THE AUSTIN REGION.*—We do not recall ever having seen for any small area in the West so exhaustive a treatment of its ornithology as is comprised in this contribution from the University of Texas. In some respects, this reminds us of Brewster's "Birds of the Cambridge Region", in some other respects of Griscom's "Birds of the New York City Region". And like these works the "Birds of the Austin Region" is bound to be of very great use in stimulating and properly directing popular bird study within the territory of which it treats.

The author, Mr. George Finlay Simmons, shows in this book marked ability for organizing his material upon a consistent plan. In the main treatments of the species the classification of facts uniformly after numerous sideheads makes for quickness in comparing different birds in given respects. Another meritorious feature of this book is the evident care with which all possible sources of information, from numerous local observers as well as the published literature, have been ransacked. And a very explicit system of citing all these sources has been put into effect.

The book has a decidedly ecological tang. The introduction is occupied largely with a consideration of the floral, physical and climatic factors bearing upon the bird-life of the Austin region; and in the species treatments there are valuable and often extended statements and analyses concerning relation to environment, as

also concerning general and feeding habits, breeding, etc. Voice is, we think, given unusually careful attention; the descriptions of songs and notes, employing to good purpose the syllabification method, are set forth accurately in many of the western species with which we happen to be familiar. There is much new to published literature in this regard.

By reason of the exhaustiveness of the introductory parts of the book, the reviewer is led to suspect that a sort of manual of general ornithology was attempted. Such headings as "How Birds are Classified" and "How Birds are Named" indicate the nature of this part of the book. Much of this matter is quite good. But it is just here that an author is most easily liable to slip up, and critical perusal brings to light a number of doubtful statements. For example (p. xxxii), we are told that "The recognition of even the most minute differences may prove of inestimable value in the study of evolution [a statement with which we heartily agree]; these slight differences may, as *decades pass by* [italics ours], be accentuated, until they may lead to the formation of easily recognized subspecies, and so into well-marked species." Here is evidently an echo of the mutation vogue; for the units of time required for the differentiation of true subspecies are undoubtedly to be computed in tens of thousands of years, probably in hundreds of thousands—rather than in "decades"!

The nomenclature adopted in the "Birds of the Austin Region" is (needlessly, it seems to us) ultra-modern, in the sense that it departs widely from the 1910 A. O. U. Check-list and succeeding supplements. The reason for this is plain, when we observe that Dr. Oberholser is, obviously, largely responsible for the names and critical comments, these latter bunched as "footnotes" toward the end of the book.

Typographical errors are in evidence here and there, but this is no fault of the author, as we understand that he has been entirely out of reach in the final stages of proof-reading. One such error (p. 43), *Zinnogeramus*, for the Whooping Crane, will doubtless be interpreted by some extremist as a new generic name!

A further indication of the variety of subject matter in Simmons' book is the "Dictionary of Ornithological Terms and Phrases" (pp. 372 ff.). A hypercritical reviewer might have some fun here at the expense of the author. But let any such reviewer try, himself, to devise accurate definitions of common ornithological terms—and become humble!

* Birds of the Austin Region | by | George Finlay Simmons, M. A. Instructor in Zoology in the University of Texas [seal] | Published by | The University of Texas | Austin | University of Texas Press | 1925; 8vo, pp. (2) + i - xlii + (4) + i - 387, numerous unnumbered figs. in text. Our copy received February 2, 1926.

Of decided human interest is the chapter (pp. xxxv ff.) entitled "Who's Who in Austin Ornithology", with accompanying portraits. Here we find concise biographies of many people known far beyond the confines of the Austin region; for example, of that thorough-going general biologist as well as ornithologist, the late Thomas H. Montgomery, Jr.; and of H. J. Kofahl, Arthur H. Howell, Henry Nehrling, A. E. Schutze, and Dr. H. Y. Benedict. We are a bit disturbed, however, by the statement under "Oberholser, Harry C(hurch)", that he is the "author of *thousands* (italics ours) of monographs and papers on birds", etc. We hate the thought of giving up our idea that Shufeldt is still in the lead as to number of titles in his personal bibliography!

To sum up, the publication of Simmons' "Birds of the Austin Region" brings permanent credit to his University, to the coterie of local ornithologists he represents, and to himself. We extend to him congratulations in behalf of westerners generally, fellow members mostly of the Cooper Ornithological Club.—J. GRINNELL, *Berkeley, California, March 26, 1926.*

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

NORTHERN DIVISION

FEBRUARY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club, Northern Division, was held at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, on February 25, 1926, at 8 P. M., with President Allen in the chair and the following members present: Mesdames Allen, Bogle, Delport, Grinnell, Mead, Mexia, Mikesell; Misses Beaman, Cockefair, Fisher, Holcomb, McLellan, Pickard, Pringle, Wythe; Messrs. Borell, Bryant, Bunker, Carriger, Clabaugh, Chaney, Cooper, Cozens, Dixon, Evermann, Follett, Foster, Grinnell, Hall, Harwell, Hoffmann, Lamb, La Jeunesse, Linsdale, Perine, Streater, Swarth and Wright. Visitors were Mesdames Bryant, Bunker, Chaney, Evermann, Hall, Hoffmann, Lamb, Linsdale, Stevens and Swarth; Misses Beatty, Buckingham, Holm, Payne and Spencer; Messrs. Myers and Pursell.

Minutes of the Northern Division for January were read and approved. Minutes of the Southern Division for January were read. The membership application of Earl H. Myers, 2234 Atherton Street, Berkeley, proposed by A. E. Borell, was

read. It was announced that Wilfred H. Osgood of Chicago had found it impossible to serve on the Ridgway Memorial Committee.

The speaker of the evening was Mr. Ralph Hoffmann, Director of the Museum of Natural History at Santa Barbara. The speaker chose as his topic "Field Notes". He described the wealth of winter bird life in and about the rice fields of Colusa County, California, and mentioned many interesting traits of flocks and individuals of geese, cranes and swans. He spoke of observations made in the Puget Sound district on American and Red-breasted mergansers, Marbled Murrelets and Rhinoceros Auklets; and he concluded by reading several descriptions from the manuscript of his book, in preparation, on Pacific Coast birds. Mr. Hoffmann's hearers were much pleased with the vigor and freshness of his observations and his unusual but logical method of preceding his account of each bird with a description of the setting which characteristically frames it.

Adjourned.—HILDA W. GRINNELL, *Secretary.*

SOUTHERN DIVISION

JANUARY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Tuesday evening, January 26, 1926, at 8 P. M. The meeting was called to order by President Wyman with the following members present: Miss Potter; Mesdames Edwards, Ellis, Everhart; Messrs. Allen, Cantwell, Colburn, Hanaford, Michener, A. H. Miller, Dr. Miller, Peterson, and Webster. Visitors were Misses Lempie and Vignos; Mrs. Wyman; Messrs. Booth, Carl Chambers, Edwards, and Everhart. The December minutes were read and approved. The December minutes of the Northern Division were read by title only.

New names proposed for membership were as follows: Mrs. Jean E. Carth, P. O. Box 1, Huntington Park, Calif.; Warren Francis Eaton, care Wellington, Sears & Co., 66 Worth St., New York City; Winton Weydemeyer, Agricultural Substation, Moccasin, Montana; and William H. Yoder, Jr., 4510 N. Carlisle St., Philadelphia, Pa., by W. Lee Chambers; Mrs. Percival B. Coffin, 5708 Kenwood Ave., Chicago, Ill., by Chreswell J. Hunt; Charles H. Snell, Box 101, Red Deer, Alta., Canada, by William Rowan; Shumway Suffel, 105 So. Madison Ave., Pasadena, Calif., by Roland C. Ross; Blanche Vignos,