

As a matter of fact mouse plagues as well as a swarming abundance of other rodents, rabbits, voles, lemmings, etc., may occur almost anywhere and are probably the result of some special abundance of food coupled with a freedom from disease for a number of consecutive years. Then disease comes and the species is all but exterminated. Such irruptions of rodents have been recorded in history from the earliest times, centuries before the decrease of raptorial birds and mammals.

In the subarctic regions the periods of abundance and scarcity in such rodents as voles, lemmings and hares is cyclic in spite of the abundance of their natural enemies. The wonderful work of the Biological Survey has shown how rodents may be controlled, even to the point of extermination over wide areas. In time they will be able to cope with any outbreak; let us help their efforts in every way and not place undue trust in the feeble domination of the natural enemies of rodents. In time, when bacterial inoculation may be the means employed to reduce rodents the abundance of hawks and owls may be distinctly harmful, as the infected mammals which should be spreading disease would be the easiest victims to predatory birds and mammals.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, B. C., July 10, 1927.*

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

A most worthy undertaking is that just launched by the United States Biological Survey, to obtain a monthly census of water-fowl at selected points throughout North America. Doctor Oberholser is in immediate charge of this activity, and these auspices guarantee an energetic, well-organized effort toward a definite object. Too long has dependence in the formulating of game laws been left to hearsay, to the testimony of the casual sportsman, and to mere impression on the part of the better informed. Now, we are in line to get accurate, quantitative data—if Dr. Oberholser can be given adequate support by numerous good field observers who are in proper geographic locations. We recall as a fine type of such observation, Kibbe's study of the ducks on Lake Merritt, Oakland, as published in the *CONDOR* for March, 1925. Details of this new plan to obtain a nation-wide census of ducks and other water-fowl can be obtained by addressing Dr. H. C. Oberholser, Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Let Cooper Club members aid him to the full extent that individual circumstances permit. Accurate knowledge of the numbers, distribution, and migration of our important game species is an absolute prerequisite to any proper move toward the conservation of this valuable national asset.

It should go without saying that the pages of the *CONDOR* are freely open for discussion on both sides of any ornithological question. Such discussion can be vigorous without, of course, verging at all on the personal. For example, in the present issue we (editorially) welcome Major Brooks' plain expression of his views on mouse plagues versus hawks—this despite the fact that "we" (the Editor personally) dissent from his statements and conclusions in just eight different points, by count! This is a two-sided question, and we urge that such of our readers as have definite evidence or logical opinion to offer, on whichever side these bear, contribute their offerings to our "field and study" department.

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

NORTHERN DIVISION

JUNE.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Thursday, June 23, at 8:00 p. m. In the absence of president and vice-president, the Club requested Mr.

Grinnell to act as chairman. Forty-two members and visitors were present. The minutes of the Northern Division for May were read and approved. The minutes of the Southern Division for May were read by title. A resolution passed by the Southern Division, expressing sympathy to Mr. Robert Ridgway in the loss of his wife, was read and warmly endorsed by vote of the Northern Division.

Two proposals for membership were presented: Miss Cecelia Carnahan, 101 Plaza Drive, Berkeley, Calif., by Mrs. Bessie W. Kibbe; Miss Elsa Blackman, Rose Walk and Euclid Avenue, Berkeley, Calif., by Ralph Ellis, Jr.

Mr. Wanzer reported finding a nest of Townsend Solitaire in a cut bank at the edge of the dusty Placerville highway a few years ago, and this year two other nests of the same species in Amador County in identical situations. Mrs. Mexia and Mr. Grinnell confirmed Mr. Wanzer's observations, that nesting on cut banks is now customary with this species.

Reporting on recent literature, Mr. Grinnell commented at length upon "Birds of the Pacific States" by Ralph Hoffmann. He quoted from the title page, which states in concise terms the nature of the book. The illustrations were made by Allan Brooks. The colored plates show his usual unexcelled workmanship, although the presswork in some cases has not done justice to the drawings. Most of the illustrations, however, are a departure from the artist's usual style, being black and white pen drawings. These are well drawn and fulfill the requirements of the book. Mr. Hoffmann is entirely qualified through years of careful field study and accurate note-taking to undertake such a publication, and the book is in fact what it was meant to be, a field guide, rather than a text to be used in the laboratory. Mr. Grinnell read the entire description of one species as a sample of the plan used in the text.

The program of the evening was given by Mrs. Ynes Mexia who has recently returned from a seven months' collecting trip in Mexico. While the expedition was expressly for the collecting of botanical specimens, Mrs. Mexia's interest in birds was keen, and she was alert to make as many observations as time and botanical collecting would permit. She saw many birds, some of which were old friends from the homeland sojourning in Mexico, but more of which were either remotely like our northern species or entirely new to

her. Most vividly impressed on her memory was the sight of a large flock of Roseate Spoonbills seen against a rose-colored sunset sky. A number of species were mentioned in detail, and specimens exhibited. Mrs. Mexia interwove into her remarks a number of entertaining accounts of her visits to various towns and of her experiences with various modes of travel.

At the close of the program two rare, unpublished volumes of colored drawings of Mexican birds were exhibited. These original drawings are the work of Andrew Jackson Grayson, made between the years 1857 and 1869. They were to have been published as "Birds of the Pacific Slope", but the artist died before completion of the drawings. The plates have been bound and are the property of the Bancroft Library at the University of California; they were loaned for exhibit at this meeting through the courtesy of Professor Priestley of the Bancroft Library.

Adjourned.—MARGARET W. WYTHE, *Secretary pro tem.*

JULY.—The July meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on July 28, 1927, at 8:00 p. m., in Room 101, Zoology Building, University Campus, Berkeley.

In the absence of the president and vice-president, Dr. Barton W. Evermann was called upon to occupy the chair. About one hundred and twenty members and guests were present. Minutes of the Northern Division for June were read and accepted. Minutes of the Southern Division for June were read by title. The name of Mr. D. E. Danby, P. O. Box 160K, Route 3, Santa Cruz, California, was proposed for membership by Mr. Clark P. Streator.

Dr. Theodore Sherman Palmer, of Washington, D. C., was the speaker of the evening and his topic was "Early Western Ornithologists". A study of the history of the men whose lives are remembered in the names of one hundred and forty of our western birds has been Dr. Palmer's recreation for several years past. The intensely interesting excerpts given from the facts which he has gathered left his listeners eager for the promised publication of his entire manuscript in the CONDOR. Each member was in enthusiastic accord with Dr. Evermann's closing statement of the Club's indebtedness to the speaker for the evening's enjoyment. Adjourned.—HILDA W. GRINNELL, *Secretary.*

SOUTHERN DIVISION

MAY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, on May 31, 1927. President Appleton called the meeting to order at 8:15 p. m., with about twenty-five members and friends present. The minutes of the April meeting of the Southern Division were read and approved. The minutes of the April meeting of the Northern Division were read.

The following applications for membership were read: Eugene R. Pike, 191 East Walton Place, Chicago, Ill.; Mrs. H. D. Foulk, 2312 Stuart St., Berkeley, Calif.; H. W. Betts, Dawson, Yukon Territory, Canada; G. E. Springer, 2082 Oakland Ave., Piedmont, Calif.; and Ralph L. Hand, Kooskia, Idaho; all proposed by W. Lee Chambers.

Mr. Wyman spoke of the recent death of Mrs. Robert Ridgway and presented the following resolution which was unanimously adopted.

WHEREAS, after the manner of inscrutable Providence, Mr. Robert Ridgway has suffered the loss of the companion of his long and useful life, and

WHEREAS, the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club knows the extraordinary affection existing between Mr. and Mrs. Ridgway for more than forty years, and the inspiration and invaluable assistance she had been to him in his ornithological work; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Secretary of this Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club be instructed to express to Mr. Ridgway the deep and sincere sympathy of the members in the dark hour of his bereavement; and be it further

RESOLVED that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of this Division, and a copy be sent to the Secretary of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club.

(Signed) Harry Harris
Louis B. Bishop
L. E. Wyman.

Mr. Chambers gave an interesting account of the Annual Meeting of the Cooper Club held in Berkeley and San Francisco, April 29 to May 1, inclusive, and spoke very highly of the way in which this meeting was conducted throughout all its sessions, as also of the entertainment features.

Mr. Roland C. Ross was the speaker of the evening. He told in his interesting way of several visits, with a group of biology students and their instructors from the Pasadena High School, to the Santa Barbara Islands off the coast of Southern California, of the structural formation of these islands, and of their bird life and their animal life generally. He described in considerable detail the distinguishing characteristics of the shearwaters and the fulmars by which they can be recognized when seen in their natural habitat, the open ocean. The shearwaters are well

named because of their way of shearing the water when alighting or taking off; the fulmars settle down onto the water after stopping their forward velocity with their wings. The shearwaters are shy, the fulmars bold and rapacious. Mr. Ross told of the presence on the islands of many of our familiar mainland birds, some with local subspecific designations, and he painted word pictures about them that will linger long in the memories of those who heard him. Adjourned.—HAROLD MICHENER, *Secretary*.

JUNE.—The regular monthly meeting of the Cooper Club, Southern Division, was held at the Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, on June 28, 1927. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 p. m. by President Appleton, with about twenty members and friends present. The minutes of the May meeting of the Southern Division were read and approved. The minutes of both the May and June meetings of the Northern Division were read.

The following applications for membership were read: James Vann Porter, Glenwood, Minn.; Karl W. Kahmann, Route 2, Hayward, Wis.; Frank H. Rose, Montana National Bison Range, Moiese, Montana; John Bossler, Hamburg, Berks Co., Penna.; Henry Ludlow Beadel, Tallahassee, Florida; Arthur Allen Andrews, 28 Dungan St., Canandaigua, New York; Christopher W. Greenwood, Elnora P. O., Alberta, Canada; all proposed by W. Lee Chambers; and also Clarence W. Whitney, Berkeley, Calif., proposed by H. C. Bryant.

Mr. Appleton told about a recent trip to the Fresno-Los Baños country, particularly to collect the eggs of the Forster Tern and the Pintail Duck, neither of which did he find. It was rather a disappointing trip for him, though he did find a few nests of various other kinds. The high waters of this year had drowned out many nests. Mr. Willett told of a recent trip to the waters about Santa Cruz Island and Catalina Island, primarily for the collection of marine specimens rather than birds. Mr. Wyman displayed a collection of South American hummingbirds recently acquired by the Museum.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously carried that the secretary be instructed to write to Mr. and Mrs. J. Eugene Law expressing the gratification of the members of the Cooper Club at hearing of Mr. Law's improvement after his very serious illness. Adjourned.—HAROLD MICHENER, *Secretary*.