

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

This year's Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held, October 19 to 23, at Detroit. This meeting place is relatively far west and should make possible the attendance of many bird students unable financially to attend meetings on the Atlantic coast. There should thus be a large attendance from the Mississippi Valley states and from Canada. Detroit is also much more reachable from California and the Pacific coast states generally than such cities as New York and Washington where A. O. U. meetings have mostly been held. However, even from the farthest distance, any earnest student of birds will find it worth his while regularly to go to the A. O. U. meetings. There are points brought out in the discussions of the papers on the programs that the printed reports never indicate. And, indeed, a considerable number of the papers themselves are never printed at all. Then there is the advantage and pleasure of personal acquaintance with fellow students in the various sub-fields of our science. Briefly, the advantages are worth a lot of effort to gain, even when attending from so far away as California.

To the museum worker and systematic student finely made bird-skins furnish never-ending enjoyment. In the average series of a given species in a large collection there is plenty of opportunity for contrasts in "make", reflecting the extremes of care and innate technical ability exercised by the various original collectors. In a series that we happen just now to have been studying, the skins of superlative beauty as regards symmetry and all the other niceties of make happen to be those taken by Ned Hollister, William Palmer and Charles W. Richmond, some of them so long ago as 1889. No matter where the results of the field-collector's work may eventually find themselves, if of high grade they carry everlasting credit to the persons whose signatures are borne by their labels.

It is only through the laborious activities of indexers and bibliographers that the working ornithologist can gain access to, and keep track of, the huge literature

in his field and can find his way to the published subject matter in the corner of the field in which he himself is trying to find out new things. A bibliography of a special field, carefully compiled and cross-referenced, which is bound to be of great and lasting use to both general and special students is comprised in the Second Edition, rewritten and augmented, of Dr. G. Carmichael Low's book now entitled "The Literature of the Charadriiformes from 1894-1928 with a Classification of the Order, and Lists of the Genera, Species and Subspecies" (H. F. and G. Witherby, 326 High Holborn, W. C. 1, London; 1931; xiv + 637 pp.; cloth 12/6 net). If a student concern himself with *shore-birds*—systematics, distribution, natural history—then he should avail himself of the immeasurable help afforded by Low's bibliography of the subject.

Dr. Tracy I. Storer sets forth the case against introducing non-native species with clearness and force in a recent article entitled "Known and Potential Results of Bird and Animal Introduction with Especial Reference to California" (Monthly Bull., Dept. Agric., State of Calif., XX, April, 1931, pp. 267-273). Some of his statements, with all of which we heartily concur, are in essence as follows: The results of acclimatization experiments in California with game birds to date have not been worth the cost. The same amount of money devoted to study and encouragement of our native species would have been productive of far greater returns to the citizens of the State. There is as much need for adequate control of animal immigration as of human immigration. A firm and unequivocal stand should be taken, at once, in the matter of importation of all kinds of alien animals. The importation of live animals for any purpose whatsoever should be put under rigid State supervision. Our native species of birds and our other native animals of desirable character should be given every possible encouragement; to do this, alien, competing species must be excluded.

Of superlative value to anyone interested in the protection and restoration of game birds is Aldo Leopold's new book,

"Report on a Game Survey of the North Central States" (American Game Association, Investment Bldg., 15th and K Sts. NW., Washington, D. C.; 1931; 299 pp., 21 maps, 15 charts, 58 tables, 4 photographic figures; price \$1.00). This report is the result of the field and laboratory work of Mr. Leopold and several assistants, financially supported by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers since July 1, 1928. While the program undertaken centered in the northern Mississippi Valley, the principles developed apply to any part of North America. The subsistence factor is properly emphasized; and clearly is demonstrated the adverse effects upon game of grazing and of "slick and clean" farming. A great amount of once farmed or pastured land in the area dealt with has been abandoned of late years and is going back into public ownership. Mr. Leopold urges convincingly the kind of management that will restore to such lands their full value as sources of game and recreation, as well as of forest products.

As Mr. McAtee says in his review in this issue of *The Condor*, some sportsmen are forever looking for causes of game-bird depletion outside the most obvious one—their own insatiable appetite to kill. A late "discovery" of one of these ingenious sportsmen was that the continued decrease of our wintering waterfowl is due to the depredations of gulls and jaegers upon the eggs and young of those birds on their breeding grounds in the far north. Indeed, the proposal was seriously made that the Government supply the Eskimos of northwestern Alaska with guns, ammunition and local transportation so that they could kill off the gulls and jaegers and thus, presumably, save the season's crop of ducks and geese. Fortunately this "wild" proposition was through official channels submitted to good field naturalists for appraisal. We happen to have seen the replies of two of these naturalists, W. L. McAtee and O. J. Murie of the United States Biological Survey. These men point out that the greatest measure of destruction wrought on the breeding grounds of waterfowl comes as a result of disturbance by people. This we can attest to from our own field experience. The mere traversing of nesting grounds by one or more persons, which frightens the sitting or guarding parents from their eggs or small young, exposes these to attack by

the predacious kinds of birds, which attacks may then be conducted in plain sight of the human interloper, who thus gets an exaggerated estimate of the damage done. Under undisturbed conditions various habits and devices on the part of the waterfowl, such as the covering of eggs with a blanket of down, are effective against the avian marauders. For, of course, the gulls and jaegers and the geese and ducks have been associated together during the summer season from time immemorial, including the period fifty years and more ago when waterfowl existed in vast myriads. It is the set of conditions increasingly unfavorable to waterfowl on their *wintering* grounds, including importantly the factor of excessive shooting, that is the key to the situation. Yes, as Murie well says, to turn a lot of natives loose on the nesting grounds of the birds would most certainly be a grand mistake—in the sportsman's own interests.—J.G.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

BIRDS OF ARKANSAS, by W. J. BAERG. Univ. Arkansas. Coll. Agric., Agric. Exper. Sta., Bull. no. 258, Fayetteville, January, 1931, pp. 1-197, frontispiece and 37 figs. in text.

Baerg's *Birds of Arkansas* provides a useful handbook for teachers in that State who desire a source of miscellaneous information pertaining to birds. A few short chapters give a variety of general matter concerning birds. Much of this is based on original work done by the writer or under his direction. Although nearly everyone agrees with Mr. Baerg that "birds must be studied out of doors," it is hard to find justification for his pronouncement that "to shoot them rarely does any good, it destroys the object to be studied." In point of fact, nearly every page of this bulletin reveals a need for some well planned activity, with collector's equipment, in Arkansas.

For each of the 312 species listed there is a paragraph of description and one on range, both general and for the State. A study of all these species accounts prompts the following comments as being of possible use to writers of similar bulletins. The attempt to serve too many purposes in a short annotated list of birds seems sure to confuse the reader and to detract from the value for any one type of user. In the present case it would seem much