

**The White-necked Raven, a Change of Status?**—Since definite records of changes of distribution of species are not over-abundant, the following observations seem worthy of note. On my arrival in Tucson in September, 1915, I found an avifauna largely new to me. Very shortly, however, an abundance of White-necked Ravens (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) forced this species on my attention. They were common on the outskirts of the city, and since the University campus was at that time contiguous to the desert, and the dining hall dumped quantities of garbage on the outermost (eastern) edge of the campus, the ravens were frequently present in the autumn and winter to the number of from 100 to 200. My notes (how inadequate now in view of changed conditions) say "White-necked Ravens come within the city in great numbers in November and December. Later in the winter they scatter more widely and in February and March are scarcely seen in the city limits, but are found along the irrigated farm area in the Santa Cruz valley".

In late autumn of 1915, I believe November, though I lack an exact date, I noted at sunset a gathering of many hundreds about two miles north of the city near the Oracle road. I supposed they were gathering to roost nearby, but other business which could not be postponed forbade following the observation to a conclusion. Two weeks later I went out for the express purpose of determining the facts but found no indication whatever of a roosting colony, nor have I ever since seen such indication either at that site or elsewhere about Tucson.

Well do I remember these ravens, to the number of 25 to 50, on mid-winter afternoons holding conversation in the big cottonwood trees on the north edge of the campus, in full view of my then office window and of the laboratory. After a satisfying meal from the garbage pile they gathered in these immense trees to preen and sun themselves.

Within a couple of years the garbage dump was cleaned up, the surrounding desert began to be occupied and we became aware that the ravens were no longer with us. Still we had no inkling what changes were to follow, for the city maintained a large garbage dump along the Santa Cruz River bed a mile or two northwest of the city, and at intervals when passing in that direction I noticed the large flocks of White-necked Ravens there. Also, at a rather primitive old slaughter house on the southwest edge of the city, these birds were plentiful.

How simple to take note of the positive; how prone to fail to note negative facts! In the next few succeeding years the city built a garbage incinerator, and the old slaughter house was abandoned either through pressure of competition or of sanitation. During just this period of years a multiplicity of other duties prevented any save the most casual bird observations (even my field work took me out of town by other routes), and before I was aware what had happened the White-necked Ravens had departed from their former haunts. Not only that, but now it seems the species is absent, or at least no longer present in flocks anywhere along many miles of the Santa Cruz valley, above and below Tucson.

It is interesting to compare Swarth's record of this species (Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 10, 1914, p. 46) with the above. He says: "Has been observed only in the extreme southeastern corner of Arizona, in Cochise County, and west and north to Oracle, Tucson, and the valley of the Santa Cruz River. It is . . . mainly a summer visitant to the region. Some remain throughout the winter in favorable localities". He cites then a November record for Willcox, by Bailey, and a February record for the San Pedro River, by Willard.

Mrs. Bailey recorded them (Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 15, 1923, p. 34) at frequent intervals from February 21 to April 20, 1921, along the Santa Cruz bottoms at Continental and occasionally along the higher slopes of the valley sides. Fortunately, there is one definite record for as late as 1925, when Stephen C. Bruner (Condor, 28, 1926, p. 235) wrote: "On the outskirts of Tucson, especially along the Santa Cruz River bottoms, these ravens are extremely abundant, more than two hundred being counted on the morning of February 13, seventy of which were seen together in a group of three trees".

Swarth believes (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., Ser. 4, 18, 1929, p. 314) that this species belongs primarily in the higher plains region east of the Santa Rita Mountains, to which apparently it has now withdrawn. I have no record or recollection of having

seen White-necked Ravens in the Santa Cruz Valley in the past few, probably the last five years. Dr. Walter P. Taylor, of the U. S. Biological Survey, stationed in Tucson since 1922, agrees that these birds seem to have been absent for some time; but our records alike fail to show when they last occurred.

Would that I had a movie record of the soaring, circling flight of a flock of these birds as they took off from the old garbage dump—a flight more like that of a group of buzzards or hawks than like crows. The last such flight seen was in November, 1931, in Sonora, Mexico, between Magdalena and Hermosillo.

One seems almost forced to the conclusion that the most significant ecological factor in this change of status is the unsanitary garbage dump!—CHARLES T. VORHIES, *University of Arizona, Tucson, December 1, 1933.*

## NOTES AND NEWS

The Ninth Annual Meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club, held in San Diego under the auspices of the San Diego Society of Natural History, proved one of the most intellectually profitable as well as entertaining meetings in the history of the Club. Secretarial reports of this series of meetings will be found elsewhere in this issue of the *Condor* (pp. 126 to 129).

On January 19, 1934, a meeting of local bird students was held in the Jordan Room of Jordan Hall, Stanford University, for the purpose of organizing a Stanford Chapter of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club. Appropriately, the day chosen was the birthday of Dr. David Starr Jordan. Dr. Isabel McCracken presided, Dr. Willis H. Rich was elected president for the ensuing year, and Miss Clare McGee served as temporary secretary. At a subsequent meeting the first Thursday of each month was chosen as the date for meetings. The eleven members and two guests present to form the chapter were: Alice H. Baldwin, Mrs. O. D. Baldwin (guest), Mr. and Mrs. John E. Borchert, Mrs. Marie F. Greene, Dr. Isabel McCracken, Clare McGee, Mrs. Adelaide H. Perry, Dr. Gayle Pickwell, Lea Reid, Gladys M. Relyea, Dr. Willis H. Rich, and Anna L. Wright. The great amount of interest being shown in the Stanford Chapter of the Cooper Club is indicated by the fact that the attendance at the later meetings runs between sixty and seventy members and guests. Minutes of the Chapter will be recorded in the *Condor* regularly, beginning with this issue (see page 123).

The Library of Congress has recently received as a gift from Ruthven Deane his famous collection of photographs of

ornithologists. A count made after receipt of the collection lists about 1,800 items, the result of the devoted efforts of the past fifty years. The photos include likenesses of ornithologists from all parts of the world; in some cases there are from two to ten of the same individual at different ages. The collection is composed mostly of studio photos, but there are many "snap shots" that were taken in the field, and also group pictures such as are taken at the A. O. U. meetings. The collection is unique. Nothing to compare with it exists in this country and probably not in Europe. Years ago Dr. Paul Leverkühn, of Sofia, Bulgaria, started such a collection, but it is not known what became of it after his death. Deane's accumulation of likenesses is well-nigh all inclusive, at least as regards American ornithologists, with this reservation, that there are probably some of the younger men who have come to the fore in recent years who are not represented therein. It is hoped that the collection will continue to grow in its new surroundings. —H. S. S. [The copy for the above note had just been received back from Ruthven Deane, to whom it had been sent for verification, when the sad news came, of his death, on March 20.—Editors.]

Pacific Coast Avifauna number 22, published March 31, 1934, by the Cooper Ornithological Club under the authorship of Harry S. Swarth, is an account of the "Birds of Nunivak Island, Alaska" (64 pp., 4 ills.). It is based upon collections and observations gathered by the late C. G. Harrold during an Alaskan trip made in the interests of the California Academy of Sciences in the summer and fall of 1927. Besides the field observations, important