

*Heteroscelus incamus*. Wandering Tattler. An early record for the Bay region (Grinnell and Wythe, *loc. cit.*) was obtained when a Wandering Tattler (female number 170) was collected at Pescadero Point, San Mateo County, on April 29, 1938. Six Tattlers were observed that day in a two-mile stretch south of Pescadero Point.

*Totanus flavipes*. Lesser Yellow-legs. Three were seen July 23, 1938, on a sand bar in the Gualala River, Mendocino County, California, about two miles up from the mouth. The identification has been checked by Mr. Frederick Test from one collected July 24 (male, number 317).—WALTER F. NICHOLS, Pasadena, California, January 3, 1939.

**Purple Finches Feeding on Cotoneaster Berries.**—About mid-morning of January 21, 1939, a group of California Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus californicus*), including at least four males and one female, was seen apparently feeding on the berries of the silverleaf cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster parnosa*). This is the form which often grows into a slender tree, with graceful, drooping branches. The light red, dull surfaced berries remain on the tree all through the fall and winter. In contrast with the robins' swallowing of whole berries, the finches' method was to bite off the top or side of a berry and eat the contents "on the half-shell." When a berry did come off the stem, a finch seemed at a loss what to do with it, fumbling it in the beak and soon letting it drop. Clicking of beaks suggested cracking of seeds, and skins and pulp were lavishly wasted.

Later examination of the berries disclosed a single, fairly large, roundish, white seed in the center. Little berry cups from which the seed had been neatly removed were conspicuous on the twigs. It is interesting that birds which are normally seed-eating should seek out this relatively abundant hidden supply, available to them at a time of year when other seeds are scarce.—FRANCES CARTER, Berkeley, California, January 22, 1939.

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## NOTES AND NEWS

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Cooper Ornithological Club held at Los Angeles January 20, 1939, it was unanimously voted to postpone the next Annual Meeting of the Club until 1940, the exact date to be set at a later meeting of the Board. The reason for this action was that a consensus of opinion of leading members of both divisions of the Club supports the advisability of concentration of the efforts of the Club on the success of the Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, to be held in the San Francisco Bay region in June of this year.—HOWARD ROBERTSON, *President*; GEORGE WILLETT, *Secretary*.

The Fifty-seventh Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union is to be held in the San Francisco Bay region June 19 to 23. Headquarters will be at the University of California, in Berkeley, where the business sessions on June 19 and scientific sessions on June 20 and 21 will be held. On June 22 the scientific program will be continued at the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Members of the Union are reminded that nominations for Fellows and Members, to be presented at the business sessions, must be sent to the secretary, Dr. Lawrence E. Hicks, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, three months in advance, that is, by March 19. The official hotel selected for the meeting is the Durant, in Berkeley, which is close

to the University campus. Reduced fares from the East have been announced by railway companies to facilitate travel to the San Francisco World Fair this summer. Local members of the Cooper Ornithological Club warmly urge all who can to attend the meeting of the Union, and we wish especially to aid in arrangements for field trips so that on June 23 and 24 all persons wishing to see something of Pacific coast bird life may have the best of opportunities.—A. H. M.

On February 4, 1939, the Cooper Ornithological Club lost, by death, one of its most accomplished out-of-doors bird-watchers, Ernest I. Dyer, of Piedmont, California. For some six years past, Dyer had occupied himself most of the hours of every day, on his woodsy place at 40 Selborne Drive, keeping "log" of the behavior of his avian associates; his observations were recorded hour by hour, typewritten by himself with a trained engineer's precision and illustrated by drawings and photographs. These records had come to comprise many manuscript volumes; but Dyer was reluctant to publish—his pleasure was gained in watching and recording. He was, as it happened, prevailed upon only recently to write up an experience of his with a nesting Allen Hummingbird, and the article appears in this issue of the Condor (p. 62). It demonstrates his technique in observing. He assumed the rôle of the birds' *companion*; he never caught, banded, or even

held for one moment any wild, uninjured bird. (Neighbors often brought him birds crippled by flying into wires or windows; of these, the ones that recovered he released at a distance, back in the Oakland hills.) By his method, he established perfect confidence in the birds on his place—thrashers, road-runners, spotted towhees, hermit thrushes, and the rest—using meal-worms as “medium of approach.” The most intimate association thus resulted, enabling Dyer to detect individual traits of behavior to an extent the under-initialed never knew of, or read of, anywhere. His daily notes were interpretive, as well as factual, but subject to his own reappraisal as to significance—again as illustrated in the Allen Hummingbird article. While Dyer left little on published record, he regularly attended meetings of the Northern Division of the Club, when almost always he contributed some pointed observation, some fresh experience of his with “Rhody” (the road-runner), occasionally a whole evening’s program illustrated by movies he had taken of his “companions” at 40 Selborne. Dyer’s work and influence in the field of interpretive bird-behavior will long endure.—J. G.

There is, we feel, increasing and justified complaint among working bird students against certain unnecessary intricacies in the current handling of scientific names. One of these unnecessary practices is described, and on the best of grounds condemned, in a vigorous and convincing article by Wilfred H. Osgood in *Science* (vol. 89, January 6, 1939, pp. 9–11). This is “the practice of enclosing in parenthesis the authority for specific or subspecific names which have been transferred from one genus to another. To discontinue this would be a blessing to the active taxonomist, to whom it is now needless, and also to the layman, to whom the name itself is a sufficient irritation without this added esoteric source of mystification.” We agree with Dr. Osgood precisely, after close reading of his presentation of arguments, pro and con; and accordingly, the editorial board of the Condor has decided thenceforth uniformly to omit all such parentheses, unless definitely asked for by an author of an essentially systematic contribution. Also, in another circle, at the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, including mammalogists and herpetologists as well as ornithologists, by unanimous vote the same intention was expressed. A related usage, long ago adopted by the Condor, and continuing in application, is the omission of “authorities” altogether for scientific names which are on the A. O. U. Check-list, whereto any inquiring student will be intelligent enough to refer for the histories of names. The majority of even the most “professional” ornithologists now-a-days are more interested in *birds* than in the artificialities of nomenclature.—J. G.

Two Cedar Waxwings trapped by Charles H. Feltes in Modesto, California (see Condor, vol. 38, 1936, pp. 18–23), February 17 and April 14, 1935, were recovered, respectively, January 8, 1938, at Phenix City, and March 29, 1937, at Meridianville, both these points being in Alabama. These recoveries were reported on the authority of May T. Cooke (Bird-Banding, vol. 9, 1938, p. 188) and betoken an almost extreme degree of east-west vagrancy as among North American passeriform birds. Phenix City is on the far eastern border of Alabama; approximately 2100 miles intervene between that point and Modesto. But no one knows what zigzag courses, north and south, those birds had followed during the interval of *time*. Cedar Waxwings are “vagrants,” in the real sense of that word!—J. G.

In this day of effort to replenish marshlands, sloughs and ponds that have been foolishly drained, a book has come out, of immediately practical value toward restoring in these places the desired aquatic vegetation. This is by W. L. McAtee, a long-time authority along this very line; and the title is “Wild Fowl Food Plants, their Value, Propagation, and Management” (Collegiate Press, Ames, Iowa, 1939 [our copy received January 19]; \$1.50). The plants recommended and described are native American ones, not exotic ones, and those that are definitely known to provide subsistence in important measure for one or another kind, or group of kinds, of native ducks, geese and swans. Of course, in thus serving essentially from a game-production standpoint, the same plants afford subsistence also to a host of other kinds of aquatic birds and to associated animal life in general. The book will be useful to many people besides those who operate in the interests of sportsmen.—J. G.

A few of the more serious-minded of our western bird students appear to be genuinely disturbed at the annually repeated announcements, by radio and in the daily press, of the departure and arrival of the “mysterious golden breasted swallows” at Mission San Juan Capistrano, their absolute punctuality being said to be a tradition at that mission. “Each St. John’s Day, as they have always done on October 23 for the past 150 years, the birds have risen in one mass flock numbering more than 2000, wheeled over the mission, and disappeared out to sea. Just as mysteriously they reappear out of the sky the following year on the day dedicated to St. Joseph, March 19, and again take up residence in the eaves of the mission.” And so on, modified and amplified as limited only by the elasticity of the narrator’s imagination. Now this is a pleasing little legend; it must arouse in the average reader’s mind only peaceful reflection, a healthy regard for bird-life. Why should anyone, even

the drabest devotee of "factual" biology, allow himself to be irked! Certainly this swallow story is innocuous as compared with the mass of animal lore currently fed to the public, much of which directly or insidiously incites to thoughts of killing for "sport" or destruction as "vermin." The germ of truth that is there is no less elusive in one connection than in the other! No, our own reaction is not at all of the ruffled sort. Incidentally, we would advise anyone interested in the facts, to read Florence Merriam Bailey's delightful article (*Condor*, vol. 9, 1907, pp. 169-172, 2 figs.) written about the Cliff Swallows and White-throated Swifts as she herself observed them over thirty years ago at Mission San Juan Capistrano. It would appear, however, that the swallow tradition was not at that time current; it may have been dormant just then!—J. G.

We have been wondering whether it would not be a welcome move in behalf of the great majority of bird students if authors of state lists, faunal analyses, and local lists generally, would take pains to use, for all the birds they deal with, the best known, or most used, or A.O.U.-sponsored, names, scientific as well as vernacular. That is to say, let nomenclatural innovations be altogether avoided in contributions of primarily non-systematic aim. To make the point clearer, we would refer in illustration to Oberholser's recent "The Bird Life of Louisiana," an account of the avifauna of that state, wherein the lay reader, for whom the style of writing otherwise seems to be gaged, is confronted with a considerable number of new names and new or at least unfamiliar combinations of scientific names. This circumstance is inevitably more or less confusing not only to a host of beginning bird students but also to advanced ornithologists who happen to be specialized in some sub-field of study not systematic in nature. We ourselves look back to published papers of our own which we now see showed in this same regard poor taste, to put it mildly. Wouldn't it have been vastly better to have kept out of that character of paper all supposedly new or unusual names and nomenclatural comments, to present separately in technical papers, in form adapted for those few readers who are specially interested in such matters? Many proposed nomenclatural innovations prove never to "take"; that is, they prove not justified—are not adopted by subsequent thoroughgoing group revisers or by the A.O.U. Committee. Meanwhile, the "synonymy" of each species affected has grown—citations in the literature made harder to run down. Perhaps every ten years is often enough for the general ornithologist to be expected to bring his avian terminology "down to date." Nomenclature should be so employed as to aid in the advances of ornithology; in itself it is *not scientific ornithology*.—J. G.

## MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS NORTHERN DIVISION

OCTOBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday, October 27, 1938, at 8:00 p.m., in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, with President Emlen in the chair and about one hundred members and guests present. Minutes of the Northern Division for September were read, approved, and later corrected. Names proposed for membership were: Lowell Adams, Yosemite, California, and (Miss) Phyllis Neale, Avenal High School, Kings County, California, by Thomas L. Rodgers; Mrs. Gilbert Newton Lewis (Mary H.), 2728 Belrose Avenue, Berkeley, by Amelia S. Allen; Ned W. Stone, 2418 California Street, Berkeley, by Margaret W. Wythe.

The secretary read a letter from W. B. Davis, Superintendent of Recreation of the City of Berkeley, to whom suggestions regarding the bird refuge at the Aquatic Park had been sent, as authorized at the previous meeting. Mr. Davis' letter stated that there were no immediate plans to change the natural sanctuary which had developed in the small pool south of the park, and that boats would be kept away from the island by means of a wooden boom so that waterfowl might feed there undisturbed.

Field reports were opened by Mr. Dixon, with the unusual record of seventeen Townsend Solitaires in sight at one time, feeding on gooseberries on Telescope Peak, Death Valley National Monument. In travelling toward Zion National Park, by way of Kern Basin, he had seen five Road-runners in less than five miles. Mrs. Mead reported a Western Gnatcatcher, September 25, feeding in the manzanita bushes at Fallen Leaf Lake, elevation about 6300 feet. Townsend Solitaires were seen feeding on juniper berries, as they had two years previously, but only one was in full song this year. A novel experience was related by Dr. Painton. While proceeding slowly on an upgrade near Mt. Herman, he noticed two California Woodpeckers fighting in the road, while a third looked on from a little distance. He centered his car so that the wheels would not touch the fighters, and so intent were they that they permitted the car to pass over them without pausing in their altercation.

Mr. Joseph S. Dixon, speaker of the evening, chose as his topic, "Birds of Crater Lake National Park," answering most interestingly the question so frequently asked him by prospective visitors, "What birds will I find there?" The deep lake occupies the crater of an extinct volcano, formerly a large member of the Cascade range comparable to Rainier or Shasta; the cone shows evidences of glaciation on its slopes. The effect of the mountain on bird populations, both past