

namely, height of bill from the ventral surface of the maxillaries to the midpoint of the nasal bridge, solved the problem. In twelve bills *pinus* ranged from 2.5 to 2.9 mm. and *tristis* from 2.8 to 3.2 mm. One of the fossils with the straight culmen characteristic of *pinus* measures 2.5 mm. and one with the convex culmen of *tristis* measures 3.0 mm. The third has the convex profile of *tristis* but falls within the region of overlap, with a bill height of 2.8 mm.

The genus *Spizella* is also easily recognized, but again similarity of species in the group complicates the identification of the fossil. *Spizella arborea* is much larger than the fossil and *S. breweri* is smaller in all proportions. *S. pusilla*, *S. pallida* and *S. wortheni* are not considered because their ranges today are so far to the east. This eliminates all but *S. passerina*, with which the fossil agrees in all respects, and *S. atrogularis* of which there are no skeletons available. Comparison of skins reveals that *atrogularis* has a broader, stubbier bill than *passerina* which is relatively slender and acuminate. The tomial profile of *atrogularis* is straight, whereas *passerina* has slightly concave tomia. The fossil exhibits the characters of *passerina* and I refer it tentatively to that species but withhold final designation until skeletons of *atrogularis* are available.

Thus the following fringillids are presented as new to the Pleistocene avifauna of Rancho La Brea.

Subfamily Carduelinae

Spinus pinus

Spinus tristis

Subfamily Emberizinae

Amphispiza bilineata

Amphispiza belli

Spizella cf. *passerina*

In reconstructing the climatic and biotic complexions of the past, it is the zonally and ecologically restricted plants and animals that furnish the best clues. If only the birds are used to interpret the ecology of Rancho La Brea in the Pleistocene, it is those species whose habitats are distinctly defined that yield the keys to the associations. The presence of Sage Sparrows and Desert Sparrows indicates a fairly arid climate. On the assumption that the habitat predilections of the Sage Sparrow have not changed, it is safe to suppose that chamise and artemisia grew near-by. The Desert Sparrow also fits well into the chamisal association. Even today it is occasionally found near the La Brea pits. Willett (Pac. Coast Avifauna No. 21, 1933, p. 172) gives the range of the species in southwestern California as, "... occasional on Pacific coast in fall, winter and spring, north and west to Los Angeles County." The nomadic goldfinches are poor zonal and ecologic indicators and either Chipping or Black-chinned sparrows would fit into the association.

The previous evidence relating to the ecology of Rancho La Brea in the Pleistocene, as interpreted from the birds, has been well discussed by A. H. Miller (Condor, vol. 39, 1937, pp. 248-252) who concluded that the general aspect was more arid in the Pleistocene than today. Some of the plants and animals were desert inhabitants. The additional species reported here corroborate this conclusion and lend more detail to the already well defined picture of the La Brea Pleistocene.

I gratefully acknowledge the counsel of Dr. Alden H. Miller throughout the preparation of this paper.—CHARLES SIBLEY, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, April 22, 1939.*

Snowy Plover from Colorado.—We wish to record a specimen of the Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) which we collected at Barr, Adams County, Colorado, on April 26, 1939 (no. 20014, Colo. Mus. Nat. Hist.). The plover, a female, was the only shore bird on the extensive bar of Clarkson Lake at the Mile High Duck Club. Its dorsal coloration is similar to specimens from Oregon and California; the bird is rather large, with a wing measurement of 106 mm., so although we rather expected it to be *tenuirostris*, we have concluded that it belongs to the western race. The taking of this specimen adds another species to the list of Colorado birds.—ALFRED M. BAILEY and ROBERT J. NIEDRACH, *The Colorado Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado, April 28, 1939.*

NOTES AND NEWS

Plans are nearing completion for the Fifty-seventh Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union to be held in the San Francisco Bay region in June of this year. On Monday, June 19, business meetings will be held at the Durant Hotel in Berkeley. The regular sessions open on Tuesday morning, June 20, with registration at 9:00 a.m., in Life Sciences Building,

University of California campus. After two days of scientific program in Berkeley, the meetings will continue on Thursday, June 22, in San Francisco at the California Academy of Sciences. Field excursions are planned for both Friday and Saturday, June 23 and 24, including a trip to Marin County. Tuesday evening there will be open house at the Museum of Vertebrate Zool-

ogy, and the annual dinner is scheduled for Wednesday night. Persons planning to attend the meetings should write for reservations at once if they wish accommodations at the Durant Hotel. Members planning to contribute to the program should submit titles and abstracts of papers to the secretary of the Union, Dr. Lawrence E. Hicks, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, well in advance of the meetings.—A.H.M.

A recent distinguished visitor to the Pacific coast was Mr. R. A. Falla, Director of the Canterbury Museum at Christchurch, New Zealand. Mr. Falla this year is visiting museums in the United States and Canada. Those Cooper Club members fortunate enough to have met with him greatly enjoyed his illuminating comments on North American avian migrants to New Zealand and came to appreciate his wide knowledge of birds of the Pacific basin.—A.H.M.

Dr. T. C. Stephens, Professor of Biology in Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa, has served natural science in other ways beside teaching registered students. One of these has been in editing the *Wilson Bulletin*, journal of the Wilson Ornithological Club. Inasmuch as Dr. Stephens has just retired from this editorship after a period of fourteen years' continuous service (1925 to 1938, inclusive) it is fitting that we make record of the fact in the *Condor*, since the *Wilson Bulletin* has in considerable degree reflected ornithological accomplishment in the Far West as well as in the Mississippi Valley region, its special geographic sphere. Under Dr. Stephens' guidance, the size of the *Bulletin* increased about in the ratio of 2 to 3 in number of pages per annual volume. Its circulation expanded at about the ratio of 5 to 9. The quality of the articles tended upward through his attraction of contributions from the best minds and observers of the era, until now a late run of the *Bulletin* is essential to any student working with modern technique in bird-behavior and life-history. A noteworthy expansion has been in the department of "general notes," wherein much new even though scattering information has been recorded. The Editor's conscientious reviewing of current literature, soundly critical, has been a valued contribution to American ornithology; and his forthright comment on conservation matters, stating truths sometimes unpleasant to potent though minority groups, brought him and his journal the respect of all thinking naturalists. We cannot express ourselves better than by quoting from the latest issue of *The Nebraska Bird Review* (vol. 7, 1939, p. 24), wherein its Editor, Professor Myron H. Swenk, says: "Dr. Stephens made a remarkable success of the official organ of the Wilson Club. . . . These [14 volumes] will endure as a monument

to his fine contribution in the bringing together and diffusing of scientifically sound information in the field of ornithology of the interior United States. . . . Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne, of the Museum of Zoology of the University of Michigan,



Fig. 30. Dr. T. C. Stephens, retiring Editor of the *Wilson Bulletin*.

is to be the new Editor of the *Bulletin*, beginning with the March, 1939, issue, and we can make no better wish for his success than that he may be able to maintain the high standards set by his predecessor; which, indeed, is our expectation." We add our own hearty wish to the same end. It is a pleasure to be privileged to reproduce a photograph of Dr. Stephens in connection with the present notice.—J. G.

The under-INITIALS has been working up a bibliography and synonymy (both scientific and vernacular) of Californian birds. In so doing, he has found certain errors in the printed literature so often as to justify special comment here, with the idea that future authors and editors who read this note will take pains to avoid them. Forster Tern again and again is written "Foster"; the

bird was named for Johann R. Forster of Germany, not "Doctor Foster" of Mother Goose! Vigors Wren is often written wrongly "Vigor's" Wren; this bird was named for the British ornithologist, Nicholas A. Vigors; if the possessive form be preferred, it should be spelled Vigors' or Vigors's. Samuels Song Sparrow was named for Emanuel Samuels of Boston, who in 1855 collected birds at Petaluma, California (see Palmer, *Condor*, vol. 30, 1928, p. 294); if the possessive form of his name be used, it should be written Samuels' or Samuels's, certainly not "Samuel's." Steller Jay is frequently written "Stellar" Jay; the species was named after Georg Wilhelm Steller, the first qualified naturalist to set foot on west-American ground; the word does not mean "pertaining to stars"! Savannah Sparrow is often rendered "Savanna" Sparrow; but it was given the name of the town, Savannah, Georgia, not that of a kind of grassland, the savanna; if a writer lower-case his vernacular names, he can only write, properly, Savannah sparrow. The Gambel (not "Gamble"!) White-crowned Sparrow was, of course, named after William Gambel of Philadelphia; so with Gambel Quail and some other vertebrates. The plural of titmouse is most correctly titmouses, not "titmice."—J.G.

Students looking into the history of western ornithology will find decided interest in reading the "Autobiography | of | Isaac Jones Wistar | 1827-1905 | Half a Century in War and Peace" (Philadelphia, The Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology, 1937, pp. viii+528, 9 ills.). For example, herein one finds mention (pp. 42ff) of Gambel, for whom several of our Californian birds were named and who himself wrote the first good natural history accounts of some of our species. General Wistar says, quoting only here and there: "...In company with Dr. William Gambel, assistant curator of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, a young naturalist and author already of some distinction, I started [from Philadelphia] at 11 P.M., April 5, 1849, on an expedition which led me during many years through much wild and precarious adventure, and directly or indirectly shaped all my future life and career." At Independence, Missouri, where westward expeditions outfitted, "Dr. Gambel had joined himself to five Virginians who with their one wagon and eight mules traveled with us." "June 2nd. [on the Platte River]. Made another march of twenty miles. Gambel being desirous of traveling more leisurely and comfortably, left us today and joined the large ox train led by Captain Boone of Kentucky, who is anxious to have him and will dispense with any aid from him in driving or working, in return for his medical services. We gave him a mule with his proportion of the tools and provi-

sions. He is an amiable, excellent fellow and very pleasant in conversation. . . . But he is averse to camp duty and hard work, and fond of taking things easy, and there is no doubt that Boone's large train with plenty of men and animals, and leisurely rate of traveling, will suit him better than our headlong methods, especially as he has formed a warm friendship with Boone." General Wistar says further: "I never saw Gambel after that separation, and may as well state here what I did not learn till long afterward. . . . Boone's train after losing many teams and wagons in the Humboldt River desert, arrived late in the season at the Sierra, where they encountered more obstacles and losses, reaching California after the beginning of the rains. Gambel personally made his way as far as Rose's bar on Feather River, where he died almost immediately from typhoid fever resulting from the extreme privations suffered during the latter part of his journey. Either Boone himself or some of his party, among whom Gambel was a great favorite, were with him at the time of his death." Dr. T. S. Palmer (*Condor*, vol. 30, 1928, p. 278) states that Gambel died at the place above indicated, "December 13, 1849, while attempting to cross the Sierra in mid-winter." The bird work for which we chiefly remember Gambel was done during his first stay in California, 1841 to about 1845.—J. G.

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

NORTHERN DIVISION

JANUARY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday, January 26, 1939, at 8:00 p.m., in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, with President Emlen in the chair and 53 members and guests present. Minutes of the Northern Division for December were read and approved. Minutes of the Southern Division for November were read. Names proposed for membership were: Monroe D. Bryant, 1817 Oxford Street, Berkeley, by Frank Richardson, and Mrs. Georgia M. Miller, 655 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto, California, by Harry R. Painton.

The recording secretary reported that a letter had been sent to Mr. Fred Carlson, Fire Marshall of the city of Oakland, protesting the wholesale clearing of brush in lower Dimond Canyon, and that an answer had been received in the form of a telephone call from Mr. Carlson. He had explained that a portion of Dimond Canyon had been deeded over by the Bank of America to the city of Oakland for a park, and that clearing of brush was preparatory to planting of the area by the Park Department. Further plans of the Fire Prevention Bureau included the clearing of a fire trail, varying from 75 to 150 feet in width,