

NOTES AND NEWS

Westerners are again privileged in having the meetings of the American Ornithologists' Union close to home. This year the Union meets in Denver, Colorado, September 1 to 4. The sessions will be held at the Colorado Museum of Natural History. Headquarters will be at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, Broadway and 18th St. Promise of field trips to the high mountains and to the prairies should appeal to ornithologists unacquainted with the Denver region. Inquiries concerning the meeting may be addressed to Alfred M. Bailey, Chairman of the Local Committee, at the Colorado Museum.—A.H.M.

Mr. A. C. Bent, author of the series of bulletins on the life history of North American birds, writes as follows about the progress of his work:

"The fourteenth volume, on flycatchers, larks and swallows, will go to the printer very soon, though it may not be published before some time early next year, as the Government Printing Office is overcrowded.

"My work on the fifteenth volume, containing the Corvidae and Paridae, is now all written and will go to the publishers in the fall.

"I am now starting work on the sixteenth volume, to contain the birds on the 1931 Check-list from the Sittidae to the Troglodytidae, inclusive. I should be glad to receive, as soon as possible, any notes, data or photographs relating to any of the birds in these five families.

"The sooner these are sent to me, the more likely they are to be included in the work, and the more conveniently I can handle them.

"I wish to thank all former contributors to this co-operative work for the valuable material sent to me in the past, and to solicit their help in the future. All material is welcome, though I can use only the most important part of it."

Carl Koford, Audubon Research Fellow, who has been studying the natural history of the California Condor, recently was called to service with the United States Navy. All of his records and findings, which are remarkably extensive, are in safe keeping pending his resumption of the work. This unfortunate, though necessary, interruption will be keenly regretted by all ornithologists interested in Koford and the condors.

The Donald R. Dickey collection of birds and mammals which was donated to the University of California at Los Angeles last fall, has been installed in temporary quarters provided by the University at the Clark Library, 2205 West Adams Street, Los Angeles. During the past spring Mr. A. J. van Rossem, curator in charge, has



Fig. 60. E. Lowell Sumner, Jr., President of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club; author of important papers on the California Quail and on the development of young raptorial birds.

been occupied with putting the collections in working condition and has resumed his taxonomic studies of Sonoran birds.

Thoughtful comments on conservation are contained in W. L. McAtee's introduction to a paper on the "Wildlife of the Atlantic Coast Salt Marshes" (U. S. Dept. Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife Circular 11, 1941). Some excerpts follow: "Conservation means different things to different people. Some think of protecting only things that can be used, and here again there is more than one school of thought—or at least, of action: One protects only to the date of use and takes what it wishes without planning for replacement—this has been compared to mining; the other strives for replacement, so that there can be sustained use—this has been compared to crop production. There is also protection for beneficial economic tendencies, without direct use—this principle underlying the protection of insectivorous birds. Finally there is conservation for its own sake, the goal of the nature lover.

"Whatever his particular interest in wildlife may be, the nature lover is one who, consciously or not, is impressed with the fellowship of all

living things, a fellowship that is very real. He sees that in structure, in habits, and in impulses, his wild neighbors often seem much like himself.

"It should never be forgotten that they share with man also the joy of living. No man can possibly get as much pleasure from water as does a porpoise or an otter. However perfect his equipment, man can never be attuned to flying like the terns, the swallows, and other birds whose pliant grace, in calm or storm, is marvelous

"That wildlife enjoys living in general as much as man, and probably in many ways even more, is a thought that should never be entirely out of mind. Man assumes dominion over wildlife and exercises it as he can, but in so doing he should as far as possible in the case of every creature respect its right to existence, to its chosen home, and to undisturbed enjoyment of its way of life. As has been so often, but not too often, said, in following out ideas for readjusting wildlife and its environment, man should do only what is necessary and no more."

The Boston Society of Natural History announces that original unpublished essays on any subject in the field of ornithology are eligible for the Walker Prize competition for 1942. For details apply to the Secretary, 234 Berkeley St., Boston, Massachusetts, after August 15, 1941. Manuscripts are due on May 1, 1942.

Announcement is made by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History that Dr. Harry C. Oberholser has accepted the position as Curator of the Ornithology Department of that museum. Dr. Oberholser has been consultant to the department for some time and now upon his retirement from the Fish and Wildlife Service takes up the position formerly held by Dr. John W. Aldrich, who joined the wildlife service in Washington.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

Roger Tory Peterson's "A Field Guide to Western Birds" (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston; May, 1941; xviii+240 pp., 42 pls. in black and white, 5 col. pls. + col. frontispiece, 40 figs. in text) accomplishes three noteworthy things which should place it high in the esteem of ornithologists of the western states. First, it covers the Rocky Mountain region and the southwestern deserts which were not included in Hoffmann's excellent handbook. Thus is brought into compact form the treatment of all birds of the United States west of the Great Plains (included are the western edge of the plains and the Rio Grande Valley of Texas). The second feature is the extension of Peterson's series of black and white illustrations of field characters to western species. His selection of the essential in these

diagrams, for which he is justly renowned, is, as usual, good. Even the most experienced field ornithologist is likely to find that Peterson has turned up some helpful clues that will prove a boon. Third, substantial progress is made in clarifying the subspecies problem for the beginner. The hopeless confusion that results from the names of the current check-list, which so often completely obscure specific units, is met by supplying a good set of names for full species, together with a list of the names of subspecies, so that a novice may sort out the tangle of racial names to which he may have been exposed. Furthermore, the ridiculousness of most field identifications of races, and the scientific inaccuracy of them are nicely brought out. Only a few races that are possessed of obvious field characters are selected for particular treatment.

Peterson makes it clear in the introduction that his book does not replace, but complements, Hoffmann's handbook. A student needs both. Peterson's guide will serve better for identification, because of the plates, but it does not include in comparable degree the natural history—details of distribution, habitat, behavior, and song—of which Hoffman through long western field experience could speak. Nor does it provide as much assistance in learning of postures and attitudes of birds as do the Allan Brooks drawings in the Hoffman guide.

Although Peterson draws attention to the sharply marked habitats and zones in the western United States, actually only limited help is given the beginner in these matters. To illustrate, the statement that the *Phainopepla* breeds "chiefly in arid lowlands" does not go far enough to provide appreciable aid. But such limitation is deliberate and no doubt a practical necessity; in many instances the essence of the habitat is clearly indicated.

Considering the time involved in preparation of the guide we encounter few errors. Sample items that have been noted or that have been brought to my attention are as follows: the breeding ranges of the Gadwall and Cinnamon Teal should be outlined to include central and southern California, respectively; the winter range of the Varied Thrush should include coastal southern California; not all Chestnut-backed Chickadees have rufous sides as stated, the absence of which in *P. r. barlowi* might well have served as a diagnostic character for this race, for it can easily be identified in the field. Elimination of the awkward and unnecessary possessive endings on names of birds would have pleased western students as conforming with prevailing custom on the Pacific coast.

To obscure the value of this book through mention of a few shortcomings would be wholly wrong. Peterson has done a great service to ac-