

## NOTES AND NEWS

At a meeting of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, held on January 12, 1945, Dr. Alexander Wetmore was elected to the post of Secretary. He has served as Assistant Secretary of the Institution since 1925.

Ernst Mayr's "Birds of the Southwest Pacific" (Macmillan Company, New York) has recently come off the press. This book is priced at \$3.75. Included are three color plates showing 39 species and 16 additional black-and-white figures.—F. A. P.

Ronald Ward Smith, a member of the Cooper Club since 1939 and an associate of the American Ornithologist's Union since 1932, was killed in action on September 11, 1944.

The son of the late Mr. and Mrs. James W. Smith, he was born at Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 21, 1913. His whole life was a cheerful and determined struggle to educate himself and to achieve his goal, to be a zoologist.

One of the several young men who owe their start along this path to the kindly and efficient direction of Robie W. Tufts of Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Ronald commenced his pursuits at the latter place in the Annapolis Valley, the scene of Longfellow's "Evangeline." Here the present writer first met him in 1930, a keenly intelligent lad of 16, gifted with a happy and attractive personality.

Graduating from the University of Acadia in 1934 with the degree of Bachelor of Science, he later studied at the University of California, receiving his M.A. degree in 1939. Between these years he did considerable careful collecting of both birds and mammals, chiefly for the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, joined several expeditions to different regions in the western states, California, Nevada, Idaho and Wyoming, and in February, 1937, was a member of an expedition to the Galapagos Islands in the interests of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. In addition he carried on much intensive work in his native province collecting land mammals and land and sea birds, his specimens being models of excellent preparation.

For some time he was attached to the Canadian National Museum at Ottawa learning the higher arts of taxidermy and modeling, in both of which he became singularly adept. His last position was as Curator of the Museum of Queens University, Kingston, Ontario.

Shortly after the outbreak of war, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force where the assiduity that characterized his whole life brought him rapid promotion. After a long period of training he went overseas early in 1943 as Flight

Sergeant, becoming Pilot Officer in 1944. He was on many bombing raids over enemy territory during the first half of this year and was looking forward to an early spell of leave when on September 11, while in command of a heavy bomber in a raid over Rauxall, Germany, he was mortally wounded but brought his craft back to England to be killed in a crash landing at Linton, Yorkshire. To the very end he gave his best.—ALLAN BROOKS.

The passing of M. French Gilman on July 18, 1944, marked the end of a chapter in the early observation of desert bird life in California and Arizona. Although many able ornithologists in the southwest carry on, Gilman was pre-eminent in the study of the lives of desert birds by reason of a lifetime spent with them. Banning, in San Geronio Pass, was the home of the Gilman family. Near here, on November 12, 1871, French Gilman was born, the grandson of the first white settlers of the region. At the age of 13 he already had built an egg collection and had early made the acquaintance of Wilson C. Hanna and the late Robert B. Herron. This group of naturalists later enjoyed many trips together searching for birds and nests. Gilman was vigorous and most notably a man of the out-of-doors. Hanna, recently commenting on this, writes: "He was a tireless walker and only a few years ago I had a letter from him while he was in Death Valley saying that he had been ill and when the doctor let him get up he walked to the top of Telescope Peak [11,000 ft.] and returned to see if he was O.K." It was from Death Valley in later years, where he was custodian, that he reported many significant distributional records in the Condor. Earlier while working for the Indian Service he contributed important articles on the life histories of thrashers, owls, woodpeckers, towhees and warblers of southern Arizona, most notably as observed at the Indian reservation at Sacaton. Appropriately, the Screech Owl of the desert country bears his name, *Otus asio gilmani*. Besides having an ornithological interest he was a field botanist of real ability. He assisted Dr. Frederick V. Colville in making a survey of the plant life of Death Valley and engaged in establishing a botanical garden of desert plants there. Truly he merits the characterization of pioneer naturalist of the southwestern deserts (see Condor, 42, 1940:225, photograph).—ALDEN H. MILLER.

### MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

#### NORTHERN DIVISION

SEPTEMBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithologi-