

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-

cal Club was held on Thursday, September 28, 1944, at 8:00 p.m., in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley, with about 45 members and guests present and President Robert C. Miller in the chair. Names of newly proposed members were: John Roscoe Hendrickson, Department of Zoology, University of California, Berkeley 4, California, proposed by Alden H. Miller; Walter Alexander Hicks, 3120 Lewiston Ave., Berkeley 5, California, proposed by Junea W. Kelly; Elmer Joseph Koestner, Lt. (j.g.), U.S. Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, proposed by Frank A. Pitelka; and Oliver Ledlie Smith, 15 York Ave., Towanda, Pennsylvania, proposed by Alden H. Miller.

The program of this meeting consisted of three short talks. Mr. Wade Fox, Jr., reported his observations of the nesting of Red-breasted Nuthatches on the Berkeley campus. He found that unmated birds foraged over a larger territory and made less effort to protect it against intrusion than did a mated bird, which drove off California jays, linnets, and other nuthatches which came too close to its nest. In basic pattern the songs of breeding males were noticeably longer than those of unmated birds.

The second talk, given by Mr. Malcolm T. Jollie, concerned the nesting of Sharp-shinned Hawks in Strawberry Canyon. On May 14 a nest containing four eggs was discovered in a yellow pine; a week later it contained five eggs. The eggs were found pipped on June 18; thus, the incubation period was about five weeks. The weights of the young sharp-shins, when compared with the average weights of adults, indicated that there were four males and one female. At 14 to 15 days after hatching, their weights approximated those of adult birds. Feather growth was still only about one-third to one-half completed at the age of one month. Mr. Jollie compared the known incubation periods of several species of hawks ranging from small accipitrines to eagles, and found them all to be approximately five weeks.

Mrs. G. Earle Kelly discussed ecological preferences of some western shore-birds on the Monterey Peninsula and Point Lobos. On certain beaches of the former area, she observed local concentrations of shorebirds, including the Black and Ruddy turnstones, Surfbirds, Wandering Tattlers, Sanderlings, and Snowy and Semipalmated plovers. Beaches near Point Lobos, comparable to those of the Monterey peninsula in a number of physical characteristics, were not frequented by these shore-birds. Apparently food, here chiefly insects associated with accumulations of algae thrown up by waves, was an important factor determining the presence or absence of these birds.

Adjourned.—ALICE S. MULFORD, *Recording Secretary*.

OCTOBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday, October 26, 1944, at 8:00 p.m., in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley, with about 25 members and guests present and Vice-President Lewis W. Taylor in the chair. Mr. Ian I. McMillan of Shandon, California, was proposed for membership by Alden H. Miller.

Mrs. Junea Kelly reported seeing the Red-backed Sandpiper for the first time this season in Alameda on October 7; flocks of this species were present there on October 24. Miss Alice S. Mulford reported an observation of four Black-billed Magpies at Graeagle, Plumas County, California, about August 16.

The speaker of the evening was Dr. Alden H. Miller, who presented an account of a field trip conducted in summer, 1940, to the Grapevine Mountains, Death Valley National Monument. Dr. Miller described the physical characteristics of the mountains and the dominant vegetation. He compared the avifauna of the lower zone of open, park-like piñon-pine forest with that of the upper zone of dense piñon forest. He related the occurrence of the various species of birds to the character of the vegetation and to the temperature changes accompanying rise in altitude.

Adjourned.—ALICE S. MULFORD, *Recording Secretary*.

NOVEMBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday, November 30, 1944, at 8:00 p.m., Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley, with President Robert C. Miller in the chair and about 27 members and guests present. Herbert Wilson, 902 Morris Ave., Modesto, California, was proposed for membership by Allan Brooks; Jerome Begun, 858 44th Ave., San Francisco 21, was proposed by Alden H. Miller.

The speaker of the evening was Mr. Laidlaw Williams who discussed his color-band studies of Brewer Blackbirds at Carmel Point, near Monterey, California. He began his studies in February, 1942. In this species, there appears to be no definite territory. The male fights for the female wherever she is and protects the nest. A few individuals are known to have kept the same mates for several years. A few were polygamous. Mr. Williams concluded his talk with a comparison of the Brewer Blackbird with other icterids.

Adjourned.—ALICE S. MULFORD, *Recording Secretary*.

DECEMBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was called to order by Vice-president Lewis W. Taylor on Thursday, December

28, 1944, at 8:00 p.m., Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley, with about 30 members and guests present. The president's appointment of a committee to nominate officers for 1945 was announced: Dr. Seth Benson, chairman, Miss Hope Gladding, and Miss Grace Crowe.

Dr. Sumner C. Brooks discussed "Biological Notes on a South American Trip." His account began at Manzanillo, Mexico, where he saw wintering North American birds. The trip continued southward along the Pacific Coast by boat, car, and plane, thence across the southern end of Argentina, and up the Atlantic Coast to Rio de Janeiro.

Adjourned.—ALICE S. MULFORD, *Recording Secretary*.

SOUTHERN DIVISION

SEPTEMBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was called to order by President A. J. Van Rossem at 8:15 p.m., Tuesday, September 26, 1944, in Room 145, Allan Hancock Foundation, Los Angeles, California. Applications for membership were read, as follows: Allan Cecil Brooks, % Livestock Insect Laboratory, Kamloops, British Columbia, proposed by Maj. Allan Brooks; Henry Taylor Wiggin, 151 Tappan St., Brookline 46, Massachusetts, proposed by W. Lee Chambers; Mrs. Florence Becker Lennon, 842 Grant Place, Boulder, Colorado, proposed by Mrs. N. Edward Ayer; and Miss Dorothy Groner, 701-C Hall of Justice, Los Angeles 12, California, proposed by George Willett.

"A Preliminary Report of Studies in the Ecology of the California Woodpecker" was given by the Secretary.

Adjourned.—WALTER W. BENNETT, *Secretary*.

OCTOBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was called to order by Vice-president Ed. Harrison at 8 p.m., Tuesday, October 31, 1944, in Room 145, Allan Hancock Foundation, Los Angeles, California. The membership application of Mr. Luther F. Keeton, 75 N. Cleveland Ave., Memphis 4, Tennessee, proposed by W. Lee Chambers, was read.

A talk on the "Life History of the White-tailed Kite" was given by Ed. Harrison and Francis Roberts. He reported one nest in San Diego County in which the first egg was laid on March 2; the set was completed on March 14. The incubation period lasted about 29 days. The young could fly in approximately five weeks. Because incubation began when the first egg was laid, the young were of varying sizes while in the nest. The adults had a second nest 21 days after the hatching began in the first nest. The first

egg of a second pair was laid on March 20; the clutch was completed on March 28. The first young hatched on April 23, the last on April 30, taking approximately 28 days for incubation. Mr. Harrison's studies have been confined to a colony begun by a single pair in 1939 and increased to nine pairs by 1944. Only the early nesters breed twice in the same year.

Adjourned.—WALTER W. BENNETT, *Secretary*.

NOVEMBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was called to order by President A. J. van Rossem at 8 p.m., November 28, 1944, in Room 145, Allan Hancock Foundation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California. The following applications for membership were read: Mrs. Bertha Stevens, 30 W. Missouri Ave., Phoenix, Arizona, proposed by C. T. Vorhies; John S. Wong, P. O. Box 452, Delano, California, proposed by W. Lee Chambers; Mrs. Myra Dodge, Henderson, Nevada, proposed by Beatrice W. Nielsen; Mattonri M. Young, R. F. D. 3, Ridgefield, Connecticut, proposed by W. Lee Chambers; George Rowland Marfield, 1820 S. Olive Ave., Alhambra, California, by John McB. Robertson; James Ortega, Creston Star Route, Paso Robles, California, proposed by A. H. Miller; and William (Wallace) Bailey, 553 Michellenda Ave., Pasadena, California, proposed by W. Lee Chambers.

It was moved by George Willett, seconded by Dr. I. N. Nokes, and duly carried, that a resolution concerning the death on October 22, 1944, of the Club's former president, Dr. Guy C. Rich, be accepted as an expression of the organization, as follows:

WHEREAS, in the death of Dr. Guy C. Rich, on October 22, 1944, the Cooper Ornithological Club has lost a member of more than thirty years standing, a former President of the Southern Division, and a member of the Board of Governors; and

WHEREAS, during the last years of Dr. Rich's life, even after complete loss of his eye-sight, his interest in the welfare of the Club was not lessened, and his unflinching cheerfulness was in inspiration to all who came in contact with him;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club here express its sorrow at the loss of our good member and valued friend; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary be instructed to place one copy of these resolutions on the minutes of this meeting, and to send another copy to Mrs. Rich with an expression of our sincere sympathy.

A lecture on "Life-zones as a Background in Natural History" was given by Mrs. Mary V. Hood.

Adjourned.—WALTER W. BENNETT, *Secretary*.