

## NOTES AND NEWS

The Annual Meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club will be held May 30 and 31 and June 1 in Los Angeles. Members are urged now to plan to attend and to contribute to the scientific program.

The life-time collections of birds, birds' eggs and nests of the late Milton S. Ray of San Francisco have recently been donated to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California by Mrs. Ray. The collection is rich in material from Guerrero, Mexico, northern South America, Africa and the Philippine Islands. The Guerreran material, assembled and prepared by the veteran collector W. W. Brown, is the most extensive single collection thus far made in that section of Mexico. A number of rarities among extinct or nearly extinct birds are included in the Ray collections: Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Paroquet, Eskimo Curlew, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, skeleton of the Great Auk, and eggs of *Aepyornis* and *Dinornis*. The specimens have been moved to the Museum in Berkeley and are being arranged preparatory to cataloguing.

## PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

"The Atlantic Alcidae. The Seasonal and Geographic Variation of the Auks Inhabiting the Atlantic Ocean and Adjacent Waters," by Finn Salomonsen (Göteborgs Kungl. Vetenskaps- och Vitterhets-samhälles Handlingar, Sjätte Följden, Ser. B, Band 3, N:o 5, 1944:1-138, 24 figs.) is intended as a general review of the Atlantic auks, "with a final arrangement of all known geographical forms." Results are based primarily on a study of nearly seven hundred and fifty specimens in Scandinavian museums. The work contains a wealth of valuable factual material, particularly on size and color variations in different populations, on the time and sequence of molts, and on age and seasonal variations in bill size and proportions. Also noteworthy are discussions of such "mutant" forms as the ringed murre, the black-winged guillemot, and the dwarf puffins, and of the variations in frequency of occurrence of these "mutants" from one population to another. The paper is in English.

Several of Salomonsen's methods and conclusions should, however, be questioned. Two races of the razor-bill auk, *Alca torda torda* and *A. t. pica*, are separated solely on the basis of the number of furrows distal to the vertical white stripe on the bill. Using this character, only sixty-two per cent of the specimens of *pica* and fifty-five per cent of the specimens of *torda* are found to be distinguishable. The practicality of such a split is doubtful. Indeed, it is unfortunate that nowhere in the paper are modern statistical meth-

ods used to evaluate the significance of the variations described.

*Cepphus grylle ultimus* is described as new in this paper. The type series was apparently examined several years before the description was written, and the latter was drawn up from measurements published by Horring in 1937. The propriety of choosing the extreme of the series for the type, as was done in this instance, is also questionable.

Throughout the paper the author assumes that wing length is an accurate index of body size. This may be a safe assumption in many groups, but in the Alcidae there are several selective factors involved in the evolution of populations with relatively long or short wings. The migratory habit of the high Arctic forms would tend to produce relatively long-winged forms whereas sedentary forms which use their wings comparatively little for flight would tend to have relatively short wings as proportionately short wings have a positive selective value for underwater use. It would be advisable to compare variations in wing length with total weight or some body measurement to test the validity of his assumption.

In his brief treatment of the Pacific forms of *Cepphus*, Salomonsen does not hesitate to make *grylle* and *columba* conspecific. Peters, in his "Check-list of Birds of the World" (vol. 2, 1934: 354) lists Herald and Wrangel islands as breeding places of both *C. c. columba* and *C. g. mandii*. Peters' statement may not be true, but it is unfortunate that Salomonsen did not consider this matter, for if both forms do breed on these islands, this has an important bearing on the question of whether or not the two forms are distinct species.

The author also states that *Uria aalge californica* is restricted to the Farallon Islands. Actually, *californica* nests all along the Pacific coast from Monterey County, California, north to Washington, where it intergrades with Salomonsen's race *inornata*.

Finally, the absence of North American material in the lists of specimens examined prevents one's considering this a definitive work.—ROBERT W. STORER.

## COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

## SOUTHERN DIVISION

JANUARY.—The monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held in Room 145, Allan Hancock Foundation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, on January 28, 1947, with 54 members and guests present. The following names were proposed for membership: Dr. John S. Garth, Allan