

## NOTES AND NEWS

The Brewster Medal was awarded by the American Ornithologists' Union at the annual meetings held in Toronto, September 8-12, 1947, to Francis H. Kortright, author of "The Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America," published in 1942 by the American Wildlife Institute. At the same meetings, Lancelot E. Richdale of Dunedin, New Zealand, was elected a corresponding fellow.

A. C. Bent has finished work on his "Life Histories of the Icteridae and Thraupidae," and is now starting work on the Fringillidae. The first volume on this family is to contain the birds of the 1931 Check-List from the cardinals to the crossbills, inclusive, for which he is ready to receive contributions of notes on habits or photographs.

### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

**THE RUFFED GROUSE: ITS LIFE STORY, ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT.** By Frank C. Edminster. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1947, xviii + 385 pp., 17 figs. and 56 plates, \$5.00.

This book is a puzzling interspersion of competence and confusion. In many respects it is as good a book as could be written at this time, considering our limited knowledge of this baffling grouse, and considering also the extreme difficulty of learning anything fundamental about a bird that cannot be trapped or banded in quantity and that cannot be bred freely in captivity. On the other hand, some parts of this volume seem foggy both in basic thought and in presentation.

The author is at his best when he discusses predation. Here he possesses the unique advantage of having participated in one of the most important experiments so far made by American game managers: the alternation of control and no control on a pair of similar areas. He is weakest in parts of the chapter called "Biography."

As Lake States grouse hunters, we must first of all question the ecological sufficiency of the author's assertion (p. 269), repeated in various forms throughout the book, that "When woodlands are pastured it is detrimental to grouse and when this pasturing is intense enough to create a visible 'cattle line' it renders the woods practically non-inhabitable to grouse regardless of its other attributes." Our question pertains not to what is included in this assertion, but to what is excluded. To illustrate: in southern Wisconsin, where woods-pasturing has reached an advanced stage and is nearly universal, it has already helped to extinguish the Ruffed Grouse from most counties, and others become grouseless

year by year. Conversely, in parts of central and northern Wisconsin, where the dairy industry is only a few decades old, and where dairy farms, successional speaking, are still in the pioneer stage, the best grouse habitat and the existing cow habitat are often coextensive. Grazing, in our opinion, is a question of degree. It is just like cutting and fire: a little of it in part of the woods is good for grouse; a lot of it all over the woods is lethal.

Wildlife research progresses partly by internal pressure and partly by pulls applied at particular spots by reason of progress in related scientific fields. At the present time a good test for the up-to-dateness of any wildlife research is the author's awareness of recent upward pulls in animal behavior, in physiology, and in the use of statistics.

The present author in his discussion of territory (pp. 50-52) does not limit the term to defended area, and hence confuses the reader in distinguishing territory, home range, and radius of mobility. A more irritating error, repeated in several chapters, is his use of decimal fractions for measurements which could not, in the first instance, have been accurate within five or ten per cent. Thus (p. 213), "the brood mortalities [on two areas] were fifty-two and three-tenths per cent and fifty-six and three-tenths per cent respectively. By calculation, the loss of adults on the trapped area was twenty-three and seven-tenths per cent and that on the untrapped [area] thirty-two and two-tenths per cent." Later on the same page the author discreetly remarks that "detailed accuracy of the results cannot be claimed." Why then the decimals?

Again, on page 297, the writer compares grouse densities based on areas censused in various regions during different years, and he states, "These maxima were: two and seven-tenths, three and five-tenths, four and seven-tenths, four and eight-tenths and seven and three-tenths acres per grouse . . ." Who can census Ruffed Grouse on an area with this accuracy? Misleading fractions are often forgivable in tables where the total must equal 100, but they are not so easily forgiven in text where they imply an accuracy that does not, and often cannot, exist.

Practically all the evidence shown in this book points to non-cyclic behavior of Ruffed Grouse populations in the northeast. This region is peripheral to the extensive range of the bird. The overwhelming evidence for cyclic behavior of the Ruffed Grouse in the Lake States and Canada is conspicuously omitted. It is understandable and expected that an intensive study like this one

will be restricted to a small part of the total range, but it is less understandable that the reader should be given only a provincial picture of a continental phenomenon like the cycle.

The field work for this book was done before the bursa of Fabricius came into general use as an age criterion. It would have been becoming in the author to acknowledge this disadvantage, which detracts considerably from the finality of his conclusions on population mechanics.

The author's command of the literature is good. The bibliography is by chapters. There are good photographs, but the publisher has crowded them all into one central section. There is a fair index. The writing is fair, but some chapters are very difficult to read because data which belong in tables are recited *ad infinitum* as text. We suspect this represents an effort to please the lay reader, but we doubt if it will do so. Nowhere in this book is the reader enlightened as to its relationship to the official report of the New York State Grouse Investigation, now said to be in press, and presumably based upon much of the same field work.

By and large, this book will be an asset to the professional worker in wildlife, and to other workers in the natural history field, but it has many shortcomings which a little less haste and a little better critical reading could have eliminated.—ALDO LEOPOLD and IRVEN O. BUSS.

Useful and worthy is A. L. Rand's "List of Yukon Birds and those of the Canol Road" recently issued by the National Museum of Canada as Bulletin No. 105, 1946; copy received May 7, 1947.

## COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

### SOUTHERN DIVISION

SEPTEMBER.—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 September 30, 1947, with 105 members and guests present. The following names were proposed for membership: Charles H. Anderson, 1915 Connely Dr., Salinas, Calif., by J. M. Linsdale; Mrs. Earl Jackson, Tumacacori National Monument, Tumacacori, Ariz., by Frank M. Erickson; Elven Rodger, 112 Elm St., Twin Falls, Idaho, by Victor E. Jones; Ira L. Wiggins, Natural History Museum, Stanford University, Calif., by A. H. Miller; Richard Wood Drabble, Box 1768, Palmer, Alaska, and Paul H. Steele, 3487 Barhite St., Pasadena 8, Calif., by Harold Michener; Phil Longenecker, 38 Canterbury Court, Toledo 6, Ohio, and Philip Kenneth Wiseman, Jr., 9908½ Durant Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif., by J. McB. Robertson; Samuel A. Arny, 1435 Octavia St., New Orleans 15, La., Charles K. Barnes, 2026 Lincoln Way West, South Bend 19, Ind., Raymond D. Bourne, 118 E. Vine St., Ox-

ford, Ohio, Mrs. John Q. Burch, 4206 Halldale, Los Angeles 37, Calif., Russell M. Bushey, Madeline, Calif., Tom Hadley, 48 Wellesley Dr., Pleasant Ridge, Mich., Harry Henderson, State Game Warden, Box 380, Belle Fourche, So. Dakota, Donald Keiser, 2323 Gunn Ave., Whittier, Calif., Richard Paul Klein, 24805 Emery Rd., Warrensville Hts., Ohio, Albert Whitney Knox, 344 S. Kingsley Dr., Los Angeles 5, Calif., T. F. Parker, 1717 Crest Dr., Los Angeles 35, Calif., Orville Elmer Randall, State Game Warden, Lemmon, So. Dakota, Kenneth C. Scissons, State Game Warden, Winner, So. Dakota, Walter Scott, 967 S. Sydney Dr., Los Angeles 22, Calif., Robert Wilson Shufeldt, La Cueva Ranch, La Cueva P. O., Mora County, New Mexico, Robert Leo Smith, Rt. 1, Reynoldsville, Pa., Edwin Way Teale, 93 Park Ave., Baldwin, L. I., N. Y., Mrs. H. P. Thomsen, Rt. 3, Box 406, Beloit, Wis., and Michael Throckmorton, 1404 E. Maple Ave., Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, by C. V. Duff.

A resolution concerning the death of Blanche Vignos was submitted by Otto Zahn, Sid Platford and Dr. Adele Lewis Grant and was unanimously adopted.

Luther Little reported on efforts of the Mining Congress and other interests to have the Joshua Tree National Monument abandoned. It was voted that the Southern Division heartily endorse H. R. Bill 2795 to save the Joshua Tree National Monument for scientific research and for future generations and that Mr. Little so advise Congressman Harry R. Shephard.

Ed N. Harrison showed a reel of Kodachrome motion pictures of California Condors. In addition, he spoke on his recent expedition into southern Sonora and northern Sinaloa and showed numerous study skins collected on the trip. Through the kindness and generosity of W. J. Sheffler, also a member of the expedition, a cage containing three pygmy owls and a pair of bat falcons, was exhibited.—DOROTHY E. GRONER, *Secretary*.

### NORTHERN DIVISION

SEPTEMBER.—The monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday, September 25, 1947, at 8:00 p.m. in Room 2503, Life Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley, with 57 members and guests present. Proposals for membership were as follows: John A. Keating, 3031 Balboa St., San Francisco 21, Calif., by Hilda W. Grinnell; Adelaide Henkel, Box 463, Deer Lodge, Montana, by W. Lee Chambers; Shirley Powell, Faculty Club, University of California, Davis, Calif., by Mary Koford; Robert S. Arbib, 115 Lafayette Place, Woodmere, N. Y., by John Davis; and Howard Elliott Winn, 398 North Elm St., West Bridgewater, Mass., by C. V. Duff.

The program of the meeting consisted of field reports by members.—CHARLES G. SIBLEY, *Secretary*.