

## NOTES AND NEWS

HAROLD MICHENER  
1882-1949

Admiration for Harold Michener among the numerous company of people engaged in bird banding in the western United States grew steadily from the impact of his quiet, thoughtful, and determined devotion to banding studies. When J. Eugene Law, the pioneer and first advocate of banding in the West, had to curtail his activity in the late '20s, the Micheners, imbued with similar principles, carried on the Laws' tradition and themselves came to lead by the example of their accomplishment and by a warm and steady helpfulness extended to all who wished to do similar work. Harold Michener had a way of bringing forth facts and viewpoints in a completely inoffensive manner and with an honesty and sincerity such as is all too rarely attained by either amateur or professional ornithologist.

Substantial indeed are the findings reported by Mr. and Mrs. Michener as the result of marking 45,000 birds of 85 species, for the birds handled were thoroughly examined for molt, changes in color, signs of nesting activity, and abnormalities. Their attitude in banding was one of inquiry, rather than that solely of capturing birds for personal esthetic enjoyment. This is summed up in the simple explanation of their work made in 1948 in *The Gull*: We are banding birds "for a serious purpose, the purpose of studying birds." Of persisting value will be the work on winter movements of Purple Finches and the extensive series of investigations on House Finches which, through following molt and plumage sequence in retrapped birds, aided by experimental plucking, have afforded a groundwork essential for proper taxonomic conclusions. "Mockingbirds, their Territories and Individualities" published in 1935 reported events in the lives of color-banded birds and is one of the best documented and interesting studies made in the early years of emphasis on territorial behavior. In fact the winter-held territories of mockers are probably the best understood example of non-breeding territories even today. To see Michener's care in analysis, one should read of his investigation of birds and electric power lines in which he brought together his profession of engineering and his ornithological ability. Restudy of this would repay anyone undertaking an inquiry of problems of interference of birds with human affairs and interests. And again one can profit in

rereading the chapter in the natural history of California Jays derived from the Micheners' watching of birds in their own back yard in Pasadena.

A warm sense of gratitude for the leadership of Harold Michener and for his valuable contributions to the study of birds leads his friends of the Western Bird Banding Association and the Cooper Ornithological Club to establish a memorial to him in the form of a color plate of the Jacana, one of Grayson's paintings, which appears as the frontispiece of this issue of *The Condor*. It is my privilege to voice this dedication by his friends.—ALDEN H. MILLER.

The two Jacanas represented in Grayson's painting were collected near Tepic, Mexico, in June of 1866. The skins were sent to the Smithsonian Institution. In a letter to S. F. Baird of July 18, 1866, Grayson wrote: "There is no difference in the coloring of the sexes but the female is the larger; this I know by opening several. The young have a whitish breast and the balance of plumage mottled. It is a plant walking bird, lighting on and walking with facility over the moss and other water plants growing on the surface of the water . . . The iris is dull grey, comb and bill bright yellow, feet greenish, nails brown; between the base of the bill and the comb is a red and purplish streak."

Members of the Cooper Club have recently received an invitation to attend the Annual Meeting at Asilomar, April 14 to 16, 1950. Please respond promptly to the call for papers and also make requests for accommodations. It will help greatly in the conduct of the business meeting if all members will return the proxy form sent out by the officers of the corporation.

Students of western birds should know of the appearance of an "Annotated Check-list of the Birds of Utah" by Angus M. Woodbury, Clarence Cottam, and John W. Sugden (*Bull. Univ. Utah*, 39, no. 16, 1949:1-40, 1 map). This is a somewhat more detailed list of Utah birds than that of Behle's of 1944. About 53 additional names are included but part of these are dubiously recognizable subspecific units.—A. H. M.

Reprints of about forty articles by the late Dr. W. T. Shaw are available to any persons

interested in them. They will be mailed post free upon request made to Albert C. Hawbecker, Fresno State College, Fresno 4, California.

The Cooper Ornithological Club will again participate in the summer meetings of the American Association for the Advance of Science, Pacific Division, to be held from June 19 to 24 at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Papers are scheduled for presentation at a session to be held jointly by the Club and the Pacific Northwest Bird and Mammal Society. Further details concerning the meetings may be obtained by writing Dr. William H. Behle, Department of Biology, University of Utah, who is acting as the Club's representative for the meeting.

Some months ago we appealed to you by letter for a contribution toward the printing of the Grayson paintings. To date our appeal has received heartening support both in dollars and in widespread interest in scientific, artistic and historic circles. The appearance of each colored plate has brought about an increase in interest.

We feel that many members have wanted to give but have hesitated to do so for lack of an answer to the question "How much should I give?" Individual gifts received so far have ranged up to sizable sums. Our objective is to raise in the aggregate an amount which will be commensurate with Grayson's paintings in the field of ornithology. The number of gifts obtained is as important to us as the size of each gift. If every member could give \$2.00 we could publish seven more plates. Won't you, therefore, join us in this important undertaking by sending us your gift? Your response will determine the number of plates to be printed in the future. Your help will be deeply appreciated.—C. V. DUFF, 1922 Tamarind Ave., Hollywood 28, California.

#### COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

##### NORTHERN DIVISION

**JANUARY.**—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the University of California, Berkeley, on January 5, 1950. The following proposals for membership were read: Curt Dietz, Box 1753, Stanford, Calif., and M. F. Vessel, San Jose State College, San Jose, Calif., by Charles G. Sibley; Melvin A. Traylor, Jr., Chicago Natural History Museum, Roosevelt Road and Field Drive, Chicago 5, Ill., by Alden H. Miller; Albert B. Ruffner, 1072 Trestle Glen, Oakland, Calif., by R. F. Johnston.

Alden H. Miller, reporting for the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate of officers for 1950: for president, Junea W. Kelly; for vice-presidents, Robert T. Orr and Charles G. Sibley; for secretary, Henry E. Childs, Jr. It was the feeling of the committee that the best interests of the Club would be served by the election of two vice-presidents. The nominees were then duly elected. A motion by Mr. Dunlap was passed expressing the appreciation of the Division to the retiring officers for their services during 1949.

Carl Koford reported that an application for the taking of young California Condors by the San Diego Zoo had been received by the California Fish and Game Commission. A lively discussion followed and on the motion of Mr. Cogswell, the Conservation Committee was instructed to write to various people expressing the Club's disapproval of this undertaking by the San Diego Zoo. "South Carolina Bird Life" by Sprunt and Chamberlain was reviewed briefly by Alden H. Miller. Charles Sibley described the effects of the recent high tides on the birds and mammals at the Alviso Marshes on December 17.

Robert C. Miller, Director of the California Academy of Sciences, spoke on "Wildlife and Conservation Problems in New Zealand."—HENRY E. CHILDS, JR., *Secretary*.

**FEBRUARY.**—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the University of California, Berkeley, on February 2, 1950. The following were proposed for membership: Grace B. Kelly, 1438 Hawthorne Terrace, Berkeley, Calif., a sustaining member, by Charles G. Sibley; Mrs. Oscar McAllister, 129 York Drive, Piedmont 11, Calif., by Mrs. Dunlap; Richard D. Porter, 3130 Ogden Ave., Ogden, Utah, by W. H. Behle; Helmut C. Mueller, 2756 N. Palmer St., Milwaukee 12, Wis., and Robert G. McKenzie, 933 Jefferson St., Quincy, Ill., by A. H. Miller.

The secretary reported that the Point Lobos League requested aid in obtaining a tract of land at the Salinas River mouth for a state park; the matter was referred to the Natural Resources Committee. Junea W. Kelly reviewed "Shore and Marsh" by H. M. Quick.

Lois C. Taylor reported seeing a Condor near Lebec on December 27. Mr. Cogswell saw one there on January 29. He also reported 600 Whistling Swans and 800 Sandhill Cranes between Lodi and Isleton on January 22.

Frank A. Pitelka spoke on "Speciation in Dowitchers."—HENRY E. CHILDS, JR., *Secretary*.