

THE WILSON BULLETIN.

A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Study of Living Birds.
Official Organ of the Wilson Ornithological Club.

Edited by **LYNDS JONES.**

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EDITORIAL.

The June Bulletin will contain a list of the birds of DeKalb county, Georgia, compiled by our fellow member, Robert Windsor Smith. The editor hopes that this will be but the first of several such lists from localities where the birds are not well known. It is only necessary for a local list to give evidence of careful, conscientious work with the birds for it to find a welcome in this Bulletin. Such a list is greatly needed for the encouragement of those who are beginning the study of birds in your locality.

We are pleased to state that the vote to reorganize under the name of The Wilson Ornithological Club was unanimous. It seemed clear to all that such a move would be a distinct gain in all ways. We still remain a corresponding organization, but can change to one holding annual meetings whenever that may seem feasible. Our work has already been done by correspondence, and the results prove that such a course is both possible and fruitful of results which we have reason to point to with pride. We still place strong emphasis upon the study of living birds, but may be led into the study of specimens to round out a study of some species or complete an investigation of a life history. We do not expect to enter the field of the systematist and taxonomist simply because we lack the training and facilities. We do not pose as a society of bird protectors, but we expect to exert all our influence toward a

sane policy of protection everywhere and at all times. While we stand for field study because we believe that here we can do the most good to the cause, we still hold ourselves plastic enough to enter any field of study and investigation which may promise large results in the increase of knowledge.

The call for a vote upon the proposition to create two new sorts of members resulted in the adoption of the proposition. Hereafter the membership will consist of Active, Associate, Honorary, and Life members, and Patrons, each of which is defined in the constitution. It is believed that the establishment of a permanent membership and a permanent fund resulting from such membership will give to the organization a firmer basis. The Constitution required revision because of the reorganization and is now presented after careful revision. It has been sent to all members, and will be furnished to any others who signify a desire to see it. Its main features have stood the test of ten years of use. Several details made necessary by the changes noted above, have been introduced, but as a whole it is the same Constitution under which we have been working all along.

Many reports from the country east of the Mississippi River mention the unusual numbers of Robins, Bluebirds and Blackbirds which are spending the winter far north of their usual winter quarters. Even in the Adirondacks considerable numbers of these birds have been found this winter. We trust that this indicates the development of hardier races of these birds, with a strong probability that succeeding winters will show an increasing number of these and other species in the more northern regions.

Elsewhere attention is called to another proposed Horizon. It becomes clearer as the seasons come and go, that daily horizons made with a definite plan and with conscientious care, are of far greater value to the bird student, and will prove of far greater value in the future comparisons of records, than most persons realize. We feel justified, therefore, in offering incentives and suggesting times for making such Horizons. Whenever possible, these Horizons should also be a census for the region covered. These "Censo-Horizons" are the only basis for accurate comparisons between different localities as well as between different times. It becomes clearer as we get farther into bird work, that statements of relative abundance of species based upon general impressions are of doubtful value. Therefore, keep an accurate record of the birds which you see and hear when you are out for study, and never

fail to record the conditions under which the work was done: time spent, time of day, character of country covered, weather, temperature. It will pay.

The editor has already hinted that special investigations will be attempted during the year. He is pleased to call attention to two calls for help on life histories of two interesting and well known birds, on another page. No doubt others will be announced later. Every member should feel called upon to do what he can to contribute notes for the use of those who undertake this work. Don't make the mistake of withholding your notes because they are too incomplete. They are likely to be just what is wanted to fill up a gap in a chain of evidence. Those who undertake the investigation feel assured that there are gaps in the life histories of these birds which can be filled if persons will contribute what they know about them. The object of these investigations is to bring together the scattered notes.

The following communication has just been received:

The Michigan Ornithological Club was re-organized at Detroit, February 13, at a meeting called for that purpose at the residence of Alex W. Blain. The following officers were elected: President, A. B. Covert, of Ann Arbor (our oldest ornithologist); Vice-President, Dr. P. A. Moody, of Detroit; Secretary and Treasurer, Bradshaw H. Swales, of Detroit; Editor and Business Manager, Alex. W. Blain, Jr. Considerable interest is shown in the Club and about 65 members have already joined, including nearly all the best ornithologists in the state. One of the main objects of the Club will be Bird Protection, which the state sadly needs. A committee of Edwin Arnold, of Battle Creek; James B. Purdy of Plymouth; Prof. Walter B. Barrows, of the Agricultural College, was appointed to act with Wm. Dutcher, of the A. O. U., in preparing the way for the introduction of the A. O. U. law in the coming session of the legislature. Another object is the compiling and publication of an authentic state list. The Club will publish a quarterly bulletin under the name of the former Club's publication, "The Bulletin of the Michigan Ornithological Club." Monthly meetings will be held at Detroit, with an annual meeting at Ann Arbor in co-operation with the Michigan Academy of Science.

Detroit, Mich.

BRADSHAW H. SWALES.

We heartily welcome to active work this sister organization which did so much for Michigan ornithology during its former activity. We predict for it a future full of valuable results.

The following announcement of Dr. Elliott Coues' Revised "Key" is of interest to all:—

Messrs. Dana Estes & Co. announce that the fifth revised edition of the "Key to North American Birds," by Dr. Elliott Coues, so long and patiently awaited by the public, will be ready in the spring

of 1903. The reason for the unusual delay in its publication may be briefly stated. When Dr. Coues died in 1899 he left the manuscript wholly finished, but the copy was rendered hard to decipher without the exercise of most intelligent care by reason of innumerable interlineations, erasures, abbreviations, "riders," and detached notes, written in a minute and sometimes difficult handwriting. It was evident that had the Doctor lived he would have cast his material, although entirely complete as he left it, into a form which would present fewer difficulties to the compositor. His sudden death left the copy in such shape that the task of revision and preparation for the press required double the amount of work that had been anticipated. The publishers, however, have had the good fortune to obtain the services of a thoroughly equipped ornithologist, who has read the proof with the most painstaking care, which has been ably supplemented by the efforts of a number of professional proof readers. The result is a book which Dr. Coues would have been proud to own as the crowning work of his life. The publishers announce it as being absolutely authoritative and definite, and express confidence that it is entirely free from errors of statement or form.

Some of the features which will make the work more than ever indispensable to ornithologists, professional as well as amateur, may be briefly summarized:

1. The detailed, careful, descriptions of species—as in former Keys.

2. The accounts, much fuller than in former editions, of the breeding habits of birds—dates, nests, and particularly the detailed description of eggs, with careful measurements of same.

3. The full collation in the text (not an appendix as in former editions) of the nomenclature of species in the Key, with the nomenclature and numeration of the American Ornithologists' Union Check List (of especial help to students).

4. The full synonymies and bibliographical references in the case of nearly all species—a new feature of the Key, and invaluable to students of all degrees of advancement. To the preparation of this important feature of the last edition of his Key, Dr. Coues brought his rare gifts as bibliographer and nomenclator. The amount and painstaking character of this work makes it possible for the student to extend with ease his researches in the case of a great many species.

5. The professional discussion of questions of classification and nomenclature by perhaps the most eminent of modern ornithologists.

6. The introductory (i.e., general) descriptions of ordinal, family, and other groups, are much amplified over those in preceding editions of the Key, being of a broader scope, which make plain the comparative relationships of North American families, genera,

and species of birds, with extralimital forms (Old World and Neotropical). This broad treatment makes of the Key more than the merely faunal work which its title would imply— i.e., while it is still emphatically a Key to North American Birds, it contains more than ever in the past, much general information in regard to birds.

7. An invaluable feature of preceding editions—the scholarly explanation of the etymology of scientific names—is retained, and will continue to make the key unique among works of its class.

Throughout the Key—in all departments, life histories, descriptions, etc.,—Dr. Coues' famous descriptive powers are fully displayed as in the past.

A BIRD RESTAURANT AND OTHER NOTES.

As usual I've been running a daily lunch counter just outside my west windows on an elm tree. Every day there come to it many times Brown Creepers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Red-bellied, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Cardinals (I am feeding in the chicken yard four pairs of Cardinals, while over the fence in the corn field 9 Bob-whites are my guests), Carolina Wrens, Tufted Tits, and Chickadees, while at intervals Juncos and Song Sparrows gather up the crumbs. I find that the Red-bellied Woodpecker likes walnuts and butternuts best of all, the other two eat nothing but the suet. The Nuthatch, Tufted Tit and Chickadee probably like the nuts best, but they are almost equally fond of broken oyster crackers. Suet seems to suit the Brown Creepers. I have had eleven birds at once waiting their turn. December 14th a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was close by for a half hour..

January 7th the first Robin. January 25th we saw a Crow and a Flicker. But our crowning triumph on last Sunday was a *Mimus polyglottos*! A sure enough Mockingbird. We were three miles north of town, ground covered with snow, temperature about 40°. Arrick first saw it in a tangled thicket through which ran a stream of water, and as it flew, we both took it to be a strike. We actually killed it for fear our veracity might be questioned, and ever since we have regretted it. I'm awfully sorry that bird isn't alive and well, for what untold pleasure we might have had, as spring opened, with its song among the blossoming hawthorns. I won't do it any more.

C. H. MORRIS, McConnelsville, Ohio.