

THE WILSON BULLETIN

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

Edited by **LYNDS JONES.**

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Editorial

The report of the Secretary of the Bird Branding Association at the Cambridge meeting of the A. O. U. emphasized the importance of bird branding as a means of determining bird movements. The report clearly showed that the bands worn by the birds in no way imperiled the life of the bird. We of the United States are far behind Europe in this important line of investigation, but if every person who can do so will undertake to place bands upon birds when opportunity offers, we shall soon be abreast of the Europeans. This is a plea for more banding, and it is addressed to you.

The policy of the editor of this Bulletin is to publish only articles of high standard, field notes of interest and value, and reviews which will attempt to give a resumé of the publication reviewed with constructive rather than destructive criticism. That the editor has failed to realize his high standard goes without saying. It has sometimes been due to a desire to encourage some beginner to better effort, sometimes to good nature or a shrinking from giving pain in a refusal, and many times to a dearth of material such as he ought to have at hand to choose from. He expects to hold more nearly to his ideal, beginning with the 1913 volume. An acceptable

article should contain some contribution to ornithological knowledge. Acceptable notes should contain some information. Personal notices should be of general interest. Prospective contributors who bear these matters in mind before sending contributions, and making sure that the matter to be submitted conforms to them, will save the editor embarrassment and valuable time.

Winter conditions have probably set in, as far as the birds are concerned, the country over. Bird studies ought not to be permitted to lapse because the birds are few and the weather cold. Certain problems connected with bird movements must be worked out during the season of ice and snow. Is there a sudden influx of birds into your region which you cannot account for? Consult the weather records and determine whether there is not something to be learned of the reason from that source. About Thanksgiving time the whole of the northern part of Ohio was covered with snow except a small area in the region of Oberlin. This clear area was well supplied with birds. Problems like this are of no small interest and value in relation to larger problems of distribution. Last winter was especially noted for the large numbers of Robins which passed the winter north of their usual winter sojourn, and thereby many seem to have perished. Large numbers of Bluebirds also seem to have been killed by the severe winter. Is there anything akin to the same conditions the present winter in your locality?

Responses to the Questionnaire which was sent out to members in November have come in to a gratifying extent. The negative votes on any of the propositions which the Executive Council offered are so few as to be almost negligible. Thus out of a total vote of 70 but four vote "no" on the first and third propositions, and but one on the second. It therefore seems clear that the changes are authorized. The kind expressions which have accompanied very many of the returned blanks indicate a most wholesome and lively interest in the Club and its official organ. These expressions are a vote of confidence in the function and future of the Club which it is good to know of. The net gain of the plan for the forward movement, as we see it, will be an affiliation of the bird students of the Interior of the county into any organization which will have for its object the working out of problems peculiar to the region. It also contemplates personal acquaintance at the meetings which it is proposed to hold at various convenient points. Hitherto there have been no other opportunities for per-

sonal acquaintance than chance meetings, or attendance upon the meetings of the A. O. U. Few persons find it possible to go so far as it is necessary to go in order to be present at the A. O. U. meetings, and it does not seem feasible to schedule the meetings in the Interior at the present time. With the working out of the plan for annual meetings in the Interior everybody will be in sufficiently close touch with some meeting place to make it possible for him to attend. The Cooper Club on the Pacific side, the A. O. U. on the Atlantic, and the Wilson Club in the Interior. We believe that this movement will prove of great advantage to the cause of Ornithology everywhere.

The thirtieth stated congress of the American Ornithologists Union convened in Cambridge on November 11, 1912, in the museum of Mr. William Brewster, at 8:15 in the evening. Routine business was transacted, reports received and members elected. Mr. C. William Beebe of New York City, Edward Howe Forbush of Westboro, Mass., and Louis Agassiz Fuertes of Ithaca, N. Y., were elected Fellows: Frederic H. Kennard, Newton Centre, Mass.; Dr. John C. Phillips, Wenham, Mass.; Miss Althea R. Sherman, National, Iowa; Alexander Wetmore, Washington, D. C.; and Norman A. Wood, Ann Arbor, Mich., were elected Members, and 184 to the class of Associate Members. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, and Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons public meetings were held in the University Museum, when papers were presented. Nine of the twenty-one papers were illustrated with lantern slides, and two others with specimens. It was especially gratifying to see, in a cage, a real live Heath Hen, from the colony on Marthas Vineyard Island, where the last of that interesting race are now being protected and permitted to increase.

The meetings were largely attended, and a wholesome interest was shown. Cambridge is noted for its large number of bird students, and the attendance of those not members gave clear evidence of the truth of this statement.

Many of the members accepted the invitation of Col. John E. Thayer to visit his estate and museum at Lancaster, Mass., on Friday, and were more than repaid by the splendid entertainment afforded by Col. Thayer. No collection in the country can equal the Thayer collection in the number of rare specimens and books which he has gathered there. This visit was a fitting climax to a most enjoyable and profitable meeting of students of the birds.