

The Western Tanager Wintering in Southern California.—A small flock of Western Tanagers (*Piranga ludoviciana*) has spent the winter in the trees on the grounds of the Deane School in Montecito, near the city of Santa Barbara. The situation is a favorable one for birds. An open grass oval of perhaps three acres in extent is completely surrounded by a dense but shallow woods composed of many varieties of trees, pines, cypress, eucalyptus, oaks, acacia, and many others.

The birds arrived in a loose flock early in November and at the present writing (February 10, 1931) are still present. How many birds compose the flock is uncertain, because they usually appear in widely scattered formation. On some days only a single bird is seen at any given time; on other days two or three are noted. One day they seemed to be in the trees all about the grass oval and, from the noise made, gave the impression of a dozen or more active, feeding birds; all were in the tops of the trees. Hardly a day goes by that at least one bird is not heard.

At least three different phases of plumage have been definitely recognized: full plumage with full red head, an intermediate plumage (the specimen taken on the 3rd of February and now no. 1572 in the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History) with but a slight washing of red about the forehead, which, in the high trees, was unnoticeable to the unaided eye, and a full eclipse plumage. Perhaps there are from six to ten birds in the flock; perhaps a few more. The call is the familiar and unmistakable *purr-urr-up*.

One thing that is especially noticeable in these birds is the regularity of their habits; almost every afternoon at about four o'clock a dark bird, in eclipse plumage, takes up its position in an old, low-growing oak at the northwestern curve of the oval and for perhaps half an hour, with but few intervals of silence, gives its call or song. The specimen taken had a more or less clearly defined route through the tops of the higher trees, that it followed more or less regularly as to time, arriving at the Senior Dormitory about nine o'clock in the morning; but this bird was not seen with the same regularity as has been the first mentioned bird. The bird in full plumage, usually in the high tree tops, has not been seen since the first of the year.—E. S. SPAULDING, *Deane School, Montecito, California, March 24, 1931.*

The Most Western Record of the Indigo Bunting.—In a collection of birds obtained for the San Diego Society of Natural History by S. G. Harter, who, during July, 1930, was engaged in field work in the Huachuca Mountains of southern Arizona, is an adult male specimen of *Passerina cyanea* (Linnaeus). The bird was taken well up in Ramsey Canyon on July 13, 1930, and is now no. 13333, collection of the San Diego Society of Natural History. Dissection proved it to be in post-breeding condition and it was evidently on its southern migration. This marks the most westerly point of capture for this species and adds a new bird to the avifauna of Arizona.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, February 25, 1931.*

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The Third Ten Year Index to the Condor (volumes 21-30, 1919-1928) was issued on April 15, 1931. It consists of 152 pages, 146 of which are double-column, in 8-point type. This means that there are 17520 lines; these lines averaging $4\frac{1}{2}$ words, volume numbers and (or) page numbers each, thus include approximately eighty

thousand such items! Think of the work this has meant on the part of the author, Mr. George Willett! This painstaking service has been rendered so as to make easily available to students of birds the information, of great amount and wide variety, which has found published record in our magazine in the third ten-year

period of its existence. These ten volumes contained a total of 2587 royal octavo pages. It is now important that every active, serious bird student have right at hand, for his own full benefit, the results of Mr. Willett's work, done by him gratuitously in the common interest. To this end, orders for copies should be sent promptly to Mr. W. Lee Chambers, 2068 Escarpa Drive, Eagle Rock, Los Angeles.

Mr. James Moffitt, Research Assistant, Bureau of Education and Research, California Division of Fish and Game, is engaged this year in making a survey of the breeding grounds of water fowl in California. With the help of other members of the organization he is also trying to get a fair estimate of the numbers of ducks and geese which are now breeding within the state. All this information will be used in determining practicable ways of increasing the "home-supply" of wild water fowl.

"Familiar Birds of the Stanford Campus" is the title of a booklet that has just appeared from the Stanford University Press (about crown 8vo [120 x 170 mm.], pp. viii + 72, our copy received March 11, 1931). The author, Mr. John B. Price, has planned this book solely, as he states in the Preface, "to help the person interested in birds to learn the names of the more common ones at Stanford and to encourage him to pursue the subject further in the many excellent bird books available." With this worthy aim in view, Mr. Price presents a field key to the common campus birds, brief accounts of about twenty of the more familiar species, some suggested "bird walks", and a list of Stanford birds, the latter "taken largely from note-books of beginning zoölogy students" under instruction of Prof. J. O. Snyder. As a beginner's guide this offering looks to us to promise an unusual measure of success. Incidentally we note that the design of the type used, one "made especially for easy reading while walking, is by Hartley Jackson." This, as far as we can recall, is novel as an advance in book printing, certainly an innovation to be welcomed.—J.G.

Mr. J. A. Munro, Chief Federal Migratory Bird Officer for the Western Provinces of Canada, found it necessary to meet, with facts, the growing complaints of both commercial fishermen and

anglers in his territory against birds of certain aquatic species. To this end, Mr. Munro, and his colleague Mr. W. A. Clemens, undertook a special study of the food habits of water fowl during the spawning season of herring in the vicinity of Departure Bay, British Columbia. The results of this study are set forth in detail in a recent pamphlet entitled "Water Fowl in Relation to the Spawning of Herring in British Columbia" (Bull. No. xvii, The Biological Board of Canada, Toronto, 1931, 46 pp., 7 figs. in text). Much good natural history is given, most interesting of which to us relates to the formation and constitution of pellets in sea-gulls. In conclusion the authors find themselves not justified in urging campaigns against any of the water fowl. In view of the enormous natural wastage of herring eggs and considering also the present great annual catch of herring by commercial fishermen, the specific complaint that the consumption of eggs by ducks has caused a shortage of herring is not substantiated.—J.G.

The Brodie Club, an organization of professional and amateur naturalists in Ontario, has recently issued a four-page publication stating its attitude on some of the controversial points concerning birds of prey. The immediate stimulus for this publication was one on the same subject sent out early in March, 1931, by Mr. Jack Miner. The point of view of the Brodie Club is indicated in the following statements that head paragraphs. "Jack Miner's 'Facts about Hawks' is not based on results of stomach analyses." "Nearly three-quarters of the hawk stomachs analyzed for Jack Miner were of three kinds known to feed largely on birds." "Unfair to condemn 'hawks' on evidence, nearly three-quarters of which was secured from species widely recognized as the destructive minority." "Jack Miner's 'evidence' casts suspicion on only one hawk generally thought to be useful." "Jack Miner's 'evidence' more favourable to some hawks than had been suspected." "Public unaware of Jack Miner's favourable view of some kinds of hawks." "Jack Miner believes some hawks are destructive; the Brodie Club believes some hawks are useful." "Because of Jack Miner's reputation as a bird conservationist, the general opinion that he is opposed to all hawks is very regrettable." "Jack Miner mistaken in saying birds of prey not de-

creasing in numbers; some species face extinction." "Small birds receive almost universal protection; large birds, and especially hawks, are killed on sight by almost everyone who carries a gun." "Mr. Miner's estimate of relative abundance of hawks and small birds obviously wrong." "Our point of view affects the value we place on birds; personal opinions cannot rule." "It is illogical to accuse a hawk of cruelty because it gets its living as nature intended it to get it." These views, it appears to us, are sound. If any Condor reader wishes further information as to the situation in Ontario, he should communicate with the Brodie Club, whose secretary is Mr. R. J. Rutter, 20 The Maples, Bain Avenue, Toronto, Canada.—J.M.L.

Nearly one hundred years ago, discussions were going on, of astonishingly similar character to those taking place right now concerning the use of vernacular names of birds. Let Dr. Stone (see January *Auk*, p. 143) and all the rest of us, present-day debaters on this subject read the following and be chastened! William MacGillivray wrote in 1837: "As to English names, very little needs be said, further than that, were the genera positively fixed, which they cannot be for many years, if ever, it might be well to give them vernacular names, in which case each species ought in like manner to have a distinctive epithet or substantive name. Thus, we shall suppose a genus named *Corvus*, to consist of five species named *Corax*, *Corone*, *Cornix*, *Frugilegus*, *Monedula*. The English generic name being *Crow*, we might name the species *Raven Crow*, *Carrion Crow*, *Hooded Crow*, *Rook Crow*, *Daw Crow*. But in all cases single substantive specific names would be the best: for example, the *Raven*, the *Corby*, the *Hoody*, the *Rook*, the *Daw*. Some person proposes a general meeting of British Ornithologists at London, York, or Edinburgh, for the purpose of determining the English nomenclature of our native birds; but such a meeting, were it to take place, would disperse without accomplishing the object in view, unless indeed its members were placed on the *Bass Rock*, and interdicted fire and food until they had settled all their differences, and sworn perpetual friendship. Even then, some malicious Celt, capable of subsisting a month on dulse and tangles, with an occasional raw limpet or mussel, might hold out until, rather than be starved, the

philosophers should leave the birds to him to do with them as he pleased. In sober earnest, it is impossible to remedy the acknowledged defects in nomenclature, so as to render it universally acceptable. Some persons who do their best to render the subject still more intricate, are extremely sensitive on the point of uniformity; but, in my opinion, however much they who are ambitious of being legislators in this matter may desire conformity to their views, there will always be more to spurn the yoke than to yield to authority, which is gradually falling to its proper standard. In fact, no two ornithologists have ever used the same names for five hundred birds; nor could two be found who should employ the same nomenclature in describing even the birds of Britain. There is really no cause of regret in all this: were there no differences in politics, religion, and science, the world would probably be much worse than it is. I am therefore under the necessity of using my own discretion in bestowing English, Gaelic, and Latin names on the birds which I propose to describe; and I request that my readers scruple not to reject whatever they find indicative of bad taste or bad feeling" (MacGillivray, *History of British Birds*, 1, 1837, pp. 9-10).

WHOLESALE POISONING OF WILD ANIMAL LIFE.—It is with a peculiar feeling of despair that we read the statement of findings summarized by Dr. Linsdale in his article published in the present issue of *The Condor*. His findings show that over one-third the area of California is being subjected to repeated applications of a poison, to kill ground squirrels, so insidious and far-reaching in its effects as to threaten the existence within that whole area of important native birds such as mourning doves and valley quail, as well as, secondarily but even more certainly, of carnivorous birds and mammals generally. And this has been going on, under State and Federal authorization or recommendation, despite our frequent solicitous enquiries of those agencies as to the harm suspected, until a stage has been reached when the malignant situation must be made known to the public through private initiative, in the hope that the practises will be discontinued.

There is a certain administrative type of mind to which the human "use" of all natural resources and the correlated elimi-