

advantage of every opportunity of securing the passage of good bird laws, and the enforcement of the same; and in the instruction of those who are in a position to encourage bird study among the children, and in directing young ornithologists into the true paths of ornithological research.

Respectfully submitted,

WITMER S. JONE,  
*Chairman.*

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### SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

THE SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS of the American Ornithologists' Union convened in Philadelphia, Pa., Monday evening, November 13, 1899. The business meeting was held in the Council Room, and the public sessions, commencing Tuesday, November 14, and lasting three days, were held in the lecture hall of the Academy of Natural Sciences.

**BUSINESS SESSION.**—The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Merriam, in the absence of the President, Prof. Robert Ridgway. Sixteen active members were present. The Secretary's report gave the membership of the Union at the opening of the present Congress as 744, constituted as follows: Active, 48; Honorary, 17; Corresponding, 66; Associate, 613.

During the year the Union lost forty-six members—four by death, thirteen by resignation, and twenty-nine were dropped for non-payment of dues. The members lost by death were John Cordeaux,<sup>1</sup> a Corresponding member, who died at Lincoln, England, August 1, 1899, in the 69th year of his age; also Oliver Marcy,<sup>2</sup> LL. D., Dean of Northwestern University, who died at Evanston, Ill., March 19, 1899, aged 79; Major Joshua L. Fowler,<sup>3</sup> U. S. A., who died on board the Steamer 'Ella,' July 11,

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<sup>1</sup> For an obituary notice, see *Auk*, XVI, pp. 377, 378.

<sup>2</sup> For an obituary notice, see *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> For an obituary notice, see *Ibid.*, p. 377.

1899, while returning home from Cuba, aged 53 years; and W. W. Colburn, of Springfield, Mass., aged 60 years, Associates.

The report of the Treasurer showed the finances of the Union to be in a satisfactory condition.

Robert Ridgway was reëlected President; Dr. C. Hart Merriam and Charles B. Cory, Vice-Presidents; John H. Sage, Secretary; William Dutcher, Treasurer. Charles F. Batchelder, Frank M. Chapman, Ruthven Deane, Witmer Stone, Drs. A. K. Fisher, Jonathan Dwight, Jr., and Thomas S. Roberts, were elected members of the Council. Messrs. W. R. Ogilvie Grant, and Arthur Humble Evans, of England, were elected to Corresponding Membership, and eighty-five new members were added to the list of Associates. As in previous years many of the new Associates were women. The usual reports of Standing Committees were received.

PUBLIC SESSION. *First Day.*— The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Merriam. A letter was read from Miss Juliette A. Owen, of St. Joseph, Mo., an Associate Member, donating \$100 to the Union, to be devoted to any ornithological purpose that might seem fitting to the Council. Miss Owen wrote that the amount sent was about the cost of the journey she expected to take in order to attend the Congress, but was prevented from going. The sum received will be the nucleus of a fund which it is hoped may be secured, the income to be used for the advancement of the science of ornithology.

Mr. Witmer Stone, Chairman of the 'Committee on Protection of North American Birds,' then read the report of his committee for the previous year. The report is published in this number of 'The Auk,' and will be issued as a pamphlet to be sold at a very low price for general distribution.

The reading of scientific papers began by the presentation by Mr. Frank M. Chapman of a paper 'On the plumages of certain Boreal Birds,' followed by 'The Summer Molting Plumages of Eider Ducks,' by Witmer Stone. Remarks followed by Mr. Cory, Drs. Merriam and Dwight, Messrs. Chapman, Rhoads, Palmer, Dutcher, and the author.

The opening paper of the afternoon session was by Dr. Jonathan Dwight, Jr., entitled 'The Sequence of Plumages and Molts in certain Families of North American Birds.'

The second title was 'Three years' migration data on City Hall Tower, Philadelphia,' by Mr. William L. Baily. Remarks followed by Messrs. Cory, Brewster, Saunders, Dutcher, Janney, Batchelder, Palmer, Daniel and Howe, Dr. Merriam and the author.

The third title was 'The Ranges of *Hylocichla fuscescens* and *Hylocichla f. salicicola*,' by Reginald Heber Howe, Jr. Remarks followed by Dr. Dwight.

The concluding paper of the afternoon was by Mr. Frank C. Kirkwood 'On the occurrence of the Egyptian Goose (*Chenalopex aegyptiaca*) in North America.'

*Second Day.*—The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Merriam.

'A Quantitative Study of Variation in the Smaller American Shrikes,' by R. M. Strong, was the first paper of the morning. Remarks followed by Dr. Dwight and the author.

The second title was 'An Oregon Fish Hawk Colony,' by Vernon Bailey.

Next came 'Further Remarks on the Relationships of the Grackles of the subgenus *Quiscalus*,' by Frank M. Chapman. Remarks followed by Mr. William Palmer.

The fourth title was 'A Peculiar Sparrow Hawk,' by William Palmer. Remarks followed by Mr. Fuyertes.

The last paper of the afternoon was 'The Requirements of a Faunal List,' by W. E. Clyde Todd.

Mr. Louis Agassiz Fuyertes then exhibited and explained a series of field sketches made by him in Alaska the past season from absolutely fresh birds. They showed the true life colors of the soft parts, mostly in the breeding season.

At the opening of the afternoon session Dr. Allen read, by request, a letter from Herbert Brown, of Yuma, Arizona, contradicting certain statements respecting the alleged existence of Egret farms in Arizona.

Mr. Witmer Stone then read 'Audubon's Letters to Baird, compiled from copies of the originals kindly furnished by Miss Lucy H. Baird.' These covered the period from the reply to the inquiry of the lad Baird, then of Carlisle, Pa., concerning the identity of a Flycatcher, until after the return of Audubon from

the Missouri River in 1843. The letters are of great historic interest and show the warm feeling of the older naturalist toward his young friend and companion.

The next title was the 'Bering Sea Arctic Snowflake (*Passerina hyperborea*) on its breeding grounds,' by Dr. C. Hart Merriam.

The remaining papers of the afternoon, all illustrated by lantern slides, were as follows:

'An Account of the nesting of Franklin's Gull (*Larus franklinii*) in Southern Minnesota,' by Dr. Thos. S. Roberts.

'Bird Studies with a Camera,' by Frank M. Chapman.

'Home Life of Some Birds,' by William Dutcher.

'The Effects of wear upon Feathers,' by Dr. Jonathan Dwight, Jr.

'Slides—Series of Kingfishers, Gulls, etc.,' by William L. Baily.

*Third Day.*—The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Merriam. Before proceeding to the reading of papers, resolutions were adopted, thanking the Academy of Natural Sciences for the use of a hall for a place of meeting for the Union, and for other courtesies extended; to the Philadelphia members of the Union for their cordial welcome and many hospitalities shown visiting members; to the Zoölogical Society of Philadelphia for its kind invitation to visit the Gardens of the Society; to Dr. W. P. Wilson, Director, for his polite invitation to the members of the Union to visit the Export Exposition; to Governor Pingree, of Michigan, and Mayor Maybury, of Detroit, for their cordial invitation to the Union to hold its next Congress in Detroit; to Miss Juliette A. Owen, of St. Joseph, Mo., for the gift of one hundred dollars to the Union, to be expended as deemed best by the Council, and to Mr. W. H. Wetherell, the owner of the property, for his polite invitation to the members of the Union to visit Mill Grove, the former home of John James Audubon.

As the first paper of the morning Dr. A. K. Fisher made 'Remarks on some of the more interesting birds of the Harriman Alaska Expedition.' The notes of many of the birds referred to were imitated by Mr. Fuertes, also a member of the Harriman party.

The second title, 'On the Orientation of Birds,' by Capt. Gabriel Reynaud, of the French Army was read in part, in the absence of the author, by Mr. Chapman. Remarks followed by Dr. Allen and Messrs. Chapman, Dutcher, Morris, Palmer, and Stone.

Next came 'The Molt of the Flight-feathers in Various Orders of Birds,' by Witmer Stone. Remarks followed by Mr. Chapman.

The fourth title was 'Notes on the Flammulated Screech Owls,' by Harry C. Oberholser. Remarks followed by Mr. Hindshaw and the author.

The fifth title was 'Language of the Birds,' by Nelson R. Wood.

The opening paper of the afternoon session (Vice-President Cory in the Chair) was by Mr. Harry C. Oberholser, entitled 'A New Wren from Alaska.'

The next title was 'Some Cuban Birds,' by John W. Daniel, Jr. Remarks followed by the Chair and the author.

Mr. Louis Agassiz Fuertes then gave, by special request, imitations of the notes of wild birds. Remarks followed by Messrs. Hindshaw, Stone, and Fuertes.

The seventh and concluding paper, 'On the Perfected Plumage of *Somateria spectabilis*,' by Arthur H. Norton, was read in part by Mr. Witmer Stone, in the absence of the author.

Mr. Stone, then exhibited and called attention to numerous specimens of Arctic birds in young plumages collected by Edward A. McIlhenny.

An honored visitor to the daily sessions was Dr. Samuel W. Woodhouse, of Philadelphia, who made explorations in New Mexico and Arizona in the early fifties. Woodhouse's Jay (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*) was named after him more than forty years ago by Prof. Baird.

On Friday, November 17, after adjournment of the Union, at the invitation of Mr. W. H. Wetherell, owner of the property, Mr. George Spencer Morris conducted a party to Mill Grove, on the Perkiomen, the former home of Audubon. Mrs. Morris F. Tyler, of New Haven, Conn., wife of the treasurer of Yale University, a granddaughter of Audubon, was a member of the party.

The next meeting of the Union will be held in Cambridge, Mass., commencing November 12, 1900.

The attendance of members at the recent Congress was much larger than at any previous one. They came from distant parts of the United States and from Canada.

JNO. H. SAGE,  
*Secretary.*

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## GENERAL NOTES.

**A Rare Record for Eastern Long Island.**—On October 7, 1899, I received a fine specimen of the Fork-tailed or Sabine's Gull (*Nema sabinii*). It was shot the day before in Gardiners Bay, between Orient, L. I., and Shelter Island, and sent me in the flesh. It was the only one seen. It was in young-of-the-year plumage, and on dissection proved to be a female. It was in excellent condition, with a thick layer of fat all over the body. The stomach contained an entire cut-worm moth (*Agrotis*), and the macerated remains of other insects, picked up, without doubt, from the water where they had fallen exhausted, having wandered from the land. The above, so far as I am aware, is a new record for Long Island, and the farthest south for the species under consideration.—W. W. WORTHINGTON, *Shelter Island Heights, N. Y.*

**Some Notes on the Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*).**—The evidence that there is no such bird as *Larus argentatus smithsonianus* continues to accumulate. Doubts of the validity of this subspecies have been expressed before, both orally and in print. (Cf. Knight, List of Birds of Me., p. 19; Maine Sportsman, July, '98, p. 13; Journal of the Me. Orn. Soc., Oct. 1899, p. 37). These records refer to the occurrence in Maine of specimens referable to *L. argentatus*, and finally question the existence of any subspecific differences between American and European specimens. While in Portland a short time ago I had occasion to visit the shop of a local taxidermist and noticed a large number of these birds which he had skinned for sale to milliners. After carefully examining fully 100 specimens, which had been shot in Portland Harbor and vicinity, I was delighted to find ten specimens which were, as regards the first primaries, typical examples of *L. argentatus*. Three of the birds had the first primary entirely white at the tip without any trace of a black bar or dot, and the others had the black bar only slightly indicated. Other specimens had the black bar more complete, and a perfect series of gradations could be found between adult birds with