

## REPORT OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE FOR 1962-63

*Van Tyne Research Grants.*—The three awards made were reported on p. 205 of the April issue.

*Review papers for The Auk.*—In order to provide A.O.U. members with periodic summaries of developments in active fields of ornithological research, review articles are being solicited from leading specialists. The first of these, "The water economy of land birds," by George A. Bartholomew and Tom J. Cade was published in October last (*Auk*, 80: 504-539, 1963). A second paper, on avian ethology, by Robert W. and Millicent S. Ficken is now in press. Other articles have been solicited.

*Organization, storage, and retrieval of published materials.*—The body of published information on birds has become so large that no one can pretend to know it; it is currently growing so rapidly that each of us is obliged to specialize closely in order to keep even moderately well posted. One student of the science literature problem predicts an eight-fold increase in the accumulated volume of published data in the next twenty-five years. The problem of how the A.O.U. should meet this avalanche has been a major concern of the Research Committee for the past several years. One approach has been to explore ways of improving the efficiency of the various reviewing and abstracting services and of eliminating wasteful duplication of time and energy. Another has been to examine the new information storage and retrieval procedures being developed by communication engineers.

At the Eightieth Stated Meeting of the A.O.U. in Salt Lake City in August, 1962, the Council authorized the Research Committee to investigate the feasibility of establishing an "information center" for the filing, storing, and retrieval of ornithological data of all types. Two members of the Committee, Drs. Kendeigh and Baldwin, have undertaken such a feasibility study with the cooperation of Mr. Donald Oehlerts and Dr. Franklin Graybill of Colorado State University and with financial aid from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund. At a meeting of this group with Mr. Miles Conrad, Director of Biological Abstracts, and Mr. Paul Janaske, then Assistant Director of the Biological Sciences Communication Project of A.I.B.S., it developed that an ornithological information center of the type visualized might be regarded as a "pilot project" for testing some of the new data storage and retrieval procedures and thus become a candidate for government or private foundation subsidies. Financial assistance of some sort would be necessary, since the cost of establishing and operating an effective program would be well beyond the reach of A.O.U. finances.

The project is visualized on an international scale with services available

to ornithologists everywhere. Specific benefits to ornithologists would depend on the nature of the service sought and the willingness to pay modest service charges. A rapid "print out" of titles could be obtained on any topic requested by an investigator; brief indications of content or published abstracts would be had for any or all titles, where these were available; and finally reprints or photocopies of papers could be obtained as requested. Should such a project materialize it would obviously be desirable to coordinate the activities of the various indexing and abstracting services throughout the world. We invite the correspondence, ideas and help of anyone interested in this proposal.

JOHN T. EMLLEN, CHAIRMAN  
*Zoology Department,*  
*University of Wisconsin,*  
*Madison, Wisconsin.*