

THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine
of Western Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES

We received three responses to our request for someone to compile the ten-year index to THE CONDOR. Messrs. Kaeding, Pemberton and McGregor each separately asserted their willingness to undertake the work, which, by the way, is no easy or quickly accomplished operation, as these gentlemen fully understood. This just shows that there are men ready to work in the cause of Ornithology and our magazine. The ultimate usefulness of a ten-year index to active ornithologists is too obvious to need emphasis here.

By reason of precedence in applying, Mr. H. B. Kaeding was "awarded the contract", and he promises its completion soon after the first of the coming year.

Another problem confronts us, that of financing this index. We should like to issue it free to all Cooper Club members who desire it. This would mean that relatively few copies would be bought, as there are but few sets of THE CONDOR outside of Club membership. In other words we cannot depend upon the sale of copies to pay the cost of printing the index. This expense (about \$100) must be provided for by contribution. The Editor now solicits correspondence relative to this matter.

In view of the kaleidoscopic changes in the nomenclature of our birds it is no wonder that the lay ornithologist has become confused. Articles received by us for publication in THE CONDOR present a variety of scientific names. Those of the 1895 A. O. U. Checklist, without Supplements, are still the ones most commonly employed. Yet the newer rulings of the A. O.

U. Committee are often introduced in greater or less proportion; so that a lack of uniformity prevails in our pages.

The question arises as to the responsibility of the Editor for the scientific names employed in the articles. It seems to us there should be uniformity. Sometimes we are requested to bring the nomenclature of the article submitted up to date, and this we try to do in such cases (to the best of our knowledge). But in other instances, it would be the extreme of officiousness for the Editor to modify the names in any way. Thus we are in a quandary. As soon as the new A. O. U. Checklist appears (early in 1909), we shall ask our contributors to conform to its nomenclature exactly, except in special cases where they have critical reason to differ. But until then, chaos will probably continue to prevail.

A great deal of nonsense has been written of late in support of bird protection. The cause is worthy enough. But we doubt the ultimate efficacy of bland mis-statement. So often the decrease or disappearance of game and song birds is laid to the "greed of the sportsman", or to the pot-hunter and his "quest of the almighty dollar." These are doubtless destructive factors in some cases. But the present status of the buffalo or of the passenger pigeon cannot be laid to that cause, as has been re-iterated. Numerous railroads, fences, stock-ranches, and farms, would altogether prevent the buffalo from existing, with its inherent habits, at the present day. The destruction of the hard-wood forests, on the breeding grounds of the passenger pigeon, removed its food supply.

The rapid settlement of the West is accomplishing mighty faunal changes. The cutting of timber, clearing of brush-lands, drainage of swamps, and cultivation of prairies, are bound to bring about the scarcity or total extinction of many of our native birds and mammals. Others will increase, and new ones will invade our territory as it changes. Perhaps no one factor is having so profound an effect on the fauna of certain parts of California, as the diversion of mountain streams for power or irrigation. But all of this is a necessary accompaniment of the growth of the nation; and its effects upon the native life of the region must be accepted philosophically by nature lovers. It can't be helped, and there is no use of fuming, and calling our fellow men greedy, and commercial, and cruel.

We learn that Mr. John F. Ferry, of Lake Forest, Illinois, returned on June 8 from the Isthmus of Panama, having completed a collecting tour for the Field Museum of Chicago. Mr. Ferry brought home with him a valuable and extensive series of birds' skins and eggs, secured by himself in Costa Rica, Venezuela and Panama. These are now being arranged and classified at the Museum, where Mr. Ferry is assistant in the department of ornithology.

The lateness of the present issue of THE CONDOR is due to the Editor's three months absence in the field, from which it was out of the question to try to handle the proof. From now on our address is Berkeley, California.