

ate knowledge pertaining to this aspect of these than of any other animals. A large portion of that knowledge is unpublished and hence available only for the observers themselves and their few personal acquaintances.

I wish to point out that this kind of knowledge is the very essence of analytical biology. True analysis in science begins with what is "given"—with the original data. Now the data of biology are the organisms, *the plants and the animals as they occur in nature*. We can learn much, very much, about animals by killing them and taking them to pieces to study their bodily parts; but nature does not give us dead animals to start with. They have to be living before they can be dead.

So, too, we can learn much about the ways of animals by studying confined—"tamed"—ones; but these again are not what nature furnishes in the first instance. The study of zoology must per force *begin* with the animals of the forests, the mountains, the plains, and the waters.

To leave generalities and come to practical matters, my main points are: (1) that steps ought to be taken to correlate the efforts of ornithologists and to put their results into more permanent and available form; and (2) that these steps should be taken from the standpoint and needs of general biology as well as of ornithology.

The carrying out of such a project would require much time, thought, labor and money; but the general lines on which it ought to run would seem tolerably obvious. A central board or bureau, not too large, but still thoroly representative, would be needed as the medium for general direction and final finishing-off of the real work, viz, that done in the field by the numerous individual observers.

This "thoroly representative" board would need to be made up somewhat as follows: Of one or more persons whose interests are birds first and foremost; of someone who has made animal psychology and behaviour generally, his main object of study; and of some one of the broadest possible biological horizon.

Besides these elements in the make-up of the board (which might be designated as professional), managerial, editorial and financiering skill would have to be secured in some way; that is, either as combined with the professional elements, or as independent elements.

I believe there are great possibilities in some such scheme, vague and cumbersome as it may look at first sight.

It is, however, not worth while to enter upon detailed discussions until there is evidence that it would appeal widely and easily to students of animate nature. It is too protean an idea to be realized thru the enthusiasm and push of one or a few persons, unless indeed unlimited time and perseverance were among the endowments of such persons.

University of California, Berkeley.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Louisiana Water-Thrush in California.—On August 17, 1908, while passing the time between trains at the station of Mecca, Riverside County, in search of the English Sparrow to determine its western progress along the Southern Pacific Route, I took an adult male of the Louisiana Water-Thrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) on the station ground among the water tank cars. Am I right in considering this a record case for the locality if not for the State?

Mecca is situated in the Salton sink at an elevation (?) of two hundred feet below the sea and within one and one-half miles of the present Salton Sea. The shores of Salton Sea are very bar-

ren at this point. The vegetation of the desert, saltbush (*Atriplex*) and mesquite (*Prosopis*) in scrubby form being the only vegetation noticeable except where the pumping plant of some rancher has made an oasis. At the station yard, however, a four inch well pipe has been sunk to a depth of eleven hundred and fifty feet where an artesian stratum was tapped which forces a gentle flow from the top of the pipe which overhangs the tank car siding. This small but constant leakage has nurtured a small grove of cottonwoods and a very limited tule patch.

The bird was first noted hopping about the trucks and platforms of the tank cars and was finally taken from the timbers of the tank support. The bird gave only its call note but this was heard repeatedly. The actions were those described by Chapman and others as being so characteristic. The teetering action and stout shanks remind one forcibly of the Dippers.

The bird flushed several times and seemed not at all shy tho restless as is its habit. Whether or not the same bird was seen each time is impossible to tell. Time did not permit very extensive or prolonged search after the one specimen was taken. Plumage was complete and testes inactive. The identification I feel to be unquestionable as the bird fits perfectly the careful description and measurements of Chapman in his "Warblers of North America."

It seems quite unusual to find this bird of the southeastern swamp and thicket so out of his sphere as to associate intimately with the Abert Towhee and Leconte Thrasher in the midst of a great south-western desert.

If our esteemed editor can assure me of this being a state record I shall be glad to deposit the specimen with the University Museum of Vertebrate Zoology where I consider such record specimens should be preserved.—LOVE HOLMES MILLER, *State Normal School, Los Angeles, Cal.*

[Yes; the specimen is unequivocally *Seiurus motacilla*, and establishes the first record for the species not only for California, but also as far as I know for the whole of the United States west of the Mississippi Valley. In accordance with Mr. Miller's generous offer, the skin has been added to the ornithological collection of the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, and is number 1105.—J. G.]

Late Nesting of the Green-backed Goldfinch.—On September 24, 1908, I took a set of four fresh eggs of the Green-backed Goldfinch from a cypress tree on one of our city streets, disturbing the parent bird from the nest. This seems to me a remarkable occurrence, as my latest previous date for nesting of the species was July 21.—C. S. SHARP, *Escondido, California.*

The Present Status of the Least Tern in Southern California.—I have noticed this season that the Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) seems to be on the increase at nearly all of the breeding grounds in Southern California.

The colony at Ballona Beach (this is the narrow strip of sand between Del Rey and Ocean Park) is nearly double what it was last year. As nearly as I could count, I should say that there were about 125 pairs of nesting birds. I watched this pretty closely, and do not think that more than ten per cent hatched because of the depredations of dogs mostly, and of small boys. This colony will surely disappear, and why the birds keep coming back I cannot see, as the whole thing (both island and mainland being cut up into building lots) is rapidly being built up with summer cottages. Some of the nests were not more than a hundred yards from the houses.

The Redondo Beach colony seems this year to be deserted. I noticed a few birds flying around, but no nests. This used to be a big colony, but the building of so many houses has driven the birds away.

The colonies at Bolsa Beach and Newport Beach were very thickly inhabited. The birds were there by the thousands, and I found it impossible to count them. The colony at Bolsa Beach is mostly within the grounds of the Bolsa Chica Gun Club and ought to increase every year, as the gun club people allow no one on the grounds. I should say that fully seventy-five per cent of the birds in this colony raised two or three broods.

The Newport Beach colony is split up into two or three main colonies, and this year a new one was started on a lot of reclaimed land. The land company had dredged the channels and filled a salt marsh up with the sand taken out where the channels were cut. This formed a nice white patch of sand and shells where the Terns made themselves perfectly at home. This colony probably succeeded in hatching sixty per cent of its eggs.

Both the Bolsa Beach and the Newport Beach colonies have increased about fifty percent over last year. The electric cars run directly thru the Bolsa Beach colony and the terns get so used to them that they very seldom leave their nests when a car passes.—W. LEE CHAMBERS, *Santa Monica, California*

Subspecific Names in the Genus *Passerella*.—According to the decision of the A. O. U. Committee, as stated in the Fourteenth Supplement (*Auk* XXV, July 1908, p. 395), the Fox Sparrow from Yakutat Bay should not be recognized in nomenclature as different from the Fox