

# THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine  
of Western Ornithology

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## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

Pacific Coast Avifauna no. 5 (Bibliography of California Ornithology) and no. 6 (Ten-year Index to THE CONDOR) have been mailed free to Honorary Members of the Cooper Club and to all Active Members *not in arrears* for dues. If you have failed to receive your copies it *may* mean a mistake on the part of the management, or it *may* mean that you haven't paid up your 1909 dues! Our Business Managers announce that they will not send out either THE CONDOR or Avifauna to delinquent members. Nor will delinquent subscribers receive this magazine longer than one issue beyond the expiration of their subscriptions. This seems a drastic measure, but prompt payments are essential to our keeping above water, financially.

As bearing on a particular case we have in mind, where in a local list a species is published as "undoubtedly occurring" in the region under consideration, the actual records are yet lacking, we quote the following appropriate remarks made twenty-five years ago by Stejneger (*Auk* I, October 1884, p. 359): "Conjectures as to distribution are always dangerous. The next step is, that an uncritical author takes up the statement as an undoubted fact, the assertion goes into other works, and future writers will have the greatest difficulty in tracing it back to its original source. There is no need of extending the

geographical range of a species before actual facts are at hand."

A distinctly retrograde step is that which we understand the A. O. U. Committee has just taken: to retain the apostrophe and "s" in common possessives. This is not a matter governed by any code of nomenclature, and the committee is clearly open to the grave charge of arbitrarily making the ruling (to be followed in the forth coming Check-list of North American Birds) contrary to a consensus of opinion among ornithologists. It will be recalled that we put this very point to a vote of CONDOR readers (which include all ornithologists in America), and it resulted unequivocally in the support of our custom to discard the useless "s." Any lay bird student is just as well qualified to pass judgment upon convenience in vernacular names as any member of the A. O. U. Committee, perhaps better; and the latter should keep in mind the preferences of the majority when preparing the Check-List which must serve as our guide to bird names for probably the next decade.

We regret that certain bird students in Colorado have gone so far in their differences of opinion as to bring in the personal element. In other words, what was originally ornithological has gradually developed into a personal quarrel without general interest, and we have been compelled to refuse space for the latest "communication." We believe large good may result from argumentative discussions, and all such, relating to ornithology, we are glad to publish. But when a controversy, such as the one referred to, becomes merely personal, a magazine with the purposes of THE CONDOR is not the place for its exploitation (excepting as advertising, at regular rates!).

The Hon. Dean C. Worcester, Secretary of the Interior for the Philippine Islands, delivered two popular lectures on birds before the Philippine Teachers' Assembly for 1909. This Assembly is held, during April and May, at Baguio, Province of Benguet, the summer resort of the Islands. Mr. Richard C. McGregor, assistant in the Bureau of Science, Manila, was an instructor at the Assembly, and gave a course in the identification of birds, and the preparation of specimens.

Word comes from Harry S. Swarth, that his explorations in the archipelago of southeastern Alaska are bringing results of unusual interest. Three species of birds have been found entirely new to the avifauna of Alaska; and several hitherto unvisited islands have been found to harbor peculiar associations of bird-life not met with previously.

Wilfred H. Osgood, for nearly twelve years identified with the important work of the Biological Survey, has withdrawn from that institution, to accept the position of Assistant Curator of Mammalogy and Ornithology at the Field Museum, Chicago. His new duties began July 1st.

E. R. Warren is occupied with an all-summer collecting trip thru central Colorado. He reports that his "bird list is growing rapidly."

At the April Northern Division meeting the eggs of the White-throated Swift described in the May number of this magazine were exhibited, and proved a novelty to most of those present. This is probably one of the rarest of Californian bird's eggs. Altho the birds themselves are in many places abundant, the difficulty of access to their nests has usually prevented even a glimpse at the eggs. The set in question, obtained by W. C. Hanna, has been generously added by him to the collection of the State Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Owing to ill health, Mr. Frank Stephens has been compelled to withdraw from field-work, and is again at his home in San Diego. His work up to the end of June was on the edge of the Colorado Desert and in the Salton Sea district.

We wish to call special attention to Mrs. Meyers' article in this issue on the nesting habits of the Rufous-crowned Sparrow. This is an admirable example of a type of work which it is possible to undertake without recourse to a collection or library. Biographical accounts of this kind are still lacking in the literature of many of even our commoner birds, such as the Lazuli Bunting, Black Phoebe, Western Kingbird, etc.

The University of California Summer Session is more largely attended this year than for several years previously. In the course in the Birds, Mammals, and Reptiles of California, as outlined in the news columns of our last issue, there are twenty-two students. The study of birds in the field is exciting particular interest; altho it is not a part of the prescribed work outside time is freely appropriated for frequent class trips.

There is an increasing need for a convenient manual of colors, something after the plan of Ridgway's "Nomenclature of Colors," but more extended. The latter work is long out of print; our own copy, for example, has been put to such good use that it is becoming sadly dilapidated; and there is a fear that some of the colors have faded. Of course the demand for such a work is limited, and its publication could be expected only from some public institution able to stand the heavy cost. Here is an opportunity for some one properly situated to do systematic naturalists an invaluable service.

Mr. R. H. Beck who for the past year has been engaged in securing series of water birds in the San Joaquin Valley for the California Academy of Sciences, is now contemplating a visit to the Hawaiian Islands for the purpose of collecting pelagic birds for the same institution.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Editor THE CONDOR;

There are two matters about which I wish to call the attention of those interested in bird protection. The first is, that the opening of the quail season is far too early in the high Sierras. Previous to September 1st, in the vicinity of Lake Tahoe, I took many tramps thru the mountains studying the birds and their habits. Just a day or so before September 1st I noted dozens of pairs of Mountain Quail with small young which had *just emerged from the egg*. No doubt a few also were still sitting on eggs. Yet *two days later the season opened*, and sportsmen from Tallac and other resorts, and also many hunters from the ranches about, were hunting in this very region, viz, Star Lake Canyon, the elevation of which is but little more than that of Lake Valley, which is 6220 feet.

Grouse, while they breed earlier than the quail in this region, are not always fully grown by September 1st either, as I observed juveniles at Mountain Meadows, elevation about 7500 feet, on August 24th. I feel that what is true concerning this region applies to the entire length of the Sierras, and as these birds are principally found only in the higher ranges I think for their protection, and for the ultimate benefit of the sportsman as well, the season for Mountain Quail should begin October 1st, and for Grouse, September 15th. I have always been puzzled to know why the season for these birds opens so much earlier than that of the Valley Quail which breeds considerably earlier than they do.

My experience has led me to believe that dogs on the Farallone Islands do more injury to the bird colonies there than any other agency. As other visitors to the islands have reached the same conclusion it seems that something should be done to have a law framed prohibiting any one with dogs landing on the island and prohibiting the keeping of any dogs or cats by those residing on the island. As they are all government employes it seems to me it would not be a very delicate matter. It may even be that at the present time no dogs are kept there, but most people going to the islands have found one or more. During my visit the dog kept by Keeper Kineen did untold damage to the colonies of almost every