

# THE CONDOR

A Magazine of  
Western Ornithology

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## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

With this, the last issue of the year, THE CONDOR concludes its fourteenth volume. Only one preceding volume (1908) has numbered more pages. As for quality of contents we leave the reader to judge. The point in mind is to suggest to all Cooper Club members as well as subscribers that their regular cash contributions are now payable. Remember that early remittances save the Business Managers from much clerical labor. And this means that commensurately more attention can be given to ways and means for further growth.

As for the Editors, their dream is to secure for the coming year the same high standard of articles that have predominated in the present volume. We hope to be able to print illustrated life histories of as high merit as Rockwell's Barr Lake series. There are yet birds of unknown nesting habits which should not be left for Ray alone to exploit! Authoritative faunal lists in moderate proportion are of value as basis for the distributionist's studies. Above all, we invite "Field and Study" notes. Here we get variety of topic and concise treatment. The "Field and Study" department is read by more people twice over than any other part of our magazine. This statement is based upon assurances from many sources. Reviews, communications, and matter for news notes all go to make up the Editorial stock-in-trade. Practically all the material necessary to make a CONDOR must come from the contributor at large. Therefore let those Cooper Club members fortu-

nately situated in respect to such resources remember the Editors early and often.

Sanely administered conservation of natural resources is a much-to-be-desired consummation. This cannot, however, be brought to a satisfactory realization until popular opinion is educated still farther beyond the primitive notion of "everything for today." Certain phases of the bird-life of the west are disappearing at an alarming rate, far faster than is consequent upon the settlement of the country. The proper restriction of hunting privileges must be legalized at once, if certain of our shore birds and ducks are to be saved at all. We would call serious attention to these subjects as discussed in subsequent columns of the present issue. The Club is fortunate in having so energetic an exponent of conservation as W. P. Taylor, chairman of the Northern Division committee. It will require the combined efforts of very many of like industry and enthusiasm to offset the influence of the gunner, when it comes to securing state legislation of an effective sort. This we must obtain *immediately*, or be compelled to witness the complete extermination of many of our native game birds.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### THE BIRDS OF COLORADO

Editor THE CONDOR:

Perhaps you will kindly allow me a few words in reply to Mr. W. W. Cooke's review of the "Present Status of the Colorado Check-list of Birds." I should like, however, first to thank you and all other of my American ornithological friends for your kind reception of my recently published work on the Birds of Colorado. The time I spent in Colorado was comparatively short, so that I was very much dependent on my friends and correspondents for local observations; but I had the advantage of the very fine collection of Colorado birds made by Mr. C. E. Aiken on which to base my descriptions, and in this way was able I hope to bring to light a good many new facts and at the same time to prepare a work which will always be useful to the Colorado bird-lover.

Mr. Cooke enumerates first of all thirteen species included by me but not by him in his most recent list of Colorado birds (*Auk*, 1909, p. 400); of these he admits six as valid and rejects seven. In regard to these:

*Phalaenoptilus nuttalli nitidus*. This species I only retained in deference to the A. O. U. Check-List; I agree with Mr Cooke that it is probably only a color phase of *P. nuttalli*.

*Otocoris alpestris enthymia*. I regard this species as a very doubtful one. I would not have recognized it had I been certain of the A. O. U. Committee's final decision in the matter; but the new edition of the Check-List did not appear till some time after my manuscript was corrected, and I confess I overlooked the fact that Oberholser's subspecies was omitted.

*Agelaius phoeniceus*. In my account of this bird I gave after the description some account of the various prevailing views of authorities on the difficult question of the subspecies of Red-winged Blackbirds in the state.

*Loxia curvirostra*. I was much struck by the great size of the bill of the pair of Crossbills obtained by Aiken in El Paso County. I felt that they must be referred to the larger form known as *L. c. stricklandi*. I see no reason why in the case of a great wanderer like the Crossbill the Mexican form should not stray as far north as Colorado along the Rocky Mountains.

*Astragalinus psaltria*. I have not come across any "conclusive proof" that the three forms of this goldfinch are color phases due to age. In the typical form generally found throughout Colorado the back is olive green, in the Mexican form the back is black; but I see no evidence that the Colorado subspecies eventually with age becomes black. I think the occasional occurrence of the more southern Mexican form in Colorado is quite conceivable.

*Protonotaria citrea*. I understood from Mr. Felger that he was quite satisfied that this species had occurred in Colorado.

Of the fifteen birds included by Mr. Cooke in his list, but omitted by me, eleven are mentioned and discussed in the text, though not admitted to the formal list; but I must plead guilty to omitting *Phalaropus fulicarius*, while it would perhaps have been more logical to admit the Pheasant if the English Sparrow is included.

Finally Mr. Cooke mentions a number of birds which I have excluded from my list of breeding birds. In drawing up my list I purposely did not include birds which have only been recorded from the state on one or two occasions; these were placed in the list of casuals. I have not kept birds in the breeding list, although seen several times in summer, unless very definite evidence of breeding is forthcoming.

Yours, etc.,

W. L. SCLATER.

London; September 6, 1912.

#### INTRODUCED BIRDS OF NEW ZEALAND

Editor THE CONDOR:

Today I received a copy of THE CONDOR, which you were kind enough to send me, and I read with deep interest your remarks on the Chaffinch at Monterey. I quite agree with your note of warning in regard to this English bird. From the very unfortunate experiences we have had in New Zealand, I can say without hesitation that people in your country ought to exercise the utmost

care in regard to English birds that are brought in.

I am an ardent bird-lover—I love them all, even those with the most objectionable characters—but I must confess that many of the English "interlopers," to use your own word, have proved disastrous failures in this country.

This is the case with some birds which were brought here purely in a spirit of sentiment, notably the skylark, the song-thrush, and the black-bird. They are great pests. We now have a law here prohibiting the importation of any foreign birds without the sanction of a Minister of the Crown. The latest attempt in this direction is the Little Grey Owl (*Athene noctua*), which was brought here to deal with the sparrow and other small birds previously introduced, and which, I am afraid, will have a bad effect on our interesting native avifauna, which, late in the day, we are making a frantic effort to preserve.

Yours truly,

JAS. DRUMMOND.

Christchurch, N. Z.; July 17, 1912.

#### THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATED SOCIETIES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WILD LIFE.

The following is a copy of a letter recently sent out to the officials of eleven organizations in the State of California:

"Dear Sir:

"It is urgent that vigorous action be taken immediately if it is desired to save the remnant of wild life yet remaining in the State of California. Many native species are suffering a rapid decrease in numbers through several causes, while the ranks of the Army of Destruction receive constant augmentation year by year.

"The Committee on Conservation of Wild Life of the Cooper Ornithological Club (Northern Division) is convinced that the formation of a centralized organization would be beneficial to the cause of saving this natural resource, and hereby asks your society to consider the advisability of the formation of such an association. We therefore request answers to the following questions:

"(1) Do you favor an intelligent conservation policy with regard to wild life, that the best interests of the farmer, sportsman, nature-lover, and citizen be guarded?

"(2) If so, would your organization be able and willing to be represented at a meeting to be held soon in this vicinity (San Francisco Bay region) to consider the most effective method of securing enlightened legislation along this line?

"Inclosed find list of societies with whom we are communicating as well as a tentative constitution for the associated societies.