

California Associated Societies for the Conservation of Wild Life:

An organization like the Associated Societies suffers a considerable handicap at best through the lack of coordination between the organizations and individuals making it up, this lack of coordination being the result of the spatial dispersment of the membership, and of the absence of a medium such as an official publication to keep each individual member fully informed. It is hoped that the publication of this report in the organs of the constituent societies will, in a measure eliminate this disadvantage.

As to the work of the Associated Societies: At the meeting of the Executive Committee, held December 19, a particular program of improvement along wild life conservation lines was decided upon. This program emphasizes the "no-sale of American-killed wild game" law, and the putting of assistants and wardens of the State Fish and Game Commission on civil service basis, as of supreme immediate importance.

Hundreds of letters have already been sent out; many of these requesting donations of money to be used to carry on the work; others to persons of influence throughout California, as a means of getting them to work with us; and others to legislators, calling their attention to the alarming decrease in our native fauna, and requesting their best attention to the field.

A news letter on "No Sale of Game" has recently been printed and sent out to a hundred of the most influential newspapers in California. Other news letters dealing with other phases of the work will be dispatched as finances permit.

As was anticipated, powerful selfish interests oppose us. The San Francisco hotel men, who would feel the effect of a no-sale law, have already stimulated the kept press to do their bidding. If we can get the facts to the people, there is no question of the result.

We can get the facts to the people if we are given the necessary finances.

Shall we permit California's fields, marshes, and forests to become devoid of all animal life? Shall we stand for the destruction for profit of our wild life, one of California's most attractive features?

The Associated Societies must answer these queries with a decisive "No!" and must be able to follow up the negative with a vigorous and able demand for constructive legislation.

You can help—(1) by becoming an islet of information along this line, (2) by awakening enthusiasm in wild life conservation, (3) by keeping track of your representatives in the State Legislature, and last but not least

(4) by seeing to it that your society makes a donation to the war chest of the Associated Societies, and by making a donation personally if you are able to do so.

Here is the challenge. The enemies of wild life—the men who put the dollar above all else—are united and have powerful financial ability. Will you accept the challenge, and enlist in the Army of Defense?

The aim of the Executive Committee is to weld the California Associated Societies into a powerful and effective fighting machine. The assistance of each constituent society, and so far as possible, of each member, is earnestly desired.

Respectfully submitted in behalf of the Executive Committee.

W. P. TAYLOR.
Secretary-Treasurer.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

FOOD OF OUR MORE IMPORTANT FLYCATCHERS, by F. E. L. BEAL (U. S. Dept. Agric., Bureau Biol. Surv., Bull., no. 44, 67 pages, 5 pls; Sept. 19, 1912).

The flycatchers are to be numbered among the birds which are almost wholly insectivorous. Their economic value, measured by their destruction of injurious insects, is, therefore, very great. The above cited recent bulletin of the Bureau of Biological Survey, by F. E. L. Beal, records the food of seventeen species of flycatchers, and proves their value as allies of the farmer and horticulturist.

In discussing the food of the Arkansas Kingbird, Mr. Beal says: "Honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) were noted in 5 stomachs. In all, there were 31 bees, of which 29 were males, or drones, and 2 were workers. This bird has been accused in California of eating honeybees to an injurious extent. It was said that the bird lingered near the hive and snapped up the honey-laden bees as they returned from the field. This statement is not borne out by the facts stated above."

Even granting that much of the complaint received from bee-keepers is based on circumstantial evidence it still seems reasonable to believe that this bird takes larger numbers of the workers than the evidence would indicate. Many bee-keepers complain bitterly that kingbirds destroy queens as well as drones. As many make a business of raising queens for the market their loss can easily be reckoned in dollars and cents. The fact that queens look and fly more like drones makes this complaint seem reasonable. Looking at the same question from another point of view: Stomach examination may not furnish accurate evidence as to the numbers of workers destroyed; for kingbirds, like orioles, may

drop the worker after crushing it in their bill to get the honey.

In the examination of 3,398 stomachs of flycatchers the animal food was found to average 94.99 per cent and the vegetable 5.1 per cent. The presence of a considerable percentage of parasitic Hymenoptera in the stomachs of flycatchers appears to be the one thing that makes their service questionable. However, "weighing as impartially as possible the injuries done and the benefits conferred by them, their good qualities outweigh the bad."

The tables giving a summary of the results of the stomach examinations furnish an interesting comparison of the food of the different species. The long lists of identified insects show careful and painstaking work. Although these lists may be overlooked by most of the farmers reading the bulletin, they give the publication a more permanent value than it would otherwise have.—H. C. BRYANT.

A HISTORY OF THE GAME BIRDS, WILD-FOWL AND SHORE BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS AND ADJACENT STATES, by EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH, State Ornithologist of Massachusetts. (Issued by the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture.) 1912; 8 vo, pp. xvi+622, 36 pls., 26 figs.

Of great immediate, practical use in the swelling campaign against the extermination of American game animals, the book under notice deserves warmest commendation. Its purpose is admirably realized in the scientifically accurate tenor of treatment throughout, combined with the logical and convincing sequence of the subjects as presented.

Here we find just the information needed in regard to the history and in some cases direful fate of Atlantic Coast game birds, and from which lessons can be drawn as to how not to treat our Pacific Coast birds. It is too bad that it is impracticable to secure wide distribution in the west, of Mr. Forbush's work, because of the limited edition and local demands for it. If sportsmen and legislators could but acquire some of the knowledge therein made so clear, a long step would have been taken towards securing proper treatment of our game before it is too late.

It is not possible to adequately describe the book in its numerous useful details, in our limited space; but some of our readers may be interested to know that, as long as they last, copies can be purchased at bare cost price plus postage (\$1.40 in all) by addressing the Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture, 136 State House, Boston, Mass.—J. GRINNELL.

THE PHYLOGENETIC VALUE OF COLOR CHARACTERS IN BIRDS. BY WITMER STONE, A. M.

(Journ. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 2nd ser., xv, Dec. 4, 1912, pp. 313-319, pl. 27).

This brief paper is a *multum in parvo* of first-grade philosophic ornithology. We have of late heard a great deal about the meaning of coloration. Mr. Stone recalls the reader's attention from the various concealing and direct-action-of-environment theories, and invites him to consider some facts more easily explained upon grounds of directive or phylogenetic significance.

Whole groups—genera and even families—of birds possess certain color patterns which occur but slightly modified throughout their members. Other features come and go, but a certain color pattern may persist, to no apparent adaptive purpose. Such a feature surely does show community of descent as much as, and in certain cases, more than does position of nostril or proportions of mandibles.

Attention is called to the over-emphasis often given such "structural" characters as compared with color features, this undue emphasis to be observed in parts of our modern schemes of classification. In some cases it is shown that color features prove more dependable taxonomically than the structural characters currently recognized. But the author refrains in this paper from any specific attempt at revising classification.

Mr. Stone shows convincingly that an extremely promising line of investigation awaits the student who will make a special study of the colors and color-patterns of birds, with problems of genetic relationship in view. The reviewer is not, however, quite ready to agree with Mr. Stone that there is more need of search in the direction of resemblances than in that of minute differences. *Both* are of great value, and equally important, though not necessarily of the same sort of meaning. The well-balanced student will neglect neither.—J. GRINNELL.

THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD OF TESTING THE EFFICIENCY OF WARNING AND CRYPTIC COLORATION IN PROTECTING ANIMALS FROM THEIR ENEMIES. By W. L. McATEE (Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., LXIV, September 6, 1912, pp. 281-364).

This work, reviewing critically the literature of such experimentation, is indispensable to students of protective coloration. The main point emphasized, backed up by abundant evidence, is the danger of drawing conclusions from experiments upon animals in captivity, unless the results are carefully compared with what is known about the habits of the same animals under natural conditions. The evidence seems conclusive that animals in captivity do not re-act to the stimu-