

THE CONDOR

A Magazine of
Western Ornithology

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Cooper Ornithological Club

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The proposition to expand the scope of THE CONDOR, as set forth in our last issue, aroused more interest than we had expected it to do. The straw vote has been responded to at a lively rate, and, as it stood on September 1, is two to one in favor of expansion. However, the tone of expression from the majority voters has been varyingly submissive, permissive or mildly approbatory, while that from the minority comes with vigor, rebuff and even threat of subsequent dire calamity! We had no notion of disrupting our present constituency, even if assured of increment membership to more than offset such defection. Therefore, though regretfully, we hasten to cover with our little scheme, and hereby declare that its consideration in relation to THE CONDOR will be given no further thought by the present Editor. So let our magazine continue on its feathered career unblemished with glint of fur or scales!

The day has come when the collector must take special pains to justify himself in the eyes of the increasingly many who are not inclined to countenance bird-destruction for any purpose whatsoever. Whatever the merits in this extreme attitude, collectors have the situation to face. Undoubtedly the "scientific specimen" argu-

ment is the strongest to be offered. In this connection it does look as though the collector might make more exhaustive use of the birds he kills. To save a well made skin, with accurate color notes, measurements, etc., is good. To save also the stomach, for economic record, is so much more use made of the bird. One long step still farther is to save the skeleton, or whatever portion of it remains when the skin is made up. And this need not now, with a knowledge of lately discovered methods, be the disagreeable, time-consuming task it once was. We would refer the collector to Mr. Holden's valuable article in the present issue, not only for an explanation of the simple processes involved, but for a statement of the urgent scientific need for preserving skeletons of birds.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

THE BIRDS ON BUENA VISTA LAKE, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. By WM. SHORE BAILY. (*Bird Notes*, n s., v, Feb., 1914, pp. 51-57, 2 half-tone ill.; *id.*, Mar., 1914, pp. 79-83, 1 half-tone ill.)

The attention of the reviewer was called to the article here commented upon through Mr. Stone's exhaustive and valuable current index to "Recent Literature" in *The Auk* (vol. 31, July, 1914, p. 427). The reader infers with probable correctness that an English travelling sportsman is here relating some of his experiences abroad, and has dashed down his story with little or no regard for accuracy of form. Severe criticism is deserved on the score of nomenclature alone, for neither the author, nor the editor of *Bird Notes*, has apparently taken the least pains to secure correct determinations. The bird names employed almost throughout the article seem to be taken directly from European literature, just as if California birds had as yet secured no recognition in ornithology. Even so, there are inexcusable blunders in regard to relationships. The nature of the case will be understood from the following selections.

"As the sun rose, revealing my presence in the shadow of land, flocks of Gulls took wing, principally Herring, and Black-backed (identical with our English birds)"; "a few Black-winged Stilts (*Himantopus candidus*) allowed me to get very close"; "Moorhens, mostly in pairs, beat a leisurely retreat"; "a pair of Greenshanks were feeding on a near by mud-bank"; "Bronze Ibis"; "a large flock of small waders" . . . "proved to be Curlew-Sandpipers (*Tringa subarquata*), a little bird I had previously met with in the Isle of Man"; a "mixed flock of Curlew and Whimbrel" . . . included "the Eskimo species (*Numenius borealis*), but the Whimbrels were similar to our European birds"; "Harrier"; "Iceland Falcon"; etc. We are thus presented with about the sort of product a California tourist in Eng-

land might put out, if armed only with our A. O. U. *Check-List!*

From a technical standpoint the publication of the article was a mistake. Historically it might have been of some value, if dates had been given. The vague expression "some few years ago" is hardly sufficient for determining the date of the conditions described. The poor typography and faulty grammar also are annoying.

With all these faults, there yet remain some features which can be commended. It is not difficult, by perusing closely the context, and upon a basis of a knowledge of the species already known to occur on Buena Vista Lake, to interpret nearly every reference with fair confidence into American terminology.

The narrative is interesting and probably very close to the truth as regards the habits and relative numbers of the species encountered. Some life-history notes of decided value are to be dug out of the text here and there by judicious effort. Adequate care in the formalities would have resulted in a distinctly useful product. Unfortunately similar cases are of not rare occurrence nearer home.—J. GRINNELL.

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

SOUTHERN DIVISION

JUNE.—The regular meeting of the Southern Division was held at the Museum of History, Science, and Art, Thursday evening, June 25, 1914. President Law was in the chair, and the following members were present: Mrs. Frances M. Harmon, and Messrs. Colburn, Cookman, Daggett, Huey, Law, Rich, Robertson, Snyder, Stivers, Swarth, Wood, Wyman, and Zahn. Visitors present were Mr. C. O. Reis, and Dr. John G. Sheaffer.

The minutes of the May meeting were read and approved, and the Northern Division minutes for May were also read. New members elected were: Miss Charlotte Bowditch, Santa Barbara, and Dr. Irwin D. Nokes, Los Angeles. A motion was also passed electing to membership those individuals whose names were accepted at the last Northern Division meeting. New names were presented as follows: F. C. Holman, Palo Alto, proposed by Joseph Mailiard; and the following, all proposed by W. Lee Chambers: Harry Harris, Kansas City, Mo.; J. Alden Loring, Owego, N. Y.; Mrs. E. C. T. Miller, Cleveland, O.; Ronald K. Brown, New York; Lionel S. Dear, Fort William, Ontario, Canada; Wm. Purdy Shannon, New York; Jules Labarthe,

Thompson, Nevada; E. S. Cameron, Marsh, Montana; Horace W. Wright, Boston, Mass.

A letter was read from the secretary of the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, inviting the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club to participate in a meeting of the Association to be held in San Francisco in August, 1915. Mr. Law was appointed a committee of one, to attend to this matter as well as to any other details arising in connection with the Southern Division's relations to the Association.

A motion was passed authorizing the secretary to supply the secretary of the Pacific Division of the A. A. A. S. with Cooper Club letter-heads, for a circular letter to be sent out by the Association to the members of the Club.

A motion was made and passed, creating a committee on arrangements, to attend to affairs in connection with the Southern Division's participation in the joint A. O. U. and Cooper Club meeting to be held in 1915. Mr. Law was made chairman, he to appoint two others to assist him, their names to be announced at a later date.

Mr. Huey spoke briefly about some of his collecting experiences of the last few weeks, among other things describing certain peculiar conditions observed among the water birds breeding at Buena Vista Lake. Adjourned.—H. S. SWARTH, *Secretary*.

JULY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Southern Division was held at the Museum of History, Science, and Art, Los Angeles, Thursday evening, July 30, 1914. President Law was in the chair, and the following members were present: Messrs. Chambers, Colburn, Daggett, Edwards, Nokes, Rich, Robertson, Swarth, Welch, Wood, and Wyman. Mr. F. Barker was a visitor. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved, and the Northern Division minutes for June and July were also read. New members were elected as follows: F. C. Holman, Palo Alto; Harry Harris, Kansas City, Missouri; J. Alden Loring, Owego, New York; Mrs. E. C. T. Miller, Berkeley; Ronald K. Brown, New York; Lionel S. Dear, Fort William, Ontario, Canada; Wm. Purdy Shannon, New York; Jules Labarthe, Thompson, Nevada; E. S. Cameron, Marsh, Montana; Horace W. Wright, Boston, Massachusetts. A motion was also passed admitting to membership those individuals elected at the last Northern Division meeting.

The following new names were presented: Carl D. Hegner, Los Angeles, proposed by H. A. Edwards; John G. Sheaffer,