

We learn through Dr. C. W. Richmond that Mr. Ridgway is nearly finished with the Parrots, which, with the Cuckoos and Pigeons, will comprise Part VII of his *Birds of North and Middle America*. The Cuckoos are already in page proof, so that the next volume is well under way.

A special meeting of the Southern Division was called at the Museum of History, Science and Art, Los Angeles, Friday evening, January 22, 1915. Fifty-two members and visitors were in attendance. No business was transacted, the purpose of the meeting being to hear a talk by a fellow Club member, Mr. Joseph Dixon, dealing with his experiences on a recent trip in the far north. Mr. Dixon was a member of a party engaged in gathering natural history specimens on the coast of Alaska. They visited certain of the Aleutian Islands, crossed over to the Siberian shore for a short sojourn, and then east once more to the vicinity of Point Barrow. Here they were caught in the ice and forced to remain until the following summer, the whole trip covering a period of about a year and a half. Mr. Dixon exhibited an interesting series of lantern slides, from photographs taken by himself, illustrating the varying fortunes of the expedition, the character of the regions visited, and certain of the birds and mammals encountered. This lecture constituted one of the most entertaining programs that has been presented to the Southern Division in recent years.

Two new numbers of the Cooper Club's *Avifauna* series are promised for publication in the not distant future. Both are in advanced stage of preparation as far as the authors are concerned. Number 11 will be "A Distributional List of the Birds of California", by J. Grinnell, and will aim to be an up-to-date summary of the nature of occurrence of the 539 species and subspecies of birds now authentically credited to the State. *Avifauna* number 12, by A. B. Howell, will treat of the "Birds of the Southern California Coast Islands". This paper will comprise practically everything that is known concerning its subject, not only distributional status island by island, but extended life-history narrative. The author's personal knowledge of the avifauna of the islands will be reflected in a goodly proportion of original matter.

The Business Managers' report for 1914 recently rendered makes interesting reading for those who like to watch the vigorous growth of the Cooper Ornithological Club. The membership of the Club at the close of 1914 numbered 503, which is 64 more than in any previous year. *THE CONDOR* for 1914 contained 278 pages, being 26 pages more than for any preceding volume. Pacific Coast *Avifauna* number 10 was published during the year at a cost of \$376.11. The edition of this, as also of *THE CONDOR*, was

1000. The full report, as compiled by W. Lee Chambers, goes into great detail; an abbreviated version is as follows:

Dues received during 1914.....	\$1011.67
Subscriptions during 1914.....	227.70
Advertisements	32.00
Sale of Avifaunas	71.88
Sale of back Condors	101.68
Donations	65.00
Refunds	5.61
Total receipts	\$1515.54
In bank January 2, 1914.....	648.36
Total cash assets	\$2163.90
Printing of Condor	\$ 975.18
Engraver's bills	219.28
Expended on Avifauna account.....	437.29
Editorial expenses	22.72
Business Managers' expenses.....	162.47
Southern Division expenses.....	27.85
Northern Division expenses.....	40.70
Sundry expenses	56.55
Total expenditures	\$1942.04
In bank January 2, 1915.....	221.86
	\$2163.90

COMMUNICATION

A NATIONAL BIRD CENSUS

Editor, *THE CONDOR*:

A preliminary census of the birds of the United States was undertaken by the Bureau of Biological Survey during the spring of 1914. The results were so encouraging that the work is to be repeated during the spring of 1915 on a larger scale, and will probably be repeated yearly thereafter in order to obtain permanent records showing the fluctuations in the bird population of the United States. Observers are particularly desired in the West and South and it is hoped that the readers of *THE CONDOR* will be able to render valuable assistance in the campaign for the coming season. Anyone familiar with the birds nesting in his neighborhood can help, more particularly as only about the equivalent of one day's work is needed.

The general plan is to select an area containing not less than 40 nor more than 80 acres that fairly represents the average conditions of the district with reference to the proportions of plowed land, meadowland, and woods, and go over this selected area early in the morning during the height of the nesting season and count the singing males, each male being considered to represent a nesting pair. In the latitude of Washington, D. C., the best time is the last week in May; in the South the counting should be done earlier; while in New England and the northern part of the Mississippi Valley about June 10 is the proper time. The morning count should be supplemented by visits on other days to make sure that all the birds previously noted are actually nesting within the prescribed area and that no species has been overlooked.

Readers of *THE CONDOR* and others who are willing to volunteer for this work are

requested to send their names and addresses to the Biological Survey, Washington, D. C. Full directions for making the census and blank forms for the report will be forwarded in time to permit well considered plans to be formulated before the time for actual field work. As the Bureau has no funds available for the purpose, it must depend on the services of voluntary observers.

Very truly yours,
E. W. NELSON,
Assistant Chief, Biological Survey.
Washington, D. C., February 16, 1915.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

HANDBOOK OF BIRDS | OF THE | WESTERN UNITED STATES | including the Great Plains, Great Basin, Pacific Slope, and | Lower Rio Grande Valley | by | FLORENCE MERRIAM BAILEY | with thirty-three full-page plates by | Louis Agassiz Fuertes, and over six | hundred cuts in the text | Fourth edition, revised | [design] | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin Company | The Riverside Press Cambridge | 1914. Pp. li+570, pls. I-XXXVI, 2 diagrams and 601 figs. in text. (Our copy received December 12, 1914.)

The appearance of the fourth edition, revised, of Mrs. Bailey's *Handbook* is a sufficient attest to its popularity and usefulness. To the average student of birds in the western United States this is the only satisfactory handbook available, and teachers in schools and colleges give it wide use in the classroom and laboratory.

Revision in the present edition consists in the elimination of all the local lists (pages xliii-lxxxii of the original edition, 40 in all) of the original text, the succeeding parts of the introduction being brought forward and repaged to fill the gap, and in the addition of fifty-nine pages (485-544) of new material. This new matter covers the following subjects: "Changes in nomenclature made by the nomenclature committee of the American Ornithologists' Union, 1902-1913" (2 pages), "Species to be added" (3½ pages, with a brief description of each added form), "Species to be eliminated" (½ page), "Birds of the western United States in the nomenclature of the 1910 check-list" (45½ pages, giving the A. O. U. number, the scientific and vernacular names and the range condensed by the extensive use of abbreviations), and "Books of reference" (62/3 pages, supplemental to the original list printed on pp. xlii-xlix of the amended introduction). Thus from the standpoint of nomenclature and distribution the revised edition reflects much more of our present knowledge, while the technical descriptions and the miscellaneous notes by Mr. and Mrs. Bailey and others remain unchanged.

In view of the extensive popular use of the book it is to be regretted that the publishers could not concede to Mrs. Bailey a

complete revision of the book, such as she desired. Certain shortcomings, which could not be foreseen when the work was first published, make parts of the original text difficult for the average student to use. However, a thorough revision is to be expected within the next few years, and until then the present edition, as with previous ones, will very effectively fill the need for authoritative information concerning bird life in western North America.—TRACY I. STORER.

ALASKAN BIRD-LIFE | as | Depicted by Many Writers | Edited by | ERNEST INGER-SOLL | — | Seven Plates in Colors and Other Illustrations. | — | Published by the | National Association of Audubon Societies | New York, 1914 [our copy received November 27, 1914]; 72 pp., 7 col. pls., 5 hftt., 1 map. (To be purchased for \$1.00 at the Office of the Audubon Societies, New York City.)

A splendid idea has here been put into execution—that of making available throughout the schools of a given district a popular account of its birds. No less than 8000 copies of this little book are to be distributed to the school children of Alaska. This benefaction, as we are told in February, 1915, number of *Bird-Lore*, is made possible through private gift for the purpose.

The text consists chiefly of quotations and direct contributions from several leading students of Alaskan bird-life, and insofar as these contributed accounts are rendered verbatim, no criticism can be offered. By far the more important of these contributions come from the pen of our foremost Alaskan authority, E. W. Nelson. His new writings here published are no less virile than those of his Alaskan "Report" of thirty years ago. The colored plates, chiefly by Brooks, are further features of great merit. Let it be understood that, even with the unfavorable comments to follow, the object and, in the main, the execution of this booklet deserve the warmest commendation. It is all the more a pity that a high standard could not have been secured on all of its pages.

Although we are told in the Introduction that "the greatest care has been taken as to accuracy", no less than thirty more or less serious mistakes offend the eye of the reader on the first twenty-five pages. It is only fair to the various contributors to state that these twenty-five pages of matter are chiefly the compilation of the editor of "Alaskan Bird-Life", who thus shows scientific unfitness for the service rendered.

As illustrative of the kinds of errors in evidence, we may point out the following (italics ours): "Among those [of the auk family] breeding in crowded colonies south of the Aleutian islands are the ... crested auklets, marbled, ancient, and Kittlitz's murrelets, ... and the black guillemots"—