

adult bird found by the junior author on September 15, 1921, and a late fall specimen collected by L. M. Huey on October 21, 1919, agree in showing conclusively that the desert race of horned owl is the form found in the extreme southern San Joaquin Valley. Whether *pallescens* has invaded the region in recent years and supplanted *pacificus*, which was formerly supposed to inhabit the section, or whether it has always been an established part of the local avifauna, is a debatable question. But the latter hypothesis seems much the more logical when we consider that this region also supports other typical desert forms, such as the Leconte Thrasher and California Sage Sparrow.

Otocoris alpestris ammophila: The horned larks breeding about Buena Vista Lake exhibit affinities that are distinctly analogous to those which characterize the horned owls of the region, in that they seem related to the form of the Mohave Desert, rather than to *actia* of the more northern portion of the San Joaquin. A series of breeding birds from the vicinity of the Lake do, in a few instances, show a slight tendency in the latter direction, but the great majority are so close to typical *ammophila* as to be referable with certainty to that form. Breeding birds from Corcoran, Kings County, California, in the collection of A. B. Howell, are unqualifiedly *actia*, so that *ammophila*, in the San Joaquin, must be confined to the extreme southern end of the Valley.—D. R. DICKEY AND A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, January 13, 1922.*

Position of Feet in Flight in Certain Birds.—Here are several apparent "rules" in bird life that have interested me for some time, and they are passed on to the readers of THE CONDOR for what they are worth.

1. All water birds in flight extend the feet behind.
2. All web-footed birds, with short tails, spread the toes in flight, the membranes apparently acting as an elevator or rudder. This group includes the murrees, murrelets, auks, and puffins.
3. All perching birds in flight fold the legs forward under the feathers.

All the short-tailed, web-footed birds that I have had under close observation, when getting under way do spread the toes, placing them side by side to form a wide flat surface, which is no doubt useful in flight. By the time these birds may have attained their regular speed, possibly the toes are relaxed, but they are then as a rule too far distant for accurate observation. I am not so certain that loons follow this rule. Grebes, which are lobe-footed, spread the lobe flat out in rising from the water, and, I think, close the toes after attaining full speed.—GEO. G. CANTWELL, *Puyallup, Washington, January 20, 1922.*

Further Remarks on the Occurrence of the Buffle-head at Eagle Lake.—We have read with interest Mr. Allan Brooks's comment on our record of the occurrence of the Buffle-head at Eagle Lake, California. Mr. Ray had received a similar letter from Mr. A. C. Bent drawing his attention particularly to the error in the identification of the young ducks shown in figure 33 of the Condor for November, 1921. It is evident that these are young American Mergansers. We do not wish to take up space unnecessarily in a discussion of this matter, but we believe a further account of the circumstances may be of interest, especially so, as Mr. Brooks has brought up several questions of doubt regarding the identity of the young following the female Buffle-head and also the actions of the male bird.

Mr. Ray and I feel positive that the young following the female are Buffle-heads and we can also vouch for the actions of the male Buffle-head. The error regarding the young ducks shown in figure 33, we believe, should and can be explained by the circumstances leading to their capture. Upon our first encountering the female and eight young, we recognized this as a new breeding duck for this locality and during our efforts to obtain a photograph it was noted that two of the young made several attempts at diving and in this way became separated from the parent. The remaining six kept well up with the parent and seemed to obey each warning. The diving efforts of the two young and the maneuvering of our boat caused a complete separation of the two from the parent and the remainder of the flock.

Several hours afterward, the two young of the photograph were found on the shore of the bay in which the female and young were encountered and not more than 50 yards from the point where the photograph, figure 32, was taken.

As the sizes of the young were apparently the same and no other duck with young was seen in the vicinity, we naturally assumed these were the missing two from the flock. After photographing, we returned these two to the small pond occupied by the female and it was noted that the female immediately began pecking at the two new arrivals. Upon a later observation of the group, we found that the female had only six young, instead of eight, she evidently having driven the two young away from the flock.

At least two explanations are possible regarding the occurrence of these two small young. They may have been separated from their own brood and joined the flock in which we found them, or it is possible Merganser eggs were deposited in the nest of the Buffle-head and hatched. The latter explanation seems the more probable to us on account of the juveniles corresponding in size with the others. It is not uncommon to find eggs of different varieties of ground-nesting ducks in the same nest and, no doubt, the same holds true of tree-nesting varieties as well.

Regarding the occurrence of the male Buffle-head, this bird was flushed from the bay before we were aware of the presence of the female and young. The male returned and was flushed at least twice thereafter from this small bay, and while he showed no particular solicitation for the young, it seemed obvious that he was the parent bird. In any event, he showed a decided preference for the small section of water occupied by the female and young.—JULES LABARTHE, *San Francisco, February 6, 1922.*

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The award of the Brewster Memorial Medal for 1920-21 has been made by the American Ornithologists' Union to Robert Ridgway in recognition of his successful labors on the "Birds of North and Middle America." Every ornithologist will heartily approve of the decision of the committee in charge of the award, that volume VIII of this great work was the most meritorious publication on the birds of America which appeared during the last two-year period.

On January 17, 1922, in response to an invitation from Mr. Charles L. Whittle, Mr. L. B. Fletcher, and others interested in the banding of birds, over 100 persons met at the Boston Society of Natural History Building in Boston and organized a new ornithological society to be known as the New England Bird Banding Association. The meeting was addressed by Mr. S. Prentiss Baldwin, of Cleveland, who during the last six years, by introducing bird-trapping as a means of banding birds, has done so much to show the scientific possibilities of the work. The Bureau of Biological Survey was represented by Mr. E. A. Goldman who spoke of the Bureau's plans in connection with the movement, strongly endorsing the organization of the new association and recommending the formation of other organizations of the same character at appropriate localities in the United States and Canada. Over 300 members are already enrolled in the new organization.

It is becoming increasingly incumbent upon active workers in any field of science to keep up with the times. Each one of us must know the literature appearing in his field. An indispensable aid to every serious

worker is the Zoological Record, published by the Zoological Society of London (Regent's Park). Mr. W. L. Sclater is editor of the "Aves" portion, the annual subscription to which is seven shillings six pence. The publication of the Zoological Record has been continuous throughout the war period, owing to local provision. But now, with greatly increased printing costs, it can be continued on the same plane of completeness only with outside support as well. It is a cooperative enterprise; hence the propriety of this suggestion that each Condor reader who is also a serious student in ornithology contribute to its maintenance by subscribing, at least to the extent intimated above.

The department of zoology of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, has been completely reorganized under the direction of Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, Curator of that department. In the division of birds, Dr. C. E. Hellmayr has been secured as Associate Curator, Mr. John T. Zimmer as Assistant Curator, Mr. Colin Sanborn as Assistant, and Mr. Boardman Conover as Associate. In the division of birds' eggs Mr. R. M. Barnes is Assistant Curator. In the division of mammals Mr. Edmund Heller has been made Assistant Curator. Messrs. Heller and Zimmer are about to leave for an extended period of vertebrate collecting in Peru.

Mr. A. S. Kibbe has recently made some comments in *The Gull* (organ of the Audubon Association of the Pacific) anent bird trapping and banding which to our minds deserve serious consideration. He says: "Trapping is not a diversion nor a spas-