

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The annual roster appearing in this issue shows an active membership in the Cooper Ornithological Club of 816, with honorary 7, making a total of 823 members. This is a three percent increase over last year, and is by that much the largest in the history of the Club.

With this issue of *THE CONDOR* a new department is started, "With the Bird Banders". This department will be conducted under the management of Mr. J. Eugene Law, who is himself vigorously pursuing the fascinating and promising line of inquiry already initiated under the auspices of the United States Biological Survey in many parts of America. We recommend that our readers take particular note of the text on pages 119-120, 140-142, and on outside back cover of this issue.

An appalling condition exists among the water birds at Buena Vista Lake, California, according to word received April 26 from Allan Brooks. Disease, apparently the same that in other years has been more or less destructive to ducks, is now killing waders as well, in countless numbers. Brooks says: "Shore birds are here in swarms, and the sick birds are dying by thousands. Western Sandpipers are here in greatest numbers. With them are many Least and a few Solitary and Spotted sandpipers; also Black-bellied, Semipalmated and Snowy plovers, Dowitchers, Hudsonian Curlew and Marbled Godwit. No dead Curlew or Godwits yet, though they are getting sick. The others are all sick and dying. Sandpipers are the worst sufferers; one dead Western Sandpiper alone per yard of shore is a very moderate estimate. Stilts are nearly wiped out; Avocets almost as bad. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley should be called 'Death Valley', as far as birds are concerned. Is there not something that can be done to mitigate this evil, which grows worse each year?" Of course, the cause is correlated with the reclamation of the watered territories, whereby there are left only a few polluted remnants of the former wide areas adapted to certain bird species. These birds, at critical times of the year, are compelled to crowd into such now unfit places, with resulting enormous casualty. No amount of "protection" will do any good, save as involving the institution or preservation of healthful and appropriate territory for these birds. If that is impractical, as some of the opponents of the recently defeated Federal "game refuge bill" averred, then we have got to simply sit by and watch the continued disappearance of certain types in our avifauna.

A rather interesting and suggestive precedent has been set by the Natural History Museum of San Diego, in placing certain of its most valuable specimens in the fire-proof vault of a bank in that city. The specimens in question are of extinct species of birds (Eskimo Curlew and Guadalupe Caracara), therefore irreplaceable. This arrangement was made possible through the enterprise of Mr. J. W. Sefton, Jr., president of the San Diego Society of Natural History.

Our fellow member, Mr. Frank N. Bassett, has started a summer resort at Jonesville, near Butte Meadows, California, with particular attention to providing comfortable headquarters for nature students. This is at an elevation of 5000 feet, on the west slope of the Mount Lassen section of the northern Sierra Nevada. This region has attractions peculiarly its own, to the botanist, to the geologist, and to the ornithologist.

### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

*ELIOT'S BIRDS OF THE PACIFIC COAST*.\*—The author, Mr. Willard Ayres Eliot, Vice-President of the Oregon Audubon Society, Portland, states in the preface that this little book is "dedicated to the amateur bird students of the West, especially to the teachers and students in our public schools." With this type of audience as the objective clearly understood, many good things can be said of the book, with all sincerity. The volume is so small and light that it goes comfortably in one's coat-pocket. The illustrations are abundant and they are colored; pictures of no less than 118 species are shown, and while of necessity cheaply reproduced, are good enough to help immeasurably in making first acquaintance with the birds in life. The type of the text is clear, on unglazed paper; and typographical errors are gratifyingly few. What is refreshing after certain recent experiences of ours with "popular" books, the English is good. The ornithology is fair,—but here the reviewer, to be consistently honest, must make some comments of an unfavorable kind.

We do not have to read far, skipping here and there, to find slips, inaccuracies, and general statements not justified by detailed facts. Here are some examples: On

\**BIRDS OF THE PACIFIC COAST* | Including a brief account [etc., 7 lines] | By Willard Ayres Eliot | With fifty-six color plates by | R. Bruce Horsfall | G. P. Putnam's Sons | The Knickerbocker Press | New York and London | 1923; 16mo, pp. xviii x 211, illus. as above stated. Copy rst seen by the reviewer May 18, 1923.