

some excitement, too, in looking for species not before encountered. A long series of disappointing visits is well repaid by the sudden sight of an Argus Pheasant, a Kagu, or a Bower-bird.

An exceedingly neat brochure has recently been issued by the Nuttall Ornithological Club, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of that organization. In its early years the Nuttall Club was the only ornithological society in America and included within its membership all those men who were later identified with the inception and early growth of the American Ornithologists' Union and who molded the course of ornithological development during that period. The major portion of the present anniversary volume is taken up with an able address by Witmer Stone, entitled "The Ornithology of Today and Tomorrow." We take the liberty of quoting from this admirable review of questions of the day some expressions of Dr. Stone's opinion in certain matters, with which opinion we find ourselves essentially in sympathy. "Taking up another phase of this subject, we view with alarm the present tendency to *exterminate* so-called pests. The Prairie-dog has been exterminated by Federal and State agents over large parts of Arizona, and now the large Hawks and the Coyotes, which formerly preyed upon them, descend upon the ranches and steal chickens, and the cry goes out for their extermination as well. They have changed their habits! So, too, a deliberate campaign is now being made against the Crow. Yet he is doing no more harm today than he did fifty years ago, if as much. But when we find the powder and ammunition makers at the back of the propaganda, we begin to see light. All these things hinge upon one question: what are we conserving—wild life, or man's dollars and cents? It would seem that anything in nature that adversely affects man's worldly gain must be exterminated—the most dangerous policy that could be adopted! I feel convinced that no species should be exterminated without the most far-reaching investigation,—disease carriers of course must be destroyed, and big game is apparently doomed with the advance of civilization; but in other cases, while man should be allowed to protect his crops and stock against individuals, the extermination of a species should be prevented. The

resultant upset to nature's balance can never be checked; one step brings on another like a falling row of blocks. Here again education is our only hope, and the knowledge must, moreover, be spread by ornithologists, by nature lovers, by bird-banders, for so much of this work must of necessity be carried on as a business, and so much support be obtained from National or State Government, where results are demanded in terms of dollars and cents, that the real conservation of nature is lost sight of."

#### SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE PITTSBURGH MEETING OF THE A. O. U.

This year, for the first time in its history, the American Ornithologists' Union convened for its annual meeting in Pittsburgh; heretofore, almost without exception, New York, Washington, Philadelphia or Boston had been the meeting place. The sessions were held November 10 to 13, 1924, at the Carnegie Museum, and the auspices there afforded proved to be most favorable; the rooms assigned for the gatherings were well adapted in all respects, so that speakers and hearers were able in comfort to get fullest returns on their efforts. To W. E. Clyde Todd, Chairman of the local committee on arrangements, and representative of the Carnegie Museum, is due full credit for insuring that element of hospitality which is so essential to the success of an affair of this kind.

Monday, November 10, was fully occupied in meetings of the Council, of the Fellows, and of the Fellows and Members. Business transacted included the following more noteworthy items: Designation of Witmer Stone as chairman of a new Committee on Nomenclature, with power to select his own committeemen and to apportion the work of the committee as he sees fit—said committee being charged with immediately getting under way the compilation of a new Check-list of North American Birds; election of new members, resulting in the addition of Mrs. Walter W. Naumburg and Mr. Herbert L. Stoddard to the class of Members; election of officers, which resulted in the re-election of the previous year's slate; and selection of New York as the meeting place for 1925. In the latter connection, the Cooper Club's invitation, initiated in the Southern Division, that the Union meet next time in

Los Angeles, was given serious consideration. Although warm cordiality was in evidence on every hand, the consensus of opinion was that very small attendance could be counted upon from the East. It was pointed out that at the Pittsburgh meeting there was only one attendant from west of Minneapolis; the expense and time involved in a journey to so great a distance, in either direction, is with the great majority of members prohibitive.

The following three days, Tuesday to Thursday, were fully absorbed in the presentation of the 54 out of the 56 papers listed on the printed program; only two out of the whole number were read by title only, and an extra one was run in, not originally programmed. In order to permit of the presentation of so many papers, and to allow of general discussion of the more important of them, double sessions were held on three of the half-days. When two sessions were going on simultaneously, the more popular type of paper was being given in the large auditorium, while technical papers were being read in a smaller room. But as it turned out, rather interestingly, the so-called technical sessions attracted quite as large attendance as did the popular ones. Of course, any one person had to pick and choose the type or subject of paper he most wished to hear during a double-session period, and as a result there was a good deal of going back and forth from one room to the other. But by reason of the careful handling of the sessions by the chairmen, under direction of the Secretary, close adherence to the time schedule was secured, and this made it easy to know about when to expect a given paper it was especially desired to hear. The present reporter, it should be said here, was deeply impressed by the efficiency of organization throughout this, the 42nd Stated Meeting of the Union. It happened to be his first attendance upon an "Eastern" meeting; but he is assured by old-timers that this last meeting affords no exception to the rule in this regard.

At this point it should be said further that *the* outstanding advantage in attendance upon such a convocation consists in the opportunity of meeting and becoming acquainted with *people*—discovering personalities. This resulted, in my own case, in altogether new concepts of several American ornithologists. One may have known a person through his published writings for years, and may have gotten an altogether inexact idea of his personality. A printed article may be brusque

in tone, arousing in the reader a feeling of antagonism, when, as a matter of fact, the writer turns out to be a gentle, amiable soul, toward whom one can never after feel resentment. Perhaps the most impressive single figure at the 1924 meeting was Theodore Sherman Palmer, now for several years Secretary of the Union, and upon whom devolved the primary responsibility of assembling the program. Dr. Palmer is vigorous, aggressive, exact, and possessed of a phenomenal fund of detailed historical and statistical knowledge at his immediate command, which makes him of scholarly credit to the organization. He was working continually and obliviously to advance the interests of the A. O. U., directing and expediting the progress of the sessions with tireless energy. Then there was the President, Jonathan Dwight, quiet, unassuming, never taking or giving offense; and John H. Sage, who held office as Secretary for 25 years previously to Palmer's accession, altogether friendly, and earnestly contributing to the maintenance of those traditions which were established at the Union's founding. Frank M. Chapman was another outstanding figure, fluent spoken, gracious, winning warmth of response from even the most distant and diffident of his confreres. But there is not the space here to permit of going farther into "personalialia"!

Although the luncheons served daily at the Museum also gave opportunity for members to visit together, the one specially planned social event of the Pittsburgh meeting was the dinner held at the Fort Pitt Hotel, Wednesday evening. Here we had the pleasure of listening to addresses by such accomplished speakers as Witmer Stone, Louis A. Fuertes, Albert K. Fisher and Frank M. Chapman. Humor there was, in abundance, but also pathos—in that the general tenor was reminiscent, of times long gone by and of ornithologists once prominent in the A. O. U. but no longer with us.

"The Auklet", volume I, number 4, appeared at each place at the dinner and afforded much fun. This brochure, of anonymous sponsorship, holds up for good-natured ridicule various persons, institutions and ornithological movements, past and present. In my estimation it is a very good thing. It is altogether impartial and has a leveling influence which cannot help but counteract any local tendency toward inflation or captiousness. Furthermore, so far as known to the present writer, no one has ever taken offense at any thrust

received; it would be a pity, surely, were anyone to permit himself to resent good-natured criticism. Some of the hits in the present number of the "Auklet" are timely as well as humorous, and really merit more than passing thought. Long live the "Auklet"!

Turning again to the subject of program, it is, of course, absolutely impossible to pick for special mention many out of the great number of papers that were presented. My personal impression was that the majority of the papers on the program were eminently worthy; only now and then a paper, possibly not one in five, could be queried as to its being worth listening to. Charles W. Townsend's paper on "Egging and the Conservation of the Herring Gull" impressed me as of more than ordinary practical value. It brought out the point that certain colonies of sea birds would probably do better under commercial control than under absolute protection of the sort that has resulted from the zealous activities of the Audubon Societies. He showed that lessees of a breeding ground would, for example, in their own interests do away with the surplus of gulls and thus would give chance for the increase of other species of birds which are now suffering from an over population of these predators. The effects of gathering two or three layings of Murres, for instance, could be offset by reasonable control of their enemies.

Edward Howe Forbush answered the query "Is Migration Affected by Weather Conditions" in the affirmative. He showed how cyclonic storms serve to scatter migrating birds literally to the four winds; birds are lifted, in the center of the vortex (which itself, along the Atlantic Coast, travels north from the tropics), and reaching great heights in the atmosphere, then drift centrifugally to settle in all sorts of unexpected northern localities. The occurrence of southern strays, of even resident species, far northward is thus accounted for.

A paper which provoked a great deal of animated, even heated, discussion was that by Charles P. Shoffner on "The Status of the Crow". Mr. Shoffner is a member of the staff of a farm paper with large circulation. Questionnaires had been sent out as to the local status of crows, with results altogether unfavorable to the species. In discussion, W. L. McAtee called attention to the human, psychological factors in such a method of appraisal, which method he properly designat-

ed as unscientific. Incidentally, he pointed out that the beneficence of crows in the early summer might be extended by destroying the first brood of young, so that a second brood would serve to lengthen the insect gathering period, and this at a time when the service is most needed by the farmer!

I was under the impression that the acme in perfection of bird photography had been reached some time ago. But certainly the exhibition of both stills and movies of birds at the Pittsburgh meeting included examples ahead of the best previous productions. The efforts now are increasingly to illustrate significant occurrences in life habits or behavior, not to get sharp pictures merely. A little inferior, old-style work got onto the program, but this served good purpose in bringing into contrast the high-grade new work. It is difficult to single out for mention as the best, any one of the many good pictorial studies of birds shown. The following were at least among the most meritorious: Arthur A. Allen's "A Search for Vanishing Birds" and "Bird Life in Texas and Florida"; Harrison F. Lewis and P. A. Taverner's "Canadian Sea-Fowl"; Norman McClintock's "A Robin Study and the Spring Dance of the Heath Hen"; and Alfred O. Gross's study of the Ruffed Grouse.

The best technical papers presented, those having to do with distribution and classification, related to South America and Africa, and were contributed chiefly by the delegation from the American Museum of Natural History. The paper by James P. Chapin on "The Breeding Seasons of Birds in Tropical Africa" showed marked originality. One circumstance which seemed to me regrettable was that the highest grade of systematic and geographic research thus now pertains to territory elsewhere than in North America or the United States. Surely preponderant human interest would pertain to such studies, which it would seem could be made quite as well on materials here as elsewhere, if they had to do with the territory immediately surrounding us. Alexander Wetmore's contributions to avian paleontology demonstrated anew his pre-eminence in this field.

The prominent part taken by bird banders on the program attested to the popular appeal of this relatively new avocation, which in a way is supplanting the egg-collecting and bird-shooting of a generation ago. Whatever may prove to be the

measure of realization upon the rather generous claims for scientific importance now being made for it, there is no question that bird banding affords an advantageous objective for out-door recreation—one which is stimulative to the powers of observation and induction.

Besides the program of papers, a hardly less attractive feature of the Pittsburgh meeting was the exhibition of paintings by American bird artists. An entire gallery of the Carnegie Institute was devoted to this display, to which no less than 32 different persons contributed. There were upwards of 150 drawings and paintings, of which some of the particularly noteworthy were as follows: Scoters, by Frank W. Benson; Canvas-backs, and Black Ducks, by Courtney Brandreth; Sketch of Golden Eagle, by Paul Branson; Golden Eagle and Ptarmigan, and Sparrow Hawk, by Allan Brooks; Black Ducks and Canada Geese, by Louis Agassiz Fuertes; Gyrfalcon and Harlequin Ducks, and Sharp-shinned Hawk and Woodcock, by Lynn Bogue Hunt; Scaups, by F. L. Jacques; Screech Owl, by H. Emerson Tuttle; and Great White Heron, by George M. Sutton. The latter, so I overheard an eminent artist remark, was perhaps the most original and striking in concept and execution of the whole exhibition.—J. GRINNELL.

## MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

### NORTHERN DIVISION

OCTOBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club, Northern Division, was held at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, at 8 o'clock, October 23, 1924. President Dixon was in the chair and the following members were present: Misses Fisher and Wythe; Mesdames Grinnell and Mead; Messrs. Borell, Bourne, Bunker, Clabaugh, Dixon, English, Grinnell, W. Grinnell, Hall, Hunt, Lastreto, Mailliard and Simpson. Mr. and Mrs. Law were visitors from the Southern Division, and eight non-members were present.

Minutes of the Northern Division for September were read and approved. Minutes of the Southern Division for September were read.

The following names were proposed for membership: Mary P. (Mrs. H. B.) Mikesell, 1633 Addison Street, Berkeley, by Margaret W. Wythe; Mrs. Loretta B. Keeler, Box 471, King City, by J. Grinnell.

The resignation of Miss M. Pamela Clough was accepted with regret.

Mr. Mailliard reported the occurrence of the Golden-crowned Sparrow, the Rufous Hummingbird and the Western Tree Sparrow in Modoc County in September, and Miss Wythe announced that she had recently seen the White-throated Sparrow and the Black-and-white Warbler on the University Campus.

The program of the evening was given by Mr. J. Eugene Law, of Altadena, who has charge of bird-banding on the Pacific Slope for the Bureau of Biological Survey. Mr. Law presented "Some Results of Bird Banding in the West." Although stating that the primary object in the fostering of bird banding has been to obtain data on the migratory movements of birds, Mr. Law suggested that many interesting lines of inquiry will occur to the bird student who traps and bands birds. Among these are the working out of the speed of ossification of bones of young birds by banding nestlings and later retaking them; the study of the effects of parasitism upon nestlings; the molts and plumages of the individual; and the local shifting of bird populations. Since chicken feed is the bait most often used in traps, grain-eating species are most apt to be taken; but if the traps are baited with cotton during the nest-building season of birds, other kinds may be secured.

Mr. Law's talk proved to be of great interest to Club members, and at its close all examined appreciatively the traps on exhibition and the note-book records shown.—HILDA W. GRINNELL, *Secretary*.

NOVEMBER.—The November meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club, Northern Division, was held at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, at 8 o'clock, November 20, 1924. President Dixon presided and the following members were present: Misses Beaman and Rush; Mesdames Bamford, Grinnell, Schenck, Schlesinger and Mikesell; Messrs. Badè, Borell, Bryant, Carriger, Clabaugh, Cooper, Dixon, English, Evermann, W. Grinnell, Hall, Hudson, Kibbe, Labarthe, Lastreto, Mailliard, Simpson, Schenck and Swarth. Visitors were: Mesdames Cooper, Evermann, Hudson and Swarth, and Mr. Mikesell.

Minutes of the Northern Division for October were read and approved. Minutes of the Southern Division for October were read.

A communication was read from the International Congress for the Study and