

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

A section of the ornithological field on the Pacific Coast now unoccupied is that dealing with migration. There is badly needed a leader for the development of this subject, someone gifted to handle vast masses of facts systematically and accurately. The problems here are doubtless not altogether the same as those east of the Rockies, where practically all of the American work on migration so far has been done. Here in the West we have the factor of altitude complicating the influence of latitude. It is even possible that certain currently held theories of migration would be upset by conclusions from studies in the topographically diversified West.

The annual Cooper Club "roster" appearing in this issue of *THE CONDOR* shows a total membership of 859. This is in considerable excess of any previous year's total and betokens a further significant extension in the serious interest being taken in the study of birds. Ornithology as a mental recreation, as an intellectual stimulus, is being more and more generally taken up among people who are very busy otherwise with affairs of importance.

COMMUNICATIONS

A SOCIETY TO PROTECT WILD LIFE FROM THE PROTECTIONISTS

Editor *THE CONDOR*:

Your attention is hereby called to a certain class of people, who, believing themselves ardent conservationists, are by their extreme position in advocating all-embracing protection frustrating the aims for which they are striving. It appears to some of us that a little more of such misdirected energy will force us into founding a society to protect wild life from the protectionists.

Excellent examples of the manner in which this all-protection is working were given about a year ago in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*, showing that protected Western Gulls, Hawks, Owls, and Crows are defeating the very object for which certain bird sanctuaries have been established.

Another illustration of an extremity in words, if not in action, to which some protectionists have gone is furnished by the

revised constitution of the conservation society of one of our states in which appear these words: "The objects of the association are:

- I. To protect, develop and conserve Iowa's natural resources, viz:
 - (a) All native plants, trees and forests;
 - (b) All native birds, fish and animals;
 - (c) All streams, lakes, rivers and waterways;
 - (d) All spots of scenic and historic interests."

Since with only four dissenting voices this revision was adopted, one is constrained to seek an explanation. Perhaps it is because Section 1 looks like blank verse, perhaps it is blank verse (the poet must decide that). It certainly looks blank: to some people distressingly blank, to others profanely blank.

In this state in which most of the conservationists pledged themselves to protect, develop and conserve poison ivy, ragweeds, milkweeds, rattlesnakes, woodchucks, cotton-tail rabbits, pocket gophers, ground squirrels, potato bugs, May beetles, squash bugs, cutworms, and army worms, in 1924 in one county there were paid bounties on 4139 pocket gophers and on 976 rattlesnakes; two fur buyers shipped 6000 pelts; and a farmer in his corn-field shot from his tractor 45 thirteen-lined spermophiles. All this happened when never a pledged protectionist was near to save his pet gopher or rattlesnake. Since the bearing of children went out of fashion, the small boy with his traps has faded from the landscape; because of this fact, taken together with the high cost of labor and the removal of the bounty on the woodchuck, this pest has been permitted to increase amazingly. Meanwhile the countryman remains tranquil, knowing full well that the closet conservationist, which is the city man, will be the first to die from starvation when his protected pets have destroyed all the crops.

This attempt at all-protection reaches its peak when certain of its persuasion become fiercely hostile if one says the House Wren is a menace or that the English Sparrow is unlovely; they can not endure to hear the truth told. A forceful example of this type was presented by a feeble-minded one, who ordered her bird magazine stopped because the editor had classed the English Sparrow "with noxious weeds, undesirable, vicious and altogether unwelcome."

Worse than woodchucks and rattlesnakes for mankind is the House Wren for the survival of many of our most valuable and beautiful small bird species; their arch-enemy is doubly protected: by the law and by the ever present wren-box with its small hole which enables him to breed without restriction. Here Dr. Hornaday may find another proof for his statement that "Beyond question we are exterminating our finest mammals, birds and fishes according to law". This protection, that has permitted the House Wren to increase until he has become a deadly menace, has been afforded him through ignorance more often than otherwise, sometimes through forgetfulness, and frequently through skeptical obstinacy. It has been a case of the blind leading the blind. An instance of this blind leadership was met with in the person of a "lecturer on birds" who had been in the lecture field for several seasons. When the destructive nature of the House Wren was mentioned, she said "I never heard of the House Wren." A few words of explanation having been given she exclaimed "Oh, I know now what you mean! You call that a House Wren; I never knew that *any one ever* called it a House Wren; I always call it a Jennie Wren." Thousands upon thousands are following the ignorant leadership of persons who know absolutely nothing of the harmful character of this Wren, even though some of them are able to recognize the bird under its common name.

For a quarter of a century the bird magazines, but more especially *Bird-Lore*, have been publishing accounts of this Wren's raids on the eggs of other species. The testimony of some, as for example that of Mr. Robert Ridgway, which has been oft repeated and of the most convincing type, has been allowed to pass from memory or has met with skeptical obstinacy on the part of those who choose to be utterly deaf to the truths told concerning the depredations of the House Wren, that are fast decimating the ranks of several species of birds formerly common in our dooryards.

A campaign is now in progress to awaken the public to a realization of the dangers threatening the very existence of several small bird species, because of the robber Wren, that despoils their nests of eggs; because these robberies are not often witnessed many people are skeptical. Help is needed in this work of awakening. It is desirable that those who have seen him destroying eggs should testify. If ever it is necessary to form a society to protect

wild life from the protectionists, it will be because the House Wren has emphasized the necessity; and because people, having been taught of his evil ways, still refuse to discontinue the protective boxes that have favored an enormous increase of a species that ought never to be tolerated about our homes where inoffensive birds are encouraged to come.—ALTHEA R. SHERMAN, *National*, via McGregor, Iowa, February 19, 1925.

JUVENILE NOMENCLATURE

Editor THE CONDOR:

I asked some school children to give me lists of California birds the other day, and I have culled the following as being possibly previously unknown to you.

honey sukke	audible warbler
bzerd	muthacher
bocker bird	budzer
sprils and song sprils	slow hawk
horn owl	morning
eanch	brown beard
bizird	blewbeard
hornet	black bier
he-toe-bird	blow bier
finch	chick and hawk
bozer	moping bird
readpucker head	bonebird
jases	bockbird
born owl	mocking
barnwoll	raves
wole	ranbon
blewjae	children's hawk
waxtail	blow jay
sane piper	moucher
malking bird	sam hill owl
water ooze	mud slow

One recognizes most, of course, as relatives of our already known species. The *blow jay* is often about when one wants to be unobserved. The *sane piper*, one imagines, would not be placed in the same family with the highland piper—certainly not with the *raves*. But the *children's hawk* appeals to all as a very desirable addition to our avifauna. So does the *audible warbler*. A warbler cannot be too audible, to my fancy. And when in wanton mood, what more desirable companions than the *sam hill owl*, the *born owl*, and the *water ooze*. But not the *hornet*! The *black bier*, the *bock-bird* and the *blow bier* are evidently related—heady stuff. The *bonebird* would, one imagines, be lacking in intelligence—not so lively, for instance, as the *he-toe-bird*. The *chick and hawk* is evidently an example of symbiosis. One seems to remember having seen the two birds together. As for the *eanch*, the *bzerd*, the *bozer*, the *jases*, the *wole*, the *barnwoll*, the *mud slow* and *slow hawk*, the *ranbon* and the *moucher*—why, one feels that one has just got to make the acquaintance of these fascinating members of the class Aves at his very earliest convenience.—DELACOURT DELL, *Claremont, California*, February 23, 1925.