

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

We often see in the local press reference to some person as "*the authority*" on the birds of a state or of a region. The word authority confers certain blandishments, attractive to the conferee in a way, and acceptable to the newspaper reading public. But rarely now-a-days is the word really applicable. As a matter of fact, ornithologists who are accomplished, if not in the field at large, then in some segment of it, are numerous. In a state like California, "authority" is vested in no single individual or even in a few persons. For a summation of ornithological knowledge, relative to our state, appeal would have to be made to each of a score or more. For example, we would seek information as to the nesting of the birds of California generally, first of all from a person we will call C, though his name rarely appears in print, more's the pity. In regard to the nesting of certain Sierran birds we would appeal to R; and so on, as regards oology, for many districts. As to the songs and call-notes of difficult species we would ask H. For facts and interpretations as to bird behavior we would ask of L. Regional and seasonal occurrence of species is the special knowledge of a number of persons, among them M, T and W. As to the systematic status of birds in certain groups we would enquire of S, and in certain other groups, of V. When it should come to historical and biographical matters we would most certainly appeal to P. And as to birds of past time we would seek information of M. And so on. Thus, orderly knowledge, in a general large field like ornithology, has become so extended that it can be the possession of no one person. "Authority" in ornithology is now vested in the many.

Mr. P. A. Taverner, Ornithologist for the Canadian Geological Survey, is carrying on field work in Saskatchewan, Canada. Early in the fall, when he is through there, he will proceed to the Pacific Coast, making a tour of the country from British Columbia to southern California, before returning to his headquarters in Ottawa. We understand that Taverner's "Birds of Western Canada," illustrated profusely with colored drawings by Major Brooks, is about ready to appear from the press.

Californians have invaded San Salvador. Two collectors representing Mr. Donald R. Dickey's interests are at work there upon birds and mammals, namely, Mr. Adriaan van Rossem and Mr. R. A. Stirton. Also, Dr. Loye Miller and Alden Miller are there, collecting skeletons of birds to use in comparisons with fossil material from California. Interestingly, several types of birds were present in Pleistocene times in California which are now restricted to Central and South America.

We heartily recommend that all who are interested in the conservation of wild life read carefully a little book which has recently been published in London. It is by Lewis R. W. Loyd and is entitled, "The Protection of Birds—an Indictment" (Longmans Green and Company, 1924). No matter what preconceived ideas the reader may have with respect to the proper use by mankind of bird life—the absolute prohibition of destruction under any circumstances, on the one hand, as against a certain measure of freedom on the part of collectors and sportsmen under reasonable control—he will find in Captain Loyd's book much food for reflection.

Attention of bird banders is called to the surprisingly large list, on the outside of the back cover of this issue, of birds banded in the Western Province during the period from March 1, 1924, to February 28, 1925. A total of 96 species and 9995 individual birds received bands.

### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN WILD FOWL. ORDER ANSERES (PART). By ARTHUR CLEVELAND BENT. United States National Museum, Bulletin 130, x + 376 pp., 60 pls.; 1925 (our copy received August 4).

In this volume, the fifth of the series, the author concludes his accounts of the order Anseres, covering certain of the diving ducks, the geese and the swans. General manner of treatment is essentially the same as in the preceding parts of the work (see Condor, XXII, 1920, p. 45; xxv, 1923, pp. 25, 35), and, as before, there is a liberal allotment of well selected illustrations to supplement the text.