

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

As usual, the coming May issue of the *CONDOR* will contain the official membership list of the Cooper Ornithological Club. Each Cooper Club member is requested to look up his name in last year's roster, to see if that entry was altogether correct. If not, or if the present mailing envelope of the *CONDOR* be incorrectly addressed, send the facts at once to the Club Business Manager, Mr. W. Lee Chambers, Drawer 123, Eagle Rock, California.

The Arrangements Committee in charge of the Annual Meeting of the Cooper Club at Los Angeles has changed the time to April 8 to 10, instead of April 5 to 7, as first announced. Members are urged to lend their aid in insuring the success of the meeting, by their presence if possible, by participating in the program, and by advertising the occasion. The bird-loving public should be advised that the sessions are open to all, regardless of membership in the Club, and it is desirable that this fact be given wide publicity. If you wish for a place on the program, write to Dr. L. H. Miller, 6066 Hayes Avenue, Los Angeles. If you are unable to attend in person, arrangements may be made to have your contribution read for you.

Dr. Glover M. Allen's book, "Birds and their Attributes" (Marshall Jones Company, Boston, \$3.50) has been adopted as text in an "upper division" zoology course in the University of California. It is proving itself well adapted for this use, better, we believe, than would any book in ornithology previously published in the United States. The treatment deals with the general principles governing avian evolution and existence, as based upon well attested facts. The book is down to date, authoritative, scholarly in every particular. No serious student of bird-life should fail to have read it, and pondered the numerous interesting problems it touches upon.

Gilbert White of Selborne in course of some critical remarks aimed at Linnaeus, in one of his letters, dated August 1, 1771, declared himself as follows: "Faunists, as you observe, are too apt to acquiesce in bare descriptions and a few synonyms: the reason is plain, because all that may be done at home in a man's study; but the investigation of the life and conversation of animals is a concern of much more

trouble and difficulty, and is not to be attained but by the active and inquisitive, and by those that reside much in the country." Quite as good a gibe today as 155 years ago!

### COMMUNICATION

#### SPECIES VERSUS SUBSPECIES

To Cooper Club Members:

The "straw vote" is an instrument that can be appealed to to very good purpose now and then, and my appeal in this instance is to ascertain just how *CONDOR* readers feel toward the question of employing subspecific names in general ornithological literature. A great deal of objection is continually to be heard, often in no uncertain terms, to "subspecies". The undersigned, even though primarily a systematist, has a good deal of sympathy for the point of view of some of the objectors in this regard. Indeed, he himself long ago proposed (*Auk*, XXIX, 1919, p. 563) that a check-list of birds ought to be issued, minus any and all subspecies, for the use of bird students who find subspecies not only useless to them but the idea of them irritating. The very best presentation of the subject which I have seen has just been set forth as part of a review by "W. S." in the *Auk* (January, 1926, p. 119), which is as follows:

"The reviewer has no more personal use for subspecies separated on minute characters than has Mr. ———, because they do not happen to concern the work in which he is most interested; but that is no reason why he should object to others describing them or using them in their work, nor does it give him any warrant to doubt the accuracy of their work. Neither is he interested in the minute and detailed nomenclature of the muscles, nor is he able to distinguish them, but he realizes that others can do this and reach important results from their anatomical study. Why this rather general clamor against subspecies on the part of field ornithologists, collectors, oologists, etc., it is hard to understand. If subspecies do not pertain to their work, why bother with them? Let them be satisfied with the species, but do not try to hamper the work of those who can and do make use of them for the advancement of scientific knowledge."

To prove that I am in hearty accord with these sentiments, I am willing to put