

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

In furtherance of the undertaking so successfully inaugurated in Los Angeles last spring, the Board of Governors announces that the Second Annual Meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club will be held in the San Francisco Bay region, Friday to Sunday, April 29 to May 1, 1927. Tentative plans include sessions for the presentation of papers on various phases of ornithology on Friday and Saturday, a reception, a dinner for members and visitors, an exhibition of bird books, and opportunity to examine important collections of birds in the region. Two sessions will be held at the California Academy of Sciences, in San Francisco, and two on the University of California campus at Berkeley. The Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors will be held during the sessions. Dr. L. H. Miller, President of the Board of Governors, has appointed a local committee on arrangements for the meeting, consisting of Tracy I. Storer (Chairman), H. S. Swarth and Joseph Mailliard. Messrs. Swarth and Miller have been delegated to arrange for the program of scientific papers. It is hoped that a large number of Club members will contribute to the program, and that all subsidiary fields in ornithology will be represented. Facilities will be provided for demonstrations, lantern slides, and motion pictures. It is especially hoped that Club members from outside of California, who are planning to be on the Pacific Coast this spring, will arrange to include Berkeley and San Francisco in their itinerary during the time of the meetings. Further announcements will follow as soon as details are perfected.

Some interesting contributions have lately appeared in England in regard to longevity in birds. The literature is so full of unsupported but continually repeated stories as to the great age reached by various birds, that it is refreshing to have at hand some authoritative statements in this regard, even though not satisfyingly complete. In "British Birds", issue of August 2, 1926, Mr. H. F. Witherby, in reviewing a paper by Major S. S. Flower in the P. Z. S., properly points out that the ages reached by birds in cap-

tivity or in semi-domestication cannot be taken as indicative of conditions in the wild. Major Flower, from his experience in the Giza Zoological Gardens, in Egypt, found that "609 different species can live for over ten years, 137 species for over twenty years, and 41 species for over thirty years." "The longest lived individual bird which he admits definitely is an Eagle-Owl of 68 years." Mr. Witherby doubts whether banding will ever furnish reliable facts as to the age reached by wild birds, "since the individuals which escape accident and those which die and are not found or not reported are surely of greater importance in this respect than the small proportion which comes to hand." Furthermore, there is great likelihood of the band or the inscription on the band wearing out short of the full lifetime of the bird. Some ages of banded birds vouched for by Mr. Witherby are as follows: European Song Thrush, 8 years 10 months; European Blackbird, about 10 years; White Stork, up to 11 years; Common Heron, up to 15¼ years; Herring Gull, up to 13 years (in captivity, up to 44 years). A final conclusion of striking interest is that "in general birds live longer than mammals."

**THE RIDGWAY MEMORIAL CAMPAIGN.**—Plans for the Ridgway Memorial are now being actively pushed by the Cooper Ornithological Club. As is now well known, this memorial will be a sanctuary for birds and other wild life—a tribute to Mr. Ridgway's services to science and to wild life preservation. Few ornithologists indeed have so richly as he deserved the love and gratitude of their fellow-men.

Mr. Ridgway's tract of land, known as "Bird Haven", situated near Olney, in southern Illinois, will be turned over by him to the Ridgway Memorial Association now incorporated under the laws of Illinois, for preservation and perpetual care. In order to carry out this plan a fund of \$35,000 is necessary. The project has been thoroughly endorsed by the Cooper Ornithological Club, the American Ornithologists' Union, and the Wilson Ornithological Club. The committee appointed to take charge of raising this amount con-

sists of Dr. Harry C. Oberholser, of the United States Biological Survey, Washington, D. C., Chairman, representing the American Ornithologists' Union; Mr. Harry Harris, Box 123, Eagle Rock, California, representing the Cooper Ornithological Club; and Mr. Percival B. Coffin, 39 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois, representing the Wilson Ornithological Club.

The active campaign for the fund is about to be launched, and all persons interested in wild life conservation as well as all bird lovers are urged to contribute. Let us all thus assure the perpetuation of Bird Haven as a wild life refuge and at the same time repay our debt to Robert Ridgway. Remittances should be made out to the Ridgway Memorial Fund and may be sent to any member of the above mentioned committee; but California contributions should all be sent to Mr. Harry Harris, Box 123, Eagle Rock, California.

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

BIRDS OF WESTERN CANADA, by P. A. TAVERNER. (Victoria Memorial Museum, Ottawa, Canada; Museum Bulletin no. 41; Biological series, no. 10; September 15, 1926; 380 pp., 84 colored plates, 315 text figs. Prices: 75 cents, paper cover; \$1.25, cloth.)

This will take its place as companion volume to the same author's previously published "Birds of Eastern Canada", the two together forming a satisfactory manual to the birds of that whole immense country. "Birds of Western Canada" covers the region from the Ontario-Manitoba boundary westward, including every species known to have occurred there. The book was prepared primarily as a "popular" manual, to convey information to an intelligent public, but one knowing little or nothing of the technicalities of ornithology. This purpose in the main has been excellently carried out; in fact the few criticisms that have suggested themselves to the reviewer are of such minor points and of such slight moment that there seems no need of dwelling upon most of them.

Introductory pages outlining the purpose and scope of the book are followed by explanatory comments upon such subjects as classification, nomenclature, geographical distribution, migration, the varied methods of bird study, and ornithological literature. A "key to the birds of western Canada" precedes the general accounts of the species. Under each species

are found in small type: the English name, scientific name, total length in inches and decimals, a brief description of the species (sometimes omitted when there is an illustration), "distinctions" (the salient points of the species as seen in specimens in the hand), "field marks" (features to be used in identifying the living bird), a brief description of the nest and its situation, "distribution", and, where more than one form is concerned, brief comments upon the several subspecific races. The large-type paragraphs deal mostly with features of the life history and of the economic status of the bird. Of the numerous colored plates, the majority are by Allan Brooks. The line drawings found throughout the text, in excellent supplement to the printed descriptions, are, I believe, mostly, if not altogether, the work of the author himself. A surprisingly large number of species are figured in the colored plates. Each plate includes two pictures. In some cases a picture includes two species or subspecies, and, wherever more than one figure of the same species appears, different plumages are shown. Although the pictures are small the artist's skill has brought out the salient points to be emphasized, and as the engraver, too, has done his work well, these illustrations are all that could be desired.

As the author emphatically states in his introduction, the Latin name, as here used, is always binomial. Subspecies are not accorded formal entry but are subordinated to mention in an explanatory paragraph. For the most part this is well enough; whether it will be entirely satisfactory remains to be seen. As examples of questionable treatment, the author's adherence to the rulings of the A. O. U. Committee on nomenclature obliges him to lump under single heads such widely diverse birds as the Slate-colored and Oregon Juncos, the several White-crowned Sparrows, and the equally diverse subspecies of Fox Sparrows and of Song Sparrows. Now, however the scientist may individually regard "degree of difference" as a criterion for specific separation, there is no doubt that the lay observer who turns to a "popular manual" for information will not be aware that there is any other criterion to apply. He will be puzzled, and some of us, who, for example, believe that the afore-mentioned Juncos are two distinct species, will sympathize with him. However, I am by no means inclined to quarrel with the author in his manner of meeting the difficulties