

ulate the cones *in situ*, we can offer them little for which they care a snap of their beaks. Even when the grosbeaks descend to lowlier seed-bearing plants, we have had little luck with picked seed or artificial bait, while the redpolls and siskins scorn us completely, with one interesting exception.

The grosbeaks are eager for exposed unfrozen earth in winter, and find it most often at the mouths of sheltered burrows among the roots of forest trees (braving, not always with impunity, the lurking weasels), or under the eaves of trappers' cabins. The siskins, in spring and early summer, have a passion for a certain type of sandy, yellow clay (not gravel), when fresh dug, in spots of which they will pick for hours in large numbers, neglecting quantities of apparently similar material, as well as baits of salt or ashes placed alongside. Failing this, at the same season they are eager for ashes, and will brave the smoke and heat of a dying camp-fire in efforts to obtain them. These are curious gastronomic reactions to the deprivations of the northern winters, comparable, perhaps, to the human trapper who returns from a winter of fish and poor game ready to consume the contents of a three-pound lard pail with a spoon. As many as 125 siskins were trapped at such spots last spring, and a few pine grosbeaks in mid-winter. The siskins rarely repeat.

With the warblers, again, we have to compete with the myriad insects of the north, and the ubiquitous water. Those caught so far have blundered into house traps, machines which, given time, may be trusted to catch most things, including rabbits and skunks.

War against hawks, owls and weasels is continuous. The writer shot five accipiters at one place last summer in about a week. The inexhaustible small rodents are a great nuisance with traps of the Potter type.

It is a pleasant accident that several naturalists should find themselves located in such relationship, as much as 100 miles from the sound of a locomotive whistle.—T. T. McCABE, *Barkerville, British Columbia, March, 1927.*

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The present field season is witnessing greater activity, perhaps, than ever before in the penetration of new territory for specimens and information relating to birds. In western North America we happen to know of the following field work in progress by Cooper Club members during part or all of the summer. Doubtless there are many others afield, too. Representing the California Academy of Sciences, Messrs. Joseph Mailliard, H. S. Swarth and R. M. Gilmore have been working certain localities in south-central Arizona. Under the auspices of the San Diego Society of Natural History, Mr. L. M. Huey is visiting certain portions of northern Lower California. In the interests of the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Misses Annie M. Alexander and Louise Kellogg and Messrs. E. Raymond Hall and Jean M. Linsdale have been working certain valleys and adjacent mountains in extreme western Nevada, and Mr. Chester C. Lamb has done collecting as far south as 27° latitude in Lower California. Messrs. Adrey E. Borell and Ralph Ellis, Jr., in the latter's interests, are visiting the Ruby Mountains in extreme eastern

Nevada. Messrs. J. R. Pemberton, O. W. Howard and J. Stuart Rowley have explored Salton Sea, with some astonishing results shortly to be announced.

We wish to question the propriety of printing purely systematic contributions concerning birds in other than regular ornithological channels of publication. We must at once acknowledge our own misdeeds in this regard; but we now regret these. No factor, such as speed of publication, seems to us now to compensate for the inconsiderateness of placing one's contributions to systematics beyond the easy reach of future students. We can see little or no excuse to warrant "burying" articles of this nature in such non-ornithological, or obscure, series as the *Ohio Journal of Science*, or the *Proceedings of the Southern California Academy of Science!*

An attractive set of cards, portraying in color important kinds of Australian birds, has been published by the Australian Museum (W. T. Wells, Secretary), Sydney. These cards can be had in a set of 30, for 6 shillings, plus postage. The

species represented are those that, many of them, are far-famed, and they have been accurately drawn and well reproduced.

Under the direction of Mr. F. S. Hall, President, and Mr. A. M. Winslow, Secretary, a regional meeting of the Northwest Bird and Mammal Club for the benefit of its British Columbia members was held at the home of Mr. J. W. Winson, Huntingdon, B. C., on the afternoon and evening of Saturday, April 30. Addresses on birds and mammals were given by Drs. Farmer and Kincaid, and Messrs. Edson, Scheffer, Bowles, Kitchen, Brown, Jay, Warburton, Booth and Racey. An enjoyable and instructive meeting was brought to a close at 10:00 P. M. by a vote of thanks to the ladies headed by Mrs. Winson for the pleasant manner in which they had provided for the social features of the evening.

In the death of Dr. H. W. Mills, which took place in San Bernardino, March 26, 1927, the Cooper Club lost an active member, highly regarded as a worthy exponent of our science. He was keenly alert as a seeker after a correct knowledge, first-hand, of the animal life out-of-doors in his part of the country. That he was a true naturalist by instinct may in part account for his success as a student of human behavior and frailties; he had become eminently successful as a physician and surgeon. Club members in southern California have expressed their admiration of Dr. Mills in high terms and his death is widely mourned.

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

HOFFMANN'S "BIRDS OF THE PACIFIC STATES".<sup>1</sup>—This review will be brief and to the point; and the point is that Hoffmann's new book is, in the present reviewer's solemn opinion, the most satisfactory popular manual yet provided for its territory.

To speak along the same vein but in other terms, the "Birds of the Pacific

States" is, ornithologically, literarily, and pictorially (these three qualities in combination, he it noted) the best yet in its class of one-volume field manuals. It is immeasurably better than nine-tenths of the current "popular" bird books that are widely pushed by their various publishers; for it has been written by an author with conscientious scruples as regards accuracy in making and recording his own field observations, an author who has taken pains to sift previous literature and acquaint himself with current conclusions, and one who has withstood the pressure from publishers to "jump into the market". In this latter respect, Mr. Hoffmann has, to the reviewer's personal knowledge, occupied himself with assiduity on the present undertaking for the past seven years; and the volume is not a large one. No haste here, with inevitably resulting failings.

The reader of Hoffmann's "Birds of the Pacific States" is impressed by the element of conciseness apparent throughout. Furthermore, the species are all treated upon a well-worked-out and uniform plan. The living bird is stressed; this is not a systematic treatise and is not dependent upon bird-skins to make it useable. It is truly a field book.

With regard to illustrations, as our citation of the matter on the title-page indicates, Allan Brooks is the sole illustrator. He presents his work in two types, as colored plates and as line figures in the text. The plates are excellent, save for the over-coloring of some of them which, no doubt, is the fault of the engraver, or the pressman, or both. The line work represents a departure on the part of Major Brooks from his customary style of drawing, and it is toward this that we, therefore, direct particular scrutiny. For the most part, the technique is well adapted for reduced reproduction. Ornithologically, the great majority of the birds strike one as "natural" in postures, as well as in color pattern, in so far as black and white can render them so. In a few cases, however, we can hardly believe Brooks to have been well acquainted with his subjects; for example, the Wren-tit and the Russet-backed Thrush. Come to think of it, we cannot recall any drawing, by anybody, of a Wren-tit that looked anything like the bird! Rather too much background is introduced in a few cases; in one case, that of the Gila Woodpecker, the perspective is such that the bird becomes a Roc as to size!

<sup>1</sup> Birds of the Pacific | States | Containing brief biographies and descriptions | of about four hundred species, with especial | reference to their appearance in the field | by | Ralph Hoffmann | Member of the American Ornithologists' Union | Director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History | With ten plates in color and over two hundred | illustrations in black and white | by | Major Allan Brooks | Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union | [Design] | Boston and New York | Houghton Mifflin Company | The Riverside Press Cambridge | 1927; crown 8vo, pp. xx + 363, illus. as above. Price, \$5.00. Our copy received June 2, 1927.