

A subject of interest in connection with the establishment of the Robin in the lowlands is the source of the breeding stock, a query which could have been answered by complete banding records had such been obtainable. In all probability birds passing through *en route* to some more northern location have stopped off. That such is the case rather than that local winter visiting Robins have merely remained over seems likely from observations of this past winter. It was a matter of comment among ornithologists in California that neither Robins nor Bluebirds appeared as they usually do in the foothill and plains regions. The extremely abundant crop of berries on the toyon (*Photinia arbutifolia*) in the foothill districts has been a current explanation for the failure of the birds to appear in their accustomed winter haunts. Whatever the actual reason for the scarcity there were no Robins at Davis this winter where normally they are abundant (see Clabaugh, CONDOR, xxx, 1928, p. 126). The first and only Robin which I noted at Davis this year (from December 28, 1927, to May 29, 1928) was seen on April 4 within the "territory" subsequently occupied by the pair with the nest mentioned. I am advised that a similar dearth of winter Robins was experienced at Berkeley but that subsequently the breeding population of the species appeared in accustomed numbers in that city. These observations go to confirm the supposition that the breeding population is not composed of the same individuals as are present in winter but that the two are mutually exclusive in any given locality.—TRACY I. STORER, *Division of Zoology, University of California, Davis, July 28, 1928.*

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

Dr. T. S. Palmer's extensive article in this issue will, we believe, go down in history as one of the outstanding contributions of human interest which THE CONDOR has had an opportunity to print. In some respects it is similar to Henshaw's and Townsend's autobiographies and to Harris's biography of Ridgway, yet it is unique in many other respects. Dr. Palmer gives us here the results of an enormous amount of searching enquiry, in the Library of Congress, in archives of unpublished materials, and through correspondence. We have a feeling of genuine satisfaction that he should have chosen our magazine as his vehicle of publication.

A movement is on foot in the Cooper Ornithological Club to establish an annual prize for the best life study each year, of any North American bird west of the 100th meridian. Judgment as to merit would be based upon originality of observations (in other words, newness of facts), thoroughness of treatment of some one selected problem, and upon clearness of interpretations. Some phase of a bird's life history would be concerned; subjects primarily of a systematic or faunal nature would be excluded from the contest. A candidate would thus not need to work at any museum or to go on any extensive field trip; he might develop the makings

of a prize-winning essay right in his own back-yard. The winning essay would, of course, be printed in THE CONDOR. We hope to be able to announce definitely the amount of the coming year's prize and other details in our coming January issue.

Mr. Milton P. Skinner, who has written so extensively and valuably concerning the natural history of Yellowstone National Park, is visiting in California. He appeared before the Southern Division Cooper Club meeting in September, giving a most instructive as well as enjoyable lecture on the bird-life of the Yellowstone.

In the preface to Dr. W. H. Bergtold's recently issued booklet, "Guide to Colorado Birds", we note the following wise comments. "The writer has little confidence in the value of *sight* identifications of species rare or previously unknown in the state, and his experience leads him to view such identifications as worthless. They are too hazardous, too uncertain, and too impossible of verification to justify anyone in adding, by them, species to the state list."

Mr. W. E. C. Todd has lately sponsored a "List of Types of Birds in the Collection of the Carnegie Museum" (Annals Carnegie Mus., xviii, 1928, pp. 335-364).

This is of especial use to western students for the reason that the A. W. Anthony collection containing many western types is now a part of the extensive series of birds belonging to the Carnegie Museum.

Mr. Chester C. Lamb is to carry on general collecting in the interests of the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology all the coming winter in the Cape district of Lower California. His headquarters after October 1 will be La Paz.

A paper of unusual interest, on more than one score, is Ernest G. Holt's study of "The Status of the Great White Heron and Würdemann's Heron." In the first place, this contribution is significant as being "Volume I, No. 1, pp. 1-35, pls. I-VI", of the "Scientific Publications of The Cleveland Museum of Natural History"—a new institution the development of which we have been watching with much interest. In the second place, this essay by Mr. Holt won the Walker prize in ornithology "for marked merit", which was offered by the Boston Society of Natural History in 1926. And in the third place, the paper is, indeed, a valuable contribution at this time (with the new A. O. U. Check-list pending) toward the solution of a difficult problem in North American systematic ornithology. Data are brought forward on an admirable plane of painstaking precision; and the conclusions are drawn after consideration of various points of view—genetic, geographic, behavioristic and morphologic. Briefly, the conclusions are that *Ardea occidentalis* Audubon is a distinct species; that *Ardea herodias wardi* Ridgway is a perfectly tenable subspecies of Great Blue Heron; and that "*Ardea würdemanni*" of Baird is simply a variable hybrid resulting from the crossing of these two species in the restricted area in southern Florida where their breeding ranges overlap.

Ornithological activities at the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, are proceeding along several lines, as follows. During May and June of this year, Mr. Joseph Mailliard and Mr. Frank Tose collected in southern British Columbia, with the object of filling some of the gaps in the Academy's collection. Also, Mr. Mailliard devotes considerable time to bird banding, both in the field at a distance and locally, in Golden Gate Park.

Mr. Harry S. Swarth is now finishing a report on the collection of birds and mammals made by himself and Mr. Mailliard in Arizona in 1927. Mr. Swarth is also working up the large collection of land birds from the Galapagos Islands, taken by an Academy expedition in 1905-1906; and he has started a report on a collection made by C. G. Harrold on Nunivak Island, Alaska, in 1927. Mrs. Mary McLellan Davidson is completing for publication the nearly finished manuscript of the late Leverett Mills Loomis, "Monograph of the Tubinares."

Technical Bulletin No. 61 of the United States Department of Agriculture, issued in April, 1928, consists of a 64-page record and discussion of "Wild Birds Introduced or Transplanted in North America." The author, Dr. John C. Phillips, well known as a free-lance student of North American game birds, has availed himself of the nearly thirty years' records of the United States Bureau of Biological Survey, together with all the published literature on the subject; and he provides here, for the first time, the facts concerning the experiments in importation and acclimatization that have been made in North America, chiefly under State auspices, with more than 100 species and subspecies of wild birds. It is ardently to be hoped that this bulletin, issued by our United States Government, will be brought forcibly to the attention of State fish and game commissions throughout the Union. Dr. Phillips's efforts, and the other expenditures in the production of this report, will have been vastly worth while if they tend to put an end to the waste of money so general in attempts to plant non-native species of game birds as a supposed offset to the depletion of our native species. The long record of complete failures must prove convincing. "Wherever an expensive enterprise fails, sportsmen's journals are found surging with ready made explanations that have not the slightest foundation." While the reasons for failures are obvious in many cases, the factors at work in deciding the balance against a certain species are "easily so subtle that ordinary methods of observation are wholly inadequate to detect them." Aside from the economic bearing of this paper, there are many interesting biological questions raised. The author points out different types of response to new environment. In one

type every individual bird set free simply vanishes and is never heard from again. In another category, the new birds, "especially if put down late in winter or early in spring, make a pretense at nesting or actually do nest the first season;" but no completely successful breeding of the birds takes place and they all disappear within one or a few seasons. In a third category, successful breedings take place the first year and perhaps the second and third years; but the species never gains more than a local foothold, so that after a brief term of years "it gradually, or sometimes suddenly, after a severe season, disappears." In a fourth type of response, the results may be astonishingly favorable (from the sportsman's point of view); there is promptly great increase, with resulting impulse to gain territory. Outstanding instances of this are afforded by the Ring-necked Pheasant and the Hungarian Partridge in the Northwest. But—we now ask—what is, or will be, the ultimate effect of these rare "successes" upon our native wild life? Leaving out of account the vast cost of this experimentation in transplanting wild animals from place to place, are not the far-reaching hazards too serious to warrant any such attempts at all?—J. G.

#### MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS NORTHERN DIVISION

MAY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club, Northern Division was held in Room 101, Zoology Building, University of California, Berkeley, on Thursday, May 24, 1928, at 8:00 p. m., with 37 members and visitors in attendance. In the absence of the president and vice-president, Mr. J. Grinnell occupied the chair. Minutes of the Northern Division for April were read and approved. The name of Miss Muriel M. S. Pettit, 917 Cole St., San Francisco, was proposed for membership by Miss Cornelia C. Pringle.

The program of the evening consisted of extempore reports of field observations by members and covered many localities in the state, from San Diego to Clear Lake. These reports dealt with birds of the desert, sea shore, inland marsh, salt marsh, lake, canyon bed, and hillside. The largest number of species seen in one day

was reported by Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Pursell who were fortunate in being able to take a trip to and from the desert east of San Diego on the Monday following the annual meeting of the Cooper Club. Among the 91 species identified along the route, Blue Grosbeaks, Phainopeplas and Road-runners were of especial interest. Mr. Pursell told of birds found in Balboa Park, San Diego, and of the thrill of listening to a Cardinal singing in the top of a eucalyptus tree there.

Mr. Whitmore reported finding in the Berkeley hills a nest of a Spotted Towhee containing four Towhee eggs and three of the Valley Quail. Mr. Swarth spoke of finding a set of eggs of the Desert Quail in the nest of a Palmer Thrasher in Arizona and then told of seasonal changes in bird population as noted during his daily trips across the Bay.

During the third week of May, which she spent at Clear Lake, Mrs. Allen found many Western Grebes on the lake, an enormous colony of Cliff Swallows nesting on the piling under an old building on the edge of the water, and many Violet-green Swallows along the shore. On the dry hillsides were Slender-billed Nuthatches, Western Gnatcatchers, Valley Quail, and Mourning Doves. Alden Miller told of seeing a pair of Lawrence Goldfinches carrying nesting material near the upper edge of the Stadium in Berkeley, and Mr. Cain reported having seen all three species of goldfinches, Lawrence, Willow and Green-backed, in a comparatively small area near Claremont Heights. Miss Wythe told of the behavior of wild Valley Quail on the Berkeley Campus, attracted by some caged quail. Dr. Ritter spoke of a recent visit to the vicinity of Visalia where the fine old valley oaks attract many California Woodpeckers, which there store acorns in the furrows in the bark of the trees instead of boring holes for their insertion. Mr. Dexter said that at the power substation at Lake Temescal, woodpeckers have bored many holes through redwood boarding.

No mention is here made of the birds recorded during the outing trip of the Cooper Club to Los Coronados Islands on May 6, as it is believed that a list of these is to be published elsewhere. Adjourned.  
—HILDA W. GRINNELL, *Secretary*.

JUNE.—The regular meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club, Northern Di-