

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

No more enduring and worthy type of monument can be imagined than a record of accomplishment toward the increase of human knowledge. And yet it is to be observed that those who die leaving the more conspicuous examples of this sort of monument have never concerned themselves at all about name or fame, but have been absorbed all their lives in the *doing*—in the fascinating occupation of accumulating facts and of interpreting them. The career of Robert Ridgway, in our field of ornithology, offers a fine illustration of life-long singleness of purpose, intelligently applied industry, and, in extraordinary measure, personal modesty.

In April *Auk*, Ruthven Deane publishes some letters of Bachman to Audubon, written from Charleston in 1832-3, which contain an amazing amount of correct ornithology, then new, of great interest in connection with what Audubon subsequently himself published. A most important source of Audubon's material is thereby demonstrated. What good sport it is to delve, sleuth-fashion, as Mr. Deane does, into ancient correspondence, personal and therefore frank, and get the true slant on things, such as rarely shows from the *published* literature of the day! And how useful a function for history!

In a recent Sunday afternoon's conference with our Cooper Club's Business Manager, Mr. W. Lee Chambers, the Editor became cognizant of certain interesting facts concerning our finances, as follows. The annual cost of *THE CONDOR* exceeds the \$3.00 per year per member paid-in dues, the balance being met by endowment income and sale of back publications. In 1928, it cost to produce *THE CONDOR*, \$3377.06: the dues received were \$2303.05. As Mr. Chambers points out, Club members are getting their money's worth!

Once more we extend invitation to anyone, bird-minded, but who has leisure hours to occupy in tatting, or solitaire, or bridge, to substitute therefor the possibly more improving pastime of compiling an index—specifically, the third ten-year index to *The Condor*. No one,

qualified and willing, has yet offered himself for this service. It is a good big job for someone with a knack for handling detail, with some knowledge of ornithology, and who likes to scrutinize bird literature.

It may not generally be known that the Cooper Club's membership includes a trochilidist. Mr. Robert Thomas Moore, formerly of Philadelphia, now of Pasadena, has adopted for his concentrated attention, a study of the hummingbirds. Incidentally to this, he is accumulating a library of the subject and this already contains several rare items. Furthermore, he is gathering a collection of specimens—study skins, nests and eggs, and mounted birds. Of the 567 species and subspecies, grouped in 118 genera, as listed by Hartert, Mr. Moore's collection now contains 320 species and subspecies representing 92 genera. The *Condor* Editor recently had occasion to go over this collection, totaling nearly 2,000 specimens, and he saw, for the first time, actual specimens of rare species previously known to him only through printed pages or through the plates in Gould's "Monograph". Thus in ornithology a strong tendency on the part of students toward group specialization is becoming apparent.

Mr. John G. Tyler, President of the Northern Division of the Club, has, in a recent set of resolutions presented and adopted (see Minutes, p. 139), pointed out a great weakness in our present system of protecting non-game birds, in that jurisdiction for enforcement of the laws dealing with them is vested in a Division of the state government, which Division now seems to represent only the sportsmen's interests. This partial representation is grantedly logical, when it is recognized that the generous financial support of the Division of Fish and Game comes from hunting and fishing licenses; the interests of the hunters and fishermen quite naturally receive first attention. Mr. Tyler's suggestion, entirely feasible, it seems to us, is to place the conservation of non-game bird life, and perhaps other natural assets of an esthetic rather than

commercial nature, under the administrative control of a Commission supported in part by a special "vacationist's" license. This whole question, of wild life administration in the interests of the average citizen, instead of in those of any one class, is one badly needing solution. Mr. Tyler has done a real service in launching a discussion of it within Cooper Club circles. A good start there may result in its transfer into wider groups, just as was the case with the State Bird Idea.

Taverner's "Birds of Western Canada" proved so extensively popular that the original edition, issued by the Canadian Government in October, 1926, was very soon exhausted. Not only because of the excellence of the work, but also because of the exceedingly low price charged for the book, orders, unfillable, piled up to an extent that convinced the authorities that a new edition should be gotten out. Now we have it, a second and slightly revised edition, issued in practically identical form with the first one, at a price of \$2.00, bound—the best "buy" we know of in bird books for the non-professional student to-day. Our scrutiny of the new volume shows no differences in illustrational content, and only very slight changes here and there in the text. By reason of the quality of paper, the bulk of the new book is 25 percent less than that of the old one, although the weight remains practically identical, 3¼ pounds. The lesser bulk is an advantage when it comes to taking a working manual in one's baggage when he goes afield.

Speaking of bird conservation again, and referring to the current system of setting apart so-called "game refuges" here and there throughout the state, why not, as a vastly more practical system, establish complete protection for all classes of birds throughout the state in its entirety, and then designate appropriate minor tracts, under proper regulations, as "shooting grounds"? There would then be far less wastage in administrative expense and, in the concentrated areas, better adjustment of annual kill to the varying annual rates of reproduction on the part of the game species. With concentration of human population in California, with the change from pioneer to highly civilized conditions, the sportsman and his interests are bound

to become of less and less moment in the common welfare. The sooner sportsmen yield to this trend, the better it will be for their own interests; for the longer will there be any hunting at all, for anyone, anywhere.—J.G.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

CHAPMAN ON HABITS OF OROPENDOLA.*

—The present reviewer never saw an oropendola and never hopes to see one—alive, in the wild; but he has seen pictures of their remarkable, pendant nests and has examined the strikingly colored study-skins of the bird. Now, Dr. Chapman provides a wonderfully appealing, intimate field study of the species, so that we have the bird as it is in life sharply visualized, permanently so, even though second-hand.

Dr. Chapman's field study of *Zarhynchus wagleri* impresses us as an ideal example of what rigidly conducted scientific observations should constitute and lead to. We gather that his observations of the bird at Barro Colorado Island, Canal Zone, was carried on in a patient, hence somewhat leisurely, fashion—the same features of behavior, on the part of the birds, scrutinized over and over again by means of high-power glasses (needed in this particular case because the nests were at considerable distance, and far aloft, from the nearest observation post); the observer seated, comfortably, drawing and writing board before him, undistracted. He was able to see and to verify *what* the birds were doing, and then was able to draw, gradually, one insight leading to another, his final inferences as to *why* the things were done.

The story of oropendola that resulted reminds us in many respects strongly of the account of Red-winged Blackbirds, as Dr. Arthur A. Allen has recorded his study of them. Both these birds are icterids; doubtless they do exhibit fundamental similarities in behavior that signify not too remote community of origin. Also, from what we have learned of its habits through casual observation, our Arizona Hooded Oriole shows traits remindful of oropendola.

*The Nesting Habits of Wagler's Oropendola (*Zarhynchus wagleri*) on Barro Colorado Island, by Frank M. Chapman. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., LVIII, December 31, 1928, pp. 123-166, pls. 1-8.