

local influence, we venture to hope, will extend quite as surely in ever lengthening radius.—J.G.

Friends of the American White Pelican will be glad to know that warden service has now been provided for the largest existing nesting colony of these birds. This colony, on Anaho Island in Pyramid Lake, Nevada, has for a number of years been a bird reservation, but it has been without actual protection until the summer of 1931, when Mr. Charles C. Cooper, of Sutcliffe, Nevada, was employed by the Biological Survey as warden for the three months of June, July and August. Through long residence at the Lake, Mr. Cooper is familiar with local conditions as they affect White Pelicans, and in addition he has a genuine interest in the birds themselves. Under his guardianship, it is expected that the colony, which has been seriously interfered with for the past several seasons, will again produce the normal number of young. It was hoped by many bird students that the fantastic rock formations at the northern end of Pyramid Lake, locally known as The Needles, also would be set aside as a wild life refuge. Here the Lake's quota of Farallon Cormorants, California Gulls, and a majority of the American Mergansers nest. In response to pleas for protection of these birds, a bill, H. R. 13276 "To Establish the Needles Rocks Wild Life Refuge," was introduced into the House of Representatives of the second session of the Seventy-first Congress of the United States. Although passed by the House of Representatives on January 5, 1931, this bill was, so far as we have been able to learn, never brought up in the Senate. It is greatly to be hoped that the measure will be more successful in the new session of Congress. Anaho Island and the proposed Needles Rocks Wild Life Refuge are included within the boundaries of an Indian Reservation. This is perhaps fortunate, inasmuch as the Bureau of Indian Affairs now is making an effort to have the winter flow of the Truckee River again, as it did naturally, enter Pyramid and Winnemucca lakes. At the present time, the water is diverted into a dry sink where it is of but slight benefit. Each of the two mentioned bird colonies is suffering because of the lowering of the lake level. Inasmuch as raising the water level seems to be the key here to remedying unfortunate conditions (as they

have to do not only with trout fishing, with agricultural pursuits of the Indians, with nesting grounds for wild fowl sought in autumn by hunters, but also with the nesting water birds) it is greatly to be hoped that the Bureau of Biological Survey will join with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in requesting that the normal flow of water in the Truckee River, at least in winter, be returned to these lakes.—E.R.H.

THE DETROIT MEETING OF THE A. O. U.

The Forty-ninth Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union convened in Detroit, October 19 to 23, 1931, at the Book-Cadillac Hotel. The holding of sessions in a hotel was an innovation at first regarded with distrust by members accustomed to the museum setting of previous meetings. The carefully worked out plans of Mrs. Etta Wilson, Chairman of the local committee, proved conclusively, however, that a background of zinc cases is not a necessary adjunct to a wholly successful meeting of bird students.

Monday, October 19, ushered in the meetings with a pleasant prologue of greetings in the lobby between old friends and the making of new acquaintances. To many of us the keenest pleasure was to meet Althea R. Sherman, whose carefully made and zestfully recorded notes have instructed and entertained us for many years. Monday afternoon and evening were occupied with the session of the Fellows, twenty-two being present at their dinner, and with the meeting of the Fellows and Members. All the old officers were re-elected. Since there were no vacancies to be filled no proposals of Fellows had been made. From among the list of Associates proposed for advancement to the rank of Members five were elected: Clinton G. Abbott, A. O. Austin, W. W. Bowen, B. H. Christy, and Mrs. M. M. Nice. A pleasant innovation was the ladies' dinner, held at the same time as the Fellows' dinner and ably presided over by Mrs. Wilson.

Fifty-four papers were listed for presentation at the public meetings, and in the adjacent parlors was an exhibition of 64 paintings and 72 photographs, all of exceptional merit. Among the paintings the "Ruffed Grouse" by Walter A. Weber, attracted, we believe, the largest number of favorable comments. The group of 15 original paintings made by Francis

L. Jaques for Arthur H. Howell's forthcoming book, "Florida Bird Life", showed that the illustrations will be in accord with the expected high quality of the text. As loyal Westerners we regretted the absence of work by Major Brooks, but hope to find it represented next year at Quebec.

On Tuesday morning the first general session was held and its outstanding feature was the announcement of the award of the Brewster Medal to Florence Merriam Bailey in recognition of her "Birds of New Mexico". In the afternoon there were both general and technical sessions, and in the evening two illustrated talks were given at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the first by George M. Sutton on his "Year on Southampton Island", the second by Alfred M. Bailey on "Louisiana Wild Life". Of Tuesday's program two presentations stand pre-eminent in the reviewer's memory: first, Professor Herrick's superb film "The Eagle in Action", portraying the rearing of their young by a pair of Bald Eagles. These birds were photographed day after day from a tall tower erected for the purpose. Second, A. R. Brand's "Preliminary Report of a New Method of Recording Bird Song". Some very good reproductions were given by means of phonograph records and then the producing apparatus proving refractory the program was announced as concluded and the room was almost emptied when Mr. Brand called out "Wait a minute, it's working now." We turned back and were rewarded by a film showing a Pied-billed Grebe in the swamp with her two downy young. As we watched the chicks climbing her steep and slippery sides to refuge beneath her wings we heard every encouraging "cluck" the mother gave, as well as the croaking of a nearby frog and the more distant song of a Red-winged Blackbird. It was an exquisitely perfect bit and promises much for those phonographers of the future who have the patience to abandon sound-proof studios and contend in the open with the multitudinous sounds created by humanity until they find a brief moment when Nature reigns uninterrupted.

Wednesday's sessions were held in the new Museum of Zoology of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Of especial interest to us were: Myron Swenk's "Present Status of the Whooping Crane", his counts in Nebraska encouraging the hope that these cranes are at least holding their own; and W. J. Breckenridge's "Court-

ship Performances of the Canada Spruce Grouse". Mr. Breckenridge presented stills and moving pictures of this grouse in its normal habitat, totally unaware of the photographer's presence—the ideal type of bird photography and the antithesis of I. H. Johnston's work in his film entitled "Road-runner and Hummingbirds", which was given the next day.

The annual dinner was held Wednesday evening in Detroit with more than 200 in attendance, including local guests, and with Dr. Alexander W. Blain presiding as toastmaster.

On Thursday morning both technical and general sessions were held. At noon the members went by machine to Cranbrook as luncheon guests of the Cranbrook Institute of Science. Here the last three papers of the meeting were given and a tour of the estate was made. The beautiful surroundings, harmoniously furnished school buildings, and the matchless Christ Church, won the admiration of all who made the trip.

Friday, October 23, was devoted to excursions by machine over the Ambassador Bridge into Canada and along the King's Highway to Jack Miner's and Point Pelee. As we were anxious to reach the Point early in the day our host and guide, Mr. W. E. Saunders, drove past Jack Miner's without stopping, but so slowly as to give us an excellent view of the setting which attracts his famous birds.

We arrived at the long, narrow sandspit which terminates the point in time to see something of the migration of hawks across Lake Erie, which we were told is always at its best before noon. We found it fascinating to watch the landward sky and see hawk after hawk come into view. During the hour and a half that we remained we counted fifty Sharp-shinned Hawks, ten Marsh Hawks and about fifteen Cooper Hawks. Flocks of Starlings crossed, and companies of Crows came out, wheeled indecisively and went back again, waiting for clearer skies. Under Mr. Saunders' experienced guidance we saw on the wooded portion of the point many trees and plants new to our western eyes, heard unfamiliar bird songs, and smelled the fragrance of old apple orchards at harvest time. All too soon the day ended, and with its close ended the Forty-ninth Stated Meeting of the A. O. U.

Two things remain to be said: First, to express our appreciation of the capable way in which Mrs. Etta Wilson, Chair-

man of the Local Committee, carried out the arrangements which made for the great success of the meeting, and the thoughtfulness with which Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Tyrrell looked after the interests of all who came from a distance. Second, to call attention to the very cordial invitation brought to the Union on behalf of Quebec by Mr. Adrian Falardeau, who promises to all who attend next year a very jolly time, such as made the first Canadian meeting, at Ottawa, so memorable.—HILDA W. GRINNELL.

CURRENT DISCUSSION

THE "CONTROL" OF BIRDS AS CAUSING POPULAR DISREGARD FOR THE VALUES OF BIRD-LIFE

Examination of the accompanying "exhibit" (fig. 8) will inform our readers concerning several features in the present deplorable onslaught of "economic" forces against birds as well as other wild animal life. Only one or two of these features will be given special consideration in the discussion I now undertake.

An observed tendency of human kind is to look at other associated sorts of animals, largest to smallest, those that are not directly and immediately usable for food, as *enemies*; there is in man a seemingly deep-grounded reaction to "fight Nature". "It's alive, damn it—kill it" epitomizes this primitive, unreasoning state of mind. With little doubt this innate attitude owes itself fundamentally to our early racial history, even down to pioneer times only a few years back, when people's efforts to "wrest from the soil" their livelihood were more or less frustrated by the activities of numerous competitors among other animals. Anyway, the animus against animal life is, with most men, *there*; it is innate, and operates toward blind action until and unless suppressed through the acquiring of increased intelligence and of intelligent appreciation of animal life—an understanding of the inter-relationships which obtain complexly and with usually mutual benefit in a multitude of directions among living things.

That the economic situation human-wise is now largely different from what it was in pioneer and early agricultural days has been clearly shown by Tyler in his article in the last *Condor* (vol. 33, pp. 258-259), as well as by many other writers in recent periodical literature. But the instinctive urge to practice destruction of non-"useful" animal life keeps welling up in very

many directions. I would here refer to the thoughtful essay by Mr. W. L. McAtee, on "vermin" as defined by the sportsman, in the last issue of *Bird-Lore* (vol. 33, pp. 381-384). McAtee's quoted saying of sportsmen, "What isn't game must be vermin", could be paraphrased from common remarks of the fruit-grower, the grain-raiser, and the sheep-man. An attempt to instruct in animal conservation very often brings the retort "What good is it?" Unless one can prove it positively and immediately "good", it must be bad!

Referring again to the accompanying newspaper clipping: The influence of that kind of publicity finds in most persons only unconsidered response to *approve*. Any popular regard for the values of bird-life as may slowly have been fostered by educational agencies like our schools and the Audubon societies, is quickly undermined by "economic" agencies whose activities give origin to such publicity. With huge facilities at the command of these agencies for strengthening public opinion naturally adverse to animal life, and with loyal field agents who seek to discover and to meet every local demand for "extirpation" of a supposed pest (and such "demand" readily responds to stimulation), the future for maintenance of our bird-life for its true economic, its esthetic, and its scientific, values is indeed black. If my understanding of human behavior be correct, the limit of destruction will only be reached (*if* the present policy of Federal and State "economic control" persists) when every kind of bird that is claimed to do damage anywhere will have been subjected to a degree of "control" only limited by the degree of ingenuity of salaried specialists to discover virulent poisons and effective means of feeding these to the victims.

I am tempted to refer to one more point suggested by the clipping—the ingenious "pre-bait" stage in extermination proceedings. This is also fully described by Mr. McCabe elsewhere in the present issue of the *Condor* (p. 49). In essence, this is the setting out of a feeding-table for the birds, so as to get them to coming to a given spot from far and near. *Then*, poisoned baits are put on this spot—with "wonderful" results, from the control standpoint! And this is, of course, most effective in the *nesting* season of the birds! Was there ever anything equally diabolical devised in the days of the feather trade? [Ask the National Association of