



Fig. 51. DR. CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, MR. JAMES H. FLEMING AND DR. THEODORE S. PALMER: THREE FELLOWS OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION AND LONG-TIME MEMBERS OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB. PHOTOGRAPHED BY DR. JAMES P. CHAPIN AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, MAY 12, 1933.

ing breeding data concerning the birds of California with the ultimate purpose of publication. On the inside back cover of the last issue of the *Condor* he lists species concerning which, we infer, information is still nearly if not altogether lacking. Among these is the crossbill, of two subspecies. As far as we know only one person has ever found a nest of this bird within the borders of this State. That person is Walter Fry who, in a recent bulletin (vol. 2 no. 6, mimeographed) from the Sequoia National Park, tells definitely of finding a nest, on June 14, 1916, at 7200 feet altitude in the southern Sierra Nevada. This nest, situated only 12 feet above the ground in a small lodgepole pine, contained four far-incubated eggs which were left to hatch. Thus no set of eggs has as yet been actually collected; at least no collector has let it be known if he has! Referring to the exhaustive article on crossbills by the McCabes, in a recent (July) issue of the *Condor* (table, p. 140), we note that, taking the World over, crossbills' nests have been found in every month of the year, while the peak of nesting comes in the period January to April. For the United States and Canada there is no record prior to that of Judge Fry's, for May

or June. The crossbill is notorious for its vagrant habits as well as for winter-time nesting. Here is a bird, fairly common at times in parts of California, that challenges the attention of our keenest oologists.—J. G.

#### MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

##### NORTHERN DIVISION

JULY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on July 27, 1933, in Room 2003, Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, at 8:00 p. m. President Pickwell presided. Sixty-five members and guests were present. Minutes of the Northern Division for June were read and approved. Minutes of the Southern Division were read by title only. Proposals for membership were: Robert Failing, 518 66th St., Oakland, Calif., by B. C. Cain, Arthur F. Halloran, 2716 Belrose Ave., Berkeley, Calif., and Leonora A. Hohl, 30 Beverly Road, Berkeley, both by J. M. Linsdale.

By July, notes from the field have usually waned, but this evening under Dr. Pickwell's spirited leadership they occupied a full half hour of the evening's pro-

gram. The Chairman contributed an account of the strikingly full dawn chorus provided in Sequoia National Park one morning in June by the four "Westerns"—Evening Grosbeak, Robin, Wood Pewee and Tanager, as a reward to the fifty-five members of the Outdoor School who were up at three o'clock and ready for it. Mr. J. R. Davis told of the singing of a Warbling Vireo on its nest at Donner Lake on July 4, and of a mysterious bird, unidentifiable by members, which "aired" its wings on Coffee Creek, Trinity County.

Dr. Haley contributed an account of a Blackbird "shadow-fighting" the wind shield of an automobile parked near the Mining Building. Upon inquiry the owner of the auto stated that he had noted the performance on four different days, other machines in the vicinity being unmolested. Miss Werner reported the finding of a baby guillemot on the rocks at Lands End; Miss Rinehart the presence of a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers in a canyon on Howell Mountain, said to have been frequented by this species for the last ten years; Elmer Aldrich the observing of an Arizona Hooded Oriole at San Leandro and the finding in Yosemite Valley on June 11 of two young Hermit Warblers heavily parasited by large fly larvae; Paul Lehman the sight of a Condor near Fillmore; and W. I. Follett the devastation wrought by six or eight White Pelicans at Pyramid Lake among the schools of red suckers trying to ascend the shallow waters at the mouth of the Truckee River.

To the accounts given in the past, of the behavior of Screech Owls, Mr. McCabe added his own recent experiences in Faculty Glade, where about ten o'clock on the night of July 7 he was struck a smart blow on the head by one of these birds, which flew about in the vicinity for fifteen minutes, clicking its bill ominously, but not attacking again. Several nights later it passed so close it brushed his hair. On the evening of July 26 the bird flew in such a challenging way that the victim's instinctive reaction was to flick aloft a white handkerchief, which was instantly seized by the owl and carried up into an oak tree, where it remains as evidence.

The evening's discourse was by Mr. J. M. Linsdale, who presented many interesting facts gathered by himself during several years of close study of magpies in life and in literature. Meeting adjourned at ten o'clock, but many of the members

remained until ten-thirty to discuss the various species of magpies represented by skins shown and to examine the excellent series of photographs secured by Mr. Lawrence V. Compton who accompanied Mr. Linsdale in a recent trip to Nevada. —HILDA W. GRINNELL, *Secretary*.

AUGUST.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on August 24, 1933, at 8:00 p. m., in Room 2003, Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, with about fifty members and guests present and President Pickwell in the chair. Among the guests were Mr. and Mrs. Wharton Huber of Philadelphia. Although Mr. Huber has been a member since 1915, this was his first opportunity to attend a meeting of the Club.

Minutes of the Northern Division for July were read and approved. Dr. T. Eric Reynolds, Franklin Bldg., Oakland, Calif., was proposed for membership by Ernest I. Dyer, and Mr. Walter Fry, Three Rivers, Calif., by J. Grinnell. At the request of Dr. Luck, Secretary of the Pacific Division of the A.A.A.S., the question of whether it would be more desirable to hold meetings of the organization in June or in September was brought before the meeting and at the suggestion of the Chairman, the Secretary was instructed to write Dr. Luck endorsing the action of the Southern Division in expressing a preference for June.

Dr. Pickwell reported that Black-headed Grosbeaks have disappeared from the campus of San Jose Teachers College, Yellow Warblers have ceased singing, the Song Sparrow has begun a second song cycle, and the voices of two non-residents are heard on the campus, the Junco and the Red-breasted Nuthatch. Mr. Bolander told of visiting a Bald Eagle's nest near the Big Sur, Monterey County, August 13, and noting that the young, though full grown, were still in the nest. Mr. Grinnell contributed an account of the "territorial" pugnacity of House Finches, which twice beset and routed a nomadic Wood Pewee which innocently perched on a wire near the box of seeds where they fed, just outside his kitchen window. Mrs. Allen reported that the crippled California Valley Quail which has been visiting her garden since January, secured a mate, raised a brood, and now hops at the rear of the mixed flock which comes to the feeding table.

Arizona Hooded Orioles in Piedmont were recorded by Mr. Dyer, who was present in Mr. Brock's store when an immature individual, accidentally trapped, was brought in. Observation in the vicinity revealed five or six of the birds, both adults and juveniles. At Mr. Dyer's home, thrashers, although far gone in molt, are giving full song; new broods of quail are still appearing, even though young were brought off in May, June and July; and young grosbeaks, thirty days out of the nest, are beginning their song endeavors. At Moss Beach during the last few weeks, Mr. Behle watched a Great Blue Heron frequenting the reefs along the shore during the low tides of early morning. On August 17, Clarence Smith visited the Farallon Islands and found California Murres rare, only eight or ten adults being seen. The three young discovered were under arched rocks, thus protected from the gulls. When interviewed, the lighthouse keepers expressed the opinion that contact with oil on the waters is very largely responsible for the disappearance of murres, these birds being even less able to withstand the handicap of bedraggled feathers than are Surf Scoters and shearwaters.

The evening's speaker was Mr. Elmo Stevenson, and his topic, "A Key to Bird Nests of the Pacific States." Recognizing some years ago the need for such a key, Mr. Stevenson has struggled long to marshal into useable array such criteria as nest dimensions, materials, height from ground and type of location, only to have confirmed his suspicion that birds are opportunists. He has discovered such disconcerting facts as that when fire sweeps away the pine trees and greasewood in which a colony of Brewer Blackbirds has habitually nested, they will the next season cheerfully place their nests on the ground in the grass which covers the burned acres. The good humor, patience, and ingenuity with which the author is attacking his problem won for him the good wishes of all his listeners.

Adjourned.—HILDA W. GRINNELL, *Secretary*.

#### SOUTHERN DIVISION

JULY.—The July meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at 8:00 p. m., Tuesday, July 25, 1933, at the Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles. President Robertson presided and twenty-seven members and guests were present. Minutes of

the Southern Division for June were read and approved. Minutes of the Northern Division for June were read by title only.

In response to request from the Chair for recent field observations, Mr. Appleton mentioned having seen a Condor over the Ridge Route during the past week. California Shrike nesting close to a neighbor's window where the birds were under daily observation, was reported by Dr. Warmer. A pair of Light-footed Rails with three chicks had recently been seen at Bolsa Chica by Mr. McCoy. Mrs. Michener told of having banded over 150 mockingbirds in her yard this summer, of the singing of the juveniles, and asked if there was any record of a plumage differentiation in the adults.

Dr. W. H. Burt was the speaker of the evening and with a series of skins showing dark and light colored phases of the gopher and the song sparrow, placed on a map of the Pacific Coast states correlative to localities where the specimens had been taken, he was able to visualize for those present his explanation of "Geographic Variation and its Significance in the Study of Evolution."

In the study of evolution as it is now taking place, Dr. Burt emphasized the fact that in order to establish themselves certain species which are more or less sedentary, and more or less plastic, have apparently been forced to take on a coloration similar to their environmental background—the palest forms being found on the light colored sands of the desert and the color range darkening as one advances toward the humid northwest. Basing his explanation on adaptation and the "survival of the fittest," Dr. Burt stated that because of predators it was logical to assume that the average life span of the light colored forms on a dark colored background would be short; that while color of soil in many places is directly traceable to humidity, yet humidity itself probably has but an indirect affect on the coloration of the species; that given sufficient time it is the dark race which will establish itself on the dark background. Further illustration was provided in the showing of specimens of dark and light colored rodents and sparrows taken on adjacent islands in the Gulf of California where climatic conditions are practically the same but soil conditions quite different.

Meeting adjourned.—LAURA B. LAW, *Secretary*.