

July, 1936

## NOTES AND NEWS

Now that the attention of tourists has been directed to southern Nevada on account of the newly completed Boulder Dam, many visitors to that area doubtless will wish to know the nature of the bird life in the surrounding region. The Cooper Club has filled this need, in part, by the publication on May 1, 1936, of Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 24, Birds of the Charleston Mountains, Nevada, by A. J. van Rossem. This 65-page book contains an illustrated general description of the region, as well as comments on occurrence and systematic status of 160 kinds of birds known to occur in this high mountain range. It is sold to Club members for \$1.00 by W. Lee Chambers, 2068 Escarpa Drive, Eagle Rock, California.—J. M. L.

Most of us believe that something should be done to aid in the development of the study of natural history in the public schools, but few persons have made any definite move in this direction. One member of the Cooper Club, Dr. Gayle Pickwell, has done more than his share to help teachers who want materials, especially for bird study. From his large stock of photographs he has selected three sets of forty-eight pictures. These make up three units, Animal Studies, Desert Studies, and Bird Studies, in the series called Natural History Pictures. Each picture is printed on an 8×10 inch card and each unit is accompanied by explanatory text. The topics have been chosen for widespread application from photographs taken at many localities in the United States. The units are sold for six dollars each by Publishers Distributing Service, Inc., 704 South Spring Street, Los Angeles.—J. M. L.

Persons who study birds are constantly wondering what previous studies have been made in whatever topic they are considering. Aside from the *Auk* which has always contained extensive notices of publications concerning birds, two other helpful review services lately have appeared. The recent expansion of the review department of *Bird-banding*, under the energetic supervision of Mrs. Nice, has provided abundant source material dealing with avian biology. Still more recently have appeared three mimeographed numbers of the *Wildlife Review*, an abstracting service for wildlife management issued for the information of cooperators by the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States department of Agriculture. The aim is to cover the field of wildlife management in a comprehensive manner, and the enterprise is conducted by W. L. McAtee, principal biologist and technical adviser, Office of the Chief. It is thus assured that the reviews will be authoritatively critical and

of maximum usefulness to the many newcomers into this field.—J. M. L.

Expansion of governmental agencies connected with wildlife study and conservation has placed increased numbers of competent men in the field. Already their activity along ornithological lines is seen in records and observations appearing in the *Auk*, *Wilson Bulletin* and *Condor*. The necessary substantiation of records by collected specimens results in the preservation of scientifically important material. Our hearty approval of the study collection of birds in local display museums such as those in National Parks and Monuments does not extend to the preservation of record specimens in such places. Personal experience in the building and maintenance of a park museum collection has shown convincingly the insecurity of bird skins there over periods of years. Continuity of curatorial activity in institutions whose primary function is other than that of preserving scientific records cannot be counted upon. Care of record specimens of no particular interest to the layman or casual visitor should be entrusted to a regional or national institution readily accessible to scientists, where long-time preservation is assured. Have sympathy for the compiler and verifier of records fifty years hence! The logical repository for specimens obtained by governmental agencies is the United States National Museum. Since the time of the early biological surveys of the West, and long before the governmental centralization now in vogue, the National Museum was the accepted guardian of such materials.—A. H. M.

One of the intensely interesting topics dealt with by Murphy in his *Oceanic Birds of South America* (1936, pp. 1099ff) relates to the Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*). Briefly, his findings demonstrate that there is a distinct species of tern (*Sterna vittata*), permanently resident in antarctic seas, and that this species again and again has been misidentified as *paradisaea*; the two can be "hardly distinguished in the field," and indeed many specimens in hand have been misnamed. In the course of his painstaking review of all the published and assembled evidence, Murphy comes to "a consideration of the legend which may yet prove to be a far-reaching ornithological illusion, namely, that the Arctic Tern on its annual migration regularly crosses the antarctic circle, enters the pack-ice zone, and attains latitudes as high as 74° S." This "legend" goes back to Cooke (U. S. Dept. Agric., Bull. No. 185, 1915, p. 10). "But Cooke's report, with the much-republished chart showing the summer and winter ranges of the Arctic Tern—at opposite

ends of the earth [involving an annual round trip of 22,000 miles]—is entirely undocumented, and so the subject becomes more and more elusive." The latest perpetuation of the "legend" in question appears so recently as 1935 (Lincoln, U. S. Dept. Agric., Circular No. 363, p. 32), wherein, accompanying a modified migration chart, the figure for the Arctic Tern's annual mileage reaches 25,000! Murphy has done a distinct service to the *science* of ornithology in thus bringing to bear upon certain current generalizations the method of critical review of basic data. No telling how many more of our current notions, not alone concerning bird-migration, may be improperly grounded in fact. Some of us occasionally have to stand the jibe that our field is a glorified hobby rather than a serious science! The critical faculty intelligently exercised, the results plainly announced, will go far toward bringing respectful regard of scientific men at large toward ornithology as a genuinely scientific field of endeavor.—J. G.

#### MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

##### NORTHERN DIVISION

**MARCH.**—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday, March 26, 1936, at 8 p.m., in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, with Vice-president McLean in the Chair and about 90 members and guests present.

Minutes of the Northern Division for February were read and approved. Minutes of the Southern Division for February were read. Names proposed for membership were: John W. Hamlin, 9 Bridge Road, Berkeley, Calif., by J. M. Linsdale; Albert C. Hawbecker, 2206 Dwight Way, Berkeley, Calif., by W. H. Behle; Dr. Lloyd Glenn Ingles, Durham, Calif., by J. Grinnell; Floyd Howard Wymore, 906 Virginia Terrace, Santa Paula, Calif., by J. Grinnell; Mrs. Stafford L. Jory, 1370 Euclid Ave., Berkeley, Calif., by Antoinette Hillebrand.

Mr. E. Raymond Hall spoke briefly reminding members that Thomas Nuttall, the naturalist, landed at Monterey in the month of March one hundred years ago, and that his memory is perpetuated for Californians in the generic name of the Olive-sided Flycatcher, the specific names of the Yellow-billed Magpie and the Dusky Poorwill, as well as in the subspecific names of the Nuttall Woodpecker and the Nuttall White-crowned Sparrow.

Mr. Elmer Aldrich reported having seen a Slate-colored Junco in Strawberry Canyon in early March; Mr. Gibson, a Townsend Warbler in Live Oak Park on March 5; and the Secretary, the presence in Mrs. Charles Newhall's Berkeley garden of a White-throated Sparrow, presumably the same individual having been noted daily since February 9. The Chairman told of seeing both White-throated Sparrow and Tree

Sparrow in Lassen County in February. Mr. C. A. Pease told of sheltering a young Horned Owl in his basement last summer. His regret at being unable to supply the birds with pellet-forming food vanished when he found pellets showing that the owl had secured the needed roughage from asbestos pipe-covering and hemp rope. Mr. C. W. Quaintance reported that both in the morning and late afternoon of March 19 he had noted a female, or yearling male, Golden-eye Duck on the swimming pool in Strawberry Canyon.

The evening's program was provided by the following five speakers: Mr. Elmer Aldrich, Miss Mary M. Erickson, Major Allan Brooks, Mr. Edwin H. McClintock, and Mr. Charles W. Quaintance. Mr. Aldrich discussed the behavior of female Allen Hummingbirds during the nesting season, and the reactions of their young. Miss Erickson gave an account of the activities of two pairs of California Jays which she is watching in Strawberry Canyon as part of her study of the economic position of the species. Miss Erickson stated that she would be happy to receive accounts of observations made on Jays by other Club members.

Major Allan Brooks spoke upon the care of bird sanctuaries and described the one established by himself at his cottage near Comox, British Columbia. There, in a small area, to achieve greatest success he found it necessary to eliminate certain hawks, jays, snakes, cats, ants and slugs. Mr. McClintock reported upon the locations and construction of fifteen Bush-tits' nests which he has watched this spring. Mr. Quaintance sketched upon the blackboard a portion of the University Campus and delineated thereon the territorial activities of several pairs of banded Brown Towhees, among them being an individual banded five years ago by Mr. Sumner.

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

**APRIL.**—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday, April 23, 1936, in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, with President Miller in the Chair and about 70 members and guests present. Minutes of the Northern Division for March were read and approved. Minutes of the Southern Division for March were read.

Mr. Grinnell presented for examination, "Oceanic Birds of South America," much of the material for which was collected by Rollo H. Beck while in the employ of Dr. L. C. Sanford. Mr. Grinnell paid high tribute to Robert Cushman Murphy, author of this exhaustive two-volume work, and to his illustrator, Francis L. Jaques. Certain of the birds dealt with by Murphy are wide-ranging, such as the Chilean Skua which has been found as far north as the waters off the state of Washington.