

NOTES AND NEWS



Fig. 78. Charles E. Hellmayr, Associate Curator of Birds, Field Museum of Natural History. Author of the later parts of the "Catalogue of Birds of the Americas."

REVIEW

Recently I have heard recordings of bird songs some of which are, frankly, good. But there is no way to replace the song of the bird as heard first-hand, so that all such bird records are inadequate, to my mind at least. Recorders of bird music may well be surprised at the much more pleasing effect of a recording issued by the University of California Press (Berkeley and Los Angeles) of Dr. Loye Miller's informal talk on "Music in Nature." Dr. Miller illustrates his discussion of bird talk and song, the characteristics of sound and music (time, tone, tune, timbre, touch), with his own vocal and whistled imitations, and the whole performance is not only as good as many actual bird recordings, but it brings the voice, thought, and personality of our beloved Cooper Club member as well. Highlights of the imitations are the four calls and the song of the California Quail, and the songs of the creeper, wolf, Spotted Screech Owl, tree frog, and meadowlark. Although I have not heard the Sandhill Crane, I am greatly impressed with Dr. Miller's three-toned imitation, combining a tongue flutter, a whistle and a grunt! I cannot imagine a more delightfully original talk than this. Dr. Miller's system of analyzing sound is all his own (musicians may throw up their hands at

the term "touch" applied to music, meaning *accent* and *inflection*). I do not agree strictly with some of his imitations: the grace note is omitted from the horned owl's hoot, the inflections used in the Russet-backed Thrush call and poor-will song are not as I have heard them, nor does his chickadee's song have the usual time intervals. But his concern is not in giving strict imitations; it is with interesting bird students in appreciating birds through sound as well as sight. Conversing with birds not only has great practical values in facilitating the taking of specimens and studying territorial responses, but is most pleasing, and at times really exciting, as anyone who has called up a Spotted Owl will admit! I advise the bird student who is eager to take up Dr. Miller's challenge to go out and converse with birds to be patient. It took me months to get that "very low falsetto" for the horned owl, but my immeasurably increased knowledge and enjoyment of horned owls since then has certainly made the effort worthwhile.—JOE T. MARSHALL, JR.

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

NORTHERN DIVISION

APRIL.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday, April 23, 1942, at 8:00 p.m., in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley, with Vice-president R. M. Bond in the chair and about 35 members and guests present. Minutes of the Northern Division for March were read and approved. Three names were proposed for membership: Marjorie Lee Guest, 4403 Marlborough Drive, San Diego, California, and Telford Hindley Work, 587 Alvarado Row, Stanford University, California, both by Alden H. Miller; Thomas Allen Smith, 843 Indian Rock Avenue, Berkeley, by Amelia S. Allen. A report of the sixteenth annual meeting of the Cooper Club at San Diego, April 3 to 5, was received from the secretary of the Southern Division, Jack C. von Bloeker, Jr.

Milton Seibert opened field observations with the report that a mockingbird in east Oakland had been singing for several weeks. He had noted the nest of a Red-breasted Nuthatch April 12. Mr. Alden Miller said that a Red-breasted Nuthatch west of the Life Sciences Building had been giving the call associated with nesting. Mrs. Kelly had recorded a Tolmie Warbler in Garber Park on April 21. Mrs. Allen was able to give April 7 as the date of their arrival. She said the Townsend Solitaire in Strawberry Canyon was still present on April 18. At the Alvarado ponds on April 11 she had seen 8 Black-necked Stilts.