

## NOTES AND NEWS

Delay in providing buckram binding has held up shipment of the Fourth Ten Year Index to the Condor to some purchasers; paper-bound copies were available in May. Copies with buckram covers should soon be in the hands of all who have ordered them.

Renewed attention, through individual appeal, is being given to the purchase of CARE packages for the relief of European ornithologists. Mrs. John T. Emlen, Jr., 2621 Van Hise Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin, will be glad to arrange for CARE packages from Cooper Club members. There is here a welcome opportunity to give critical aid to our co-workers in devastated areas.

We report with regret the death of P. A. Taverner, widely known for his books on Canadian birds, who for many years was Curator of Birds in the National Museum of Canada.

There is hardly a sailor who does not look with affection upon the gulls which follow in the wake of his ship or gaze with admiration at the skill with which petrels and shearwaters skim the crests of the waves. Often he has had to depend upon some solitary sea bird to break the monotony of a long voyage out of sight of land and other shipping. Yet strangely enough, so far as is known, no organization has ever been formed to carry out systematic observation of birds over the immense area that the seas and oceans of the world cover.

In many respects the sailor is an ideal bird watcher. First, there is his natural affection for the birds which he finds at sea; second, owing to the limited facilities for recreation, he must needs spend a fair proportion of his leisure time gazing at the sea and sky about his ship; third, he has in his ship a number of specialists who can give him much of the necessary information (meteorological and navigational) which he will require when making out his records. Also he is in a good position to obtain first class binoculars and telescopes from Service sources.

It is not, therefore, altogether surprising to hear that the more enthusiastic bird watchers in the British Navy have got together and formed a Royal Naval Bird Watching Society. The main objects of the Society are: (1) The encouragement and promotion of bird watching in the Royal Navy with special reference to bird watching at sea. (2) The cooperation with other ornithological societies in carrying out investigations connected with birds and bird movement at sea. (3) The cooperation with the British Trust for Ornithology in their special investigations and work.



Fig. 23. Vice-admiral W. L. Tebbant, President Royal Naval Bird Watching Society.

The Society is affiliated with the British Trust for Ornithology, which is the largest and most active field society in Britain and works largely on the cooperative system.

The organization of the Naval Society does not differ materially from any other, but it has, in addition to the officers of the executive council, two advisory panels from which it obtains expert ornithological guidance. The first of these is the editorial and advisory panel, composed of those members who have had most experience in ornithology and who are responsible for editing all reports and checking all records. In addition to this panel there is a "consulting panel" of four leading British ornithologists who have kindly consented to assist the Society in an advisory capacity. This latter body should ensure that the newly formed Naval Society starts off on the right track and is from the beginning obtaining the type of information that is most required. One of the consulting panel experts is probably already well known to bird students in the United States. He is W. B. Alexander, author of "Birds of the Ocean"—one of the few reference books on sea birds.

Membership of the Society is open to all ranks of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines and to their Reserve, Women's and Cadet services as well as to personnel of the Dominion and Indian navies. The aim of the society is to have at least one observer in every ship of the Royal Navy.

Individual members cooperate in the Society's activities mainly by filling in various report sheets. On a Sea Report Sheet they will report

the sighting of every bird observed at sea. Much, of course, will depend upon the experience and accuracy of the individual observer. Great emphasis has been laid upon the importance of bird identification and it is intended so far as is possible to maintain the highest level in this respect. For special inquiries observers will use special report sheets drawn up for the express purpose of the inquiries.—MAJOR NOEL BEALE, *Founder and Secretary, Royal Naval Bird Watching Society.*

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

Part 10 of the Birds of North and Middle America (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 50, pt. x, 1946 [rec'd January 15, 1947], xii + 484 pp., 28 figs., \$1.25) covers the Galliformes, following the style and plan of earlier volumes of this work and particularly part 9. Friedmann has used many of Ridgway's notes and diagnoses, yet is responsible for the contents of the volume and should be regarded as the author. Indeed, we wish he felt less constrained to follow the pattern of Ridgway's earlier treatment; although uniformity has merit, its values diminish after the lapse of 45 years, the period since the initiation of the series. In the matter of form, we do appreciate the helpful inclusion in the keys of brief indications of ranges of species and subspecies (oddly omitted in some genera of the Cracidae).

One great value in such a compilation lies in the bibliographic material. Titles are listed for 1943, and at least some for early 1944. There is included a number of recently described races of galliforms, additional to those in Peters (Birds World, vol. 2, 1934) and in Hellmayr and Conover (Cat. Birds Amer., pt. 1, 1942), but only part of these seem to have been critically evaluated. In fact there is a tendency here and there to accept a form merely if it has not been clearly disproved as a distinct racial entity rather than place the burden of proof upon those who would advocate its recognition. Thus *Canachites canadensis torridus* is listed, although Friedmann says his material does not bear out this race and Hellmayr and Conover (*op. cit.*:212) could give it no real support. Further, *Lophortyx californicus orecta*, although thought unworthy by several authors, is defended but weakly as follows: "The race is only faintly characterized, but in fresh material it is recognizable." The recognition of two different races of turkeys on the two slopes of the Sierra Madre Occidental of northern Mexico is a questionable decision. Turkeys range freely across the crest of these mountains, and the likelihood of them segregating there into two consistently characterized races is slight.

In the genus *Dendragapus*, although but one species is recognized formally, the arguments for two species are well reviewed and are stronger than those calling for one species; it may be

added that nowhere is an intergradation of the two species brought to light. In these grouse, there is reported an incongruous overlapping of the ranges of *sierrae* and *howardi*, the former extending south as far as Madera County, California, the latter extending north some fifty miles past Madera County to Calaveras County. These resident races in fact intergrade in the vicinity of latitude 37° on the west slopes of the Sierra Nevada over a fairly broad belt and arbitrary delimitation of range is necessary. To indicate that the ranges overlap distorts the picture and implies racial identification of individuals apart from the populations of which they are members.

There are a few errors of make-up in the volume which have been noted, the most disturbing of which is a transposition in the key on page 4 of the characters of the Cracoidea and Phasianoidae; the later text is correct. The name "Olathe Quail" is given to the California Quail of Owens Valley! Evidently this vernacular name was transposed from the account of the Gambel Quail of the race *sana* which has been provided with the new and sensible name of Colorado Gambel Quail. Such meaningful names indicating species affinity should have been provided throughout the work.

Surveys like the Ridgway series are by nature comprehensive rather than intensive. The taxonomic study of each small group cannot be complete nor wholly satisfying to the person particularly acquainted with a limited area or subject. Indication in this review of some points of doubt are not a reflection on the author of the work but rather an indication to the uninitiated that the analysis of variation and speciation in North and Middle American birds, and the taxonomy which reflects it, is far from being an exhausted field of endeavor. Friedmann is to be congratulated and thanked most warmly for bringing out this extremely useful and prevailingly accurate and dependable treatment of the Galliformes.—ALDEN H. MILLER.

#### COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

##### NORTHERN DIVISION

JANUARY.—The monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on January 23, 1947, in Room 2503, Life Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley, with 153 members and guests present. Proposals for membership were as follows: Haven Hadley Spencer, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich., by William H. Burt; Lawrence P. Richards, 5375 Kalaniana'ole Highway, Honolulu 49, Hawaii, by Harvey I. Fisher; Mrs. Roy F. Nelson, 650 Blair Ave., Piedmont 11, Calif., Miss Grace E. Ball, 1219 Leavenworth St., San Francisco 4, Calif., and Mrs. Luther Dunlap, 2817 Woolsey St., Berkeley 5,