

NOTES AND NEWS

For better protection of the California Condor, the Secretary of the Interior has issued an order withdrawing from entry under mining laws 55 sections, or about 35,200 acres of land, in the Los Padres National Forest in Ventura County, California. The order permits limited entry under the provisions of the Mineral Leasing Act, for oil and gas, dividing the acreage into two categories, one in which there may be no entry on the surface of an area within half a mile of any condor nest known to have been active within three years, and the other a compact tract of 10,240 acres on which no surface entry will be permitted. The latter is a particularly vulnerable part of the condors' nesting and concentration area. Under the terms of the order, any operations in search for oil or gas under the surface of these 16 sections would have to be directional; in other words, by slant drilling from outside the boundaries of the tract. The few existing mineral leases are not affected by the order and will run their course.

The withdrawal order implements the authority of the Forest Service and enables it to make the refuge effective. All other forms of entry than under the provisions of the mining laws and Mineral Leasing Act were already under the control of the Forest Service. Through his action the Secretary of the Interior has established a valuable precedent that holds promise of better protection of endangered wildlife on other federal lands.

Conservationists throughout the country may well take heart. The issue was not easily settled, but the joint action of many conservation organizations and federal agencies carried weight and brought success. The National Audubon Society through its support of the basic research of Carl B. Koford on the natural history of the condor and by the persistent efforts of John H. Baker to establish an effective sanctuary is to be largely credited with this success. Efforts of this kind have meant considerable expenditures by the Society. It is hoped that persons appreciative of this excellent work in the conservation of the California Condor will be willing to contribute to the National Audubon Society in support of this and like undertakings.—A. H. M.

Funds to publish the frontispiece of this issue were generously provided by Dr. I. D. Nokes and Mr. Albert E. Colburn. This, the twelfth of Grayson's paintings appearing in the Condor, shows the Bat Falcon (*Falco albicularis*). From Gray-

son's notes on this species, we have extracted the following comments:

"In the winter of 1863, near the foot of Sierra Madre, not far from the mining town of Panuco in the State of Sinaloa, I saw two small falcons, the smallest I had ever seen. . . . Their movements upon the wing reminded me of the Peregrine Falcon. They were chasing each other in a playful manner, and uttered a sharp whistle as t'chee, t'chee, t'chee. . . . One of them captured a small parrot from a flock which had just settled on the top of a large tree. . . . One morning during my rambles on the Tres Marias (1864), I heard this well remembered note, with great caution commenced searching for it. I soon discovered the little fellow, sitting upon a dry branch of a tall tree. . . . Whilst hunting in the vicinity of San Blas, in an old clearing, I saw one of these hawks dart at and seize a little ground dove, when it was endeavoring to escape. . . . This dove is a swift flyer, but the little peregrine came up with it so suddenly as to make it appear almost stationary, indeed it passed over my head like an arrow just sprung from the bow. I at last succeeded in shooting one near the Rio Mazatlan in the month of February 1867. . . ."

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

MENABONI'S BIRDS. By Athos and Sara Menaboni. Rinehart and Company, Inc., New York and Toronto, 1950. 9×12 inches, 132 pp., 45 full page plates (32 in color, 13 black and white), numerous sketches in text. \$10.00.

The core of this book is the assemblage of reproductions of Athos Menaboni's paintings of birds, which run the gamut of species sizes and types from the Ruby-throated Hummingbird to ducks, herons, Golden and Bald eagles and a turkey. Many of the plates are nicely arranged, colorful and thereby pleasingly decorative. In others, as the Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Wood Thrush, rather dull-colored birds are de-emphasized by the much brighter and more extensive foliage in which they are placed. Menaboni's own admiration for Audubon's work is evident from this as well as from his arrangement of certain birds, such as the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Blue Jay. Upwardly bent wing-tips seem overdone in some, but not in other paintings. The body proportions or postures of certain of the birds seem unnatural to this reviewer and to others whose opinions were solicited. Thus, the Pileated Woodpeckers (name consistently mis-