

who will be willing to enter into the spirit of our work and to undertake the various lines of study we have outlined. Information concerning our work may be obtained from Mr. Lynds Jones, Oberlin, Ohio.

Our constitution calls for an annual election of officers. We were once in the habit of holding this election regularly, but during the past two or three years it seems to have been forgotten. There appears to me no better way to make amends for past neglect than to call for a regular election. Every active member is urged to make nominations to the secretary at once. A list of candidates will then be published and an election held by mail. As the office of secretary is at present vacant, I appoint Mr. Benj. T. Gault to be secretary for the few weeks remaining before a regular secretary can be elected.

The officers to be elected are a president, secretary, treasurer, and three members of the executive council.

According to our constitution any active member may place in nomination during the month of September, one eligible member for each elective office; all nominations to be sent to the president.

R. M. STRONG, W. O. C., President,
Woods Hole, Mass.

A Criticism.

A criticism in the March-April number of "The Condor," upon Bulletin No. 33, which is a running account of "A Summer Reconnoissance in the West," under the joint editorship of the writer and Rev. W. L. Dawson, seems to call for some comment. It is true that the criticism is mainly directed against the writer's list taken in Los Angeles county alone, but some remarks of a general nature seem to reflect upon the whole enterprise.

In the interest of accuracy the criticism is welcomed, the more so, because for Los Angeles county it accomplishes what did not seem feasible in the small space allotted to that large field; namely, indicating what species were rare and therefore

would not likely be seen by the tourist who is only casually interested in birds.

It seems to the writer that our critic was unfortunate in his choice of the form of destructive criticism, because it has no doubt led him much farther than was intended. Furthermore, he has wholly misconstrued the spirit of the "Reconnaissance." It was not intended that the results have any general scientific value. We were out to become acquainted with as many species new to us as possible, and had nothing other in mind than to satisfy ourselves. In our own opinion we have made no local lists, and therefore compete with none. Our object in placing the results of this work before the reading public is only to give a concrete illustration of what one may accomplish in the way of a study of the birds during "a ride on a rail."

I am fully in sympathy with my critic in seeking to save his locality from errors of identification, but I still maintain that ability to determine species on the fly is no less worthy of endeavor than the ability to determine in hand scarcely discernible differences in closely allied forms. I protest against the notion that the only good bird is a dead bird.

To pass on, now, the species objected to. Green-tailed Towhee and Western Winter Wrens are pretty clearly mistakes due to a too hasty revision of my field note-book. The California Thrasher and Samuel's Song Sparrow are indistinguishable in the field from the closely allied forms and since their fringes are not adequately defined in any writings available both forms were admitted. A better plan would have been to follow them with a question mark. While the record of the Prairie Falcon and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher may not satisfy anybody else, the specimens not having been taken, I have no doubt about them. The Falcon has become so familiar to me in the regions just traversed that I could not have mistaken it for any of the other Raptores likely to occur there. The Gnatcatcher was too well seen to warrant a doubt. The California Cuckoo could hardly be mistaken for any other species, especially in the setting in which I found it. It is wholly against the experience of the most of us that because a species happens

to be rare in our locality that therefore the person who comes for a brief study will not find it. For nine years I have looked in vain for the Short-billed Marsh Wren in this county; but last year one of my students found one! A week later I also had that privilege.

In our critic's statement, "It is unnecessary to call attention to other identifications almost as glaring, for enough has been said to illustrate the danger of publishing local lists without years of experience gained in the locality itself." I cannot but feel that he has been led into a too sweeping statement by the style of criticism adopted, and certainly his idea that this list is intended to pose as a local list is mistaken. A careful scrutiny of the list does not reveal any other species than those which he has mentioned to which serious exception should be taken.

It is our intention to revise the whole paper to conform to the late Supplement to the A. O. U. Check-List, when other records which seem to us questionable will be called attention to. Another expedition of a similar nature, but with a scientific setting, is being planned, when we shall have opportunity to compare this initial work with the later.

LYNDS JONES, *Oberlin, Ohio.*

Publications Received.

Pacific Coast Avifauna, No. 2. (A List of the Land Birds of Santa Cruz County, California.) By Richard C. McGregor. Cooper Ornithological Club of California. May 15, 1901.

This paper of nearly 22 pages is the second in the series of papers too extensive for publication in the official organ of the Cooper Club. It is a most happy arrangement by which the papers of greater importance which this active organization is presenting from time to time may be preserved separately, with their own paging.

The paper consists of two parts, the Introduction and the list of Land Birds. The Introduction gives one an insight into the methods of work, the amount of time spent, the sources of