

## EDITORIAL

We are asking our contributors to try to avoid the indiscriminate use of trinomial scientific names. The trinomial was accepted only after much protest and many ornithologists held out stoutly against it for a long time, but, now that all resistance has been overcome and a generation that has never been without it has grown up and occupied the ornithological world, we seem to be going to the other extreme and are tending to use trinomials on every possible occasion, whether we mean anything by them or not. Remember that the binomial is perfectly respectable. If you live in the Southwest, for example, and are a student of the breeding habits of birds, send us that paper on the nest-building habits of *Spinus psaltria*, but don't call it *Spinus psaltria hesperophilus* just because you judge from the A.O.U. Checklist that that *must* be the form found in your region; and do not, above all, fall back on that clumsy and wholly useless subterfuge of speaking of the "Arkansas Goldfinch (*psaltria* group)." Your notes actually refer to the habits of *Spinus psaltria* at Centerville. Any other label is based on gratuitous assumption, as you will realize when you eventually discover how many birds occur at Centerville all unknown to the A.O.U. Checklist.

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As the editorial year comes to a close we wish to express here our grateful appreciation of the advice and assistance received from Helen T. Gaige, Thomas D. Hinshaw, Milton B. Trautman, and Leonard W. Wing.

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The Club is much indebted to its long-time member and former Editor, Frank L. Burns, for his recent, very generous gift of one hundred rare early numbers of the *Bulletin*.

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Contributors to *The Wilson Bulletin* are requested to follow as fully as possible our established format. They should *not*, however, mark on manuscripts the type for the printer to use; that practice usually results in making the Editor's task harder instead of easier.

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Again we urge members to notify us promptly of changes in address. The failure of some members to do so adds greatly to the Club's postal expense.

## ORNITHOLOGICAL NEWS

Frank A. Pitelka will serve as teaching assistant this year in the University of California Department of Zoology at Berkeley.

Robert C. McClanahan has been added to the staff of the Section of Distribution and Migration of Birds of the U. S. Biological Survey.

Dr. Louis B. Bishop has given his great collection of North American birds to Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. Dr. Bishop's collection was said to be the largest American collection in private hands.

George N. Rysgaard is now a graduate assistant at the W. K. Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Homer L. Bradley has been transferred by the U. S. Biological Survey to Havana, Illinois and placed in charge of the Chautauqua Waterfowl Refuge.

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

"NUISANCE REGULATIONS." A recent article in *Time* magazine implies that the current federal waterfowl regulations are "nuisance" measures, and unnecessarily restrictive.<sup>1</sup> No doubt written with intent to please some shooters, this news item serves best as a reminder to us that the fight for wise waterfowl management is by no means over; it has only started! The "nuisance" restrictions provide the earlier (4 P.M.) closing hour, lower bag limits, only 45 days open season and include the ban on live decoys and baiting. (Formerly the season was 3½ months and the closing hour was sunset.)

The bag limit reduction (from 25 ducks a day to 10 per day) must save some birds; but to the ducks it matters little whether one shooter bags 60 birds or six shooters take ten apiece! It is the total kill that counts. Wild geese decoy readily to paper silhouettes, and winter wheat fields and corn stubble are legal "baiting." During the 1936 fall flight, large numbers of Blue and Snow Geese were shot in Michigan during their unusually long stay; and in 1939 the Canadas were similarly bagged in southern Michigan in numbers far greater than customary. *Changing habits of these birds may create new hazards for them and require even more stringent regulations.*

In all but perhaps a few items, the U. S. Biological Survey is to be upheld in its stand on waterfowl protection. A daily allowance of 25 Coots, for example, seems to us unnecessarily large. Coots may occur in great concentrations at a few places, but also they are scarce in many marshes. They eat some of the foods that ducks eat; but it has not been proved that other waterfowl need or miss what the Coots take. With additional reductions probably in order in the legal daily bags of ducks and geese, raising the legal bag limit on the Coot seems like lost ground.

LOCAL BIRD PROJECTS. Probably in conservation fields that vague something called "public education" is best accomplished not by printing bulletins or giving lectures alone, for at best these reach but few people. We need local projects, such as bird sanctuaries and trail-side museums! In many States a mushroom-like growth of local and county-wide conservation clubs is taking place. It usually starts with a fish hatchery or a branch pheasant farm, or possibly a skeet shooting ground or a club house where dinners and dancing are paramount. Properly cared for aviaries and small zoos of native animals may serve well in club or municipal programs to entertain and instruct the public in wildlife conservation. His interest aroused, each person then becomes a possible reader of bulletins or nature guides. Ornithologists should study local conservation moves, keeping a friendly yet critical attitude. Eventually the opportunity will come to be of some specific aid in promoting or advising on community wildlife projects. The past summer at Augusta, Michigan, a new Conservation Club settled a program dispute (pheasants versus a fish pond) among its members by heeding a suggestion that they start a community picnic ground, adding a few geese or ducks, some bird houses and feeding stations for year-round interest. The idea took hold, caught their imagination, and they really enjoyed every step in developing their project. Plans now call for an exhibit of Wood Ducks and Mallards in a neat enclosure on the creek. A bird sanctuary, nature trails, tree labels and other interesting exhibits in a natural setting are on the way. Is not that the spirit of out-door activity? But as yet few villages or cities have any such development. Why should not our members propose and help with many such local projects?

"CALLING ALL BANDS." The conservation of any wild species depends on a thorough knowledge of its natural history. Thousands of gulls, terns, and ducks have been leg-banded. Even the Prairie Chicken and Crow have been banded in fair

<sup>1</sup> *Time*, Oct. 23, 1939: 60.

numbers in the north-central States; for bird banding adds to our findings on annual mortality, flight lanes, and manner of dispersal. The success of these studies depends on the reporting of recovered bands, and this in turn depends on an interested and informed public. Wilson Club members can help greatly by repeating the story of why birds are banded and to whom and where the recovered bands should be reported. Urge your Game Department to include a "call for bands" in its digests of game and fish laws which are given to buyers of hunting and fishing licenses. Tourist-resort publicity might well carry stories of local bird studies and the significance of the colored or aluminum leg bands on gulls and ducks.

**SHOOTERS MAY LEARN.** The following news item has been received from Richard A. Pough, in charge of the National Association of Audubon Societies program to help save predatory birds:

CONSTABLE IS FINED \$50 FOR KILLING EAGLE

Hendersonville, Oct. 12. (Special)—Green River Township Constable H. B. Davis was fined \$50 and costs Thursday by Magistrate Guy Jordan after pleading guilty to killing a bald eagle, a protected bird under the game laws.

The warrant was taken by Game Warden S. S. Whitaker, and Special Agent W. R. McLean, of the State department of conservation and development, who came here for the investigation.

Mr. McLean emphasized that it is a serious violation of the game laws to kill a bald eagle.

Excerpt from the *Asheville* (North Carolina) *Citizen* of Oct. 13, 1939.

In December 1938, Edward K. Love of St. Louis established a \$100,000 foundation for wildlife conservation in Missouri. The income from this fund is being used for several purposes: Scholarships and cash awards to 4-H individuals and clubs and to members and Chapters of the Future Farmers of America; cash awards to county conservation organizations and high-school clubs; two graduate Fellowships at the University of Missouri for work on a problem relating to the furbearers and on a problem in aquatic biology; and others.

A conservation poster contest, sponsored by the Illinois Junior Academy of Science in May of this year, brought out about 25 posters by high school students on various conservation subjects. First prize was a colored poster on protection of hawks. This was submitted by one of the judges, Dr. D. H. Thompson, to the *Illinois Sportsman*, a privately published outdoor magazine of about 20,000 circulation, and was recently published.

From Mississippi Fannye A. Cooke writes, "In addition to the educational program inaugurated by the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission, we have had through W.P.A. federal aid an opportunity to sponsor a program which is fitting teachers in the State colleges to teach conservation and nature study in the public schools. While these teachers are being trained, we are introducing popular nature projects in the schools of nearly all of the counties and in the summer camps. The program provides also for the building of museums of natural history at each of the State colleges. It also provides for a biological survey of the vertebrates and flowering plants. These surveys are being made under the supervision of the research assistant of the State Game and Fish Commission."

—WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Miles D. Pirnie, Chairman