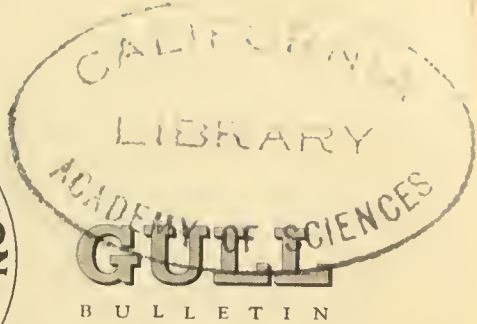


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NUMBER 3

MARCH MEETING: The twenty-sixth regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 13th inst., at 8 o'clock sharp, in the lecture hall of the California Development Board, Ferry Building.

Dr. Harold C. Bryant, Honorary Member of the Association and Economic Ornithologist, University of California, and of the State Fish and Game Commission, will give a talk on "Wild Life," illustrating the nesting habits of birds with several reels of motion pictures.

President Lastreto will honor the following members of Troop 20, B. S. A., for distinguished services rendered in the cause of conservation of wild life: Scouts Ralph Vincent, Sanford Mosk, Alva Werner, Joseph Gutman, Fred Geirrine and Robert McLean.

* * *

MARCH FIELD TRIP will be taken in Golden Gate Park Sunday, 16th inst. Party will assemble at Forty-third Avenue entrance on Fulton Street at 9 a. m. McAllister car to the gate, or Geary line B to Forty-third Avenue and walk two block south. The morning will be devoted to the study of such early migrants as may have arrived, and of the numerous waterfowl still frequenting the lakes. Bring lunches, to be eaten at the Japanese Tea Garden at 12:30 p. m. After lunch the party will retrace its steps to Middle Chain Lake, to take part in the dedication of the Experimental Grounds, as announced in the Junior Section hereof.

* * *

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING

The twenty-fifth regular meeting was held on February 13th, in the Ferry Building, President Lastreto in the chair. After the disposal of routine business an interesting discussion arose over the intertwined activities of sparrow-hawks, shrikes, cats, canaries and policemen, as variously reported in the daily press from time to time. Efforts will be made to sift the truth from statements and to determine what has happened, but the only outstanding fact at this time was that the canaries had not attacked the policeman.

The meeting then enjoyed "A California Quail Story," by Dr. B. W. Evermann, Honorary President, an idyl based upon Dr. Evermann's observations of these fascinating birds.

Immediately preceding the meeting the Board of Directors had convened and elected the following gentlemen to membership in the Association: Messrs. Frederick Baruch, Theo F. Dredge and Charles R. Allen. It was also decided that the Association should pledge lecturers for a course of monthly talks to the Boy Scouts on Bird Study, Breeding and Conservation.

BIRD NESTING BOXES IN NAPA

My bird-box experiments have been carried on at my residence property of about two acres, in the heart of the country town of Napa. There is an abundance of trees on the place—oaks, conifers and California laurels—as well as fruit trees. A mountain stream adjoins us on our north boundary, notwithstanding which the bird bath is always very popular, with a numerous waiting list. So far as possible, we endeavor to make the place a bird-sanctuary, shooting English sparrows, which are very numerous, and California jays, and trying, more or less unsuccessfully, to banish the hordes of hungry cats.

The first box which we erected was a hollow cherry limb, which we placed twelve feet from the ground, facing east, in a cherry tree, in 1915. The limb was burned out with kerosene from its original small cavity and gouged out to five inches in diameter. The entrance was ten inches above the floor and the hole was one and one-quarter inches in diameter. This was occupied almost immediately by the plain titmouse, who raised a brood successfully. The following year these birds brought off two broods, commencing nesting operations in March. In 1917 a pair of house wrens took possession early in the spring, but were evicted and their nesting material thrown after them by the titmice, who in turn were dispossessed by English sparrows. We shot the sparrows and swung the nesting-box by a wire, but the titmice did not return that year. At least one of them slept in the box during the winter, however, and in 1918 titmouse housekeeping was going on smoothly, as usual. We clean out the nest-box through the swinging observation top, and put in a little buhach at the end of each season. The titmouse is such a jolly, cheerful, rollicking little fellow that we would miss him greatly from our family.

We put up a similar hollow log box in 1916 (with the exception of its having a one and one-half inch entrance hole) that has also been very successful. It was hung fifteen feet up on an electric light pole on a back street, immediately adjoining our place, and the entrance faced north. As usual, the English sparrows at once endeavored to take possession, but were shot. We use a little twenty-two calibre rifle with BB caps. The box was then promptly taken by a pair of the beautiful tree swallows, who have been with us each season since. Their nest was a fine piece of workmanship, lined as it was completely around the circle of the cavity with the wing feathers of pigeons, set with the quills down. The birds sit very close on the nest and allowed us to use the observation top freely. Possibly this, however, was a factor in their moving about fifty feet down the street for the past two seasons to occupy a board box house (of the flicker type) with solid top, erected on another pole by a neighbor's boy. This is encouraging; anyone can find a convenient electric pole on a street on which to put up a bird box! There are seven boxes scattered around on poles on this street now, and bluebirds have been inspecting them very carefully this spring. We have great hopes!

We put two boxes inside our tank-house in 1916, attaching one to a hole that the red-shafted flicker had bored, and where he slept in winter, hanging to the rustic inside. The other was back of a hole about three inches square that had been left from a gauge that had led out there. Both boxes had a flat bottom, with a couple of inches of sawdust thereon. The flickers laid two eggs in the first-mentioned box the next year, but nesting was apparently abandoned. A pair of screech owls brought off a family from the box with the larger entrance in 1918.

We have experimented with the outdoor nest shelves which are shown in Farmers' Bulletin No. 609 of the Department of Agriculture—"Bird Houses and How to Build Them." (This, incidentally, is very useful, giving tables of the required diameter of nesting cavity, entrance hole for each bird, etc.) Henry Ford is said to have had great success with these shelves on his bird sanctuary in Michigan. We erected one in a cherry tree close to the house, about fifteen feet from the ground, and the Western Fly-

catcher built on it in 1917. The young hatched, but died in the nest; possibly the parents were killed, as the nest is well sheltered from exposure in this type by the overhanging roof board. In 1918, however, a family of this bird was raised here successfully. The Black Phoebe formerly nested under the eaves of a toolhouse, but left us for some reason, and a shelf in this location does not seem to attract anything. Neither do the robins use these shelves, although we have placed them on the site of previous nests around the place, as they build every year here. The robin, I believe, was one of the birds which adopted this nesting shelf under Eastern conditions.

We are also trying the weathered shingle houses described by E. H. Forbush in his bulletin, "Bird Houses and Nesting Boxes" (Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture). These are exceedingly easy to make, being merely a square section of old weathered board about three and one-half inches in dimension for the top and another four inches square for the bottom, the shingles being nailed to them. Mr. Forbush says: "A saw, hammer, jack-knife and a few nails are the only tools and materials needed, and I have made such a box in twelve minutes." He states that these boxes "all were successful," and that some happy families of bluebirds were raised in them. Our Scout boys in Napa tried some of them last year, but the only results, so far as I know, were English sparrows. I have four of them up this year, however, in a favorable location, frequented by bluebirds at this season of the year, and am hoping for favorable results from them.

For the encouragement of the novice I will add this word from Mr. Forbush: "Many people write me anxiously asking of what size nesting boxes should be made, and asking for the exact dimensions; some are unhappy lest the entrance holes face the wrong way; others are anxious about ventilation; while still others fear that they may get the box too high or too low; but all THESE THINGS MAKE VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE. The situation and environment, and the size of the entrance, however, ARE important. I have known tree swallows to nest in a round box, three and one-half inches in interior diameter, in a flower pot even smaller at the bottom, and in a one apartment bird house nearly a foot square and eighteen inches high. I have tried facing the entrance hole to all points of the compass; the birds used them all. Painted or unpainted, weathered or unweathered, wood, bark, cement, tin, clay, papier mache and roofing felt—all have been chosen indiscriminately by feathered house hunters. Boxes placed six feet from the ground and others set on poles on the tops of tall city buildings have been taken. I have seen chickadees nesting in a hole in a birch stump two feet from the ground, and in a hollow branch of an elm sixty-five feet high. Such experiences lead us to revise our opinions regarding the exact size of tenement each bird requires and how high and low it should be situated. I am not so positive as I once was regarding what is best for certain species or what kind of box or situation will best please each one. It seems that the birds have some individuality, or that they need places so badly that they will take almost anything if it is so situated that it offers peace and safety." E. L. BICKFORD.



ACTIVITIES OF THE JUNIOR ANNEX

On Sunday, March 16th, the Experimental Grounds in Golden Gate Park will be dedicated. A tract of eight acres has been designated by Superintendent of Parks John McLaren, who has very cordially supported the proposition. Bird houses and feeding tables are already installed. Experiments will be carried on by the Boy Scouts, under the supervision of the Association. All members and their friends are urged to be present. The grounds are located at Middle Lake (Chain of Lakes), on the North Drive, near Forty-third Avenue.



Four Junior Audubon Societies are now in course of formation in San Francisco, with the approval of the Public School authorities in each in-

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stance. The Boy Scouts' curriculum requires that they give talks on bird conservation and form clubs for the protection of birds at their respective schools or classrooms in order to win certain medals and honors. Membership is open to both girls and boys, under an instructor, preferably their class teacher. Further information may be obtained from the Superintendent of Juniors.



The first of the bird study lectures given by the Association to the Boy Scouts was delivered February 28th at the headquarters of Troop 26. President Lastreto described methods of bird study and identification. Superintendent Hansen then showed a few slides, illustrating different types of bird life. The talks were enthusiastically received by the four hundred odd Scouts and visitors present. The course promises to be extremely popular.



ANNUAL DUES ARE PAYABLE IN JANUARY: If you have forgotten this, will you not save trouble and expense by forwarding your check to the Treasurer before the next meeting? PLEASE DO NOT DELAY LONGER.



THE FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP was a success from the standpoint of weather, attendance and enjoyment, but the list of birds encountered was small. About 150 members of the Sierra and Tamalpais Conservation Clubs and of our Association gathered at Bootjack No. 2 on Sunday, 16th ult., after a pleasant climb from Mill Valley by diverse paths. The chill in the air was speedily counteracted by the plentiful supply of hot coffee, but its effects were seen in the early dissolution of the meeting. Proposed legislation dealing with the Tamalpais Fire District was discussed and Dr. Kelley said a good word for our Association.

Members present were the Misses Ames, Ayer, Cassidy and Pierce; Messrs. Bickford, Douglas, Hansen and Kelley; Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Kibbe. As guests, the two Misses Brown and Miss Chapin, Messrs. Fitzimons, Michaels and Scott; Jack Anderson, Robert Bickford and George Roudebush.

On the bay were seen California and glaucous-winged gulls, scaup and canvas-backs. On the marshes blackbirds and a great blue heron. Inland, chickadees, meadow larks, sparrow hawk, linnets, Anna hummer, juncoes, golden-crowned sparrows and song sparrows, vigors wrens, wren tits, California jays, flickers, San Francisco towhees, ruby-crowned kinglets, dwarf hermit thrushes, and as the event of the day, an Allen hummer, the first of the season for many members.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Meets second Thursday of each month in Lecture Room of California Development Board,
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Everyone welcome. Active Membership, \$3.00 per year, including Bulletin.

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