

&O
erials
L 671
684



THE
MONTHLY



GULL
BULLETIN

VOLUME 1

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, AUGUST, 1919

NUMBER 8

AUGUST MEETING: The regular monthly meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, the 14th of August, at 8 o'clock, in the lecture hall of the California Development Board, Ferry Building.

The Plumage and Coloration of Birds will be further discussed by Mr. Douglas, Mr. Ed. Ellis and Mr. Dave Wilson, Secretary California Pigeon Association, will talk on the same subject as related to Poultry and to Pigeons, respectively.



AUGUST FIELD TRIP will be taken to Wildeat Canyon and the ridge above Berkeley, on Sunday, 17th instant. San Francisco members will take ferry at 8:40 a. m., transferring to Berkeley car at the mole. Party will assemble at news stand at terminus of the Berkeley line, corner of University and Shattuck Avenues, at 9:20 a. m., and proceed via Euclid Avenue car, leaving shortly thereafter.

The distance traversed will depend upon the day and the inclinations of the members of the party. If the canyon is found to be too warm, lunch will be eaten upon some part of the ridge, where a breeze may be counted upon. In any event, canteens should be carried.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE JULY MEETING: The thirtieth regular meeting was held on the 10th of July in the Ferry Building, President Lastreto in the chair. Most of the meeting was principally devoted to general discussions on various bird topics, more particularly coloration, and the desire was expressed to bring up the same subject again at the next meeting.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors it was decided to furnish Junior members with The Gull, and also to furnish each Junior Society with Bird Lore. The Gull was made an open forum for the expression of individual views on subjects pertaining to bird life.



ACTIVITIES OF THE JUNIOR ANNEX: A course in Bird Study was given to the Boy Scouts at their Training Camp, Olenia, Cal. Mr. Lastreto visited the camp several times, and Mr. Hansen remained at camp for two weeks. We found that a great deal of interest and enthusiasm was centered in the work by the Scouts. Daily trips were taken and fifty different species were observed and recorded. A colony of cave-swallows and a great blue heron rookery (about 80 feet above the ground, in some Douglass firs) were found near the camp. A colony of cormorants, probably Brandt, was seen on a rock off the coast. Three pigeon guillemot nests were located. The nests or young of the following were also found: Tree-swallow, California woodpecker, Western mourning dove, coast jay,

and Western warbling vireo. Three hundred Boy Scouts were in Camp, of whom all heard or learned something about birds, at least half went out on different field trips, about thirty have taken a decided interest in the Audubon work, and ten progressed so rapidly that they were able to win their merit badge in Bird Study, before camp closed.

It having been vacation time, there is little progress to report in our Junior Societies.

* * *

California Cuckoo Seen at Point Reyes: While on a bird hike with Mr. Lastreto, and a group of Boy Scouts, July 19, 1919, a large bird was seen fluttering in some willows just off the road. One of its wings had been injured, and a Scout caught it. The bird was quickly identified as a California Cuckoo. This is apparently the first record of this species for Marin County.

HAROLD E. HANSEN.

* * *

SPARROW ERADICATION CAMPAIGN

In our last number we reported a misguided movement for the combating of the English sparrow pest, and that we had caused Dr. Bryant to set it in the right direction. It is very gratifying to record the friendly spirit in which our criticism was accepted and the prompt action taken to correct the errors that might have caused more harm than good.

The Napa County Farm Bureau Monthly in its following (July) issue explains that it had "assumed the source from which the article came was dependable" and explains methods prescribed principally in Teachers' Bulletin, California Fish and Game Commission, No. 7, June, 1916, by Harold C. Bryant, and also warns its readers that the use of poisoned grain is forbidden in this State because of the attendant danger.

Then it goes at some length in urging proper identification of the house sparrow, enjoining against the killing of the sparrow with a white stripe over the top of the head (white crowned sparrow), with a streaked breast (song sparrow), with a chestnut-colored crown patch (chipping sparrow), etc., which are beneficial, and discourages sparrow destruction by children.

The Farm Bureau Monthly is to be commended for its readiness to correct a mistake, though unintentional, and for its sincerity of purpose. Another example of education applied to conservation.

* * *

Condor, July-August, discusses some of the results of the study by the Bureau of Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture, of the problem of Ducks vs. Rice, which was the title to a paragraph on the subject in the first number of *The Gull*. Correctly commenting that in "many . . . economic problems arising in the course of adjustment of natural conditions to human settlement . . . these often prove to be no valid grounds for conflict of interests: when there are real grounds, then some fair solution is likely to present itself . . .," it announces that the proper authorities will permit growers and their immediates to kill (and to eat) ducks in the rice fields within certain restrictions, as the best or the only apparent remedy for the damage the ducks are accused of causing to the crops.

We recollect that an authority who had participated in the investigation has stated that the only rice damaging duck is the pintail, but we fail to note a resulting appropriate limitation of the species that the growers and the members of their immediate families might "herd" and utilize for food, notwithstanding that other ducks rival it as a delicacy.

But we are still more surprised that another, more efficacious prevention of the situation appears to be ignored, particularly because it would

contribute to increased crop production and not impair the protection that Federal and State laws afford to ducks.

As we have already recorded, Prof. Mackie explained that in Oriental rice-producing countries ducks had not provoked any complaint because through more careful planting those growers avoided bare patches that show water from above and attract ducks to alight within the fields. It is in these barren water openings where the harm is started, and thorough cultivation and planting will be the doubly desirable remedy obviating a partly effectual and regretful cure open to some abuse.

We postpone joining Condor in approving the investigations and the policy of the Bureau of Biological Survey on the subject until it adopts measures that Oriental practice appear to recommend, or explains their impracticability.



Conservation Through Destruction: At a recent meeting of the Cooper Club, Mr. Tracy I. Storer developed a new and interesting phase of woodpecker service to forests in the apparently paradoxical method of provoking causes of decay but appropriately applied.

Dead trees serve no useful purpose to the forest itself and the quicker they are removed the more rapidly can young seedlings fill in the gap. The activities of many species of woodpeckers in drilling forage and nesting holes in dead trees tends to hasten disintegration of such trees by providing many paths through which water and boring insects may get at and reduce the substance of such trees.



SMALL BIRDS AS "GAME"

A portion of the work of the Fish and Game Commission is the enforcement of the laws relating to the protection of non-game birds.

More violations of these laws occur in the Bay region than in the less populated sections. In the fall of the year when the hunting instinct is strongest, hundreds of hunters work out from San Francisco, Oakland and the adjoining cities into Marin, San Mateo and Alameda Counties. Many of these hunters seem to believe that anything with feathers is game and do not hesitate to kill even bush-tits and kinglets. More commonly their "game" consists of robins, meadow and horned larks, crown, song and grasshopper sparrows, pipits, towhees, flickers, swallows and thrashers. Shot guns of various sorts from cane guns to ten gauge are the weapons used, but frequently a more wholesale method of slaughter is followed. A small mesh net of silk or cotton thread sufficiently long is spread across a small creek or ravine. The hunters commence beating the brush at a considerable distance from the net gradually working toward it. The frightened birds fly against the webbing, become entangled, frightened and fluttering, are killed by the hungry law-breakers.

It is difficult to catch this kind of hunters as they work quietly and mostly always have a lookout posted where he can give notice of the approach of danger. As a rule the courts have very little sympathy with bird netters and heavy fines are imposed.

The most effective method of handling men who wilfully kill birds in a wholesale manner is by vigorous prosecution. The big stick is more effective than soft words. No amount of education will have any effect on

THE GULL

men who use a bird net or on those who cannot understand that birds are good for anything other than food. There is, however, a class of offenders that can be reached more effectively through parents, schools and audubon work. Not a few birds are killed by boys with air rifles and other weapons. It is more exciting to shoot at a living target than at a tin can or fence post and that is the boys' only excuse for killing birds. If by proper training the boys can be shown that birds are of more value as insect destroyers than as targets and most interesting as objects of study, the average boy will become a bird protector, and as such, will have a decided influence with his chums.



THE JULY FIELD TRIP, Sunday, July 13, 1919—Being in the vacation season, very few of the members showed up.

The members met at 43rd Avenue and Fulton Street at 9:30 in the morning. The party consisted of Mrs. Roe, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Hansen, one visitor and two of the Junior's members. The members proceeded around North Lake, of the Chain of Lakes, where broods of young mallards were seen, some full grown and others just hatched. Some pilleolated warblers were seen flitting around the trees and numbers of willow goldfinches were singing.

The party then went to Middle Lake, where chickadees, mallards and bright colored ruddy ducks were seen. Hummers were towering around the trees—both Allen and Anna hummingbirds.

The members then walked around the Buffalo Reserve, and in the fields killdeer and Western robins were flying around. They then walked around the Reserve and headed towards North Lake, and on the way some Brewer blackbirds and a Western mourning dove were seen. The members then separated at North Lake at 11:45 a. m.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) EDWARD SMITH,
Seety. Hummer Junior Audubon Society.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

President, C. B. Lastreto.....260 California St., San Francisco
Corresponding Secretary, C. N. Douglas.....Kohl Building, San Francisco
Superintendent of Juniors, Harold E. Hansen.....870 Forty-third Avenue, San Francisco
Treasurer, A. S. Kibbe.....1534 Grove St., Berkeley

Meets second Thursday of each month in Lecture Room of California Development Board,
Ferry Building, San Francisco.

Everyone welcome. Active Membership, \$3.00 per year, including Bulletin.

The Gull invites free and open discussion. The views expressed herein are not necessarily the
views nor the stand taken by this Association.

Address Bulletin correspondence to President,

Subscription to Bulletin alone, 35c per year.

Single copies, 5c.