

THE
MONTHLY



DECEMBER MEETING: The next regular monthly meeting of the Association will be held at 8 o'clock, on Thursday, the 11th of December, in the lecture hall of the California Development Board, Ferry Building.

On the approval of the Board of Directors the following constitutional amendment will come before the general membership at the next meeting for the final ratifying vote:

Proposed amendment to the Constitution:

To replace existing Sections 2 and 3 of Article Four by the following:

Sec. 2. The officers of this Association shall be: a President; a First Vice-President; a Second Vice-President; a Recording Secretary; a Corresponding Secretary, and a Treasurer. The said officers and the Directors shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Association and shall hold office for the period of one year following the close of said meeting or until their successors are named.

Sec. 3. A Superintendent of Juniors shall be selected by the Board of Directors during the month of January, to hold office for a period of one year or until his or her successor is named.

To insure a quorum and a vote representative of the will of the membership of the Association, prompt attendance is particularly requested.

"The Forage Habits of Birds" will be the subject of a lecture by Dr. Joseph Grinnell, Director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California.



DECEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, December 14th, to and around Lake Merced. East Bay members should take ferry boat reaching San Francisco about 8:40 A. M. and go thence by Mission St. carline No. 12 with "Ocean" sign. Leave car at Fortieth Ave. and Sloat Boulevard. San Francisco members take Ingleside car, line No. 17, and transfer to carline No. 12 at Nineteenth Ave. and Sloat Boulevard and ride west on the boulevard to Fortieth Ave.

Party will form at 9:30 A. M. at entrance to nurseries of MacRorie & McLaren on Sloat Boulevard, near the point where Fortieth Ave. intersects with same. Bring lunch and drinking water. Leaders, Messrs. Harold Hansen and C. R. Thomas.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING: The thirty-fourth regular meeting of the Association was held on the 13th of November in the Ferry Building, President Lastreto in the chair.

On the announcement of the marriage of Recording Secretary Dr. Leggett and of Director Dr. Kelley, a motion was passed by virtue of which Mr. Hansen and Dr. D'Evelyn were appointed on a committee to express the Association's congratulations and good wishes.

A letter from Mr. Max Dyer was read, informative of the Associated Oil Company's plans to avoid the occasion of spilling oil on the ocean waters.

The proposed amendment to the Constitution was duly referred to the Board of Directors.

Mrs. Bertha M. Rice, Secretary of the California State Wild Flower League, discoursed on the need of educational and even legislative measures to repress the extensive and destructive gathering of wild shrubs—especially berry bearing kinds—not only for their own preservation, but also to retain their value to bird life as sources of food and shelter, sounding a note of warning of the gradual disappearance of certain species. Mrs. Rice proposes, at the next wild flower and plant exhibit, to feature the berries and seeds that attract and nourish birds and whose plants afford them shelter and nesting sites.



WHY IS IT SO? ARE THERE OTHERS?

A CORRESPONDENT ASKS THIS QUESTION OF THE GULL.

It was but yesterday that the writer received from the courteous superintendent of the Zoo, Cincinnati, a letter wherein, amongst other data, it was stated: "We have three specimens of the Carolina Parakeet; these are claimed to be the last survivors of this interesting bird." It will be remembered that it was in the Cincinnati Zoo that the last specimen of the Passenger Pigeon on the American Continent died. In the matter of the Carolina Parakeet, the point of interest, to the writer at least, centers around the fact that he has still in his possession a "Book on Birds" which was to him a veritable *vade mecum* in school-boy days, on all matters pertaining to birds; how to keep, and care for them, in "sickness and in health." The petted favorites of many an hour of early enthusiasm had their life histories written therein, and a chumship established, which perhaps was but poorly compensated for when later years stiffened "the observations" into a quasi-ornithology of ponderous terms that somehow or other was ever more suggestive of curricula and class rooms, with "skins" and "species" and "intermediates," rather than of "leafy days in June," the rustle of the blackbird in the hedgerow, or the coquettish poises of the gold-finch as he flirts amidst the thistledown that floats afield. Be these facts as they may, there still remains the compelling truth that a brief, short span of years has seen the passing out of a species from flocks so large that, when they alighted upon the ground around their favorite salt-licks, it appeared as if a many-hued carpet had been outspread, to a painfully, narrowed inventory that recorded in an official zoo museum catalogue: "3—the last survivors." The boy remembers; the book remains; but the species, the birds—are gone!

Let us recall the coloring of the Carolina, as it was known, when, amongst other inmates, it clambered over the netting of its aviary, or darted, flash-like from bough to bough within its roomy arena. A truly parrot-like bird, about 14 inches in length, the ground color of its feathering was an Irish-green, shaded with blue and purple; the forehead and cheeks were an orange red, shading into a gamboge hue on the neck and shoulders; the under parts were more of a yellowish tinge; the tail green, tipped with orange and red. A sociable but somewhat pugnacious "pet," it was a keen favorite, but the fact of the possession of a well-hooked and rounded beak, which it was not unwilling to employ, always secured for it a certain respect akin to aloofness it did not seem prudent to trespass upon. But now—not merely the individual, but the very species, is only a memory.

Wilson, in his "American Ornithology," speaks of the Carolina "being in great numbers on the Kentucky flats"—and adds—"at each successive discharge, showers of them fell, yet the survivors seemed rather to increase." Is it not possible that, after all, artificial causes, e. g., of "showers of them falling," as distinct from natural causes, may be the gruesome initiative, that places ever and anon some fated series upon the death-roll, that finally reaches the unpardonable goal of extinction?

This is an evil thing; it may be excusable, the evil of indifference or ignorance. The result is the same. We must concede these factors of sinister potency. Their mitigation, if not their actual cancellation is undoubtedly a matter of training, education and appreciation. Hence not merely the desirability, but the actual and imperative need of just such activities as are embodied in Audubon Associations and other like utilities which have for their primary purpose the elucidation of these conservative attributes, and their subsequent dissemination broadcast amongst all sections of state and county.

An intelligent and sustained protection should be accorded, alike, to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, to such an extent, that it would be charged against any section, as a sin of commission, the registration as "extinct" of any species of wild life that had claims of beauty, utility, service or perchance only squatter's rights and once had its being and habitat within said area or section.

Why is it so?—is a question that has a moral, individual and communal claim in its challenge.



A PLEA FOR GREATER ACCURACY.

People come to me and ask me to tell them the name of some strange bird they have seen, and when they have finished their description it certainly is strange! It would not know itself. They will say that it is about the size of a robin, or a linnet, without having any true idea of the comparative sizes of the birds they refer to. The color may be given as "dark on the back and light underneath, with some red somewhere." Upon being asked whether the back is dark brown, or dark gray, or possibly black, they cannot tell. "It was just dark." And where was the red? "Oh, it just had some red markings on it." When asked if the bill was flat and broad, or long and pointed, or perhaps thin and high; was it sharp or blunted, hooked or straight, they have not noticed. The "red" may be vermilion, crimson, orange, or any old color, and the bill may be anything from "rather like that of a crow" to that for an Easter hat—short, but rather high. Did the bird have any characteristic pose? "No, it just kept still"—etc., etc. Now, the curious part of this is that just such answers as these often come from women; yet, when one woman catches only a passing glimpse of another she can generally give a fairly accurate and detailed account of what the other woman was wearing—the color and material of her dress, whether it was bought ready made, or made by a ladies' tailor; the style of hat, kind of shoes, and possibly hazard a fair guess as to what each article cost! Now why not apply this faculty of appraisal to the matter of passing birds? Why not note carefully the actual color of the bird's back, the markings thereon, the color and depth of these markings, whether the wings have upon them any bands, and if so how many, and whether lighter colored or white? Why not try to impress upon the mind the sizes of, say, three common birds with which you are familiar and then practice making comparisons with other birds as to their relative sizes? Suppose, for instance, you can recognize the Green-backed Goldfinch and choose that for the smallest model of size; similarly a California Linnet for the middle size and a Western Robin for the largest. Then a little practice in comparing these sizes with those of other birds around you should bring about a fair enough idea of relative proportions for ordinary purposes.

Another great aid to those persons appealed to for identification would be the matter of attention paid to the actions and poses of the unknown birds, as these often are clues leading to the solution of some of the problems. A recent incident will show the value of this. A lady asked me to identify a bird that was about the size of a robin, with a dark back and red marks on the head, with a little lighter color on the wings, which was rather indefinite. The suggestion of a wood-pecker was scorned, but questioning in regard to actions and attitudes lead to the facts that the bird was first seen **upright** and **very immovable** on a limb, and then it flew to a telegraph wire, where it also remained perfectly still. The action and attitude suggested a thrush, and further questioning brought out the fact that the **red** was really a sort of orange color, which was close enough to find the answer—a Varied Thrush. Now, if orange or brownish yellow had been the color first given for the head markings the answer would have been forthcoming at once, but "red" to my mind meant crimson, scarlet, or something on that order. And so it goes.

All this is written, it should be stated, with the idea of helping those interested in bird life who have but few opportunities to profit by lectures, field trips, etc., and by the assistance such give in the matter of identifying the birds with which they may not be familiar. Should it happen that there are but few readers of *The Gull* in this category, so much the better. Yet there may be some suggestion herein which may prove of benefit to those still struggling with these problems, and with this hope the above is submitted.

JOSEPH MAILLIARD.

THE NAMELESS BIRD—For the past three years a strange bird has come with the black-birds every winter to the beach [Ocean] neighborhood. The first time I noticed it was by hearing it sing sitting on a wire over my head. Its notes are very loud and rollicking. They sound very much like *wich-e-ha-chu, wich-e-ha-chu*. The size is about half again as long as the Brewer black-bird, of a chunky build, bobbed tailed and with plumage of a sooty black. Eyes and bill large and white and light colored legs. At the base of the bill is a tuft of black feathers about the size of the end of one's thumb that stands up straight. In repose a narrow edge of white shows on the primaries, but when in flight a large disk of white is seen both under and on top of the wing. The bird walks and eats same as the black-birds.

Whenever I see the California woodpecker I always think of the "nameless bird," as we call him.

MRS. A. H. SMITH.



SONG OF THE SHRIKE—All are acquainted with the harsh notes of the shrike and it seems but a few have ever heard his song, which various writers have credited him with at the mating season. About the middle of September I heard what I thought was a bi-colored blackbird. I went to the porch to see it and instead it was a shrike. The notes changed to a series of sweet, liquid gurgling notes. It sang for fully five minutes. As a rule birds have a certain pose when singing, but if I had not had my glasses I should have thought it was some other bird, as it looked down and up and sidewise all the time while singing. I was only about 30 feet from the bird and on a level with it.

MRS. A. H. SMITH.



THE NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP covered the University Campus at Berkeley on Sunday, November 16th. Through inadvertence, the members formed in two parties which did not meet until the afternoon was well nigh spent, but the day was fine and everything ended well, with a visit to Mrs. J. T. Allen's lunch counter on Mosswood Road.

Exclusive of birds on the bay, of which no notes were taken, there were encountered: California quail, red-tail and sparrow hawks; kingfisher, flicker and Anna hummer; Say and black phoebes, coast and California jays; meadow larks and Brewer black-birds, purple and house finches; green-backed goldfinches, pine siskin; Gambel, Nuttall and golden-crowned sparrows; Sierra junco, song and fox sparrows; San Francisco and California towhees; California shrike, Hutton vireo, Audubon and Townsend warblers; pipits, California thrasher, Vigors and winter wrens; red-breasted nuthatches, plain titmouse, bush- and wren-tits; ruby-crowned kinglets, hermit thrushes, and varied thrushes,—thirty-nine species in all.

A notable occurrence was a desperate encounter between two winter wrens, each of which obtained a strangle hold upon the other and the pair wrestled thus until they landed upon their backs with feet in the air. This apparently appealed to the wren sense of humor, for they promptly abandoned hostilities and resumed their respective occupations.

Members present were Misses Ames, Ayer, Cassiday, Flynn, Griffin, Johnson and King; Mesdames Kelly, Kibbe and Roe; Messrs. Kibbe, Thomas and George Wright. As guests, we were accompanied by Miss Braese, the Misses Henrietta and Olive Burroughs, and Miss Madden; Mrs. Knight and Mr. Kelly. Thirteen members and six guests.

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.