



## 100 YEARS AGO IN THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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## 100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

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The Recent Literature section of *The Auk* in 1901 (new series vol. 18, old series vol. 26) consisted of book reviews and a list of publications received, many of which were scientific journals from around the world. The author of a review was identified only by initials, and almost all reviews were done by the editor, J. A. Allen. Of note in this volume is Allen's review of Grinnell's *Birds of the Kotzebue Sound Region, Alaska*, which was the first in the Pacific Coast Avifauna series published by the Cooper Ornithological Club of California. This work was based on a year that Grinnell spent in Alaska with gold prospectors. Although no gold was discovered, Grinnell was able to observe and study 113 species during that time.

Amusing today is Allen's review of *Birds of Massachusetts* by Reginald H. Howe, Jr., and Glover M. Allen. Apparently Howe and Allen took it upon themselves to list birds in the order that they liked, not following the AOU "Check-List", and they used the names of some birds that were different than the ones that appeared in the Check-List. Allen states ". . . the ordinary student, familiar with the arrangement of the AOU 'Check-List' will find himself greatly at sea with the new order in the present catalogue." He goes on further to say that their use of different names "gives a distasteful flavor to their work." He concludes that their "innovations . . . give the work a certain personality, which is doubtless pleasing to the authors."

Correspondences were occasionally printed, which were letters to the Editor. In this volume, Walton Faxon wrote a piece (*Auk* 18:216–218) on how to tell a first edition of Wilson's nine-volume *American Ornithology* from subsequent editions. Since there were only 200 copies of Vol. 1 printed in 1808, this information would appear to still be of use for rare book collectors today.

The last section of most issues was devoted to Notes and News. These usually began with short pieces on members that had died recently. Notable passings mentioned in 1901 were for Audubon Ridgway, the only son of Robert Ridgway, at age 24 and Barbara Jordan, nine-year-old daughter of David Starr Jordan, then president of Stanford University. It is stated that her bird books were presented to the Stanford Library to start the "Barbara Jordan Library of Birds." Francis J. Birtwell died at age 20, apparently falling out of a tree while attempting to secure a "valuable" nest 65 feet (20 m) above the ground.

New journals starting in 1901 included *The Bittern* (Iowa), *American Ornithology* (Massachusetts), *The Petrel* (Oregon), and the *Bulletin of the Bird Club of Princeton University*, while *The Western Ornithologist* ceased operations. The Australian Ornithologists' Union ("the second AOU") started in 1901 and they published the first issue of their journal, *The Emu*. In the announcement concerning the annual meeting of the AOU starting on 11 November, members who wanted to make a presentation at the meeting were reminded that Secretary needed that information by 8 November.

Also included in this volume was the "Tenth Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-List of North American Birds." The committee, chaired by C. Hart Merriam, had met from 10–18 April 1901 in Washington, D.C. and considered issues that had arisen since the committee met last in 1899. Their report consisted of several sections: additions to the Check-List, and accepted changes in nomenclature; proposed changes in nomenclature not accepted; species and subspecies not accepted; and deferred for further investigation, the last being matters that required more "careful consideration."