



100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

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Having held its first Congress in New York City in September, 1883, the AOU held its nineteenth annual Congress in 1901. C. Hart Merriam was President of the Union, and Charles B. Cory and C. F. Batchelder were Vice-Presidents. John H. Sage had been Secretary since 1889, and William Dutcher had been Treasurer since 1887. The Council consisted of seven other members, plus four expresidents: J. A. Allen, William Brewster, D. G. Elliot, and Robert Ridgway. J. A. Allen continued as Editor of *The Auk*, a position that he had held since volume 1, and Frank M. Chapman had been Associate Editor since 1893.

The membership of the Union consisted of 738 individuals in 4 categories: 44 Active Members (15 of whom were founding members and 5 of whom were Life Members), 16 Honorary Members, 62 Corresponding Members, and 616 Associate Members. By 1901, 8 active members, 14 Honorary Members, 22 Corresponding members, and 56 Associate members were deceased. During the nineteenth Congress, the category of "Active Member" was changed to "Fellow" and "Associate Member" was changed to "Associate." A new category between "Fellow" and "Associate" was created called "Member," and it was limited to ≤ 75 people. Thus, the Union consisted of Fellows, Honorary Fellows, Corresponding Fellows, Members, and Associates at the end of 1901.

The nineteenth Congress of the AOU convened on Monday night, 11 November 1901 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Sixteen Active Members (shortly to be Fellows) were present for the business meeting. Outram Bangs, Joseph Grinnell, T. S. Palmer, F. E. L. Beal, and Louis B. Bishop were elected Fellows; Montague Chamberlain was elected a Corresponding Fellow; 83 new Associates were elected; and 55 people were elected into the newly created "Member" category. During the year, the Union lost 77 members: 11 died, 24 resigned, and 42 for nonpayment of dues. The Treasurer reported that the Union was in good financial condition, and all officers were reelected.

The rest of the Congress consisted of three days of sessions open to the public. The first on Tuesday morning started with a welcome by H. C. Bumpus, and was followed by three presentations by J. A. Allen, Jonathan Dwight, Jr., and Frank M. Chapman. Four more papers were presented in the afternoon. The second day was highlighted by an exhibition of books and manuscripts that formerly belonged to J.

J. Audubon and an afternoon session that was illustrated by "lantern slides." The morning session on the third day consisted of the following: "Are hummingbirds cypseloid or caprimulgoid?," "The birds of Wequetonsing, Michigan," and "Notes on the ornithological observations of Peter Kalm."

The afternoon session that day was a joint meeting with the Audubon Societies of the United States that focussed on bird conservation issues. Witmer Stone presented the report of the Committee on Protection of North American Birds (*Auk* 19:31-34). The new Lacey Act had just come on the scene, and was helping to stem the tide of bird slaughtering both by hunters and for the millenary trade. Stone hoped that they would be able to "permanently stamp out the feather trade." The Committee announced that it was prepared to investigate any reported illegal killing of birds (*Auk* 19:224).

William Dutcher followed with a report concerning use of funds from the Thayer Fund for protection of gulls and terns (*Auk* 19:34-64). The fund was apparently the idea of Abbot H. Thayer, who solicited donations to the fund. The fund started 1901 with \$449.98 and ended the year with \$301.60. Contributions totaled \$1679.65 and the fund spent \$1828.03 on a wide variety of conservation efforts. One strategy was to get every state to pass a law protecting nongame birds. Prior to 1901, only 5 states—Indiana, Vermont, Arkansas, Illinois, and Rhode Island—had such laws, but 11 more states passed bird protection laws during 1901. Several case studies of states were presented, including the Cooper Ornithological Club's failure to get a bird law passed in California in 1901. Dutcher's report is accompanied by a sample state bird law endorsed by the AOU (*Auk* 19:59).

The second strategy used by the Thayer Fund was to hire wardens to protect colonies of terns and gulls and other seabirds and waterbirds during the breeding season. A veritable army of wardens was employed from Maine to Louisiana during the breeding season of 1901 with great success, according to Dutcher's report.

The congress concluded with a talk by T. S. Palmer on National Bird Protection and illustrated presentations on gulls of the Maine Coast and one by Frank M. Chapman on "Some results of bird protection." The nineteenth Congress was adjourned after agreeing to meet the following year in Washington, D.C.