

YOUR PRESIDENT SAYS:

Our Federation showed its strength a few weeks ago by helping to cause the recent reversal in the voting of the New York State Senate regarding protection of the Great Horned Owl. It therefore remains on the protected list for at least another year. We believe this is largely due to the deluge of letters and telegrams protesting the decision already passed by the Assembly, to take it off the protected list.

Intense interest in the proposed bill to protect the Golden Eagle is also evinced by our conservation committee and vigilance is the keyword toward all other legislation which may shrink or destroy wild tracts or convert them from their present ever wild status.

Strong on conservation was our past president, Mrs. Frances H. Irving, and chairman Joseph A. Blake, Jr., carried our conservation banner to lead state organizations during his years in office. Mr. Blake was forced to resign and Maxwell C. Wheat, Jr., of 333 Bedell Street, Freeport is our new chairman since January 1. Other chairmanship changes will show up on the back cover of the May Kingbird.

No doubt we can feel assured that we will progress favorably under these committee changes and sincerely hope that our past chairmen will continue their deep and sincere interest and support. It is also to be hoped that through the tenure of your president's occupancy in office that finances will increase to the extent desirable for at least a 56 to 64 page Kingbird, as written materials have built up. Actually we need a great many more new members. We have much to offer: a fine publication, a tremendously cooperative editor in Mrs. Alice E. Ulrich, cordial and extremely friendly conventions, unbounded enthusiasm in the future and strong convictions of a great Creator who has blessed us with this fine country, its wildlife and still abundant wild lands.

John Jackson Elliott

JOHN T. NICHOLS

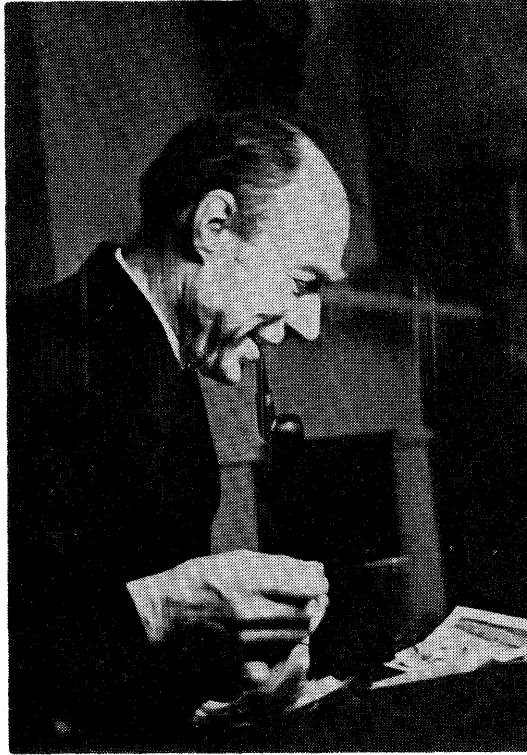
By JOHN J. ELLIOTT and JOHN W. TAYLOR

John Treadwell Nichols, foremost authority on Long Island birds, was born at Jamaica Plain, near Boston, Massachusetts, June 11, 1883. His interest in birds around him began at the early age of eight and after sixty-seven years of continuous study he died in his sleep on November 10, 1958 in his seventy-sixth year. He had been living at his home at 116 Ninth Street, Garden City, Long Island.

His parents, John White Treadwell Nichols and Mary Blake (Slocum) Nichols, moved to New York City when he was two years of age. He, with his family, spent summers in the Rockaways from 1890 to 1900 and while there he studied shore and water birds, getting up early and searching the beaches for an hour or two before commuting to New York City. He was educated in several private schools and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard in the class of 1905.

He visited Museums abroad and took two long oceanic trips on the square-rigged "Nuanu", the first in 1900-01. The ship left the East River, New York City docks for a trip to Hawaii, 41 days of which it fought headwinds off South America's Cape Horn. Another trip around the Horn was made in 1906. On these he collected specimens of albatrosses and

petrels which were later given to the American Museum of Natural History, New York City.



An ichthyologist by profession, he examined marine life in Puerto Rico, The Bering Sea and Nova Scotia; and from 1910 to 1918 served as assistant curator of recent fish (against fossilized) in the Department of Ichthyology and Herpetology in the American Museum of Natural History. In 1920 he became associate curator and was curator from 1927 to 1952 the year he retired. In his professional capacity Mr. Nichols wrote the informative book "Fishes of the Vicinity of New York City", American Museum of Natural History, Handbook Series No. 7, New York, 1918. He, with Paul Bartsch, wrote "Fishes and Shells of the Pacific World", The Macmillan Company, N. Y., 1945. Besides these he wrote hundreds of published articles on fish including "Chinese Fresh Water Fishes", Natural History, publication of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. 25. no. 4, 1925, 346-352.

He founded and was the first editor of the magazine "Copeia" which deals with cold-blooded vertebrates, and was also founder of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.

Mr. Nichols married Cornelia Floyd in 1910. He is survived by his widow; four children, Mrs. David Weld, William F. Nichols, John S. Nichols and David G. Nichols; a brother William B. Nichols and two sisters,

Mrs. Edwin P. Taylor and Mrs. Harold T. Pulsifer. (John Taylor, co-writer above, is a nephew.)

Turning to our own interest — ornithology — according to a letter from his son David G. Nichols of Berkeley, California: "Dad started keeping notebooks on birds as soon as he could write at all . . . His first published scientific note was the year before he graduated from Harvard: 1904. Jan. 'Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker and Evening Grosbeak at Wellsfleet, Massachusetts,' Auk, vol. 21; 81-82. Dad was not a taxidermist. He didn't like to hunt . . . He never made an egg collection. The total of his published articles runs to 1,045 titles. This figure includes many reviews in scientific journals and popular articles in such publications as "Forest and Stream". The strictly scientific material (mostly in fishes, next most abundant in birds, then mammals, and lastly some entomological notes) would account for some 800 to 900 titles, depending on how one classified each publication. From 1915 to the time of his death Dad was an active bird bander."

Two outstanding accomplishments in ornithology were: his careful editing of Ludlow Griscom's "Birds of the New York City Region", 1923, with collection of data on the water birds for this publication; and his revision of the Long Island water bird records in Frank M. Chapman's "Second Revised Handbook on the Birds of Eastern North America", 1934. Both Griscom and Chapman acknowledged Nichols as the outstanding authority on Long Island birds then living. During these years and generally thereafter he spent his summers at Mastic and winters at Garden City. He was editor of "Birds of Long Island", from 1939 to 1941, a publication of the now defunct Long Island Bird Club, and with Rudyerd Bolton in one of these issues wrote 33 interesting pages on "A list of the Birds of Oyster Bay and Vicinity" giving Historic background, discussions on status, and in some species references to past records back to the time of Theodore Roosevelt in 1874. For over a decade from 1941 Mr. Nichols continued publishing ornithological researches on Long Island bird life in similarly patterned issues and still entitled "Birds of Long Island". From 1930 to 1932 he was counselor of the New York Academy of Science and was editor of "Field Notes" in Bird Lore, forerunner to the present day "Audubon Field Notes". He was particularly interested in the British Goldfinch and wrote in the Auk of his experiences with this exotic species both in the Englewood, N. J. area and later described it as nesting in the 1920's at Garden City, L. I.

Some 40 years ago, he, with Ludlow Griscom, separated the Wakula Seaside Sparrow (*Ammospiza maritima juncicola*) and Howell's Seaside Sparrow (*A. m. howelli*) from other numerous races of Seaside Sparrows residing in the Gulf and Florida Coast. He was particularly interested in sandpipers and wrote on these authoritatively for Chapman, especially where concerning their call notes.

In his retired years after 1952, Mr. Nichols still came to the Museum regularly in an unofficial capacity, but somewhat more relaxed; he was there to answer newspaper and other inquiries in an authoritative manner regarding some rare fish, or to discuss some ornithological subject. Fond memories of J. T. (as we affectionately called him) will be long-lasting and a visit to the museum without a look-in at his office door was quite incomplete. His big smile and cordial welcome, his settling back into his desk chair as one of us would settle into another, was characteristic of such a visit.

In such moments of complete relaxation in his retired days, out would come his pipe which he would knock out with several sharp raps, carefully load and, upon lighting, would drag out a half-dozen luxuriant puffs; then conversation would be resumed, likely as not his feet would go up on his desk and we would settle down into some serious phase of ornithology. How the time flew! On such occasions he offered freely of his vast store of knowledge, accumulated from more than half a century of bird study. In late years he was particularly interested in wintering sparrows around Garden City, which, reinforced by banding operations, produced "Sparrow Associations" an article that appeared in "The Kingbird", vol. 7, no. 4.; 106-108. This was in the January 1958 issue and was probably the last of his ornithological writings. His consistent records to Region 10 of "The Kingbird" however, came in to within a month of the time of his death.

From "The Grapevine", December, 1958, published by the employees benefit association for employees of the American Museum of Natural History, come the following lines: "To the outside world — he was known as John Treadwell Nichols, eminent ichthyologist . . . But to most of us he was Mr. Nichols, the man who always had time to listen to our problems, both personal and scientific; who always supported our raffles and our parties, altho' he never came, — whose courtly manner made us feel important; and whose dry sense of humor made our day".

"We would like to quote one of his poems which was read at his memorial service, held on November 13, in Cold Spring Harbor. It is called "Smoke":

A ship rides out,
Her iron funnels there
Loosing a trail of smoke
Into the air.

A day rides out,
Quickly it dims and fades
As does a trail of smoke
Into the shades.

A life rides out —
Long may its memory last
Trailing astern like smoke
Into the past."

Yes, J. T. Nichols has passed on, but associations with him are as fresh in our minds as though it were yesterday; and his accomplishments, his books and his thousand or more writings will, like smoke, range far into the future horizon as an assist to those who wish to know more about Long Island's birds and fishes.