

to local service organizations and donating any money received. The most rewarding result is the community interest which has been awakened. Formerly, the S.C.B.C. has been referred to locally with more or less tongue in cheek. Even sponsoring paid lectures with fine films has not been too successful in this area. Many of us feel that perhaps from now on the attitude will change — already club membership has increased. People are beginning to realize that those "silly bird watchers" are actually a group of conservation-minded people with our country's wildlife heritage in mind. Of course, the S.C.B.C. cannot take all the credit. The whole country's growing awareness of conservation problems as publicized through all media certainly is keeping the subject before the public. Also, we must give credit where it is due; if it weren't for Cotton-Hanlon, Inc., Texas Hollow Wildlife Sanctuary might never be! This, too, is a political feather in the cap for a large lumber concern. But in its small way, we feel that the S.C.B.C. is contributing by sponsoring this wildlife sanctuary.

The 35-member S.C.B.C. has proved one thing — it *can* be done! Bird clubs need such projects not only to stimulate club interest, but to bring recognition to themselves as working organizations. The size of the club is unimportant. All that is needed is leadership and willingness to work. The interest will take care of itself.

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CLINTON HART MERRIAM

Clinton Hart Merriam was born in New York City on December 5, 1855. He attended Sheffield Scientific School at Yale and later the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City, from which he was graduated in 1879. Two of his classmates in medical school were A. K. Fisher and E. A. Mearns, both destined to become prominent in ornithology. For several years following graduation Dr. Merriam practiced at Locust Grove, a small community a few miles north of Boonville, N. Y. During this period he was active in field work in Lewis County and adjacent areas and contributed to the Nuttall Ornithological Club Bulletin.

Of major interest to us is Merriam's "Preliminary List of Birds Ascertained to Occur in the Adirondack Region, Northeastern New York." It appeared in the N.O.C. Bulletin, 1881-2 and the "Auk", Volume 1 (1884). This is an annotated list of 211 species with relative abundance indicated in most instances. The area covered is not clearly defined but it is evident that peripheral territory such as Lake George, the western border of Lake Champlain and the upper Black River Valley is included.

A few of the common names used by Merriam are quite unlike the ones we now know. For example his Grass Finch is our Vesper Sparrow, and the Little Blackhead turns out to be the Lesser Scaup. One species whose status has changed radically is the Raven. It is given as a "common resident throughout the Adirondacks". Merriam includes the Masked Duck (*Oxyura dominica*), stating that "Dr. Cabot found it on Lake Champlain." This species, however, is omitted from later New York State lists and it is

probable that the bird referred to was actually found on the Vermont side of the lake. In his brief introduction Merriam makes this observation in referring to the higher Adirondacks: "Birds of all kinds are rare in the dense evergreen forests of the Canadian Fauna. One may travel for hours, and sometimes a whole day, among the lonely mountains and scarcely see a single bird."

Mention should be made of an earlier paper which appeared in three parts in the N.O.C. Bulletin (1878-9) entitled, "Remarks on Some of the Birds of Lewis County, Northern N. Y." Four species are discussed at considerable length; viz. Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark, Red-headed Woodpecker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. On June 4, 1878 Merriam and C. L. Bragg found the first eggs of the Northern Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus bacatus*) known to science. The nest was discovered near McKeever in the western Adirondacks. The two adult birds and four eggs were collected. This event is reported in the N.O.C. Bulletin, Volume III page 200.

In 1885 Dr. Merriam was appointed Chief of the U.S. Biological Survey which had just been established at Washington, D. C. This position he held for twenty-five years. During this period Merriam and his colleagues developed the "Life Zone" concept, preparing the well known map of North America which delineates biotic regions and zones.

Merriam was the first president of the Linnaean Society of New York which he helped to found while a medical student. He took an active part in organizing the American Ornithologists Union in 1883 and was elected the first secretary. He later was made president of that organization. He was affiliated with numerous scientific and learned societies. Dr. Merriam died in Berkeley, California March 19, 1942. A memorial biographical sketch of his life can be found in the "Auk", Volume 71, page 130 (April 1954).

John B. Belknap, 92 Clinton Street, Gouverneur

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