



ROBERT THOMAS MOORE

1882-1958

## IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT THOMAS MOORE

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WHILE the progress of ornithology necessarily derives its greatest impetus from the penetration and prescience of its professional practitioners, it also is helped along in its course by others who contribute to its available resources by amassing collections or data, by establishing facilities to house these assets, and by providing funds which enable the studies of others to advance by their use. The subject of the present notice was one of the latter type. He was a prominent example of the group of amateurs seriously interested in systematic ornithology, and he devoted to this interest a good part of his time and considerable funds over a period of many years. His great achievement was the forming of the Moore Collection, containing about 65,000 birds, over 80 per cent of which are from Mexico, and 1,000 mammals, now housed in a building given by him to Occidental College in Los Angeles, with an endowment for its maintenance and for furthering studies on American birds, particularly those of Mexico and adjacent areas.

Robert Thomas Moore was born in Haddonsfield, New Jersey, on June 24, 1882, and was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1904 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. A year later he earned a Master of Arts degree from Harvard University. Although involved in business ventures from early manhood onward, he found time to give to his ornithological avocation and he served as editor of *Cassinia*, the journal of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club from 1911 to 1916. After moving to southern California, Moore became affiliated with the Department of Zoology of the California Institute of Technology, where he held an honorary title of "Associate" from 1929 to 1950. For some time he contemplated placing his collections, together with those of Donald R. Dickey, in that Institute, but these plans were later abandoned. Moore joined the American Ornithologists' Union in 1898, and advanced to election as a fellow in 1940. His membership in this organization spanned a total of 60 years.

Combining his interest in birds with that of mountain climbing, he made two trips to the Andes of Ecuador, in 1927 and 1929, collecting specimens whenever possible. Although he did not have further personal field experience in Ecuador, his interest in that country continued, and was evinced some years later, when he served from 1934 to 1938 as chairman of the Galapagos Commission, which laid the ground work for the eventual establishment of an international effort for the conservation of the natural history of the Galapagos and for the founding of a research station in those Ecuadorian islands.

His studies of Ecuadorian birds resulted in such notable discoveries as a new genus and species of tanager, *Tephrophilus wetmorei*, and a new hummingbird, *Chaetocercus cleavesi*. His discussion of the Mt. Sangay labyrinth and its fauna, published in 1934, is still of interest as one of the relatively few papers on the bird life of the high Andes of Ecuador. Something of the pleasure Moore derived from his Andean excursions may be sensed from his account of "Gonzalo Pizarro's trail to the land of Cinnamon and its denizens," also published in 1934.

Later, Moore concentrated his field interests in the Mexican area, in which his efforts, and especially those of his privately paid collectors, such as Chester C. Lamb, resulted in the largest, most comprehensive corpus of Mexican ornithological material ever assembled under one roof. Moore's own participation in this work is evidenced by his own trips to Mexico in 1933, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1942, 1943, 1945, and 1948.

When the project of compiling the first comprehensive check-list of the birds of Mexico was first considered seriously, it was felt by the late Ludlow Griscom and the present writer that it was essential for its success that the Moore Collection be utilized as a primary source of as yet unpublished data. At that time Moore was planning to write a report on the birds of Sinaloa, but he was prevailed upon to defer this and to join in the production of a work covering the whole country. Until then, the Moore Collection had not been readily available for study as its owner was inclined to be overly possessive about it, knowing full well what money, effort, and time had gone into its formation. With the new check-list as an immediate project, Moore opened the doors to his collection to his collaborators, although at times it was apparent that this was not altogether easy for him to do.

Looking back on the years of correspondence involved in the production of the two volumes of the Mexican check-list, it becomes obvious that the contribution of specimen data from the Moore Collection, thereby made known to the ornithological world for the first time, is one of the most important elements in that work. The passage of time has smoothed out what at the moment were irksome little differences, minor difficulties, and occasional personality clashes between collaborators. It should be remembered that the publication of the second volume was made possible by a gift of \$7,500.00 from Robert Moore, a fact that offsets the little, although at the time disturbing, quibbles that occasionally ruffled the composure of the compiling authors. As a businessman, Moore had some trouble accepting the fact that the Mexican check-list, which was causing him time, effort, and expense, would be certain to become outmoded the more it succeeded as a catalyst in causing other workers to release into print their dormant data, or in stimulating still others to attempt to im-

prove on weak points in its coverage. His work in the two volumes of the Mexican check-list, issued in 1950 and 1957, respectively, which were only partly written by Moore, and which involved much more work by Griscom, Miller, and Friedmann, is Moore's most important contribution to the literature of ornithology. During the progress of the work on the second volume, illness prevented Moore from doing as much as he had planned, but he did the primary compilations of data covering the Corvidae and the Parulidae as well as part of the Tyrannidae. Much of the subsequent knowledge that inevitably will cause this work to need revision will emanate directly, or partly, from studies of the vast collections he assembled. Probably the outstanding new Mexican bird Moore described was the Tufted Jay, *Cyanocorax dickeyi*,\* named after his friend Donald R. Dickey. Moore published about 80 ornithological papers, all descriptions or notes dealing with American birds.

Moore was married in 1903 to Selma Helena Muller, and in 1922 to Margaret Forbes Cleaves. He had three children of his own and three step-children by these marriages.

Aside from his business affairs, which ranged from fur farming to lumbering, and included investment companies, Moore was much interested in poetry. He was not only active in the Poetry Society of America but also wrote poetry himself. The closing years of his life were troubled with poor health, which necessarily reduced his application to bird work. It seemed that once he had established his collection in a special building on the campus of Occidental College and once the Mexican check-list was finished, he felt his personal activities in ornithology had reached their fruition, and he turned more to poetry and to his lifelong interest in the Presbyterian Church. He died on October 30, 1958.

PUBLISHED ORNITHOLOGICAL WRITINGS OF R. T. MOORE

1910. The Orange-crowned Warbler in New Jersey again. *Auk*, **27**: 85.  
Finding of three rare nests in New Jersey. *Auk*, **27**: 87-88.
1912. The Least Sandpiper during the nesting season in the Magdalen Islands. *Auk*, **29**: 210-223.  
Last record of the Piping Plover (*Aegialitis meloda*) in New Jersey. *Auk*, **29**: 238.  
The Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) wintering in New Jersey. *Auk*, **29**: 236.  
The Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) wintering in New Jersey. *Auk*, **29**: 244-245.
1913. The Fox Sparrow as a songster. *Auk*, **30**: 177-187.
1915. Methods of recording bird songs. *Auk*, **32**: 535-538.
1916. Another hybrid warbler from northern New Jersey. *Auk*, **33**: 202-203.  
Graphic representation of bird song. *Auk*, **33**: 228-229.
1930. Chimborazo, Bolivar's "Watch Tower of the Universe." *Amer. Alpine J.*, **1**: 93-105.

\* It is this bird that he is handling in the accompanying portrait.

1932. A new motmot from Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **45**: 109-112.  
A new race of *Aimophila carpalis* from Mexico. *Ibid.*, **45**: 231-234.
1934. A new genus and species of tanager from Ecuador. *Auk*, **51**: 1-7.  
The Mt. Sangay labyrinth and its fauna. *Auk*, **51**: 141-156.  
A new species of hummingbird, genus *Chaetocercus*, from eastern Ecuador. *Condor*, **36**: 3-6.  
Gonzalo Pizarro's trail to the land of Cinnamon and its denizens. *Condor*, **36**: 97-104.  
A new race of *Lepidocolaptes leucogaster* from Sonora, Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **47**: 87-90.  
A review of the races of *Buthraupis eximia* (Boissonneau). *Amer. Mus. Novit.*, no. 715, pp. 1-8.  
A review of the races of *Geococcyx velox*. *Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist.*, **7**(39): 455-470.
1935. A new jay of the genus *Cyanocorax* from Sinaloa, Mexico. *Auk*, **52**: 274-277.  
New birds from northwestern Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **48**: 111-114.
1936. Description of a new race of *Carpodacus mexicanus*. *Condor*, **38**: 203-208.
1937. New races of the genus *Otus* from northwestern Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **50**: 63-68.  
Four new birds from northwestern Mexico. *Ibid.*, **50**: 95-102.  
Two new owls from Sinaloa, Mexico. *Ibid.*, **50**: 103-106.  
New race of *Chubbia jamesoni* from Colombia. *Ibid.*, **50**: 151-152.  
New races of *Myadestes*, *Spizella* and *Turdus* from northwestern Mexico. *Ibid.*, **50**: 201-206.  
A new House Finch from central Mexico. *Condor*, **39**: 204-206.  
A new race of Finsch's Parrot. *Auk*, **54**: 528-529.
1938. Unusual birds and extensions of ranges in Sonora, Sinaloa and Chihuahua, Mexico. *Condor*, **40**: 23-28.  
Discovery of the nest and eggs of the Tufted Jay. *Condor*, **40**: 233-241.  
New races in the genera of *Vireo* and *Buarremon* from Sinaloa. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **51**: 69-72.  
A new race of wild Turkey. *Auk*, **55**: 112-115.
1939. A new race of *Cyananthus latirostris* from Guanajuato. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **52**: 57-60.  
Two new races of *Carpodacus mexicanus*. *Ibid.*, **52**: 105-112.  
New races of the genera *Sialia* and *Carpodacus* from Mexico. *Ibid.*, **52**: 125-130.  
A review of the House Finches of the subgenus *Burrica*. *Condor*, **41**: 177-205.  
The genus *Otus* of Mexico and Central America (with J. L. Peters). *Auk*, **56**: 38-56.  
The Arizona Broad-billed Hummingbird. *Auk*, **56**: 313-319.  
Habits of the White-eared Hummingbird in northwestern Mexico. *Auk*, **56**: 442-446.
1940. New races of *Empidonax* from Middle America. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **53**: 23-30.  
Notes on Middle American *Empidonaces*. *Auk*, **57**: 349-389.  
The nomenclature and habits of the black-throated Copper-tailed Hummingbird. *Condor*, **42**: 251-254.
1941. New races of flycatcher, warbler and wrens from Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **54**: 35-42.  
New form of *Toxostoma* from Hidalgo. *Ibid.*, **54**: 149-150.  
Three new races in the genus *Otus* from central Mexico. *Ibid.*, **54**: 151-159.

- Notes on *Toxostoma curvirostre* of Mexico, with description of a new race. *Ibid.*, **54**: 211-216.
- Western Robin nesting near Pasadena, California. *Condor*, **43**: 201.
- Habits of the White-tailed Kite (with A. Barr). *Auk*, **58**: 453-462.
1942. Notes on *Pipilo fuscus* of Mexico and description of a new form. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **55**: 45-48.
- New records of the Colima Warbler from Mexico. *Auk*, **59**: 315.
1944. Nesting of the Brown-capped Leptopogon in Mexico. *Condor*, **46**: 6-8.
1945. The transverse volcanic biotic province of central Mexico and its relationship to adjacent provinces. *Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist.*, **10**(12): 217-236.
1946. Two new warblers from Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **59**: 99-102.
- A new woodpecker from Mexico. *Ibid.*, **59**: 103-105.
- The Rufous-winged Sparrow, its legends and taxonomic status. *Condor*, **48**: 117-123.
- The status of *Dendroica auduboni nigrifrons* in the United States. *Auk*, **63**: 241-242.
- Notes on *Falco sparverius* in Mexico (with R. M. Bond). *Condor*, **48**: 242-244.
1947. Habits of male hummingbirds near their nests. *Wilson Bull.*, **59**: 21-25.
- New species of parrot and race of quail from Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **60**: 27-28.
- New owls of the genera *Otus* and *Glaucidium*. *Ibid.*, **60**: 31-38.
- Two new owls, a swift and a poorwill from Mexico. *Ibid.*, **60**: 141-148.
1949. A new race of *Pipilo fuscus* from Mexico. *Ibid.*, **62**: 101-102.
- A new hummingbird of the genus *Lophornis* from southern Mexico. *Ibid.*, **62**: 103-104.
1950. Distributional check-list of the birds of Mexico. Pt. I (with H. Friedmann and L. Griscom). *Pacific Coast Avif.*, no. 29, 202 pp.
- A new race of *Melanerpes chrysogenys* from central Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **63**: 109-110.
- A new race of the species, *Amazilia beryllina*, from southern Mexico. *Ibid.*, **63**: 59-60.
- Northern record for *Klais guimeti* in Central America. *Auk*, **67**: 387.
1951. Records of two North American corvids in Mexico. *Condor*, **53**: 101.
1953. Notes on two rare tyrannids of Mexico. *Auk*, **70**: 210.
1954. A further record of the Slaty Finch in Mexico (with A. H. Miller). *Condor*, **56**: 310-311.
- A new jay from Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington*, **67**: 235-238.
1956. Additional unrecorded specimens of *Neochloe brevipennis* from Oaxaca, Mexico (with D. R. Medina). *Condor*, **58**: 442-444.
1957. Distributional check-list of the birds of Mexico. Pt. II (with H. Friedmann, L. Griscom, and A. H. Miller). *Pacific Coast Avif.*, no. 33, 436 pp.
- A record of the Slaty Finch for Honduras (with D. R. Medina). *Condor*, **59**: 67.
- The status of the chachalacas of western Mexico (with D. R. Medina). *Condor*, **59**: 230-234.
1959. A new race of screech owl from Oaxaca. *Condor*, **61**: 224.

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