

EDITORIAL

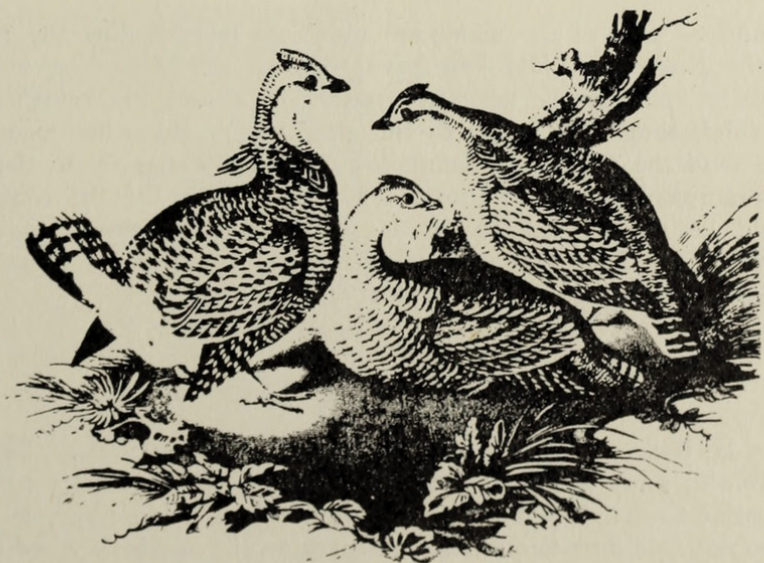
Peter Rindisbacher's portrait of the Dowitcher which, as a result of one of A. W. Schorger's valuable historical studies, appears as the frontispiece of this number of the *Bulletin*, is of especial interest because it is one of the earliest portraits of the species. It is, in fact, the earliest picture we have seen of the fall plumage, which is so very different from the ruddy-breasted spring dress. It was, of course, the fall plumage that Thomas Pennant described in 1785, from Mrs. Blackburn's collection of New York birds, as the "Brown Snipe"; he described the spring plumage elsewhere in the book as the "Red-breasted Snipe." Pennant did not give the bird a Latin name, but Gmelin, in his 1788 edition of Linnaeus, cited Pennant's description of the "Brown Snipe" and gave the bird the name *griseus* that we now use.

In 1813 Wilson remarked the Dowitcher's similarity to the common (Wilson's) snipe in "general form, size, and colors"—an observation fully confirmed by Percy Lowe in 1931 after a detailed study of the anatomy.

Mr. Schorger sent us some very interesting photostat negatives made from the "Wilson's Pinnated Grouse" and "Grouse" portraits mentioned in his paper. Unfortunately it was not possible to include these as illustrations of the article, but we hope that, in spite of unavoidable loss of detail, the copy shown below of the Prairie Chicken portrait will convey some impression of Rindisbacher's published work. This portrait is of particular interest because it was engraved for the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* by Alexander Lawson, the great Philadelphia engraver, who is now best known for his part in the publication of Wilson's "Ornithology."

It might well repay an ornithological student to investigate the pages of the *American Turf Register* (published from 1829 to 1844). B.L.H. [Bertha L. Heilbron] states in *Minnesota History* (vol. 14, 1933:423) that the *Register* "from time to time reprinted extracts from the published works of . . . Audubon and other writers on the West." Complete files of this once popular magazine are now, of course, extremely rare.

We are very grateful to Mr. Schorger for the opportunity to publish a contribution to the history of ornithology that offers so many facets of interest.



From "Wilson's Pinnated Grouse" by P. Rindisbacher

Since war time regulations again prevent our holding a regular Annual Meeting, President Kendeigh has asked the Council and the Chairmen of standing committees to meet August 20 at Jackson Mill, West Virginia, to carry on the necessary business of the Club. He asks that members write to the Secretary about any business which they would like to have brought up at the meeting.

Generous support of the Club through difficult years has enabled us to continue the subscriptions of members prevented by war conditions from paying their dues. We were very happy to receive a letter recently from an English member who had finally obtained a permit and was sending dues for 1942 through 1945. "It was pleasant when coming home on leave," he says, "to find Wilson Bulletins awaiting me. . . . Kind regards and all good wishes to the W.O.C."

The Wilson Ornithological Club Library is enjoying a steady increase in size and in use. In spite of the undoubted decrease in ornithological research caused by the war, more requests have come to the Library in the past few months than ever before. Added experience in administering the Library has demonstrated very clearly the value of the reprint collection. From that collection the librarian is often able to supply the needs of a borrower by sending several small reprints from periodicals, thus saving the bird student considerable postage expense and keeping the bound volumes available for other workers. We therefore urge members to send in to the Library as complete a set of their reprints as possible—including reprints from even the most generally available publications.

There is another easily overlooked need of the Library, namely, the need for recently published books on ornithology and related subjects. The Club has no funds for the purchase of new books, and yet many of the calls that come to the librarian are for the latest publications. Perhaps the need could largely be met by our members sending in recent books which they have read and do not need for reference in their libraries. We are sure that some members, when they know of this problem, will want to send to the Library copies of recent books which they especially admire and would like to have other members read.

We should be glad of the members' assistance in compiling the Bibliography section of the *Bulletin*. When you have read an article dealing with birds or related subjects—particularly when it appears in a non-ornithological journal—which you think should be called to the attention of the other members of the Club, please send the title, with complete reference (preferably in the form used in the Bibliography), to the Editor. A brief statement of the contents of the article would be doubly helpful. It is perhaps not necessary to remind our readers that such articles (or reprints of them) would be a valuable addition to the Wilson Ornithological Club Library.

ORNITHOLOGICAL NEWS

Mr. John H. Baker, President of the National Audubon Society, has been good enough to give us some details of a cooperative project for investigating the status of the Whooping Crane. The Society and the Fish and Wildlife Service have agreed to jointly sponsor field investigation and research on the numbers, breeding localities, and life history of this crane in order to determine what steps may reasonably be



1945. "Editorial." *The Wilson bulletin* 57(2), 133–134.

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