OBITUARIES

ALFRED WEBSTER ANTHONY

Plate 15

ONE of our great naturalists has passed on and left an enviable record of achievement. Alfred Webster Anthony was born in Cayuga County, New York, on December 25, 1865, and died at his home in San Diego, California, on May 14, 1939, at the age of 73 years. Few naturalists have seen more of the western United States and Mexico or done more to give us an accurate knowledge of the fauna and especially the birds and mammals of the West in its early days.

A mining engineer by profession and a naturalist by taste and interests, he could not resist the impulse to preserve and make known the rare and little-known birds and mammals around him and he added many new species of both to our knowledge, a goodly number of which were named in his honor. Important collections of birds and mammals bearing the labels of A. W. Anthony may be found in many of the leading museums of the country, especially the Carnegie Museum, U. S. National Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, and the San Diego Museum of Natural History, besides those scattered in private collections. His collections also included reptiles, invertebrates, plants and minerals and his interests leaned strongly toward the conservation of wildlife and a better knowledge of habits and values. He was preeminently a *field naturalist* but published many important papers on both birds and mammals.

Anthony's parents, when he was three years old, moved to the then infant city of Denver, Colorado, which was to be his home until early manhood. His school vacations were spent with his father, who was a mining man, amid scenes of beauty and interest to the young naturalist. This was the beginning of what was to be his real interest in life, although most of the time it had to be pursued as a hobby.

After schooling in Denver he took a course in mining engineering to follow in his father's footsteps. In the meantime he had visited an uncle living near Portland, Oregon, and there he began a serious study of birds, collecting and photographing them. At this time the Northwest was a relatively unknown region and he made many discoveries and became an authority on birds among the local Nature students. About this time he met Anabel Klink whom he married in 1888. Later a beautiful bluebird was named in her honor.

In 1886 the Anthony family moved from Denver to San Diego, and young Anthony engaged in mining in Lower California. Following this came a sojourn in New Mexico. In both of these regions he was studying birds as a hobby in all of his spare time. Ultimately his private collection, comprising some 10,000 birds, after long storage in several places, was sold to the Carnegie Museum at Pittsburgh.

While living at San Diego he felt the call of the sea and one of his first ventures was a trip of exploration to North Coronado Island, Mexico, about twenty-five miles from San Diego. The fishing boat which had been engaged to take him there failed to carry out the agreement but he secured a rowboat and rowed out alone, writing up the experience as 'A Night at Sea.' The family did not learn about the episode until they read about it later.

Anthony developed a keen interest in the islands off the coast of Lower California and purchased the schooner 'H. C. Wahlberg' in order to collect there.

With a company of young naturalists he carried on work which can truly be said to qualify him as a pioneer naturalist in this area. He made extensive collections of birds, their eggs, mammals, plants, reptiles, crustaceans and minerals, and many of these were distributed among various museums and private collectors.

With Charles H. Townsend he visited Guadalupe Island and the Benitos searching for elephant seal and Townsend's fur seal, utilizing this opportunity to study the birds as well. While he was with his family in Portland, Oregon, the schooner was chartered to others and was wrecked. Later on he obtained another schooner, the 'Stella Erland', and again had the misfortune to lose his boat. This time he was aboard with a party of naturalists, and everything was lost on the rocky coast of Lower California.

He then spent three seasons mining in Nome, Alaska, beginning with the gold rush, and from there turned to mining in eastern Oregon. From mining he turned to ranching and spent ten years in eastern Oregon on a homestead. But in 1920 he returned to San Diego for a visit and was tendered the directorship of the San Diego Natural History Museum. He accepted this post and remained there for four years.

On April 2, 1924, he sailed for Guatemala where he was to spend some of the happiest and most interesting years of his career as a naturalist. For upwards of five years he observed, collected and photographed birds, mammals and reptiles, moving about with native porters and working out of a number of field stations. Guatemala, with its picturesque Indians, its varied topography and its beautiful scenery, made a deep impression upon him. The birds collected at this time served as a substantial part of the material upon which Ludlow Griscom based his report upon the birds of Guatemala.

Ironically, the region in which he found such great enjoyment also exposed him to tropical disease and when he returned to the United States, after a continuous residence of nearly five years, he brought back with him a malady from which he never fully recovered. The effect of this was to place him on the retired list for the remainder of his life, and from that time on his field trips were limited to short sojourns in southern waters with some of his Mexican scientist friends. His last years were passed near Balboa Park in San Diego for which he had a deep affection. He was a frequent visitor at the Natural History Museum and the Zoological Park.

He had the distinction of discovering many species new to science; some of these he named and described but more were named by other scientists. Of the new birds which he collected and named the first was a beautiful bluebird, named for his young wife, *Sialia mexicana anabelae,* in 1888. Then followed *Junco oreganus thurberi* in 1890, *Heleodytes brunneicapillus bryanti* in 1894, *Toxostoma cinereum mearnsi, Pipilo fuscus senicula, Passerella iliaca stephensi, Colaptes chrysoides brunnescens, Thryomanes bairdi leucophrys* in 1895, *Thryomanes bewicki cerroensis* in 1897, and *Dryobates villosus monticola* in 1898.

In 1895, Dr. E. A. Mearns described Anthony's Green Heron, *Butorides virescens anthonyi,* and long before that his name had been given to many newly discovered species and subspecies of mammals.

In 1887, Dr. C. Hart Merriam named as *Peromyscus eremicus anthonyi* a desert mouse collected by Anthony the previous year at Camp Apache near the Big Hatchet Mountains in southwestern New Mexico. In 1898, Dr. J. A. Allen named in his honor the Anthony woodrat, *Neotoma anthonyi,* from Todos Santos Island,

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Lower California, and in 1893 the Anthony mole, from the higher part of the San Pedro Martir Mountains in Lower California. Dr. W. H. Osgood named Anthony's pocket mouse, *Perognathus anthonyi,* collected by Anthony on Cerros Island, Lower California, and Dr. E. A. Mearns in 1907 named the beautiful Anthony's gray squirrel, *Sciurus griseus anthonyi,* from the Laguna Mountains in southern California.

To these notable lists of new species were added an important crab, *Cancer anthonyi,* from southern and Lower California waters, and a conspicuous flowering plant, *Dudleya anthonyi,* from the Peninsula of Lower California.

A partial bibliography of his published papers shows the trend of his interests and extent of his scientific activities better than any words could do.

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A. W. Anthony was a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, a charter member and later an Honorary Member of the American Society of Mammalogists, a member of the Western Conservation Committee, and one of the early Directors of the San Diego Museum of Natural History. His honors were many but best of all were his genial personality and warm friendships. I count it an honor to have known him personally.

He is survived by his wife and two sons, Charles A. Anthony of San Diego and H. E. Anthony, now Curator of the Department of Mammals in the American Museum of Natural History, and a naturalist of world-wide experience.—VERNON BAILEY.