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# 100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

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The 30th stated meeting was held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the annual business meeting was called to order by President Frank M. Chapman on the night of Monday, 11 November 1912, in "Mr. William Brewster's museum" on Riedesel Avenue. The meeting was attended by 16 Fellows. The membership had increased to 929 individuals, about 40 more than the year before, in six categories: 46 Fellows, 2 Retired Fellows, 16 Honorary Fellows, 59 Corresponding Fellows, 77 Members, and 729 Associates. During the year, the Union lost 66 members: 5 by death, 23 by resignation, and 38 for nonpayment of dues. The report of the Treasurer showed the finances of the Union to be in satisfactory condition. Frank M. Chapman was re-elected President, A. K. Fisher and Henry W. Henshaw continued as Vice-Presidents, John H. Sage entered his 23th year as Secretary, and Jonathan Dwight, Jr., served his ninth year as Treasurer. In addition to those five, the Council consisted of seven elected members and eight ex-presidents.

The five deceased members included two Corresponding Fellows, one Member, and two Associates. One Corresponding Fellow was Alfred Dugès (1826–1912), who died in Mexico on 7 January. Born in France, he moved to Mexico after obtaining a medical degree in 1852. He was an obstetrician and Professor of Natural History at the University of Guanajuato and is remembered mostly for his work in herpetology. At the time of his death, the large Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) found in central Mexico was considered a separate species and was named after him (*D. dugesi*). The other Corresponding Fellow was Wilhelm August Heinrich Blasius (1845–1912), who died in Brunswick, Germany, on 31 May. Son of a famous naturalist (Johann Heinrich Blasius) and brother of an equally famous ornithologist (Rudolph Blasius), he was Professor of Zoology and Botany at what is today the Technical University Carolo-Wilhelmina at Brunswick and was also director of both the Natural History Museum and the Botanic Garden there. He published widely on a variety of subjects during his career. His most notable work on birds was a monograph on the Great Auk (*Pinguinus impennis*) published in 1903. Bradford Torrey (1843–1912), made an Associate Member at the first AOU meeting and elected as one of the original Members in 1901, died on 7 October in Santa Barbara, California. A native of Massachusetts, he traveled widely throughout the United States during his life and wrote numerous books and popular essays on natural history and the outdoors, as well as several ornithological notes in *The Auk* and *Condor*. Many consider him the third-best 19th-century nature writer, behind Henry David Thoreau and John Muir. There is a bird sanctuary named after him in his hometown of Weymouth.

Three Fellows were elected: Edward Howe Forbush (1858–1929), Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874–1927), and C. William Beebe (1877–1962), surely one of the most distinguished groups ever elected together. M. A. Carriker, Jr. (1879–1965), living at that time in Colombia, was elected a Corresponding Fellow. Both Carriker and Beebe's illustrious careers were discussed in the last issue (128:808–809). Carriker would share the Brewster Medal with W. E. Clyde Todd in 1925 for their book, *Birds of the Santa Marta Region, Colombia*, published in 1922.

At the time, Forbush was the State Ornithologist for Massachusetts. An avid field biologist early in his career, he became one of the first ornithological bureaucrats, serving as Director of the Division of Ornithology for the State Department of Agriculture from 1920 until 1928, when he turned 70 and faced mandatory retirement from the state. He also served as a Field Agent for New England for the National Association of Audubon Societies (= National Audubon Society) starting in 1907, and was one of the staunchest bird conservationists of his time. Forbush produced three works of outstanding importance: *Useful Birds and Their Protection* (1907), *A History of the Game Birds, Wild-fowl and Shore Birds of Massachusetts and Adjacent States* (1912), and the three-volume set *Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States*. The first volume appeared in 1925, the second in 1927, and the third was completed by John B. May, who succeeded him as State Ornithologist.

Fuertes was the leading bird illustrator in the United States for nearly three decades. Born and raised in Ithaca, New York, he would spend his entire life there, dying tragically in an automobile crash with a passenger train near Unadilla, New York, on 22 August 1927. A chance meeting with Elliot Coues when the Cornell Glee Club was visiting Washington, D.C., in 1894 led to a deep relationship between the two over the next 5 years, allowing Fuertes to hone his skills as an illustrator. Fuertes was unable to attend the AOU meeting in 1895, but Coues brought about 50 of Fuertes' illustrations to the meeting and the rest, as they say, is history. Guided by Coues, Fuertes began getting commissions before finishing his undergraduate degree at Cornell. He did attend the 1896 AOU meeting and almost every one after that until his death. In his memorial to Fuertes, which runs to 26 pages (45:1–26), his close friend Frank M. Chapman related how the success of annual meetings was typically due to Fuertes, who gave lively comments on oral presentations, often accompanied by a hastily drawn illustration; provided the illustration for the banquet program; and made humorous and sincere speeches after the dinner. Fuertes also had a wonderful ear for bird songs, and his renderings "seemed to bring the birds themselves into the lecture hall" (45:1). Previously (128:199), I suggested

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that Fuertes may have played recorded bird songs at the 29th annual meeting in 1912, but "audibly illustrated" may have referred to him actually making the bird songs.

Five people were elected as Members, including the young Alexander Wetmore (1886–1978), who was at the University of Kansas. Frederick H. Kennard (1865–1937) was an avid sportsman and conservationist (founding member of the American Bison Association) who started out as a landscape architect. He published several papers on how to attract and feed birds through landscaping (Kennard 1914), hunted for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers (*Campephilus principalis*) in Florida (Kennard 1915), and invented the Kennard pliers for putting aluminum bands on bird legs (Kennard 1929). His son, John H. Kennard (1910–1981), was a stalwart in the New England Bird-Banding Association. John C. Phillips (1876–1938) would eventually become a Fellow in the AOU in 1925. A medical doctor by training but independently wealthy, he spent most of his life traveling around the world, collecting birds and mammals primarily for the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. He published widely on a variety of topics and is probably best known for the four-volume set *A Natural History of the Ducks*, published between 1922 and 1926, for which he was awarded the Brewster Medal in 1927. At the time of his death, he was the first chairman of the American Committee of International Wild Life, founded by the Boone and Crockett Club. That committee is now part of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. Norman A. Wood (1857–1943) had recently been promoted from taxidermist to Curator of Birds in 1911 at the University of Michigan's Museum of Zoology, a position he would hold until retirement in 1932. He is credited with solving one of the great ornithological mysteries of North America: in 1903 he discovered the breeding grounds of Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) in Michigan and collected the first nest, eggs, and young of the species. Althea Sherman (1853–1943) became only the third woman to be elected a Member. Generally considered the mother of Iowa ornithology, she did not start her bird (and bat) studies until well into her fifties. She had a profound influence on Margaret Morse Nice (1883–1974): they started exchanging letters in 1921 when Althea was 68 and Margaret was 38 (Trautman 1977).

An unprecedented 186 people were elected Associates, meaning that the AOU had over 1,000 members for the first time in its history. The Secretary noted that this was due to the "interest of one [unnamed] Fellow," and indeed 98 of the new Associates were from Massachusetts. Notable among the Associates were Ira Noel Gabrielson (1889–1977), future Fellow (1938) and first director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1940); J. Stokley Ligon (1879–1961), the famous New Mexico ornithologist; the collector Charles Johnson Maynard (1845–1929); Herbert Lee Stoddard (1889–1968), a future Fellow (1936) who was awarded the Brewster Medal in 1935 for his book, *The Bobwhite Quail*, published in 1931; and Ernest Harold Baynes (1868–1925), the founder of the American Bison Association, who started a bird-club movement in the United States after forming the Meriden Bird Club in New Hampshire in 1910. His book, *Wild Bird Guests; How to Entertain Them; with Chapters on the Destruction of Birds, Their Economic and Aesthetic Values, Suggestions for Dealing with Their Enemies, and on the Organization and Management of Bird Clubs*, which first appeared in 1915, has recently been reprinted.

The largest-ever meeting of the AOU was called to order the next day by President Chapman in the lecture rooms associated with the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. Late in the afternoon on the first day, there was an informal reception at the home of Charles F. Batchelder (1856–1954), a former president of the AOU and eventually the last surviving founder of the society. In the evening, the men were invited to a reception at Brewster's Museum. Following the second day's sessions, members of the AOU and guests dined at the Mifflin Hall in Brattle Square. During the third day, George W. Field gave an update on the status of the Heath Hen (*Tympanuchus cupido cupido*), which featured a living specimen. Katherine E. Dolbear made a presentation on the "Problem of Domesticating the Ruby-throated Hummingbird." Apparently she had the notion that hummingbirds might be domesticated to pollinate flowers and eat insects in greenhouses (Dolbear 1912). *The New York Times* published a feature article titled "Making hummingbirds useful members of society" on 12 May 1912 about her attempt to capture 100 hummingbirds during that summer.

During the afternoon on the third day, women were invited to Brewster's Museum to see his collection of birds. The following day, some 70 members and friends traveled to Lancaster, Massachusetts, to visit the wonderful bird museum and excellent ornithological library of John E. Thayer (1862–1933).–Kimberly G. Smith, *Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, USA. E-mail: kgsmith@uark.edu*

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