

## THE GEORGE MERCER AWARD — 1953

On October 25, Dr. Frank A. Pitelka, Associate Professor of Zoology, at the University of California, was presented with the George Mercer Award of the Ecological Society of America in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the field of ecology.

President Sproul of the University of California presented the \$100 award in behalf of the Society. Dr. Pitelka received the award as the result of his studies on "Ecologic overlap and interspecific strife in breeding populations of the Anna and Allen hummingbirds." The Mercer Award is made each year to a young man who, during the previous two years, has published an outstanding ecological paper.

The officers of the Society asked Dr. Pitelka to send in a brief account of his training in ecology. He writes as follows: "My undergraduate introduction to ecology came in courses offered by V. E. Shelford and S. C. Kendeigh at the University of Illinois and in the intensive field course in plant ecology offered by F. C. Gates at the University of Michigan Biological Station. My bachelor's degree was from the University of Illinois in 1939, and my bachelor's thesis, on the relation of bird distribution to major biotic communities, was prepared under Kendeigh's direction. In the summer of 1939 I assisted Kendeigh at the Baldwin Bird Research Laboratory in the last season of his field work on the house wren. Graduate work at the University of California gave me new points of view, approaches, and methods in ecology from A. H. Miller, the late S. F. Light, and H. L. Mason. The doctor's degree was received in 1946, and my thesis work, on speciation and ecologic distribution in jays of the genus *Aphelocoma*, was done under Miller's direction. I have been on the teaching staff of the University of California since 1944."

The George Mercer Award was established by a member of the Ecological Society of America in honor of a young naturalist and ecologist who was killed in World War I. Its purpose is "to encourage others to publish papers comparable with those it is reasonable to suppose he would have published, if he had lived."