ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

THE PHEASANTS OF THE WORLD. By Jean Delacour. Country Life Limited, London, and Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1951:8¾ × 11¼ in., 347 pp., with 16 color plates and 16 monochrome plates, and 21 maps and diagrams. $35.00.

No ornithologist living today is better fitted to attempt the task of preparing a new monograph on the pheasants than Jean Delacour. It is a particular pleasure then that he has chosen to do so, and to revise and emend so carefully and notably the previous monographs on one of the most beautiful of all avian families. His immediate predecessor in an illustrious line was Dr. William Beebe, whose four magnificent volumes on the subject, published between 1918 and 1922, have long been out of print as well as somewhat outmoded by advancing knowledge. Beebe's principal contributions were the observations on living birds made for the first time by a naturalist on many of the least known species.

Delacour during his remarkable career has been able to combine to an unusual extent the field and museum researches of an ornithologist with the patient study of a careful and recording aviculturist. Too few ornithologists have had any practical or first-hand experience with birds kept under observation in aviaries or at semi-liberty. Too few aviculturists are sufficiently trained or interested to keep records and observe various characteristics of the birds in their possession. It is the blending of work in the field, the museum, and the aviary that has given Mr. Delacour an unrivalled opportunity to study pheasants. It seems to me that such experience is a necessary requisite in any definitive study of these rare, secretive, and yet manageable birds.

The plan of this volume is admirable. Mr. Delacour has worked out what seems to this writer a practical and convenient systematic arrangement of the various genera and species, emphasizing relationships rather than diversity (presumably the aim of systematics). He has included under each genus a general discussion of range, field notes, and, in many cases, an important amount of material on the occurrences of these forms in captivity, their breeding, food habits and the like. Following this is a more detailed discussion of the species or subspecies, concise and to the point, which serves to make the amateur feel as much at home among the groups under discussion as the professional. Particularly serviceable in this connection is a detailed discussion of the forms of the true pheasants, *Phasianus*. Delacour recognizes two species and his break-downs into smaller groups and excellent distribution maps serve to create order out of what had been a chaos of races of these plastic birds. If the true pheasants are today still over-split, taxonomically speaking, at least we know now where to begin.

One of the most important aspects of this book is its emphasis on aviculture as an auxiliary aspect of ornithology. Although much is known, and that at least summarized in this volume, about conditions of keeping and rearing many kinds of pheasants, it becomes apparent from a perusal of this work that much remains unknown about the behavior of pheasants. The field is open to the behavior student to whom large aviaries may be available to study mating habits, pair formation, the relationships between adults and young, and a host of other psychological attributes of these relatively easily managed birds. The problem of territory could probably be readily studied among aviary birds. Variations within species would be particularly interesting in this connection. Perhaps the notably bad temper exhibited by species of *Syrmaticus* is directly explainable through a study of their territorial requirements. This is a poignant question to me as the only cock Ijima's Copper Pheasant (*S. soemmerringi ijimae*) I ever possessed was so incredib-

ly bad-tempered that immediately after mating with a hen of a closely-related subspecies, *S. s. soemmerringi*, he reached forward and broke her neck with a swift twist of his bill.

In short this is a magnificent book and must find its way into the library of every serious student of game birds, whether ornithologist, aviculturist, or sportsman. I cannot praise it highly enough as a many faceted accomplishment of one man. It seems unjust to carp about small details and I will not beyond saying that the spelling of some of the geographical names, particularly in the region of India, is not always according to current practice. Nor is the Barail Range (mentioned on p. 69) anywhere except *in* Cachar and the Naga Hills, rather than outside of these districts as implied. But this is quibbling. The plates by Mr. J. C. Harrison are excellent, even imparting a rough tweedy feeling to the birds as if they were being watched out of doors on a cold bracing day. A few are entirely too rough, however. The Sonnerat's Junglefowl is not done justice to by any means, and, at least in my copy, Rheinart's Crested Argus seems far too washed-out, and the Congo Peacock altogether too bright. However, these could easily be faults of the printing, quite out of the hands of the artist. In any monograph of this sort it might have been well to have listed, along with the scientific description of the bird, a citation of when, if ever, it had been illustrated in a publication.

Suffice it to say in any case that this volume is a "must" and well merits the great success and popularity it is bound to achieve.—S. Dillon Ripley.

ECOLOGICAL ANIMAL GEOGRAPHY. By W. C. Allee and K. P. Schmidt. Revised second edition, 1951. (Based on *Tiergeographie auf oekologischer Grundlage.* R. Hesse). John Wiley & Sons, Inc., N. Y., 5¾ × 9 in., xiv + 715 pp., 142 figs. $9.50.

Appearing fourteen years after the first (1937) edition, this useful work has been thoroughly revised and brought up to date. The 597 pages of the original edition have been expanded to 715. The improvements, as stated by the authors, are: "a greatly simplified terminology; a suitable background, without undue emphasis, for modern interest in conservation on a world-wide scale; expansion and revision of a large amount of material; expanded chapter bibliographies, including pertinent recent publications." With these changes the present edition is still more independent of the German original published in 1924, but even so large blocks of the original remain, as the authors acknowledge. The organization and chapter headings remain virtually unchanged. Even the separate paragraphs follow those of the first edition in their organization and contents, but new sentences have been added and phrasing altered to incorporate the large amount of new material that has been skilfully integrated with the old.

The bibliographic citations are fuller than in the earlier edition; titles are included and papers are arranged alphabetically by authors at the end of each chapter. Approximately one-seventh of the papers cited are new ones published since 1937. The authors state that age alone is little indication of the value of a given report, but that older papers may have special value when they accurately describe conditions of existence that were present years ago.

More than a dozen subjects are mentioned in the preface as illustrating the nature and scope of the revisions and additions in this second edition. One of these is "the concept of the biome, with a schematic map showing the biomes of the world." Discussion of the biome concept, however, is limited to one short paragraph. This brief discussion serves mainly to point out that the biome system cuts across Hesse's useful classification of the habitable world, the "biosphere," with successive divisions, into biocycles, superbiochores, biochores, subbiochores, biotopes and facies, a classification based primarily on physical

environmental features. The map mentioned (the same previously published in Principles of Animal Ecology, 1949, by Allee, Emerson, Park, Park & Schmidt) is on the inside of the cover, and shows not the biomes but the more inclusive "biome-types," seven of which are recognized. These are: Tundra, Taiga, Temperate Deciduous Forest, Grassland, Desert, Tropical Forest, and Temperate Rain Forest.

The last chapter, "The effect of man on the distribution of other animals," has been altered more than most others and contains much new material under the headings Deforestation; Controlled forests; Orchards, gardens, and parks; Buildings; Tropical regions; Aquatic life; Pollution of streams; Intentional and unintentional transport by man; Direct eradications; Disease and facilitation of its spread; Conservation. There are numerous references to birds, and changes in their ecology and distribution wrought by man's influence on the environment, with special emphasis on those found in the United States, but with many allusions to birds of other continents. Dependence for nesting sites on "artificial cliffs" provided by eaves of barns, is mentioned as characteristic of both Old World and North American barn swallows. These are referred to respectively as *Hirundo rustica* and *H. erythrogaster*, although their conspecificity has been recognized in recent years. Many other outdated scientific names of birds are used.

Among the sections that are of greatest interest to ornithologists is that containing the discussion of coastal birds, in the chapter "Animal Life of Swamps and of Shores." The works of many eminent authorities in this field are drawn upon. The statement (p. 582) that "Like the auks, penguins have only a single egg (rarely two) . . . " seems to minimize the fairly wide range of reproductive potential found among the sphenisciform birds. In another chapter, the penguins as a group are used to illustrate the Bergmann Rule of thermal economy by increase in body bulk in colder climates. Among the twelve species of four genera listed, there is a well-defined trend toward increasing size farther south, from the diminutive Galapagos penguin, to the giant emperor penguin of the Antarctic. However, the illustration seems not altogether appropriate, because the Bergmann Rule applies primarily to intraspecific trends.

Obviously many minor points of this nature could be raised in a review of any work involving such extensive compilation. But in general the source material has been well selected and carefully appraised to attain a high degree of accuracy. By their thoroughgoing revision and modernization of this important work, the authors have assured its continuing usefulness as a text and reference for many years to come.—H. S. Fitch.

WATERFOWL AND THEIR FOOD HABITS IN WASHINGTON. By Charles F. Yocum. University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington, 1951:6 × 9 in., xvi + 272 pp., 48 plates, 63 figs. (including 5 maps), 47 tables. $5.00.

The author's stated objective (p. 2) is "to lay the groundwork for future research on waterfowl in Washington." In view of this objective, emphasis is placed on compiling pertinent information, with a minimum of interpretation. References to the literature are frequent and the bibliography of 90 titles is an adequate guide for the future researcher.

As the title indicates, the subject matter is divided into two fields—waterfowl and their foods. Geography and climate of Washington are briefly reviewed. Data relevant to migration, wintering, and nesting of two species of swans, ten kinds of geese, and 31 kinds of ducks and mergansers are recorded. Major waterfowl wintering grounds in Washington are outlined. The results of two summers' study of waterfowl found breeding in Washington are presented and there is a brief review of migration, effects of hunting, parasites and disease, and management.

Chapter 8, concerned with sex ratios of ducks in Washington, is especially good. Means of gathering sex ratio data are critically considered, with the conclusion that such data gathered from one locality or at one time are apt to be inadequate, and that the most reliable data are obtained from counts of birds in the field compared to live-trapping or hunters' kill data.

The chapters on food habits and food and cover plants (chapters 12 and 13) are more thorough than are the remaining ones. A relatively complete review of the literature is made and the original data are cross-tabulated by species, regions, and food items for ready comparison to other data. The original data are weak, as is frequently true for for game species, in that little information was gathered except during the hunting season. The chapter on food and cover plants is excellent, with keys, illustrations, and distribution maps for the important food and cover plants of the state. A separate index to this chapter is appended.

In general, the make-up and printing are good and conducive to easy reading. The author's style is easy without being light, but is weakened by too frequent use of such words as "undoubtedly" and "probably." References are made to rather vague records of occurrence of waterfowl, but sole reliance is not placed on them. Unusual application of words such as "vulnerable" (p. 172), and unusual words such as "epizooty" (p. 132) are grammatically correct but do not contribute to clarity. The reviewer finds no justification for "speciate" (p. 16) when used to mean the identification of species.

Future students will be fortunate to have this groundwork for waterfowl studies in Washington.—Maurice F. Baker.

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ATTRACTING BIRDS. By Leon A. Hausman. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1951: 127 pp., 27 pp. of text figures. $2.00.

In this little handbook we have a work with a clearly defined purpose: to point out to people who know little about birds the advantages and pleasures to be derived from having them around our homes, and then to outline some ways of supplying the necessary items for attracting them. With its low price, convenient size, and readability, it will admirably serve this purpose for many real or potential bird lovers. The illustrated suggestions for nest-boxes and feeding stations, particularly in their emphasis on naturalness and simplicity, seem to me excellent. The table of favored foods for various purposes is helpful—I wondered why nutmeats, however, did not receive the praise due them. Listing of food-producing vines and shrubs will be of interest and value to many, while discussions of such easily forgotten attractions as warm water, grit, dust, salt (for northern finches), and perches and shelters of several sorts, add much to the book's usefulness. The author's attitude toward English Sparrows, Starlings, and prowling cats seems a little over-benevolent at times; and there are passages in which birds are made to sound all but omnipotent as weed-seed and insect destroyers; but these things do not detract seriously. In trying to construct a non-technical key in a form so very abbreviated, using only a selected few "Home Grounds Birds," I feel Hausman has literally attempted the impossible. The key, which could scarcely be used as such at all, becomes little more than a series of thumbnail sketches of common birds (perhaps quite helpful in themselves). Classing a Pine Siskin as "gray" and a female Purple Finch as "brown or brownish," or placing such dissimilar birds as a Cedar Waxwing and a Brown Creeper almost adjacent, illustrates to me the uselessness of gross color and size as bases of separation. The choice of species is questionable, three *Hylocichla* thrushes being included, for example, and all wrens omitted from the key. The matter of geographic

coverage, while considered to some extent, would still be very confusing to a novice who did not happen to live in the Northeast. The ink sketches of birds, while sometimes crude, yet manage to capture enough of the species' personality that they could be very helpful. I would have preferred that more of them be used, and the descriptive matter not attempted at all. The good appended bibliography of other published material (a glaring typographical error cites Forbush and May: *"National" History of the Birds . . .*), should lead readers to adequate sources when they are ready to extend their knowledge of birds. It would be surprising if this book did not encourage a great many to do so. —William A. Lunk.

PRESERVE OR PLAYGROUND?

Within the last few generations, governments in the United States and Canada have created many public parks for the purpose of preserving areas of natural beauty and of particular floral and faunal significance. These have been enthusiastically accepted by the public which, encouraged by travel publicity, now throngs to such areas in ever-increasing numbers. Indeed, in some of our smaller parks, it now seems likely that the public, by sheer weight of numbers, is threatening to destroy some of the very things the parks were intended to preserve.

Consider, in microcosm, the example of Point Pelee National Park, Ontario, Canada. From the north shore of the western end of Lake Erie, Point Pelee extends southward for some nine miles in the form of a gracefully symmetrical isosceles triangle. Long sand dunes form the two sides of this attenuated triangle, and much of the interior is, or was, marsh land. About three miles from the end of the point, the marsh gives way to sandy soil able to support tall hardwoods. As the soil becomes thinner, red cedars are more prominent. Alongside the beaches and near the terminal sandbar, the vegetation becomes a tangle of shrubs and vines. The eastern sand dune is much less luxuriantly vegetated than the western one, particularly where it borders the marsh.

Point Pelee has long been of interest and concern to the Wilson Ornithological Club. In the early part of this century, members of the club from both Canada and the United States made many visits to study its natural history. Their ornithological findings were published at length in *The Wilson Bulletin* (Taverner and Swales, 1907–1908: No. 59, pp. 37–54; No. 60, pp. 82–89; No. 61, pp. 133–153; No. 63, pp. 79–96; No. 64, pp. 107–124; Wood, 1910, 22:63–78).

It was, in fact, a member of the club, the late Mr. P. A. Taverner, who, in his official capacity with the Geological Survey of Canada, drew up the original recommendation that the area be made a national park. The reasons for doing so were: (1) the point was an area of natural beauty which should be preserved; (2) as the southernmost part of the mainland of Canada, it supported a wide variety of Carolinian forms of flora and fauna not found elsewhere in Canada; (3) the large marsh on the point was one of the few waterfowl breeding-grounds of importance remaining in southern Ontario; (4) the area was a focal point on one of the most important migration highways in America, where almost incredible numbers of small migrant birds gathered in spring and fall.

In due course this recommendation took effect and, in 1918, Point Pelee National Park came into being by Order-in-Council. The park so formed comprises slightly more than six square miles of the more terminal portion of the point. In deference to local opinion and established custom, the government did not acquire private property existing within the limits of the newly formed park. This concession was contrary to the original recommendation made by Mr. Taverner, and the problems arising from these private holdings have increased rather than diminished.