

RECENT LITERATURE.

Forbush on the Game Birds, Wild-Fowl and Shore Birds.¹ This excellent report on the Water-Fowl and Game Birds of the Atlantic coast has been written, the author tells us, with a purpose — namely to set forth in an authoritative publication the facts in connection with the alarming decrease in the numbers of these birds in recent years and the imperative need of concerted efforts for their preservation. Those who read Mr. Forbush's report,— and everyone interested in game protection should do so — will agree that his purpose has been admirably accomplished. Not only in Massachusetts but in all of our eastern maritime states this book will be available as an incontrovertible argument against those who come forward to oppose legislative restrictions to gunning privileges, and who claim that game is not decreasing or that spring shooting has nothing to do with the problem.

Mr. Forbush cites reliable authors from early colonial times to the present day in sketching the history of each species, and in the majority of cases it is a history of decrease in numbers and abandoning of former breeding grounds, if not of threatened or actual extinction over at least part of the former range.

In addition, scores of reliable correspondents have supplemented the accounts, by furnishing valuable unpublished information drawn from their personal experiences.

Besides the history, each species is fully described in all the plumages in which it appears on our coasts, and a résumé is given of the time of occurrence and present abundance in Massachusetts. The nomenclature follows that of the last edition of the A. O. U. Check-List but the various vernacular names of the species are added, while the general range, usually that of the Check-List, is given. One unfortunate error in the Check-List which is copied by Mr. Forbush, should have been corrected in the recent supplement — namely the use of the name 'Red-legged Black Duck' in the Hypothetical List in connection with *Anas rubripes tristis*. The name *tristis* was not proposed for the red-legged bird but for the 'ordinary' Black Duck. The former name *obscura* being untenable, the oldest name for any form of Black Duck is *rubripes*; if there be but one form it should

¹ A History of the | Game Birds, Wild-Fowl | and Shore Birds | of | Massachusetts and Adjacent States | Including those used for food which have disappeared since the | settlement of the country, and those which are now hunted | for food or sport, with observations on their | former abundance and recent decrease | in numbers; also the means for | conserving those still | in existence | By Edward Howe Forbush | State Ornithologist of Massachusetts | Illustrated with Drawings by W. I. Beecroft and the Author | and Photographs by Herbert K. Job and others | Issued by the | Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture | By Authority of the Legislature, 1912. Roy. 8vo. pp. i-xiv + 1-622, plates I-XXXVI, text figs. 1-26 [+ 82 not numbered].

be called *Anas rubripes* but if there be two then the Red-legged form is *Anas rubripes rubripes* and the dusky-legged form *A. rubripes tristis*. The systematic treatment of the species constitutes Part I.

Part II of the report comprises histories of the species which are extinct or extirpated in Massachusetts; the Great Auk, Labrador Duck, Eskimo Curlew, Passenger Pigeon, Trumpeter Swan, Whooping Crane, Sandhill Crane, and Wild Turkey.

Part III is an admirable discussion of the conservation of Game Birds in which every element receives careful consideration.

The problem is a serious one and one that must be considered promptly and exhaustively in every state in the Union, if we are to save many of our birds from the fate which has overtaken those mentioned above. Mr. Forbush suggests seventeen steps, all or most of which must be taken if we expect to increase the supply of game birds. These include the following: establishment of (1) bird reservations, (2) systems of federal control of migrating birds, and (3) systems of town wardens in addition to state wardens; prohibiting of (1) sale and export of game, (2) sale and use of ultra-destructive firearms, (3) shooting from boats; registration of native hunters and raising of fees for alien hunters, so as to be practically prohibitive; limiting of each day's bag; reducing the number of stray dogs and cats; checking forest fires; making the open seasons as nearly uniform as possible; encouraging the propagation and sale of such game as can be raised on game farms; and more important than all the establishment of a better attitude among the public at large toward the game laws. If the laws are wilfully disregarded as is frequently the case at present all hope for improved conditions might as well be abandoned. In this very field, more perhaps than in any other, Mr. Forbush's work will do an enormous good.—W. S.

Miller on the Classification of Kingfishers.¹—Work of the kind that Mr. Miller has here presented is most welcome. Whether the multitude of bird genera that have been proposed of late years is to stand or fall there can be no question but that we need light upon both internal and external characters of the species to guide us in our final judgment, and this so far as the Kingfishers are concerned is provided in the paper before us. The treatise is divided into two parts. I. The Subfamilies of Alcedinidæ and II. The Genera of Cerylinæ. In the former Mr. Miller reaches the conclusion that three subfamilies should be recognized: *Cerylina*, *Alcedininæ* and *Daceloninæ*, the last two being more closely related to each other than is either to the *Cerylina*. *Ceyx*, *Ceycopsis*, *Ispidinæ* and *Myioceyx* he regards as members of the *Alcedininæ* rather than of the *Daceloninæ* where Sharpe placed them. In the association of these four genera with the other short tailed genera *Alcedo*, *Corythornis* and *Alcyone*, and the ex-

¹ A Revision of the Classification of the Kingfishers. By W. DeW. Miller. Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, XXXI, pp. 239-311. New York, September 12, 1912.