

**A Bibliography of British Ornithology.**<sup>1</sup>— Three more parts of this work which was first noticed in 'The Auk' 1916, p. 443, have since appeared carrying it well through the letter 'R'. Among the most interesting of the biographical sketches are those of Latham, MacGillivray, and Pennant. The first we learn was a strict disciple of the Linnæan School, and strongly prejudiced against the growing innovations upon his master's nomenclature, which were even then being made on the Continent. Latham's plan to describe all known birds, while thoroughly commendable, was too great for his talents, especially when we consider the vast number of new birds quite unknown to Linnæus which were at this time pouring into the museums of Europe. Of MacGillivray, whose collaboration with Audubon brings him into close connection with American ornithology, it is sad to learn that no detailed biography has ever been written and that the materials for such do not now exist. Pennant a descendant of a distinguished Welsh family united more than an average ability as a naturalist with the reputation of an elegant scholar and refined gentleman.

In glancing over the long list of the contributors to British ornithology one is struck by the very small number of titles from the pens of many of the foremost bird students that England has produced — such as Godman, G. R. Gray, Gould, etc. These men labored almost entirely in wider fields, leaving the British avifauna to others who preferred to concentrate their attention on the home birds, and who in consequence are for the most part but little known to the world at large.

The excellent typography of the first part of the work is fully maintained and when finally bound up it will form a handsome volume as well as a storehouse of information.— W. S.

**Cory on New South American Birds.**<sup>2</sup>— In a recent publication Mr. Cory describes three new subspecies of South American birds from the collections of the Field Museum of Natural History, as follows: *Nyctipolus hirundinaceus ceare* (p. 4) Quixada, Ceara, Brazil; *Scardafella squammata ceare* (p. 6), same locality and *Leptotila ochroptera approximans* (p. 7) Serra Baturite, Ceara, Brazil. There is also discussion on the races of *Nyctipolus hirundinaceus* and on the southern forms of *Speotyto cucicularia* and some further remarks on the author's *Piaya cayana venezuelensis*.— W. S.

**Oberholser on the Birds of Bawean Island.**<sup>3</sup>— In this paper Mr. Oberholser describes a collection made by Dr. W. L. Abbott on Bawean Island, in the Java Sea about 175 miles south of Borneo. The collection

<sup>1</sup> A Bibliography of British Ornithology from the Earliest times to the End of 1912. By W. H. Mullins and H. Kirke Swann. MacMillan and Co. 1916. Svo. Pts. II-IV, each 6/net.

<sup>2</sup> Notes on Little Known Species of South American Birds with Descriptions of New Subspecies. By Charles B. Cory. Field Museum of Nat. Hist. Publ. 193. Zoölogical Series, Vol. XII, No. 1. January 25, 1917. pp. 3-7.

<sup>3</sup> The Birds of Bawean Island, Java Sea. By Harry C. Oberholser. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. 52, pp. 183-198. February 8, 1917.

which was made in 1907, comprises fifteen species, eight of which had not been previously known from the island, and which bring the total number of its bird fauna up to 26.

Seven of the forms represented in Dr. Abbott's collection prove to belong to undescribed races which are here named and diagnosed by Mr. Oberholser as follows: *Spilornis bassus baweanus* (p. 185); *Sauropatis chloris cyanescens* (p. 189); *Strix baweana* (p. 190); *Microtarsus atriceps abbotti* (p. 193); *Malacocincla abbotti baweana* (p. 194); *Gracula javensis baweana* (195); and *Antheptes malacensis baweanus* (p. 196).

In a footnote Mr. Oberholser discusses the question of family names and argues that the name Bubonidæ should not be changed to Strigidæ simply because the name *Strix* (of earlier date than *Bubo*) is found to be applicable to the genus formerly known as *Syrnium*, and hence takes its place in the family Bubonidæ. In other words a family should take its name, not from the oldest generic name in the family but from the genus upon which the family was originally founded. It follows that the family name need only be changed when the name of the "type genus" is changed. This seems to be a sound argument and if followed will avoid some very undesirable and misleading changes.—W. S.

**Wetmore on Secondary Sexual Characters in the Ruddy Duck.**<sup>1</sup>—

In dissecting some Ruddy Ducks Mr. Wetmore was able to verify the statement, first made by Macgillivray, that in this species the *bullæ ossea* usually present in the trachea of the males of river and sea ducks, was entirely absent. Carrying his investigations further he discovered a remarkable tracheal air-sac which is used when the males are displaying during the mating season. The presence of this sac is responsible for the full and loose condition of the skin of the neck in this species, which renders it possible to slip the head through it when skinning a specimen, something which is quite impossible in our other ducks. Upon examining skins of other members of the subfamily Erismaturinæ he found the same condition of the neck skin in other species of *Erismatura* as well as in *Thalassornis* and *Nomonyx*.

Mr. Wetmore's studies are particularly welcome as we are badly in need of more knowledge of the anatomy of birds in arriving at a true understanding of their systematic relationships. The field is a large one but for some reason or other has not been attractive to ornithologists. We hope that Mr. Wetmore may receive every encouragement to continue his investigations along these lines.—W. S.

**Mathews' 'Birds of Australia.'**<sup>2</sup>—The first part of volume six which is now before us begins the treatment of the Parrots, a group of birds

<sup>1</sup> On Certain Secondary Sexual Characters in the Male Ruddy Duck, *Erismatura jamaicensis* (Gmelin). By Alexander Wetmore. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. 52, pp. 479-482. February 8, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. Vol. VI, Part I. November 22, 1916.