

Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, LXIX, Part I, January-March, 1917.

Records, of the Australian Museum, XI, Nos. 7 and 8, February and March, 1917.

Revue Française d'Ornithologie, Nos. 94, 95, and 96, February to April, 1917.

Science, N. S., XLV, Nos. 1160-1172.

Scottish Naturalist, The, Nos. 62 to 65, February to May, 1917.

South Australian Ornithologist, The, III, Part 2, April, 1917.

Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Arts and Letters, XVIII, Part II, 1915.

Wilson Bulletin, The, XXIX, No. 1, March, 1917.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Plumage Importation in England.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':

A long-delayed letter (dated February 26, 1917) has come to me from Mr. James Buckland of London bringing the important news that for the duration of the war the importation of the plumage of wild birds into England has been suspended. Efforts are to be made, Mr. Buckland says, to have the suspension of the traffic made permanent. That these efforts will be successful there would seem to be little doubt, in view of the period of stress that will follow the conclusion of the war. The British parliament would not be likely to re-open traffic in such an absolute luxury in the midst of the keen struggle for necessities that will follow the cessation of hostilities, more especially since the chief beneficiary of such action would be Germany.

Faithfully yours,

HENRY OLDYS.

Silver Spring, Md., April 25, 1917.

Coloration of Down in Adult Ducks.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':

With reference to Mr. J. H. Bowles's remarks concerning the coloration of the down in ducks (*Auk*, 1917, pp. 206-7) a paper by Miss A. C. Jackson on the moult of ducks (*British Birds*, July, 1915, vol. IX, pp. 34-42) should be consulted. Briefly stated, Miss Jackson there shows that in

certain species of ducks the females have a spring moult of the down as well as of other parts of the plumage and that not only is the winter down renewed but in addition there grows what she terms a "nest down," which is longer, coarser and of a different color.

Yours faithfully,

H. F. WITHERBY.

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EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':

In 'The Auk' (XXXIV, pp. 206-207) is an interesting note by Mr. Bowles, calling attention to the differently coloured down in winter and summer in a number of Ducks. Apparently the author has not seen Miss Jackson's article in 'British Birds' (IX, p. 35, 1915) where she describes the down-moult of certain Ducks. It was first discovered by me in the Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), where it is very striking, the down being whitish in winter and moulting into an almost black one in the spring. While studying Ducks I had already noticed that the description of nest-down did not agree with what I found on female ducks, but I did not grasp the reason, until I noticed the change in the Long-tailed Duck or "Old Squaw". Miss Jackson soon after, while working in the Tring Museum, discovered, to use her own words (l. c.) "that the females of the surface-feeding Ducks and those of the genus *Nyroca* also acquired a special down just before the breeding season. Female *Tadorna tadorna* also have a down-moult in spring. This down is evidently used for embedding the eggs during incubation, and has been designated 'nest-down' by Dr. Hartert, a term I propose to use in describing it." I believe that all palæarctic Ducks, or at least the majority of them, have a down-moult in spring, but in some species the colour is the same, though the nest-down is often longer and coarser than the ordinary down. Where there is no material difference in colour, the down-moult is difficult to observe in skins, but of course very easily seen when one skins a fresh bird. I may add that Miss Jackson's article contains also valuable details about the spring-moult in adult females of several British Ducks, which must also take place in American species.

ERNST HARTERT.

Tring, May 15, 1916.

Subspecific Designations.¹

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':

The exception taken in 'Bird-Lore' to the current practice of subspeci-

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