

Ottawa Naturalist, The, XXXI, Nos. 2 and 3-4, May, and June-July, 1917.

Records of the Australian Museum, XI, Nos. 9 and 10, May 28, and July 12, 1917.

Revue Française d'Ornithologie, Nos. 98 and 99, June and July, 1917.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, 26th Annual Report.

Science, N. S., XLV and XLVI, Nos. 1173-1185.

Scottish Naturalist, The, Nos. 66 and 67-68, June and July-August, 1917.

South Australian Ornithologist, The, III, Part 3, July, 1917.

Wilson Bulletin, The, XXIX, No. 2, June, 1917.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Definite Localities.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':

In modern zoological work a knowledge of the geographic distribution of the various forms of animal life has become increasingly important. It is at least highly desirable, not to say essential, in systematic work, in the investigation of economic problems, in the enactment of protective legislation, and in practically every other phase of zoological activity. And the more exact this knowledge is, the greater its usefulness.

It is perhaps only those who make a special study of geographic distribution that realize to what extent ornithological literature is filled with *indefinite* data on the subject. A great many published records of occurrence are so inexplicit as to localities and dates as to be all but worthless. In the preparation of distributional maps and in the study of migratory movements the futility of indefinite records becomes particularly apparent. A case in point is a paper by Messrs. Philipp and Bowdish in the July issue of 'The Auk,' wherein the authors, for some unexplained reason, have failed to state any definite localities for a large number of breeding records, which would have been of real value if accompanied by proper geographical data. It is to be hoped that the authors will supply the desired data in full in a later issue of 'The Auk.'

Cases like the one just quoted suggest the urgent need for authors of ornithological papers to become impressed with the importance of supplying exact and detailed information as to localities and dates of occurrence.

There are unquestionably many of us who can add materially to the value of our papers by bearing in mind this need of definite records.

Very truly yours,

FRANCIS HARPER.

U. S. Biol. Survey, Washington, D. C.,
July 19, 1917.

[The editor feels responsible for the omission above referred to for had he noticed it and called the authors' attention to it, the desired information would surely have been furnished. For various reasons it may seem desirable to withhold the *exact* locality for the breeding of rare birds, but there can surely be no objection in publishing the county, which except in certain cases of varied topography would doubtless answer the needs referred to by Mr. Harper.—W. S.]

Appeal for Assistance in Work of the Biological Survey.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':

The Biological Survey, as is generally known, is engaged in compiling and collating distributional records of all North American birds and mammals. These records are compiled from all available published literature, from reports of field work by members of its staff, and from manuscript reports by voluntary observers throughout the United States and a large part of Canada. The Survey's file system of carded records doubtless constitutes the only source of fairly complete information regarding the distribution of North American birds and mammals, as at present known. As such it is constantly being consulted and utilized in the preparation of the Survey publications, the A. O. U. Check-List and its supplements, and the Indexes to 'The Auk,' as well as in various other ways.

The Biological Survey would take this occasion to invite all members of the A. O. U. to contribute bird migration reports and bird census reports for use in its work. Blanks for the purpose will be promptly sent to those who write for them. It is only by the accumulation of a vast amount of additional data that many problems in distribution and migration can be worked out satisfactorily. Reports from the South, West, and Pacific Coast are especially needed, and fall migration notes from the entire country are much to be desired. The importance of accuracy in all records can scarcely be over emphasized.

Since A. O. U. members are among the chief beneficiaries of this phase of the Biological Survey's work, it is hoped that this request for their cooperation will not go unheeded.

Very truly yours,

E. W. NELSON,
Chief, Biological Survey.