

The collection, consisting of some 700 skins representing 159 species was obtained during a period of seventeen days with the aid of Indian shooters and is stated to be not fully representative, as ornithology was secondary to other activities, while the illness of Mr. Underwood, who was expected to pay particular attention to this field, prevented further prosecution of bird work. The following forms are described as new: *Jacamerops aurea penardi* (p. 200), Carrillo, Costa Rica; *Phaethornis adolphi nelsoni* (p. 204) for *P. a. fraterculus*, preoccupied; *Threnetes ruckeri dariensis* (p. 204) Mt. Sapo; *Chalybura buffoni micans* (p. 204) Mt. Sapo; *Phaenostictus macleannani choconus* (p. 208); *Sclerurus mexicanus anomalus* (p. 209); *Pipra erythrocephala actinosa* (p. 214); *Craspedoprion olivaceus badius* (p. 216) and *Oxyruncus brooksi* (p. 220) all from Mt. Sapo; *Chlorophanes spiza arguta* (p. 225) Divala, W. Panama. and *Tangara inornata languens* (p. 227) Loma del Leon.

In many cases comparisons are made with allied forms and there are a number of interesting field notes, the whole making a most welcome contribution to the ornithology of a region which appears to have been previously unvisited by zoologists.

While the authors lay particular stress upon the remarkable speed of the field work of the expedition, eighty-seven birds having been shot and prepared in a single day, it would seem that attention might also be called to the rapidity displayed in the preparation of the report, for while collecting was still in progress at the end of April the collection had been transported to Cambridge and the report prepared and published by September.—W. S.

Check List of the Birds of Illinois.¹—This little pocket list of Illinois birds has been prepared by Benjamin T. Gault with the assistance of Robert Ridgway and other ornithologists in various parts of the State. The object was to produce a check-list which should contain a summary of the authenticated data relative to the occurrence of birds in the State and serve as a standard for the recording of bird notes. The result is most satisfactory and rarely have we seen so much information clearly presented in such a small space.

There is an excellent faunal map of the State showing the extent of the three primary zones—the Transition, Upper Austral and Lower Austral and the three minor subdivisions of the last, while an introduction to the list by Robert Ridgway explains the characteristic species of each. Under each species is a brief statement of its relative abundance, time of occurrence etc., with separate statements for the several districts, if its distribution is not uniform. Then by means of various signs before the name the districts in which it nests are indicated.

¹ Check List of the Birds of Illinois. Together with a Short List of 200 commoner birds and Allen's Key to Bird's Nests. Published by the Illinois Audubon Society, 10 South La Salle Street, Chicago, pp. 80. 1922.

English names only are used so that all of the complications of nomenclature which have no place in such a list are avoided.

We congratulate the Illinois Society and Mr. Gault upon an admirable piece of work which came out just in time for many of the visiting members of the A. O. U. to take copies home with them as souvenirs of the first Chicago meeting of the Union.—W. S.

Chapin on the Genus *Steganura*.¹—Mr. Chapin has made a careful study of the long-tailed Paradise Whydahs examining all of the material in the principal museums of America and Europe. He comes to the conclusion that there are two perfectly distinct species, *Steganura paradisaea* and *S. aucupum* the ranges of which overlap in the region south of the Congo forest and at one or two other points. The much narrower point to the long tail feathers in *paradisaea* seems to be a constant difference as compared with the broader, rounder tip in *S. aucupum*.

Of the latter Mr. Chapin recognizes four subspecies three of which are new: *S. a. longicauda* (p. 5) Uelle District; *S. a. nilotica* (p. 5) Blue Nile, and *S. a. obtusa* (p. 6) Nyasaland.

The Whydahs are birds of the short-grass plains and abhor the rain forests. Mr. Chapin suggests that originally *S. aucupum* occupied the northern, and *S. paradisaea* the southern, grass-lands, separated by the forests which then reached to the eastern coast. With the reduction of the eastern portion of the forest the two forms spread; the northern occupying isolated areas suited to its needs has been differentiated into several races through isolation, while the southern, which has maintained a continuous distribution, has not. His theory seems to be supported by the facts which he presents.—W. S.

Chapman on the Bird Department of the American Museum.²—This paper contributed to the Museum's magazine 'Natural History' is an interesting historical sketch of the department with which Dr. Chapman, at present its head, has been associated almost since its inception, while most of its activities have been carried on on lines which he has laid down.

We learn that the study collection now consists of 200,000 specimens while no less than sixty-three expeditions have gone out under the museum's auspices partly or wholly in the interests of the department of birds. Beside the historical portion of the article there is an excellent outline of the objects of a department of birds and the uses of exhibition and research collections.—W. S.

¹ The Species and Geographic Races of *Steganura* By James P. Chapin American Museum Novitates No. 43 September 6, 1922.

² The Department of Birds, American Museum. Its History and Aims. By Frank M. Chapman. Reprinted from *Natural History*, Vol. XXII, No. 4, pp 306-318, 1922.