

The various Old World forms recently added to the fauna, mainly in the far northwest have been interpolated where they are considered to belong. Curiously enough, although the author emphasizes the close relationship between the Ring-necked Duck and the Tufted Duck, also pointed out by Hollister, he places them in different genera separated by the Scaups! However he is evidently not responsible for this arrangement as he has transferred all authority for the scientific nomenclature of his work to Dr. Charles W. Richmond and Dr. Harry C. Oberholser (introduction p. 6), and his opposition to a multiplicity of genera is well known (see 'Auk', 1923, p. 180). He has, however, a comment on nomenclature on p. 64 when he says of the complicated history of the Black Duck, "Our old friend was hardly recognizable after all the changes; fortunately we can still call him by the old familiar name, the Black Duck. Let us be thankful for the much-needed stability in the English names." To this we would say amen! and trust that those who have been advocating changes in the English names will take heed. Indeed we regret that Mr. Bent did not omit the Latin names entirely, for they seem to serve no purpose whatever in a work of this kind.

The birds of which our author treats in this volume are species which have from the earliest times attracted man's attention and their life histories, so admirably told, will furnish most entertaining reading to numbers of sportsmen and nature lovers to whom the rarer and unfamiliar birds of the sea in the earlier 'Life Histories' had less appeal. These readers will make a large addition to the ornithologists who value all the volumes equally as works of reference, and we hope the edition has been made adequate to meet this need. Let all those who can do so respond to Mr. Bent's appeal for help and send him information on species far along on the list so that he may have adequate data to draw upon when the time comes.—W. S.

**Preble and McAtee on the Birds of the Pribilof Islands.**<sup>1</sup>—This report is based on observations made by the senior author on a visit to the islands in 1914 as a member of the Fur Seal Commission, as well as data and collections obtained by others, notably by W. L. Hahn and G. Dallas Hanna, and the late William Palmer's painstaking report published in 1899 which up to the present time has been "the only completely annotated list of the birds of the group." Mr. Preble is responsible for the general accounts and Mr. McAtee for the data on food, based largely on personal analysis of stomach contents furnished by various collectors. The result is an unusually complete series of data on the various species, covering habits, abundance, migration, nesting and food, and forming a most important work of reference.

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<sup>1</sup> North American Fauna, No. 46. A Biological Survey of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska. I. Birds and Mammals. By Edward A. Preble and W. L. McAtee. II. Insects, Arachnids and Chilopods. By various Entomologists with an Introduction by W. L. McAtee. June 20, 1923. Birds, pp. 1-101, pl. 2-6.

Mr. Preble discusses the life zone relationships of the group, which is of course most closely allied to the Arctic but "there are many elements that forbid its unqualified reference to that zone." The small size and rugged contour of the islands, severe winds, isolation and abundant food supply have combined to produce a fauna and flora peculiar in many respects.

No less than 137 species of birds are now known from the Pribilofs of which twenty-three breed. There are also seventeen regular migrants, and six of less regular occurrence, while the rest of the list is made up of species that have occurred only as occasional visitors, many of them but once, of these no less than twenty-one are visitors from Eurasia.

The authors are to be commended for giving footnote equivalents to the A. O. U. 'Check-List' so that those not conversant with the various new genera recently proposed may understand to what the names refer. There is a growing tendency especially in Government ornithological publications among those using "up to the minute" nomenclature, that has not been accepted in the A. O. U. 'Check-List' or other standard lists, to give no clue to where the new names originated or in what sense they are used. Even trained ornithologists cannot ascertain these facts without much laborious research, whereas a word of explanation or a footnote reference as here used would supply the clue.

Messrs. Preble and McAtee are to be congratulated upon producing a valuable contribution to American ornithology.—W. S.

**Miss Cooke on Bird Censuses.**<sup>1</sup>—This interesting report summarizes the history and results of the bird census work conducted by correspondents of the U. S. Biological Survey from 1916 to 1920.

The object of bird censuses is to ascertain as accurately as possible the number of breeding birds in selected areas. The counting of singing males at the height of the nesting season is the most satisfactory method and about 80 acres seems to be the area best suited for a single observer, provided it includes reasonably diversified country. The count should be made several times as a check on its accuracy. From the data so far obtained, fragmentary as it is, it has been possible to draw some fairly accurate conclusions. In the northeastern States, for example, the average bird population per 100 acres for the four years 1916, 1917, 1918 and 1920 was respectively 159, 124, 95 and 140 pairs and for the north central States, 139, 129, 150 and 124 pairs. In the northeastern States the Robin proves to be the most abundant, comprising 8.3 per cent of the bird population, Song Sparrow, 7.7; English Sparrow, 4.3; Chipping Sparrow, 3.9; Catbird, 1.7; and Meadowlark, 1.0.

In the north central States the order of abundance differed: English

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<sup>1</sup> Report of Bird Censuses in the United States, 1916 to 1920. By May Thatcher Cooke, Assistant in Biological Investigations. Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Dept. Agriculture; Dept. Bull. 1165. July 20, 1923, pp. 1-34, 10 tables. Price 5 cts. Supt. Documents, Gov't. Printing Office, Washington, D. C.