

**Bibliography of Austrian Ornithology.**<sup>1</sup>—Tschusi Zu Schmidhoffen has published his usual bibliographies of ornithological literature for Austro-Hungary for the years 1915 to 1918 inclusive, which form valuable reference lists for those studying the birds of central Europe.—W. S.

**Oberholser on New East Indian Birds.**<sup>2</sup>—This paper is the result of further studies of the rich collections made by Dr. W. L. Abbott in the East Indies and most of the nineteen new subspecies are described from specimens collected by him. They represent the families Turdidae, Sylviidae, Pycnonotidae, and Muscicapidae. The descriptions are full and in every way model diagnoses.—W. S.

**Wetmore on New Patagonian Birds.**<sup>3</sup>—Four new forms are here described. Three from the collections of the U. S. National Museum and one from the Pemberton collection deposited in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California. The study of the latter led to the recognition of these new forms which the author has named: *Pteroptochos rubecula nemorivaga* (p. 333), Port Otway, Sts. of Magellan; *Taenioptera pyrope ignea* (p. 334), Lareda Bay, Sts. of Magellan; *Turdus magellanicus pembertoni* (p. 335), Rio Negro, Argentina, and *Spizitornis parulus lippus* (p. 336), Owens Islands, Chile.

The complications of modern nomenclature make it absolutely impossible to determine whether Dr. Wetmore in using *Turdus* regards the old genus "*Merula*" as congeneric with the typical Thrushes or whether he desires to be "up to the minute" in his use of names. Thus is the lessened usefulness of technical names emphasized unless some explanation is added!—W. S.

**Jones on Inheritance in Pigeons and Fowls.**<sup>4</sup>—Miss Jones has published two papers bearing upon the inheritance of plumage characters. In one she discusses the several interacting factors which produce varying amounts of black and blue color in pigeons. She finds five factors affecting distribution of black pigment, producing (1) black in the wing bars, (2) black sprinkling in the wing coverts, (3) black check pattern, (4) black throughout the wing coverts and (5) black tail. The detailed discussion is mainly of interest to students of evolution and is in the complicated terminology of modern genetics, but some of the conclusions are of importance to the systematist.

<sup>1</sup> Ornithologische Literatur des früheren Österreich-Ungarns 1915. Verhandl. k. k. zool.-bot. Gesellschaft in Wien, 1916; same for 1916, *ibid* 1918; same for 1917 and 1918, *ibid* 1921.

<sup>2</sup> Descriptions of New East Indian Birds of the Families Turdidae, Sylviidae, Pycnonotidae and Muscicapidae. *Smithson. Misc. Collns.* Vol. 76, No. 6. July 16, 1923, pp. 1-9.

<sup>3</sup> New Subspecies of Birds from Patagonia. By Alexander Wetmore. *Univ. of Calif. Publ. in Zoology.* Vol. 21, No. 12, pp. 333-337, June 16, 1923.

<sup>4</sup> Studies on Inheritance in Pigeons. IV. Checks and Bars and Other Mutations of Black. By Sarah van Hoosen Jones. *Genetics* 7, 466-500, September, 1922. Inheritance of Silkiness in Fowls. By Sarah van Hoosen Jones. *Jour. of Heredity*, XII, No. 3; March, 1921, pp. 117-128.

For example, the author states that as a result of the isolation of some of these factors it seems evident that certain species differences are based on a single factor. Therefore she contends that "if such marks are used for species differentiation, then the color variations of each variety of the various breeds of pigeons might as legitimately be assigned species names." This of course brings up again the old question: What is a species? and it is quite conceivable that it is one thing from the point of view of the geneticist and another from that of the systematist. The latter, as we understand it, is dealing with forms as they occur in nature, and those which remain constantly different even though by a single factor are none the less species. The artificially produced forms due to selective breeding may differ more widely from one another but if when thrown back on nature they all revert to an original type they are not species from the systematist's point of view.

The possibility that the Domestic Pigeon is of polyphyletic origin and not descended from a single species *Columba livia*, we are quite willing to admit.

The second paper deals with the inheritance of silkiness in fowls, a plumage condition due to lack of hooks on the barbules. The author considers that the sporadic occurrence of such birds, which has been noted since the thirteenth century, is due to the chance mating of birds carrying the silky factor in heterozygous condition.—W. S.

#### **Howell on Agencies which Govern the Distribution of Life.**<sup>1</sup>—

This is an interesting and readable discussion of an important subject which has engaged the attention of many students. Mr. Howell, while conceding that temperature is the most important factor involved, believes that too little attention has been given to other agencies, some of which he considers. His classified table of 'Agencies' contains five main heads: (I) Life Types, whether active, or sedentary, aquatic, fossinal, etc.; (II) Direct Physical Barriers, oceans, rivers, mountains, etc., forests, plains, and deserts; (III) Regulation by Temperature, zonal, faunal and associational; (IV) Food and (V) Enemies.—W. S.

**Chapman on New Formicariidae and Dendrocolaptidae.**—A continuance of the study of his South American collections has resulted in the discovery of twenty-two new forms of these difficult families which Dr. Chapman names in the paper before us. They belong to the genera *Thamnophilus*, *Myrmotherula*, *Microbates*, *Myrmoderus*, *Hylophylax*, *Grallaria*, *Schizoeaca*, *Synallaxis*, *Siptornis*, *Pseudocolaptes*, *Philydor*, *Xenopicus*, *Xenops*, *Sclerurus* *Glyphorhynchus* and *Lepidocolaptes*.

The descriptions are full with lists of specimens examined and comments on related forms, measurements, etc.—W. S.

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<sup>1</sup> Agencies which Govern the Distribution of Life. American Naturalist, LVI, Sept.-Oct., 1922, pp. 428-438.