

Chapman on New South American Birds.—Dr. Chapman's continued studies of the South American avifauna have resulted in two more contributions since our last issue. The first of these¹ contains descriptions of new forms of *Mecocerculus*, *Ochthoeca* (2), *Platytricus* *Poecilotriccus*, *Euscarthmus*, *Spizitornis* (3), *Mionectes*, and *Phaeomyias*,—all belonging to the Tyrannidae and obtained from Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

The second paper² treats of Tracheophonae and includes two new genera, *Xenornis* (p. 1) for *X. setifrons*, a curious new species obtained at Tacarcuna, eastern Panama, in 1915, but which still remains unique; and *Apocryptornis* (p. 5) for another novelty, *A. lineifrons*, from the Papalacta River, allied to *Grallaria* and *Hyllopezus*. There are also new forms described of the genera, *Dysithamnus*, *Melanopareia*, *Chamaeza*, *Synallaxis*, *Cranioleuca*, and *Xiphorhynchus*.—W. S.

Chapman and Griscom on 'The House Wrens of the Genus Troglodytes.'—This paper³ is a model of its kind. Not only is the taxonomic side of the study admirably presented with full descriptions, synonymy and lists of specimens examined, but there is a general discussion of the distribution of the family and of the special group under consideration, with suggestions as to its origin, lines of dispersal, etc. From this we learn that Wrens are probably of American origin with 289 Neotropical forms as against 48 for the Old World; that the House Wren has a wider distribution than any other American Passerine bird; and that it is a "successful" species in its ecological relations, able to hold its own against enemies, to drive out rivals, and to adapt itself to nesting places provided by man. The very "fluidity" of the House Wren group makes it difficult to trace its center of dispersal. It occupies arid and humid areas, "crosses the Andes where they are highest, and seems as much at home in the Paramo Zone as in the tropics."

The authors are compelled to regard the North American House Wrens as differing specifically from the South American group but feel that they will yet be found to intergrade. The four Central American forms including *peninsularis* which occupies the eastern coast region of most of Mexico, are subspecies of *musculus*, the South American type, but owing to the migratory character of the North American type *aëdon*, it is impossible to fix definitely the relation between the two until the breeding range of the latter in Mexico is determined.

Thirteen South American races of *musculus* are recognized together with two forms which are regarded as of specific rank: *T. cobbi*, of the Falkland

¹ Descriptions of New Flycatchers from Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. By Frank M. Chapman. Amer. Mus. Novitates. No. 118, June 20, 1924, pp. 1-11.

² Descriptions of New Genera and Species of Tracheophonae from Panama, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. By Frank M. Chapman. Amer. Mus. Novitates. No. 123, July 2, 1924, pp. 1-9.

³ The House Wrens of the Genus Troglodytes. By Frank M. Chapman and Ludlow Griscom. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., Vol. L, Art. IV, pp. 279-304, July 8, 1924.

Islands and *T. tecellatus*, from isolated river valleys in southwestern Peru and northwestern Chile. *T. m. carabayae* (p. 296) allied to *audax*, and found in southeastern Peru is described as new. A number of races described by previous authors are relegated to synonymy.—W. S.

Loyd's 'The Protection of Birds.'—This¹ is a curious publication, being a rather disconnected attack upon the British 'Wild Life Protection Act' and the methods of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, by one who is apparently espousing the side of the egg collector. There are always extremists on both sides in discussing bird protective legislation as it affects the collector, but we can see nothing to be gained by such a vehement attack as this and the heat displayed by the author, especially his characterization of a certain statement of the protectionists as "nothing more or less than a — lie" discount to a great extent the weight of his remarks.

Collectors can gain their points better by cool-headed appeals and constructive suggestions than by such vigorous denunciations.—W. S.

Mathews' 'The Birds of Australia.'²—This great work is rapidly approaching completion, and the two additional parts which have appeared since our last notice continue the consideration of the family Melithreptidae. In Part 6 of Volume XI the genera *Ramsayornis*, *Grantiella*, *Lacustroica*, *Conopophila*, *Certhionyx*, *Zanthoniza* and *Glycichaera* are treated, one new form *Conopophila albogularis mimikae* (p. 390) from Mimika River, S. W. New Guinea, being described as new. There are also a number of descriptions of plumages to be added to the accounts of species treated in previous parts.

In Part 7 the genera *Lichmera*, *Ptilotina*, *Microptilotis*, *Paraptilotis*, *Dorothina*, are considered. The method of treatment is the same as in the other recent volumes, the subspecies being all listed in the synonymy whether accepted or not, with an elaborate history of their nomenclature, etc., in the text.—W. S.

Dr. Lowe on the Presence of Broadbills in Africa.—In 'The Ibis' for 1914, Mr. G. L. Bates, the well-known ornithologist resident in Cameroon, made the interesting announcement that the African genus *Smithornis* hitherto regarded as a Flycatcher possessed characters which showed clearly that it could no longer be retained in the Muscicapidae, if indeed it could be regarded as a normal Passerine bird. Although he did not make a definite statement, it was obvious that he considered that the genus might better be grouped with the Oriental Broadbills, Eurylaemidae, a family unknown from Africa.

¹ The Protection of Birds: An Indictment. By Lewis R. W. Loyd. Longmans, and Co., 39 Paternoster Row, London, E. C. 4; New York, Toronto, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. 1924, pp. i-vi + 1-88. Price \$1.25 net.

² The Birds of Australia. By George M. Mathews. Vol. XI, Part 6, pp. 361-416, pls. 9. June 21, 1924. Part 7, pp. 417-472, pls. 6. July 31, 1924.