

Heinroth and Frau Magdalena Heinroth. The unique feature of this publication is the wealth of photographic illustration which shows the bird shortly after hatching from the egg and in various stages afterward to maturity. The egg is also figured and diagrams of the coloration of the inside of the mouth of the nestling are added. The colored plates are apparently reproduced from hand colored photographs and are not so pleasing as the uncolored ones. Large numbers of single portraits, sometimes a dozen or more are presented on one quarto plate, which detracts very much from their artistic beauty, though they are just as valuable for study and comparison.

There is in this part a brief introduction on the Passeriformes and then a series of accounts of the birds of the first 'group', "Erdsanger" including the Nightingale, Robin, Blue-throat and Wheat-ear. The text includes measurements of birds and eggs, with an account of the distribution and life history of each species. The plates in Part I, which are loose, include some of Owls and Plover and other species not mentioned in the text, and apparently no attempt is made to have plates and text in each installment correspond. The completed work is to form two volumes with 125 colored plates and 275 in uncolored halftone, and will be issued in 35 parts.

It should be an invaluable work of reference to students living in the region of which it treats and to others as well, especially those interested in successive plumage development.—W. S.

Recent Publications of the U. S. Biological Survey.—Besides the annual synopsis of the game laws¹ and the directory of officials and organizations² concerned with game and bird protection, the U. S. Biological Survey has recently issued two important papers.

One of these by Ira N. Gabrielson deals with the food habits of some winter bird visitants.³ These comprise the Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, the Crossbills, Redpolls, Siskin, Snow Bunting, Longspurs and Pipits. The conclusions of the author amply confirm our present attitude of protection to all of these species. Most of them do not figure prominently as either beneficial or injurious birds, their food being for the most part of little or no economic importance but they should be rigidly protected on account of their beauty and attractiveness as in the case of all wild life not directly injurious.

The other publication⁴ is by Mr. F. C. Lincoln and is entitled 'Returns from Banded Birds 1920-1923.' It includes tabulated records of 1746

¹ Game Laws for the Season 1924-25, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1444. U. S. Dept. Agriculture, August 1924. By Geo. A. Lawyer, pp. 1-38. Price 5 cents.

² Directory of Officials and Organizations Concerned with the Protection of Birds and Game: 1924. By Geo. A. Lawyer and Talbot Denmead. October, 1924. pp. 1-16.

³ Food Habits of Some Winter Bird Visitants. By Ira N. Gabrielson. Department Bulletin No. 1249. October 27, 1924. pp. 1-32. U. S. Dept. Agriculture.

⁴ Returns from Banded Birds, 1920 to 1923. By Frederick C. Lincoln. Department Bulletin, U. S. Dept. Agriculture No. 1268. October 15, 1924. pp. 1-56. Price 10 cents.

returns reported to the Survey which have to do with 103 species. The great bulk of these are from Ducks, notably the Mallard and Black Duck, but some of those relating to other species are the most interesting, as for instance, a Common Tern banded on the coast of Maine and recovered in South Nigeria, West Africa, and another of the same species banded at Brigantine, N. J. and recovered in Trinidad.

This sort of publication is most important and most practical and this is in our opinion the right way to publish banding records. The long lists of birds banded and the recovery records, scattered through various publications, do little good, as it takes too much time to look them up and correlate them. Published in this way by the Biological Survey all records are brought together in convenient form and can readily be studied and compared.

The large number of banded birds found dead at or near the banding stations demands most careful investigation in connection with the communication under "Correspondence" in the present issue of 'The Auk.' Any real menace to bird life that may be positively proven to result directly or indirectly from banding must be promptly eliminated. The birds are too valuable to be uselessly destroyed and the method of study too important to be abandoned or to have any serious criticism placed upon it.—W. S.

Chapin on the Weaver-Finches of the Genus *Pyrenestes*.—Mr. Chapin's latest contribution to African ornithology¹ is a study of the genus *Pyrenestes*, a group of Weaver-Finches which exhibits a variation in the size of the beak comparable to that of the Galapagos Finches (*Geospiza*). This variation has not been well understood nor has the coloration of the sexes been satisfactorily worked out. Mr. Chapin's paper is a philosophical discussion of the distribution of the species and races and their relationship to one another, to forest areas, rainfall and food. His conclusions are that there are three species clearly distinguished by their coloration: (1) a species with black and red males, ranging from the Gold Coast to Uganda; (2) one with brown and red males, occurring from Senegal to Liberia; and (3) a similar species but with the red not extending to the hind crown. Each of these species is divisible into races varying in size and in proportions of the beak, which variation is roughly correlated with changes in vegetation and rainfall, the greater size of the beak being apparently coincident with a diet of hard coated seeds of the Razor-grass (*Scleria*).

A key to the forms, tables of measurements, with maps and diagnoses, add further to the value of this interesting paper.—W. S.

Riley on Celebes Birds.—This paper,² by Mr. J. H. Riley of the

¹ Size Variation in *Pyrenestes*, a Genus of Weaver-Finches. By James P. Chapin, Bull. American Museum, Nat. Hist. Vol. XLIX, Art. IV, pp. 415-441. September 3, 1924.

² We regret that the National Museum has not yet been able to return to the practise of dating their papers as was the custom prior to the war. A collection of Birds from North and North-central Celebes. By J. H. Riley, Proc. U. S. Nat. Museum. Vol. 64, Art. 16, pp. 1-118. 1924.