Lynes, Hubert. An Ornithological Visit to N. W. Morocco (Spanish Province of Yebala). (*Novit. Zool.*, XXXI, No. 1, March, 1924.)—Notes on 339 species and an excellent map.

Hartert, E. The Birds of St. Matthias Island (*Novit. Zool.*, XXXI, No. 2, October, 1924).—Near New Hanover. 39 forms listed, of which 10 are new.

Hartert, E. The Birds of Squally or Storm Island (*Novit. Zool.*, XXXI, No. 2, October, 1924).—Lies between St. Matthias and New Hanover; 21 forms listed.

Lowe, Percy R. Some notes on the Fregatidae (*Novit. Zool.*, XXXI, No. 2, October, 1924).—Apparently admits all the proposed forms and names two more. *Fregata minor mathewsi* (p. 309) Queensland, Australia and *F. ariel wilsoni* (p. 311) S. Trinidad Island. We have thus *aquila*, *magnificens* (two subspecies), *andrewsi*, *minor* (six subspecies), and *ariel* (three subspecies). He follows Rothschild in regarding the eastern Indian Ocean as the type locality of *F. minor*.

Schouteden, H. Contributions to the Avifauna of the Belgian Congo. I. My collections from Kasai (*Revue Zoologique Africaine*, XI, fasc. 3).—320 species. II. My collections from Kwamouth (*Rev. Zool. Afr.* XI, fasc. 4).—187 species. My collections from Kisantu, Leopoldville and Kidada (*Rev. Zool. Afr.* XII, fasc. 2).—150 species.

Mertens, Robert. Contribution to the Avifauna of German New Guinea. (*Senckenbergiana*, V, Heft 5-6, December 20, 1923.)—*Lanius schach stresemanni* (p. 228) and *Melidectes torquatus cahni* (p. 229) are described as new.

CORRESPONDENCE

Danger in Bird Traps.

Editor of 'THE AUK':

In view of the large number of amateur ornithologists at present engaged in the new "sport" of Bird Banding, I think it would be a good thing to draw your attention to a fact concerning the U. S. Government Sparrow Trap, which, on account of its simplicity and excellence appears to be very widely used. The full instructions accompanying the illustrated pamphlet (U. S. Dept. of Agr. Circ., No. 170) make it possible for anyone to build the trap at home and it is the home-made product to which I am making reference. The trap I use was made for me by a very capable and neat workman according to the plans and specifications supplied in the pamphlet. I think I am safe in assuming that the workmanship is at least as good as that in the vast majority of home-made traps of the kind. I have, however, not been employing it for banding purposes, but for trapping birds for experimental work. The birds so caught are released in large roomy aviaries made of match boarding and mosquito netting, so constructed that there are no free edges of netting anywhere. The meshes

are so small that the birds (mainly Juncos) cannot push their beaks through them.

If I had been banding these birds instead of keeping them in captivity I should probably still be satisfied with my Sparrow trap for I should never have suspected that there was anything wrong with it. As a matter of fact I found that about 20% of my birds died shortly after being turned into the aviaries. Post-mortem examinations were made on all of them, and the cause of death was the same in every case—subcutaneous inflamation in the region of the lores. There is no doubt that the cause lies in the small wire ends sticking in at the edges of the trap. These—and they appear to be unavoidable—puncture the skin behind the nostrils as the birds push their bills into the corners and through the meshes in endeavour to escape. There seems no reason to assume that the rate of mortality of the injured (about ten per cent. recovered) would be lessened if the birds were liberated instead of being turned into well-constructed aviaries. I have now had my birds for two months since removing the last dead from the above cause, during which time there has not been a single death amongst them.

This seems to me to be so serious a defect in the home-made trap (it would also be found to exist, no doubt, in other types of home-made traps) as to warrant an investigation. It is of interest to note here that in the U. S. Dept. of Agr. Bull. No. 1269 (Returns from Banded Birds, 1920–1923) just issued, "numbers preceded by a dagger (†) indicate recently banded birds found dead at or near the place of banding." Numbers marked in this manner total 332 or about 19.1% of the complete returns—1746. A list of "known causes of such deaths" is given, but this flaw in the home-made trap is not amongst them. The cause given in these cases by the banders, with so large a number of amateurs participating, must in many instances be mere conjecture. There is also this fact to be taken into consideration, that the number of birds found dead after banding does not represent the total mortality, but only a fraction of it—those that are by chance picked up. The percentage quoted above, 19.1, is considerably lower for ducks and water birds and very much higher for the small species that are most likely to be taken in the kind of trap of which the U. S. Government Sparrow Trap is typical. On one page (40) over 56% of the returns are marked as birds found dead shortly after banding. Although this is the percentage on returns, which is a very different thing from a percentage of those banded, it must indicate a very high banding death rate. Surely the matter is one for immediate attention.

If this point is worthy of investigation I think it might be very well at the same time to investigate other points that are open to trenchant criticism in our present system of banding. Personally, I should welcome the appointment of a committee for the purpose of considering all aspects of bird-banding activities as carried out on this continent at the present time. Such a committee might be jointly appointed by the Biological Survey and the executive of the A. O. U., to include selected officers of

both bodies, amongst them, or in addition to them if deemed advisable, at least two *scientifically trained* biologists. If the committee were given time to correspond with Rossitten, London, Aberdeen and other well-known continental banding centers as well as with the officers of the various American Bird Banding Associations and the Cooper Club, it could publish its findings in 'The Auk,' and if found desirable, use its columns for open discussion.

Yours etc.,

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The Bean Goose in North America

Editor of 'THE AUK':

May I be allowed to point out that the Bean Goose, *Anser fabalis* (Latham) has no right to inclusion in the list of North American Birds? In the third edition of the 'Check-List' (p. 85) it is said to be "recorded from northern Greenland," but reference to the supposed records show that in every case the species indicated is the Pink-footed Goose, *Anser brachyrhynchus* Baillon, now universally regarded as a distinct species, but formerly considered to be merely a race of *Anser segetum*(=*fabalis*) by many Danish ornithologists. *Anser brachyrhynchus* is now known to be a summer visitor to the northeast coast of Greenland and has been proved to breed there.

Politically it may be convenient to regard the whole of Greenland as American, but from a consideration of the Ornis, it becomes evident that the great ice cap of central Greenland is the real dividing line between the Nearctic and Palaearctic regions. Just as the west coast of Greenland shows a great preponderance of Nearctic forms, so on the other hand the east side is even more distinctively Palaearctic. This is a point of some importance in the preparation of an authoritative list of Nearctic birds. as several stragglers from the Palaearctic Region have occurred on the coast of East Greenland and nowhere else in America: e.g. *Cornus cornix, C. frugilegus, Delichon urbica, Anser albifrons albifrons, A. brachyrhynchus, Falco peregrinus peregrinus and Numenius arquata.* The claims of all these species to a place in any list of Nearctic birds should be carefully re-considered.

Yours truly,

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