

Van Tyne on the Birds of Charlevoix Co., Mich.—This is an annotated list¹ of about 120 species observed on an expedition supported by the Michigan Department of Conservation in the summer of 1923. Following the method of the plant ecologist the writer lists some twenty-three "habitats" but fortunately he does not use these regularly throughout the list in describing distribution and if for such terms as "edificarian" and "ruderal" simple English had been used, more persons would understand what he was talking about. The county under consideration has apparently not been previously investigated by the ornithologist and the paper therefore is a welcome addition to our knowledge of the distribution of Michigan birds.—W. S.

Tugarinow and Buturlin on the Ornithology of the Yenisee Government.—This paper² is a translation into German of the original published in Russian in 1911 and constitutes the fifth number of the 'Ornithological Literature of Russia,' edited and translated by Hermann Grote, which has been appearing recently. It consists of an annotated list of 285 species and forms a valuable contribution to Siberian ornithology.

Prof. Grote is to be congratulated upon making these publications in the Russian language available to ornithologists.—W. S.

Miss Sherman on the House Wren Problem.—Miss Althea R. Sherman has recently published several papers³ dealing with the iniquities of the House Wren in destroying the nests and eggs of other birds and seems bent on a campaign of extermination against the unfortunate Wren. She terms him a "felon" who "should be sentenced and the sentence executed without dangerous delay."

These articles have inspired others, some of which applaud Miss Sherman's attitude while some, written, we presume, by the class which she refers to as "ignorant and narrow-minded," indignantly refute her charges and give testimony that House Wrens in their vicinity do no appreciable harm to other species.

There is no denying Miss Sherman's statements as to these activities of the House Wren which have been known for many years, indeed the bird's success in driving all other species from his domain was fully described

¹ Notes on the Birds of Charlevoix County and Vicinity. By Josselyn Van Tyne. Printed from papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters, Vol. I, IV, 1924, pp. 611-627.

² A. Tugarinow und S. Buturlin: Materialien über die Vogel des Jenisseischen Gouvernements. Russisch in; Mitt. (Sapiski) der Krassnojarsker Abt. der Russ. Geogr. Gesellschaft, Sekt. Phys. Geogr., Bd. I, Lfg. 2-4, Krassnojarsk 1911. Aus der ornithologischen Literatur Russlands. Berichte und Übersetzungen von Hermann Grote. V. Ausgegeben als Sonderheft zu "Falco" im Februar, 1925, pp. 1-252.

³ Down with the House Wren Boxes. By Althea R. Sherman. Wilson Bulletin, March, 1925.

The Problem of the House Wren. By Althea R. Sherman. Bird-Lore. March-April, 1925.

by Alexander Wilson more than a century ago. But the Wren's methods are no worse than the parasitic habits of the Cowbird, the predacious habits of certain Hawks and Owls or the egg destroying propensities of the Blue Jay, and why have not these birds a perfect right to practice their living in the way that nature has ordained that they should? The Wren is no more of a "felon" for destroying the nest of a Bluebird than is a Flicker for destroying a nest of ants.

In nature's scheme all these things were adjusted and everything went well, and it is extremely likely that the very actions above referred to served as a check on overcrowding to the benefit of all concerned.

It is when man comes into the game that the trouble develops and so it has always been! Man is the "felon" not the Wren. In this instance he instituted a tremendous campaign for bird box erection without a thought as to what it would lead to and without providing for any sort of a check, and, just as Miss Sherman has said, most of the boxes are suited for the Wren alone and protect him from the attacks of all other species, with the result that Wrens in certain districts have increased abnormally and by the overcrowding of bird life due to the abundance of boxes, the bad habits of the little bird have been accentuated in his efforts to reduce things to their normal level. In exactly the same way thoughtless and unrestrained charity increases the bad habits of beggars and prevents them from reforming. Is it not possible also, that the promiscuous erection of feeding shelves, so that we may see the birds eat and perhaps photograph them in the act, may render those birds less able to secure food for themselves? If food and nesting boxes were provided when needed and not so lavishly forced upon the bird world we should have no further trouble in this line.

Now the answer to the House Wren problem is to reduce the number of boxes where the bird has become overabundant, just as Miss Sherman has said. But we must also accept the evidence of others that there are places where the Wren has not appreciably affected the presence or abundance of other species, and we must admit that people have a right to prefer the Wren to the other species which he persecutes. On purely economic grounds the Wren is just as valuable a bird as any of the others which he drives away so that it comes down, to some extent, to a matter of sentiment and personal preference.

At the same time there is no doubt that man has thoughtlessly increased the numbers of Wrens at the expense of other species which is an undesirable upset of the balance, and it is incumbent upon him to take steps to remedy the matter. We therefore would strongly advocate a check upon the promiscuous erection of Wren boxes and the reduction in their number where the birds have been demonstrated to be too abundant. This advice is based on practical reasons not sentimental or economic and it should be remembered that it is just as sentimental to protect the Bluebird from the "atrocities" of the House Wren as it is to hold on to our preference for House Wrens in spite of their habits of destroying nests and eggs.

In this connection too we cannot refrain from mentioning the allusions to the nefarious habits of the Cowbird which one sees in the "oölogical" magazines and the satisfaction that the oölogist feels in always removing the Cowbird's egg from the nest of its victim!—W. S.

Clark on Animal Coloration and Flight.—These two papers¹ are full of suggestion for those interested in speculating upon these fascinating subjects. To quote from the former the author says: "It has never seemed quite plausible to me that sexual selection could have a bearing on the coloration of the birds and butterflies. My belief has always been that the differences existing, which are sometimes very great, would eventually be interpreted in terms of differences in the environment of the sexes."

He suggests that in nature the most brilliant living things are the butterflies and the birds of the tree tops. These he contends are protectively colored against bird enemies, since the short focus of the bird's eye renders all images in one plane or nearly so, and the landscape or background appears as a patchwork of various spots of color against which a gaudy butterfly is very hard to see and birds are the only enemies that these free flying or tree top creatures have to contend with. To the eye of the mammal or lizard, sharp vision is only possible in one single plane at a time and a brilliantly colored object would be conspicuous when in focus, hence, he argues, birds of the ground or the underbrush or the back of a female bird sitting on a nest, all of which come within the range of mammal enemies, are dull colored.

The paper considers many other sides of the problem and is well worth a careful study.

The consideration of flight is a full and detailed resumé of this method of progression throughout the animal kingdom. The problem of soaring is explained on the presence of upward currents of air.—W. S.

Recent Papers by Stresemann.—Several important reviews of genera have been published lately by Dr. Stresemann, one treats of the genus *Pitohui*² of which fifteen species or subspecies are recognized, from New Guinea and adjacent islands. The species of *Cyornis*³ are considered in another paper and the forms of *Attila spadicea*⁴ in a third, while an extended article⁵ deals with various birds of prey. These latter have been mentioned in the notice of the journals in which they appear.—W. S.

¹ Observations on Animal Coloration. By Austin H. Clark. The Scientific Monthly, April 1925, pp. 341-344.

Animal Flight. By Austin H. Clark. The Scientific Monthly, January 1925, pp. 5-26.

² Die Gattung Pitohui von Erwin Stresemann January 1925, pp. 413-416, no name of journal appears on the separate.

³ Ueber einige *Cyornis*-Arten. von Erwin Stresemann. Ornith. Monatsberichte, March, 1925.

⁴ Mutations studien *Attila spadicea* Gmelin. Jour. f. Ornith., 1925, Heft 2.

⁵ Raubvogelstudien. von E. Stresemann. Jour. f. Ornith., 1925, Heft 2.