

RECENT LITERATURE.

Another Edition of Beebe's 'Pheasants.' The original edition of William Beebe's 'Monograph of the Pheasants' was limited to 600 copies and as these approached exhaustion Col. Anthony R. Kuser, to whose generosity the publication was largely due, decided to bring out another smaller edition which would maintain the main features of the original work and yet, with a reasonable reduction in illustration, could be placed within the reach of many who were unable to purchase the larger, more expensive volumes.

This has been admirably accomplished in the two volumes¹ before us which preserve all the text except certain technical portions and most of the plates, although it has been possible to present only 31 of them in color, and also a few of the photographs of habitats.

The text has been rewritten in some places and additional matter, acquired since the appearance of the original edition, has been added. Everything essential to the life histories of these interesting birds has therefore been presented in the present work. The text is beautifully printed on heavy paper, while the reproduction of the colored plates by a quadricolor process is exceedingly accurate and the results very pleasing.

Both Mr. Beebe and Mr. Kuser are to be congratulated upon this admirable publication which will make the natural history of the Pheasants familiar to a far greater number of persons than could be reached by the original edition and many will be led to consult the original volumes which, as Dr. Osborne states in his preface, can now be seen in most of the large libraries, museums and universities of the country.—W. S.

Danforth's 'Birds of Cartagena Lagoon, Porto Rico.'²—The present contribution seems to be the first in which modern methods of ecological investigation have been applied to a limited area in the West Indies, and the avifauna studied carefully in its relation to definitely restricted associations of plant life and other factors. The author has selected Cartagena Lagoon in the coastal plain of southwestern Porto Rico, near the town of Lajas, as typical of the lagoon areas of the island, and has studied its life over a space of twenty months. During this period 105 forms of birds were recorded from this limited area, a remarkable list when

¹ Pheasants their Lives and Homes. By William Beebe. In two volumes. Published under the auspices of the New York Zoological Society by Doubleday, Page & Company, Garden City, New York. 1926. Volume I, pp. i-xxiv + 1-257, pls. I-XXXIV (15 in color, 11 plain and 8 from photographs), one map. Volume II, pp. i-xv + 1-309, pls. XXXV-LXIV (16 in color, 6 plain, and 8 from photographs). Price of the two volumes. \$15.00.

² Birds of the Cartagena Lagoon, Porto Rico. By Stuart T. Danforth. Journ. Dept. Agric. Porto Rico, vol. X, no. 1, Jan., 1926, pp. i-x, 1-136, 1 map, 45 figs., published Dec., 1926.

it is considered that in 1916 the reviewer listed only 162 forms for the whole of Porto Rico, including the outlying islands of Mona, Desecheo, Vieques and Culebra. Of the forms given by Mr. Danforth 42 are migrants from North America and 42 breed regularly or occasionally at the lagoon. Others come to the lagoon area to search for food or are found in its vicinity casually. The author divides his area into nine distinct plant associations, each with its characteristic forms of other life. Bird life is common and reasonably varied when the total bird list is considered, since daily lists included from 26 to 48 forms.

The annotated list that forms the greater part of the paper includes under each species a statement as to the ecological preferences, habits, and abundance, and for many a detailed statement of the food, obtained from examination by the per cent by bulk method of the stomach contents of birds taken for specimens. Certain records new to Porto Rico that have already appeared in the 'Auk' (for 1925, pp. 558-563) are here given in more detail. On the supposition that the Willet of Porto Rico may represent a distinct form, "if such proves to be the case," there is provided for it the name *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus longicaudus* (p. 76). The proposed form, based on two specimens, from the measurements given appears to have the general size of typical *semipalmatus* but has the tail seven millimeters longer than the maximum given for that form. Under modern methods in systematic ornithology it is undesirable to name forms "provisionally" since such action usually throws the work of proof on others and can only cause trouble. Unless there is certainty in the matter, it is better to call attention to supposed differences and then let the matter rest until further study proves or disproves the assertion.

The paper is especially valuable for its detailed observations on birds of aquatic habit. The naturalist from elsewhere, resident for a brief space in the West Indies, or for that matter anywhere in the Tropics, is ordinarily so attracted by species peculiar to the region in which he is working that usually he gives somewhat casual attention to forms of wider range. The present account adds notably to knowledge in this latter respect. It is to be hoped that the author, who is again in Porto Rico, may continue his contributions on the interesting avifauna of that American possession.—A. W.

Catalogue of the Ayer Ornithological Library.—In two stout volumes,¹ Mr. John T. Zimmer, assistant curator of birds in the Field Museum of Natural History, has presented a detailed catalogue of the Edward E. Ayer Ornithological Library which includes most of the bird books in the Museum. Mr. Ayer one of the founders of the Museum and

¹ Catalogue of the Edward E. Ayer Ornithological Library. Part I [II] By John Todd Zimmer, Assistant Curator of Birds. Wilfred H. Osgood, Curator, Department of Zoology, Editor. Field Museum of Natural History. Publication 239 [240]. Zoological Series Vol. XVI. Chicago, U. S. A., November, 1926. Vol. I, pp. i-x + 1-364. Vol. II, pp. 365-706.