

fortunately for American readers the work is entirely in Japanese with the exception of the technical names, synonymy and title.

Another extremely interesting paper<sup>1</sup> by the same author is in English and describes the method of catching Ducks in hand-nets practised on Dr. Kuroda's family estate for many years past. A pond of some three and a half acres in extent carefully shielded from view is resorted to every year by thousands of wild Ducks. From this have been constructed seventeen dyked ditches 48 feet long and six feet across, which have a right angled bend at the middle so that the inner section cannot be seen from the pond. At the end of each ditch is a little feeding house presenting a solid wall to the ditch but open behind and with small holes for observation.

Domestic Ducks hatched under a hen are trained to run to a feeding box whenever fed by rapping on the box with a mallet whenever feed is furnished them. When they have become full grown they are released on the pond and are induced to swim up the ditches to feed whenever the caretaker raps on the wooden wall. Wild Ducks naturally follow them and soon the inner ditch will be full of them coming for their share of food which is supplied through a bamboo tube by the concealed "decoy-man" behind the board wall. The "hunters" at the signal suddenly climb up over the dyke which has been constructed along the ditch and as the Ducks take wing they scoop them in with long handled nets which they carry. The utmost care is taken to conceal everyone concerned from the Ducks on the pond. No word is spoken before the operation is started and all communication is by signs.

Dr. Kuroda states that this method secures the Ducks free from blood, or from bird lime which inevitably soil the feathers when the birds are shot or caught by lime and with no discharge of fire arms to frighten them the wild Ducks remain the season through on the pond. No less than 54,000 Ducks have been caught in this way on this pond alone since 1905-6, of which 21,000 were European Teal, 16,000 Pintails, 4,000 Falcatated Teal and 3,600 European Widgeon. Dr. Kuroda proposes to invite the visiting zoologists at the Third Pan-Pacific Science Congress to inspect his pond.

Another of Dr. Kuroda's recent papers deals with the Japanese Pheasants<sup>2</sup> and still another with the birds of Mt. Fuji.<sup>3</sup>—W. S.

**Kennard on the Snow Geese.**—As is well known to many of our readers Mr. Frederic H. Kennard has for some years been making an exhaustive study of the Snow Geese and the Blue Goose. In the paper<sup>4</sup> before

<sup>1</sup> Wild Duck Hunting at Haneda. By Nagamichi Kuroda, Dr. Sc. With 8 plates and 1 map. Published by the author, Tokyo, 1926. pp. 1-22.

<sup>2</sup> Notes on Japanese Pheasants. Bull. Imp. Soc. for Preservation of Scenery, Historic and Natural Monuments. Vol. 1, No. 6, pp. 7-18, Jan., 1926. In Japanese.

<sup>3</sup> Birds of Fuji. By Nagamichi Kuroda. Dobutsugasshi, XXXVIII, Jan. 1926, pp. 7-9. In Japanese.

<sup>4</sup> The Specific Status of the Greater Snow Goose. By Frederic Hedge Kennard. Proc. New England Zoological Club. Vol. IX, pp. 85-93 February 16, 1927.

us he presents a welcome array of measurements of the two forms of Snow Geese and other data to show their distinctness and their respective ranges. Rather recently some ornithologists questioned the existence of two races of these birds but the reviewer always maintained the distinctness of the two forms and Mr. Kennard has forever settled that question.

The range of the Greater Snow Goose so far as we know seems to be north Greenland, while the smaller form ranges all the way from Baffin Land to Pt. Barrow, Alaska, and eastern Siberia. In winter the large race is confined to the Atlantic Coast of North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland according to Mr. Kennard, though apparently some remain in Delaware Bay where the entire flock stops for some time in early spring on its way north. The winter range of the smaller bird covers the country west of the Mississippi from Louisiana to California.

Mr. Kennard in this paper not only emphasizes the fact that there are two perfectly separable forms of Snow Geese but proposes to regard them as species instead of geographical races. His series of measurements, however, shows overlapping of dimensions which according to all our standards indicate subspecific difference and intergradation has always been our criterion for a subspecies. Furthermore a subspecies may be just as important as a species (as witness the great Aleutian Song Sparrow) and it in no way affects the value of Mr. Kennard's admirable paper to continue to recognize the two Snow Geese as subspecies—indeed it is fortunate that we can do so since it emphasizes the obvious fact that they are geographic derivatives of the same stock.

In attacking the nomenclatural side of the question Mr. Kennard claims that Forster's name *nivalis* which has universally been applied to the Greater Snow Goose really belongs to the smaller bird because Forster's specimens came from Severn River where in recent times only the latter form has been found, and he further considers that the large bird does not occur anywhere on Hudson Bay, the only evidence being a specimen in the National Museum labelled Hudson Bay with no further data.

Unfortunately the rules of nomenclature do not always correspond to what appear to be the ornithological facts. We cannot, in settling nomenclatural matters, infer what an author intended to do or should have done, but must concern ourselves wholly with what he actually did do. In this case Forster described a Snow Goose and the impossibility of determining from his description which one he intended to name, is admitted. As a matter of fact he included references relating to both forms and did not of course know that they were different. Cassin, years later, restricted Forster's name *nivalis* to the Greater Snow Goose, and we, personally, feel that his action must be accepted.

It would be logical, in view of the facts of distribution that Mr. Kennard has brought together, to do just as he has done but Cassin's action has precedence. The case seems to be analagous to many cases of fixing generic types, where it seems obvious from present day knowledge what

species the author had in mind when he proposed his genus but if some subsequent author has fixed a wholly different species as the type our hands are tied!

In any case the rejection of a well established name is not warranted unless the facts are absolutely proven, and should a straggling Greater Snow Goose occur on the Severn River, which seems quite possible, Mr. Kennard's argument would fall to pieces.

Nomenclature is the bane of ornithology, there is always difference of opinion regarding it, and others may not agree with our views. However, we are in hearty accord with the ornithology of Mr. Kennard's paper and congratulate him on a fine piece of work.—W. S.

**Wood on the Nest of the Indian Tailor Bird.**—In this interesting paper<sup>1</sup> Dr. Casey A. Wood describes several nests of the Tailor Bird, *Orthotomus sutorius sutorius*, which he studied in Ceylon. There are five plates from photographs of nests of the species which add greatly to our understanding of the building of these remarkable structures. Sometimes the nest is made of a single leaf, sometimes of several, and there are four distinct methods employed in binding the leaves together which Dr. Wood calls sewing, rivetting, lacing and matting.

The bird makes tiny holes in the leaf with its sharp bill and draws the strands of delicate fiber through those along the leaf margin, pulling the edges together and often lacing them much as a shoe is laced. Through the holes in the body of the leaf pieces of cotton fibre from the lining are drawn and the loose end forms a sort of button or rivet head on the outside. This has erroneously been considered a knot by some writers.—W. S.

**Harper on a New Marsh Wren from Alberta.**—A series of Marsh Wrens collected on the Athabaska Delta by the author, H. A. Laing and J. A. Loring are here<sup>2</sup> made the basis for a new race *Telmatodytes palustris laingi* (p. 221). The type is in the Museum of Comparative Zoology.—W. S.

**Friedmann on Three New African Birds.**—Dr. Herbert Friedmann describes<sup>3</sup> from his African collection of 1924 *Parus albiventris curtus* (p. 217), *Amadina fasciata candida* (p. 218) both from Taveta, Kenya Colony and *Parisoma pulpum* (p. 219) Gunnal, Portuguese West Africa. The descriptions are full with ample comparison with allied forms.—W. S.

**Bangs on a New Parrot from Madagascar.**<sup>4</sup>—Specimens of the Lesser

<sup>1</sup> The Nest of the Indian Tailor Bird. By Casey A. Wood. Smithsonian Report for 1925, pp. 349-354, pls. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> A New Marsh Wren from Alberta. By Francis Harper. Occasional Papers of the Boston Society of Natural History, Vol. 5, pp. 221-222, December 10, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Three New African Birds. By Herbert Friedmann. Occasional Papers of the Boston Society of Natural History, Vol. 5, pp. 217-289, December 10, 1926.

<sup>4</sup> A New Form of the Lesser Vasa Parrot. By Outram Bangs. Proc. New England Zoological Club, Vol. IX, pp. 83-84, January 8, 1927.