

RECENT LITERATURE

Mathews's 'The Birds of Australia'—With the publication on February 8, 1927, of Part 10 of Volume XII, this great work is at last completed. Ever since the present editor took over 'The Auk' in 1912 the 'Birds of Australia' has been coming in regularly for review and in almost every one of the quarterly issues of the journal there has been a notice of Mr. Mathews's work. The first part appeared on October 31, 1910 and it with the three succeeding parts were reviewed by Dr. J. A. Allen before he retired from the editorial chair. While we shall miss the regular appearance of these handsome quartos on our desk, we heartily congratulate Mr. Mathews upon the completion of his gigantic undertaking, and his publishers, Messrs. H. F. and G. Witherby, upon the fine piece of printing which they have turned out. We must also recognize the indefatigable energy with which Mr. Mathews has delved into every part of his subject, while systematic ornithologists of all time will owe him a debt of gratitude for the vast amount of bibliographic and nomenclatural data that he has made available.

The production of the main work has involved several other publications. Mr. Mathews has prepared several lists of Australian birds, and has published the first volume of a 'Manual' of the birds of the country besides establishing a journal, the 'Austral Avian Record', for the early publication of new names and of papers dealing with nomenclatural and bibliographic subjects. As joint author of the manual and as collaborator in much of his research work he has had the assistance of Mr. Tom Iredale for some years his private secretary. From the start of his study of the Australian birds Mr. Mathews was impressed by the nomenclatural complications which have hampered systematic work and his effort has ever been to clear these away, to get to the bottom of all the problems, and settle them for all time. He has gone to much expense and trouble to run down all publications which might affect the nomenclature of Australian birds and to solve questions of dates of publication and other matters which previous authors had left in abeyance or had been unable to settle. Naturally he discovered facts which seriously affected the nomenclature of the birds of other countries, even those of England and America, and upon publishing these and calling attention to the necessary changes of names he aroused much opposition from the conservative element and soon constituted himself a sort of stormy petrel of ornithological nomenclature.

We have always had great respect for his sincerity of purpose and for the great service that he has done to ornithology in bringing to light so many overlooked publications and in settling so many problems depending on dates of publication. We have endorsed his researches in nomenclature and have agreed to most of his findings. His main effort has been to arouse Australian ornithologists to a realization that Gould had not said the last

word on the birds of the Antipodes and that they could not sit back and ignore the rest of the world and all early authors, but must move along with the rest of us and bring their nomenclature up to date. The old school conservatives would have none of this and bitterly opposed Mr. Mathews's ideas but with the passing of the years the younger men have in a great measure come into agreement with him and, thanks to his efforts, the latest check-list of the Australians follows the same code of nomenclature that governs the rest of the scientific world.

A visit by the author to Australia in 1914 did much to smooth out many differences of opinion and a stop over in Philadelphia on his way back to England gave us the pleasure of his personal acquaintance and the opportunity to show him the famous Gould collection in the Philadelphia Academy.

In the matter of subspecies Mr. Mathews was an extremist and proposed them at a rate unequalled we believe by any other writer, and here again he encountered quite as much opposition from the older Australians as in his revision of names. We considered that in the main he was doing good work here, as in the nomenclatural field, though it seemed at times, especially in view of his frequent cancellation of many of his own new forms, that he was sometimes hasty in setting up names to be immediately knocked down, without waiting for adequate data and without considering the trouble he was creating for those who had to catalogue these names and look them up whenever they were engaged in working out allied forms. Then too, as we have several times said, there was often no mention of a type specimen.

It is interesting in view of Mr. Mathews's many discussions of nomenclature to see how his attitude on certain points changed as his work progressed. In the opening volume he congratulates the authorities of the British Museum upon their intention of ignoring many of the "useless generic names" of the late Dr. Bowdler Sharpe and yet in a few years we see Mr. Mathews as one of the most extreme genus splitters that ornithology has known. So again in spite of his vigorous plea for the universal use of subspecies we find him, by the time Vol. V is reached, refusing to give them the full recognition in the text that they had previously received and simply discussing them at the end of each species. And what is far worse placing them in the synonymy where they cannot be distinguished from the real synonyms. The number and treatment of subspecies however are ornithological problems, always subject to personal opinion, with no possible "code" to govern them.

We have felt that the great amount of space devoted to nomenclatural discussion in the 'Birds of Australia' was unfortunate as most of the facts could usually have been stated without nearly so much verbiage and often the very fact that the author was endeavoring to bring out has been obscured by useless repetition. It seems as if some parts of the text may have been printed from a hastily prepared manuscript without revision. We have discussed Mr. Mathews's great work from a nomenclatural

point of view because that seems to have been the author's chief concern in its production and that is the feature that will be remembered in the future. He has, however, collected a great deal of valuable and interesting data on the lives and habits of the birds but as he tells us the adequate life histories of the Australian birds are yet to be written and his aim has been to clear away the technical difficulties in Australian ornithology and set up the species and their names on a permanent basis. This we feel that he has done or at least has presented all of the necessary information on the subject, an achievement of which he may well be proud.

The plates are of varied artistic merit but all give a good representation of the species so far as purposes of identification go. It is impossible to compare the work of the artists concerned with that of Fuertes, Thorburn or Brooks because they were drawing birds that they had not had the opportunity of studying in life. As artistic productions too they cannot be compared with the great folios of John Gould.

Five artists were engaged on the present work. The greater part of the plates of the early volumes are by Keulemans and are probably the best. He contributed 56 to Vol. I, 44 to Vol. II, 62 to Vol. III and one to Vol. IV. Goodchild prepared 3 for Vol. IV, one for Vol. V, and 11 for Vol. VI, while Roland Green contributed most of the Parrot plates, and some of the groups that followed: 38 to Vol. VI and 23 to Vol. VII; while there is one plate, that of the Black-cheeked Falcon, by G. E. Lodge. The greater part of the plates however are from drawings by Grönvold who contributed to every volume furnishing 360 plates or more than half of the total.

The edition was, we are informed, finally limited to 225 copies (of which the one before us is 202) so that it will not be a common book in libraries.

As many supplements, appendices, errata and disconnected notes have appeared in the various parts of the work and as the exact contents of the various parts and their dates of publication appear only on the covers, it seems worth while at this time to present some of this information where it will always be available.

Volume I. Casuariiformes, Galliformes, Turniciformes, Columbiformes, Ralliformes, Podicipediformes, Sphenisciformes.

Part I. October 31, 1910. pp. 1-96, pls. 1-19.

Part II. January 31, 1911. pp. 97-136, pls. 20-33.

Part III. April 29, 1911. pp. 137-184, pls. 34-45.

Part IV. August 9, 1911. pp. 185-234, pls. 46-58.

Part V. October 31, 1911. pp. 235-286, pls. 59-67.

Part VI. January 31, 1912. pp. 287-301 + i-xiv.

An extralimital genus *Mantellornis* is discussed at p. 255 and several extralimital species, *Geopelia shortridgei* (p. 138), *Porphyrio albus* (p. 247) and *Eudypetula minor iredalei* (p. 286). *Lopholaimus antarcticus minor*, not numbered, is inserted on p. 122. Pp. 183-184 in Part III are cancelled and reprinted in Part IV. There is a list of errata on p. xiv.

Volume II. Procellariiformes and Lariformes.

- Part I. May 30, 1912. pp. 1-120, pls. 68-81.
 Part II. July 31, 1912. pp. 121-236, pls. 82-94.
 Part III. September 20, 1912. pp. 237-356, pls. 95-107.
 Part IV. November 1, 1912. pp. 357-476, pls. 108-120.
 Part V. January 31, 1913. pp. 477-527 + i-xiv, pls. 121-124.

An extralimital genus is discussed, pp. 174-177, *Pagodroma*, and an extralimital species *Pterodroma mollis* (p. 157). There is an erratum on p. xiv.

Volume III. Charadriiformes, Psophiiformes and Ardeiformes.

- Part I. April 2, 1913. pp. 1-104, pls. 125-137.
 Part II. May 2, 1913. pp. 105-204, pls. 138-150.
 Part III. August 18, 1913. pp. 205-300, pls. 151-166.
 Part IV. December 31, 1913. pp. 301-380, pls. 167-177.
 Part V. March 26, 1914. pp. 381-444, pls. 178-189.
 Part VI. January 25, 1914. pp. 445-512, pls. 190-199, + i-xvii.

Between the genus *Ditelmatias* and the species *D. hardwickii* are interpolated on 283-295, some remarks on the Snipes and Woodcocks and a note on *Pagoa geoffroyi*. There is an erratum on page xvii to the effect that the first paragraph on p. 347 is to be deleted as it does not refer to the species there discussed.

Volume IV. Anseriformes and Pelecaniformes.

- Part I. October 6, 1914. pp. 1-80, pls. 200-209.
 Part II. February 17, 1915, pp. 81-192; pls. 210-223.
 Part III. June 23, 1915. pp. 193-334 + i-xii, pls. 224-233.

Volume V. Falconiformes and Strigiformes.

- Part I. November 5, 1915. pp. 1-152, pls. 234-244.
 Part II. February 29, 1916. pp. 153-248, pls. 245-254.
 Part III. May 23, 1916. pp. 249-352, pls. 255-266.
 Part IV. August 30, 1916. pp. 353-440 + i-xi, pls. 267-274.

There is an extralimital species (*Butastur teesa*) treated at pp. 129-130 and an appendix, pp. 411-423, consisting of some additional notes on species in this volume.

Volume VI. Psittaciformes.

- Part I. November 22, 1916. pp. 1-104, pls. 275-282.
 Part II. February 6, 1917. pp. 105-216, pls. 283-290.
 Part III. April 17, 1917. pp. 217-296, pls. 291-299.
 Part IV. June 27, 1917. pp. 297-372, pls. 300-307.
 Part V. September 11, 1917. pp. 373-444, pls. 308-316.
 Part VI. December 11, 1917. pp. 445-516 + i-xix, pls. 317-324.

There is an Appendix, pp. xv-xviii, consisting of a reprint of a description of *Platycercus elegans fleurieuensis* by Ashby with comments on allied

species. Also a Correction on p. xix where *Nannopsittacus* is renamed *Suavipsitta*.

In this volume the practice of figuring two or more species on the same plate begins in one or two instances and becomes more common in the last few volumes.

Volume VII. Podargiformes, Coraciiformes, Alcediniformes, Meropiiformes, Caprimulgidiformes, Micropodiformes, Cuculiformes, Menuriiformes.

Part I. March 4, 1918. pp. 1-112, pls. 325-334.

Part II. May 15, 1918. pp. 113-216, pls. 335-342.

Part III. August 26, 1918. pp. 217-320, pls. 343-351.

Part IV. December 19, 1918. pp. 321-384, pls. 352-362. Also a plate of Cuckoos' tails which is not numbered.

Part V. July 10, 1919. pp. 385-499 + i-xii, pls. 363-370.

Beginning with p. 413 a number of species additional to those so far treated in the work are described and figured with no separate heading whatever: *Globicera pacifica* (pp. 414-415, pl. 366); and *Cacomantis castaneiventris* figured on the same plate without text or mention on the cover. Then comes a review of recent work on the Procellariiformes. Then follow, additional species of this group, *Reinholdia reinholdi* (pp. 420-424, pl. 367); *Pterodroma inexpectata* (pp. 425-426, pl. 368); *Diomedea chionopectera* (pp. 427-430, pl. 369); and an additional Parrot, *Psephotellus chrysopterygius* (pp. 431-433, pl. 370); there are Addenda on pp. 433-434 on the generic name *Steganopleura* and on *Psephotellus dissimilis* apparently quite out of place.

Appendix A (pp. 435-442), consists of an addition to the list of works containing new names from 1910-1919, and a list of extralimital genera described in the work so far, most of them in the text without headings.

Appendix B (pp. 443-473) consists of dates of publication of various ornithological works bearing on the birds of Australia with Addenda to Appendix B ((p. 473-477), additional dates furnished by C. W. Richmond.

Extralimital genus and species *Collocalia esculenta* are given special heading on p. 260.

Volume VIII. Passeriformes: Pittidae, Atrichornithidae, Hirundinidae, and Muscipidae.

Part I. May 5, 1920. pp. 1-80, pls. 371-376.

Part II. June 17, 1920. pp. 81-144, pls. 377-382.

Part III. August 18, 1920. pp. 145-184, pls. 383-388.

Part IV. October 13, 1920. pp. 185-240, pls. 389-394.

Part V. December 15, 1920. pp. 241-316 + i-xiv, pls. 395-399.

There are "Corrections to my check-list" on pp. xiii-xiv and a further note on *Atrichornis* in the preface p. xii.

There is an extralimital genus *Hypurolepis* on p. 41 and two extralimital species *H. javanica fontalis* (p. 41) and *Hirundo rustica gutturalis* (p. 40).

Volume IX. Passeriformes: Muscicapidae (concluded), Campophagidae, Sphecotheridae, Orthonycidae, Cinclosomatidae, Turdidae and Sylviidae.

- Part I. February 15, 1921. pp. 1-48, pls. 400-405.
 Part II. April 15, 1921. pp. 49-96, pls. 406-411.
 Part III. June 20, 1921. pp. 97-144, pls. 412-417.
 Part IV. October 19, 1921. pp. 145-192, pls. 418-424.
 Part V. December 15, 1921. pp. 193-240, pls. 425-429.
 Part VI. February 15, 1922. pp. 241-304, pls. 430-436.
 Part VII. April 4, 1922. pp. 305-360, pls. 437-442.
 Part VIII. May 22, 1922. pp. 361-416, pls. 443-448.
 Part IX. August 3, 1922. pp. 417-518 + i-xiv, pls. 449-453.

There is an extralimital species, *Sphecotheres stalkerii*, under special heading on p. 169, and an addendum to *Leachena crocea boweri* without any heading and not indexed, on p. xii.

Plate 426, *Samuela marginata* bound in at p. 226 should be transferred to p. 198 and plate 430, *Hylacola pyrrhopygia* and *H. cauta* not published until Pt. VI, should be substituted at p. 226.

Volume X. Passeriformes: Sylviidae (concluded), Artamidae, Prionopidae and Cracticidae.

- Part I. September 28, 1922. pp. 1-56, pls. 454-459.
 Part II. December 12, 1922. pp. 57-136, pls. 460-465.
 Part III. January 30, 1923. pp. 137-208, pls. 466-471.
 Part IV. March 19, 1923. pp. 209-264, 472-477.
 Part V. April 24, 1923. pp. 265-344, pls. 478-483.
 Part VI. June 5, 1923. pp. 345-416, pls. 484-489.
 Part VII. July 26, 1923. pp. 417-451; + i-xi, pl. 490.
 One extralimital species is treated at p. 29, *Sericornis tyrannulus*.

Volume XI. Passeriformes: Falcunculidae, Shenostomidae, Sittidae, Climacteridae, Zosteropidae, Dicaedidae, Pardalotidae Nectariniidae and Melithreptidae.

- Part I. October 8, 1923. pp. 1-56, pls. 491-496.
 Part II. November 21, 1923. pp. 57-120, 497-502.
 Part III. December 27, 1923. pp. 121-200, pls. 503-508.
 Part IV. February 20, 1924. pp. 201-296, pls. 509-514.
 Part V. April 2, 1924. pp. 297-360, pls. 515-520.
 Part VI. June 21, 1924. pp. 361-416, pls. 521-526.
 Part VII. July 31, 1924. pp. 417-472, pls. 527-532.
 Part VIII. October 25, 1924. pp. 473-528, pls. 533-538.
 Part IX. December 22, 1924. pp. 529-593, pls. 539-541 + i-xiii.

There are "Additions" at pp. 413-416 and 476-477 containing supplementary notes on several species. Also Errata on p. xiii, and Note on *Lichmera albo-auricularis*, p. 428. *Whillocka wellsii* listed as a distinct species in the Contents, though not numbered, is treated under *W. melanura* on p. 128.

Volume XII. Passeriformes, Melithreptidae (concluded), Motacillidae, Alaudidae, Ploceidae, Oriolidae, Dicteruidae, Graculidae, Ptilonorhynchidae, Paradiseidae, Corvidae, Corcoraciidae and Struthidiidae.

Part I. March 3, 1925. pp. 1-48, pls. 542-547.

Part II. May 11, 1925. pp. 49-88, pls. 548-553.

Part III. June 22, 1925. pp. 89-128, pls. 554-557.

Part IV. August 31, 1925. pp. 129-184, pls. 558-563.

Part V. November 23, 1925. pp. 185-224, pls. 564-570.

Part VI. March 24, 1926. pp. 225-264, pls. 571-577.

Part VII. June 28, 1926. pp. 265-320, pls. 578-583.

Part VIII. September 6, 1926. pp. 321-360, pls. 584-589.

Part IX. December 9, 1926. pp. 361-404, pls. 590-595.

Part X. February 8, 1927. pp. 405-454 + i-xii, pls. 596-600.

A note on *Donacola thorpei* is added on 203. Plate 600 represents the adult female of *Samuela alesteri* with comments and a note on *S. cinnamomea* (pp. 426-427). The female of *Stipiturus ruficeps* is figured on the same plate but with no mention in the contents. There are also "Corrections and additions to my Check-List" Part II (pp. 429-431) and an Appendix consisting of a continuation of Supplement No. II, pp. vii-xvi being an additional list of papers in which new names for Australian birds appear from 1923 to 1926.

Supplement I. February 16, 1920. Check-List Part Casuariiformes to Menuriformes. pp. i-iv and 1-116. Genera 1-279. Species 1-334.

On p. 107 is a list of authors of the 356 species given in this part. There is an appendix containing 22 additional species which have occurred less than three times in Australia, two being of very doubtful occurrence. At the end is a list of species which should now be eliminated from the Australian list (pp. 109-115) and finally some additions to synonyms in volumes II and VII.

Supplement II. July 26, 1923. Check-List Part II. Passeriformes (in part). pp. i-xvi and 117-156. Genera 280-366. Species 335-456.

On pp. i-xvi are corrections to part I of the Check-List (pp. i-vi) including a list of authorities for the names in Part II. Also an Appendix containing lists of papers in which new names for Australian birds appeared, 1907-1922.

Supplement III. September 8, 1924. Check-List Part III. Passeriformes (concluded). pp. i-viii and 157-244. Genera 367-495. Species 457-656.

A hypothetical list on p. 219 adds two species and one genus, and there follows a list of authorities for the "683" [=680?] species presented in the entire work, all on the same page. There are further "Additions and Corrections" to former parts of the Check-List (pp. 221-224) ending with a lot of incomplete figures, as to the number of species mentioned and

figured, etc. in the work. An index to the three parts of the Check-List concludes this part (pp. 224-244).

Supplement IV. April 6, 1925. Bibliography of the Birds of Australia.

The introduction (pp. i-viii) consists of biographical notices of C. Davies Sherborn and Charles Wallace Richmond with portraits, forming one unnumbered plate. The Bibliography (pp. 1-96) is arranged alphabetically by authors and general works in one series. This part breaks in the middle of the article on the 'Naturalists' Library.'

Supplement V. June 22, 1925. pp. 97-149. Bibliography (completed).

While the text for each species has the order and family given at the top of the first page the use of order and family headings is very inconsistent and often they are omitted entirely. In Vol. I, they are used throughout often with considerable descriptive matter, before the species are taken up, but from Vol. II to Vol. VI the family (and two orders in Vol. III) headings are omitted. In Vol. IX about half the family headings are omitted and in Vol. XII all but one. The treatment of family names in the "Contents" to each volume is still more irregular.—W. S.

Hellmayr's Catalogue of the Tyrannidae.—Part V of the 'Catalogue of Birds of the Americas'¹ by Dr. Charles E. Hellmayr forms a bulky volume of over 500 pages and is devoted entirely to the Tyrannidae. This is, we believe, the first complete treatment of the Tyrant Flycatchers since Sclater's monograph, forming Vol. XIV of the British Museum 'Catalogue of Birds,' published nearly forty years ago. The vast increase of material and of our knowledge both of the life of the American tropics and of ornithological literature have made this earlier work sadly out of date and every systematic ornithologist will welcome Dr. Hellmayr's timely volume.

This family is probably the most puzzling of all the American Passerine groups and we are most fortunate in having the benefit of Dr. Hellmayr's views on the species and subspecies and their relationships, since he is not only one of the leading authorities on Neotropical birds, but has for the past twenty-five years made a specialty of the Tyrannidae.

His attitude regarding genera is, as in his preceding volume on the Dendrocolaptidae and Formicariidae, commendably conservative nor does he endorse some of the recent suggestions as to the relationship of certain genera. He tells us in the preface that he cannot agree with Mr. Ridgway in his views upon the taxonomic value of the tarsal covering and feels that the transfer of certain genera and species to allied families on this character are not warranted, and that they had better be left in the

¹ Catalogue of Birds of the Americas and the Adjacent Islands, in Field Museum of Natural History, etc. Initiated by Charles B. Cory continued by Charles E. Hellmayr. Part V. Tyrannidae. Field Museum of Natural History Publication 242, Zoological Series, Vol. XIII. Chicago, April 11, 1927. pp. 1-517.