

krideri, he considers a dimorphic color form of the eastern Red-tail, limited to the western portion of its range and apparently merging into the western Red-tail. *Buteo b. alascensis* of Alaska he dismisses as identical with the eastern race.

Three colored plates of birds and tail feathers illustrate the paper very satisfactorily and there is a full bibliography.

Mr. Taverner has certainly thrown much light upon a puzzling problem and we see no reason why his general conclusions are not sound.¹ There may, however, be some question as to the advisability of upsetting the current name of the Western Red-tail since Audubon's type specimen of *harlani* is not extant and there seems to be some doubt as to just what it was. It is not a good plan to replace a certainty with an uncertainty in nomenclature. This is purely a matter of nomenclature and in no way affects Mr. Taverner's disposition of the birds usually called *harlani*. There may also be some question as to relegating *krideri* to synonymy since it is not an albino and has a fairly definite range and consequent claims to recognition as a subspecies.—W. S.

Strecker on the Birds of McLennan Co., Texas.—Mr. Strecker presents an annotated list² of 254 species and subspecies of birds observed in McLennan Co., Texas, with especial reference to the city of Waco and its public park, Cameron Park, now maintained as a bird sanctuary. The author remembers this tract of land as it was thirty years ago, when essentially a wilderness, and his comparison of the relative abundance of birds at that time and in the present forms one of the valuable features of the list.

The paper constitutes another up-to-date county list, which will be of much assistance to local bird students, as well as a valuable work of reference.—W. S.

Strecker on Birds and Snake Skins.—Following up his publication in 'The Auk' 1926, p. 501, on the use of snake sloughs as nesting material Mr. Strecker publishes³ more details and speculations upon this problem. He finds about ten distinct species of birds which habitually use cast off snake skins in the construction of their nests and others which do so occasionally.

His conclusions are that birds do not fear snake skins nor do their enemies. In other words they do not associate the cast skin with the live

¹ A Study of *Buteo borealis*, the Red-tailed Hawk, and its Varieties in Canada. By P. A. Taverner. Museum Bulletin No. 48. Victoria Memorial Museum Biol. Series No. 13, Nov. 11, 1927. pp. 1-21. Price 25 cts.

² Notes on the Ornithology of McLennan County, Texas. By John K. Strecker, Curator, Baylor University Museum. Special Bulletin Baylor University Museum, Number One. November Nineteen Twenty-seven. (Waco, Texas.) pp. 1-65.

³ Birds and Snake-Skins. By John K. Strecker. Contributions from Baylor University Museum Number Eleven. Waco, Texas, May 15, 1927. pp. 1-12.

snake, so that its presence in the nest cannot frighten off enemies as some have assumed. He finds moreover that certain species have developed the habit of using snake skins in only a part of their range and considers that this is due to the fact that their forebears in part of the range did not, through chance gathering of nest material, select snake skins as a regular material. He argues that young birds remember the materials of which their home nests were built and "go and do likewise" when it comes their turn to build a nest of their own, and goes on to say that "Birds are taught by their parents to fly, and through a certain visual educative process, they learn to select food and nest materials." We are, however, skeptical as to birds learning from observation how to build a nest or what materials to use. If birds inherit the ability to sing a certain song, or to perform certain characteristic actions why cannot they also inherit the ability to select certain nesting materials? It is in reality no more wonderful or mysterious for a Crested Flycatcher to use snake skins for nesting material than for a Worm-eating Warbler to select the fruit stalks of *Polytrichum* moss. How such choice originated we cannot say, anymore that we can trace the origin of the migratory instinct, though when individuals are forced into a region or subjected to conditions where their favorite material is not to be had they probably take the nearest substitute which is perhaps in accord with Mr. Strecker's "chance gathering."

His advice to egg collectors to study more nests and less eggs and to collect old nests for detailed study and comparison we heartily commend; as he puts it: "If the egg collector who is never satisfied unless he has dozens of sets of eggs of the same species, in order to display every possible type of variation in shape, shade of shell coloring, and pigmented marking (these being produced through a process over which the birds have no control) could be induced to form a collection of nests from widely separated localities in order to show the differences, he would be making a much greater contribution to science."—W. S.

Kennard and Peters on Panama Birds.—The months of February and March, 1926 were spent by Mr. Kennard at Almirante Bay, Panama, making a collection of birds for the Museum of Comparative Zoology in that vicinity and in the rain forests of the higher mountains between Chiriquito and Boquete. In this paper he gives an interesting account¹ of his itinerary while Mr. J. L. Peters presents an annotated list of the specimens collected. Two new forms were described by the authors in a preliminary paper.—W. S.

Jaeger on Nevada Birds.—Mr. Edmund C. Jaeger has published an annotated list² of the birds observed on the Charleston Mountains of

¹ A Collection of Birds from the Almirante Bay Region of Panama. By Frederic H. Kennard and James L. Peters. Proc. Boston Society of Nat. Hist., Vol. 38, No. 10, pp. 443-465. January, 1928.

² Birds of the Charleston Mountains of Nevada. By Edmund C. Jaeger. Occasional Papers of Riverside Junior College, Vol. 2, No. 1, April 1, 1927. pp. 1-8. Riverside, California.