

Sass's 'On the Wings of a Bird.'—Those of us who delight in penetrating to the heart of wood and swamp or in scouring the river shore or ocean beach in search of bird-lore, likewise delight in the accounts of the experiences of others, in similar pursuits, when written with the power and charm that create vivid pictures before our mind's eye. Such a writer is Herbert Ravenel Sass and in his recent book 'On the Wings of a Bird'¹ one may visit with him his favorite haunts in the South Carolina low lands and share his delight in the study of the native birds of the Palmetto State.

The opening chapter takes the name of the book or rather *vice versa*; then follow accounts of the White Ibis, the Wood Ibis, the Bald Eagle, the Wild Turkey, which Mr. Sass terms appropriately "our other national bird," and the White Egret—"Herodias the White." While paying especial attention to birds, our author, like a true naturalist, does not ignore other kinds of life and we have a chapter on alligators and another on sharks and sea turtles, while in "The Magic of Still Waters" and "The Watcher in the Woods," we have delightful pictures of nature and wild life in general. This is a book that all lovers of nature should possess.—W. S.

Delamain's 'Pourquoi les Oiseaux Chantent.'—This little work² in its 16th edition is one of the series published under the direction of the author and with the title "Les Livres de Nature."

It consists of a series of sketches of bird life in France, the titles of which will give one an idea of the contents: Why the Birds Sing; The Spring Migration; Loves and Hates; The Nuptials; The Round of the Titmice; The River; Nature's Larder; The Autumn Migration and the History of a Family of Montague's Harriers.

This little volume will appeal to all bird lovers and those who may wish to improve their French, will find it a most attractive medium for the purpose. Incidentally in the same series are French translations of Seton's 'Lives of the Hunted,' Stewart Edward White's 'The Forest' and Will James' 'Smoky.'—W. S.

Henry and Wait on the Birds of Ceylon.—This collection of colored plates of the birds of Ceylon³ was described in a notice in 'The Auk' for April, 1928, p. 240. The second part has now appeared which is in all respects equal to the initial number; the color reproductions of Mr.

¹ On the Wings of a Bird. By Herbert Ravenel Sass. Illustrated by Herman Palmer. Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York. 1929. pp. 1-334. Price \$2.50.

² Pourquoi les Oiseaux Chantent par Jacques Delamain. Préface de Jérôme et Jean Tharaud. 16th edition. Librairie Stock. Delamain et Boutelleau Paris, 7, Rue du Vieux-Colombier, Paris. Price 12 frs.

³ Coloured Plates of the Birds of Ceylon. By G. M. Henry with a short description of each bird by W. E. Wait. Part II, with sixteen coloured plates. Published by the Ceylon Government, 1928. Price per part £1.10. Dulan & Co. Ltd., 32 Old Bond Street, London, W. I.

Henry's paintings are excellent and the brief text to each plate satisfactory and well printed.

The species figured in this part are the Blue Nuthatch; the Iora (*Aeginthina*); Ceylon Blackbird (*Merula*); Whistling Thrush (*Arrenga*); Black-naped Flycatcher (*Hypothymis*); Wood Shrike (*Tephrodornis*); Racket-tailed Drongo (*Dissemurus*); Fan-tailed Warbler (*Cisticola*); Munia (*Uroloncha*); Legge's Flower-pecker (*Acmonorhynchus*); Pygmy Woodpecker (*Yungipicus*); Layard's Woodpecker (*Chrysocolaptes*); Jungle Nightjar (*Caprimulgus*); Pompadour Pigeon (*Treron*); Ceylon Wood Pigeon (*Columba*); and Bustard Quail (*Turnix*).—W. S.

Pellet Formation and Nesting Habits of the Barn Owl.—In the fourth number¹ of the 'Encyclopedie Ornithologique' the formation, mechanism of expulsion, physical form and composition, and number of pellets ejected daily is discussed for birds in general with special reference to feeding experiments with *Corvus corone* and *Tyto alba perlata*.

The author and M. Madon examined over 1700 whole pellets and an indefinite amount of unconsolidated pellet material of the common Barn Owl. The results obtained differ from those of former investigators in the greater proportion of rodents found. Percentages secured by averaging the findings from 4 lots of pellets ejected at varying times and places by different individuals show that rodents numerically form 58.98 per cent, insectivores, 21.05 per cent; tabrachians, 16.30 per cent; birds, 0.65 per cent, and saurians a trace, of the food items. The conclusion is that this owl merits diligent protection.

The balance of the volume is devoted to a journal of 220 days of observation of the nesting habits of the Barn Owl. Commencing with the selection of a pigeon house as a suitable domicile, the coming of the mate, laying of the eggs, brooding, hatching of the young, their growth and departure from the nest were recorded daily by the painstaking observer. In the journal the daily catch, number, species, sex and weight of prey is noted. Certain marked foods were weighed and left in the nest shelter, the pellets containing them subsequently being collected and weighed. The nestlings were weighed daily from first appearance until they became unmanageable, a period varying from 31 to 44 days for the five birds. In addition the weights of a series of eggs and of adults are included.—PHOEBE KNAPPEN.

Shorter Papers.

Bangs, Outram.—The Chinese Forms of *Seicercus* of the Burkii Form-Circle. (Proc. New Engl. Zool. Club, Vol. XI, pp. 1-5, May 8, 1929.)—Three species recognized; *cognitus*, *intermedius* and *burkii* the last divided into four subspecies *S. b. latouchei* (p. 4) Kuatun, n. w. Fohkien being described as new.

¹ La Vie des Chouettes. Régimes et croissance de l'Effraie commune *Tyto alba alba* (L.) en Vendée. By G. Guérin. Encycl. Orn. France. No. 4, 157 pp., 10 pls., 1928.