

RECENT LITERATURE.

Howell's 'Florida Bird Life.'—An adequate work on the birds of Florida has long been a desideratum. The fact that only in Florida does the Tropical Zone enter the United States while the entire Floridian Faunal Region, with its twenty-eight indigenous birds, is included within the state boundaries makes a study of its animal and plant life of great interest to the naturalist. The popularity of Florida as a winter resort, moreover, especially of late years, has brought thither from the north, hundreds of nature lovers who would know more about the unfamiliar birds that they see about them.

To both of these classes Mr. Arthur H. Howell's recent book 'Florida Bird Life'¹ will be most welcome and a perusal of its pages shows that the author has most satisfactorily met their needs. The work is published by the Florida Department of Game and Fresh Water Fish in coöperation with the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, with which Mr. Howell has been associated for many years, and is a royal octavo uniform in size in size with Forbush's 'Birds of Massachusetts.' In its preparation the author has had the benefit of the experiences of a host of ornithologists who have cheerfully furnished notes and observations to supplement his wide personal acquaintance with Florida bird life, while his thorough knowledge of the literature of the subject and access to the records of the Survey, have enabled him to quote extensively from the published records of his predecessors.

The plan of the work is to present a summary of our knowledge of the birds of the state, rather than detailed life histories and in this the author has been eminently successful. Under each species is a brief statement of "Recognition Marks" and "Range," followed by "Distribution in Florida" in much detail, with dates and localities for all important records, "Haunts and Habits," usually brief and limited to accounts of nesting and characteristic activities, and finally "Food" under which heading the records of the Biological Survey have been extensively drawn upon and the economic status of the species established. There is also in the case of many of the birds a most useful outline map showing their distribution in the state.

There is also an excellent "History of Florida Ornithology" from the expedition of Jean Ribaut in 1562 and William Roberts' account of Florida published in 1763, through the explorations of Bartram, Audubon, Harris

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etc., the classic studies of Dr. J. A. Allen and the collecting trips of Cory, Scott, and others, down to the present day. This is followed by a list of the birds originally described from Florida—eighty-two in number, a chapter on the "History of Bird Protection in Florida" by Robert W. Williams and a well illustrated discussion of the "Physiographic Regions" and "Life Zones" of Florida, the latter listing the characteristic mammals and trees as well as the birds. The accompanying map shows the Tropical Zone extending as a narrow strip along the eastern coast from Jupiter to Miami and including the entire tip of the peninsula and the Keys, from Homestead to Everglade and to Coxambas on the Gulf. It is explained that while this area (including the everglades) has very marked tropical elements in its flora, insects, and mollusks, only a few birds are restricted to it, eight being restricted to the Keys in the breeding season with four additional species which, while most characteristic of the Tropical Zone, range also somewhat farther north.

The Floridian Fauna according to Mr. Howell occupies practically all the remainder of peninsular Florida, the Louisianian Fauna extending east from the northwestern part of the state as far as St. Marks and then dipping down to Gainesville and sharply up again to Jacksonville. The author considers that so far as birds are concerned the "Gulf Strip" of Merriam and the "Sabalian Zone" of Rehn and Hebard cannot be separated from the Louisianian.

The work ends with an excellent bibliography and a hypothetical list of twelve species apparently erroneously attributed to Florida. We have been able to add but one item to the bibliography, i. e. Gen. George A. McCall's 'Letters from the Frontier,' Philadelphia, 1868, in which are accounts of his experiences in Florida with notes on the Flamingo and a few other species. (See 'Cassinia' 1912 and Cassin's 'Birds of California etc.').

The illustrations of Mr. Howell's book consist of photographs of habitats and birds from life, thirty-seven colored plates and two in black and white by Francis L. Jacques. The aim has been to figure "the most striking and unusual birds characteristic of Florida" and "those others most likely to be confused in the field." In carrying out this idea the artist has adopted two plans; in the first a group of species representative of a given region is presented with a background of characteristic environment, as birds of the Pine Woods, Scrub, Florida Keys, Prairie, Salt Marsh, Cypress Swamp etc.; while in the other all of the species of a group are arranged on a single plate so as to best bring out their differences. In either case the necessary crowding of figures on a single plate is often disastrous to artistic effect but in this instance Mr. Jacques has been remarkably successful in carrying out a difficult task and the plates as presented are far more useful to the reader than single plate figures which, while they give the artist his longed for opportunity, add so to expense that they are almost prohibitive. The color reproduction is excellent and evidently has been given most careful consideration.

In sequence of families and species, and in all but a few cases in nomenclature as well, Mr. Howell has followed the new edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List.' While one may follow his own ideas on nomenclature in a technical publication where arguments may be presented, it seems unfortunate that in a work of this sort he has in a few cases—cf. Blue Jay and Grackle—preferred to follow his personal opinion instead of that of the A. O. U. Committee, which was appointed for the very purpose of establishing uniformity. Such discrepancy confuses many—if not most of the readers of his excellent work and we have already had to answer several letters from puzzled readers who thought that the author had made a "mistake." At least a footnote might have been added to explain why the names in the 'Check-List' had not been followed.

Mr. Howell's 'Florida Bird Life' will be our authority for many years to come on the birds of the South Atlantic and Gulf States as well as of Florida since nearly all of their species include Florida in their range. We congratulate both the author and artist upon a work well done.—W. S.

Chapman's 'Handbook.'—**Revised.**—Probably no book has had so much to do with developing ornithologists and an interest in birds as Dr. Frank M. Chapman's 'Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America.'¹ Appearing originally in 1895, when the author had scarcely more than started upon his scientific career, it has been our standard for the past thirty-seven years, thus fully confirming the late Eugene P. Bicknell's prophecy, when reviewing the first edition, that it "is marked for a career of extended usefulness" and "will take rank among the authoritative works on North American birds." (Auk, 1895, pp. 282-284.)

Since that time a revised edition was published in 1912, and now with the advance of our knowledge, another revision has become necessary. This new "Chapman" is in many respects a new book which is not surprising when we note that four feet of 'Auks,' as the volumes stand on the shelf, have been published since the last edition, giving some idea of the accumulation of bird lore since that time.

The most noteworthy change is the entire rearrangement of the sequence of species to conform with the classification of the new A. O. U. 'Check-List.' It is most fortunate that the two works have appeared at so nearly the same time since the presentation of the new arrangement in such a work as Chapman's 'Handbook' will do more to make it familiar to bird students, gain immediate recognition and bring about uniformity than any

¹ Handbook of Birds | of Eastern North America | with 'Introductory Chapters on | the Study of Birds in Nature | By | Frank M. Chapman | Curator of Ornithology in the American Museum of Natural History | Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union | Honorary Member of the British Ornithologists' Union etc. | With Illustrations by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, | Tappan Adney, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Francis L. Jacques | Second Revised Edition | New York and London | D. Appleton and Company | 1932. Pp. i-xxxvi + 1-581, 29 plates and 166 text figures. Price \$5.00.