

with a resulting high mortality that certainly must work to the disadvantage of the species. Fear, anger and sex reactions in the adults are treated with especial fullness.

In his discussion of the conclusions to be reached as to the gull's mental processes, the author is wisely restrained, and refrains from answering many of the questions he propounds. He concludes, however, that even though the bird's mental limitations often turn out to its disadvantage, it may nevertheless attain its goal by other means than through planning. Part of its failures seem due to a lack of perception of the relation between parts of a whole so that if the usual stereotyped forms of reaction fail, the bird has no further resource. One is impressed by the value of attitude and aspect as a means of communicating mental states.

The author has endeavored with much success to present an account of these matters that shall be untechnical and interesting to the general reader; he has even gathered on a separate page the Latin names of birds mentioned in the book, curiously omitting that of the Black-headed Gull itself! A useful bibliography of relevant literature on bird behavior is added, which perhaps justifies the somewhat inclusive major title of the book, and there is a good index. In the author's own words, "At the end of the account we are not much more advanced than at the beginning towards the answer to the main question why the birds acted as they did"; nevertheless he has presented much new matter of intrinsic value.—G. M. A.

**Butler's 'Birds around the year.'**—Characteristic of the changing seasons in our eastern States are the varying aspects of bird life, which form the theme of this readable little volume.<sup>1</sup> Beginning appropriately with the spring and the coming of the Bluebirds, the author carries her readers through the rush of the migration season, the busy period of nesting, the heyday of summer, the mellowness of autumn and the waning of the year with the advent of winter. For each of these periods a brief sketch of bird activities is presented. The author writes from the standpoint of the middle Atlantic States with occasional digressions farther afield and evidently draws from a considerable field experience as well as from some knowledge of ornithological literature. The book is of the 'popular' type, designed to arouse and enliven a general interest in birds and in its easy conversational style should readily accomplish its purpose. Such writing, however, too easily lends itself to slight inexactnesses of expression while the sympathetic attitude tends to bestow our own emotions and reactions upon birds to an unwarranted extent. One would disagree with the author that migration had its inception with the Ice Age; that the Golden Plover makes its long over-seas flight from "a pure spirit of adventure"; that the Gannet feeds its young by placing food in its bill; or that feathers have developed from reptilian scales. The wings of the Great Auk and the Penguin are specialized rather than "rudimentary"; and it is no longer true that "there is no record of a bird banded in Europe being recovered in America." The division of paragraphs is often faulty and interrupts the flow of the thought. But these are trivial defects and the book is in general an attractive picture of the outward aspects of bird life from season to season. Eight full-page illustrations, selected from artistic sketches by various well-known illustrators to whom due acknowledgment is made, convey the spirit of the book better perhaps than photographs could have done. What a thrill one gets from Brandreth's sketch of a great eagle launching in flight from its lookout in the dead top of a lofty pine! It seems a pity that the colored figure of Redstarts on the jacket of the book could not have been included among the plates.—G. M. A.

**Pearson's 'Adventures in Bird Protection.'**—This is the record of a great

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, Lorine Letcher. *Birds around the year*. Small 8vo, xi + 242 pp., 8 pls., 1937, D. Appleton-Century Co., New York and London.