RECENT LITERATURE

Riley's 'Birds from Siam and the Malay Peninsula.'—This paper¹ by Dr. Riley enumerates the birds in the U. S. National Museum collected by the late Dr. W. L. Abbott and Dr. H. M. Smith. Dr. Abbott collected between 1896 and 1904 in the southern part of peninsular Siam, British Malaya, southern Tenasserim and the islands off its coast. Dr. Smith's birds were secured between 1924 and 1934, almost entirely within the boundaries of Siam, and from almost every part of the country. The two collections, as may be surmised, complement each other extremely well. A great number of forms are listed, and all but about twenty-one are birds found within the present-day boundaries of Siam.

Siam has an extent of 200,000 square miles, and with its beaches and mangrove, forested hills, and grassy plains supports a very large bird fauna of about a thousand forms. Of these Dr. Riley discusses no less than eight hundred, and therefore it seems a great pity that the remaining species were not included. No list of Siamese birds has appeared since Count Gyldenstolpe published his in 'The Ibis' for 1920. When that list was published the Siamese bird fauna was but sketchily known, and since that time, through the efforts of various collectors about 250 forms have been added to Count Gyldenstolpe's list. Therefore a complete, up-to-date list would have been of great use.

Dr. Riley has been working on the paper under review for several years, and as often happens, some of the latest information has not been included. For example, Yen has shown that the race phayeri of Francolinus pintadeanus is not tenable. Kinnear has shown that the race tubiger of Glaucidium brodei cannot stand. Brachypodius atriceps major should be called B. a. cinereoventris as shown by Chasen.

Dr. Riley has recorded a few birds from Siam for the first time, among which are two specimens of *Urocissa flavirostris robini*, both immature; this record should be taken with many reservations, as it seems highly improbable that a form generally considered a high-mountain one, should be found in the hot (low) hills of central Siam. The lack of a chapter on the zoogeography of Siam is keenly felt, and the absence of any sort of map is much to be regretted.

Dr. Riley has done a great service in re-examining and clarifying the status of many of Dr. Oberholser's types. He has given a useful list of Siamese localities, fixing the location of many towns, villages, mountains, etc., which are impossible to find on the usual maps. He has also compiled from literature a record of the various localities at which the species mentioned have been taken by various collectors and given a good outline of the range of each form. No field notes are given, no new forms are described, but interesting critical notes accompany each species.

Dr. Riley, it may be said, has done a good piece of work, which will be found most useful to future students of Siamese birds.—R. M. DE SCHAUENSEE.

Niethammer's Handbook of German Birds.—The second volume of the 'Handbuch der Deutschen Vogelkunde,' of which the first volume was reviewed in

¹ Riley, J. H. Birds from Siam and the Malay Peninsula in the United States National Museum collected by Drs. Hugh M. Smith and William L. Abbott. Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 172, iv + 581 pp., 1938. Price 75 cents, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

² Handbuch der Deutschen Vogelkunde, herausgegeben von Günther Niethammer, Band II: Pici, Macrochires, Upupae, Meropes, Halcyones, Coraciae, Caprimulgi, Striges, Cuculi, Accipitres, Gressores, Phoenicopteri, Steganopodes, and Anseres. 8vo, x + 545 pp., 9 text-figs., 2 pl. (col.); Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, Leipzig, 1938. Price, RM. 15.

'The Auk' (1937, p. 552), comprises the first half of the non-Passeres from the wood-peckers to the ducks (following Hartert's sequence). The general arrangement of the first volume is retained, but much more detail is given under a number of subheadings, such as, migrations, fieldmarks, eggs, etc. Also treated are plumage, molts, size and weight, range, mating, incubation, fledging, food, parasites, etc. The particular value of this second volume for American readers lies in the fact that a large proportion of the genera and even some of the species treated in this volume, are also found in the United States. Some of these species are: Three-toed Woodpecker, Short-eared Owl, Barn Owl, Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Rough-legged Hawk, Goshawk, Osprey, Black-crowned Night Heron, European Cormorant, White-fronted Goose, most North American ducks, and many others. Important is, that in many of these species, there is much more known about the European representative than about the American.

There is no other book that gives even nearly as much correct information on continental European birds. Even the most recent literature is completely covered, including, in the treatment of the migration, the recoveries of banded birds.

There is a number of illustrations, including a colored plate; paper and printing are excellent, altogether a very commendable publication. It is a pity that the knowledge of North American birds has not yet reached the point where a publication like this or the 'Handbook of British Birds' could be prepared.—E. Mayr.

Allen's 'Golden Ployer and other Birds' is an attractive volume¹ forming the second series of 'American Bird Biographies,' the first of which, published in 1934, proved its value in a wide popular demand. In each of its twenty-seven chapters, some characteristic bird of eastern North America relates its own life history or occasionally brings in further information concerning its near allies. Most of these bird autobiographies have previously appeared in 'Bird-Lore' under the Audubon Society's 'School Department,' of which the author is also editor. The success of these brief character sketches has led the author to continue the method of presentation in which each bird in turn recounts its affairs in easy conversational language. While this may tend to encourage the anthropomorphic trend of the younger readers, the whole is so skillfully done that the resulting feeling of more intimate acquaintance through the personal touch amply compensates for any possible misconception. The concluding pages consist of a series of questionnaires, one for each of the twentyseven chapters, wherein the Latin name of each bird alone occurs, as a caption, to be followed by twenty-five questions, the answers to all of which may be found in the appropriate text. It thus becomes a book full of suggestions for Nature teachers in the elementary schools while as a school reader it should serve to arouse in younger persons a real interest in the study of birds.

The wealth of photographic illustration throughout the text is of the author's usual high order of excellence, although the reproduction of shaded areas may in some instances be unsatisfactory in half-tone cuts printed with the text. The seven beautiful full-page plates in color by Dr. G. M. Sutton further add to the attractiveness of the volume. There is no apparent method in the arrangement of the chapters which might perhaps have been grouped so that the sequence of the species treated should follow their systematic order as a further help for the reader. The lack of an index is hardly a serious matter, since the desired chapter may be readily found in the table of contents. As an authoritative, non-technical and well-presented account of

¹ Allen, Arthur A. The | Golden Plover | and other birds | 8vo, xiii + 324 pp., 7 colored plates and 240 text-figs. from photographs, 1939; Comstock Publishing Co., Ithaca, N. Y. Price \$3.00.

some of our familiar birds, it is safe to predict for it a wide field of usefulness among junior students.—G. M. Allen.

Prince Taka-Tsukasa's 'Birds of Nippon', of which six parts of the first volume have thus far come out, now continues in a seventh¹ brochure treating of the birds of Japan and its various island dependencies. The first forty pages supplement the bibliography of all papers dealing with the avifauna, arranged according to the island groups, and in chronological order. The remaining thirty-two pages contain, besides many minor additions or corrections to previous parts, the accounts of several more species since made out as occurring in the area, including two pheasants (Syrmaticus), two megapodes (Megapodius), and the Willow Ptarmigan. There are also two more plates in color, one illustrating the eggs of various gallinaceous species (unfortunately without indication of the scale of reduction), and one showing the downy chicks. A third plate reproduces photographs of the site and nest-mound of the megapode. Apparently a further supplement is intended, as the text ends abruptly.

The bibliography should prove useful, with its inclusion of many references to papers in Japanese journals. It is to be regretted, however, that the abbreviations used are often too cryptic to enable the reader to reconstruct the title easily. Thus one may not readily interpret the abbreviation 'T'.for 'Tori' (Birds), 'Al.' for 'Alauda,' 'D.Z.,' or 'Sh. & D.' Occasional misprints are excusable in an English work published in Japan but some, as 'Vigor' for Vigors, might well have been eliminated with more careful reading by an English editor. Nevertheless, one may be glad that the book is written in the latter tongue and hope that present difficult conditions may not hinder its early completion.—G. M. Allen.

Mrs. Nice's 'Watcher at the Nest.'—The diversity of present-day interests imposes on the specialist that he present the results of his work in two forms: the one for those few who are technically conversant with the particular field of study and the other for a public who would like to know the general import of his discoveries. In the volume here reviewed2 the author has transcribed for the many who have a genuine interest in birds, some of the results of her painstaking investigations that have already appeared as special studies of a more technical nature on the behavior of birds. In the opening chapter we are introduced to the two male Song Sparrows and their mates whose domestic life in adjacent home sites the author first followed in such minute and precise detail that she was later able to throw much light on the full meaning of their song, minor notes and behavior, their struggle for 'territories,' the manner of mating, territory defense, care of young, general social relations and life history. Succeeding chapters, comprising half the book, carry the study to other pairs of Song Sparrows in the same Ohio area. By means of distinctive colored bands, each individual could be readily identified and its characteristic behavior followed, so that it became a personality. For eight years the study was continued and the intimate lives not only of the two original pairs, but those of their progeny and neighbors were traced as of familiar friends. Of the many breeding birds thus marked and studied in this period, seventy-six were recorded for two years, twentyfour for three years, eight for four years, one for five, one for six, and one, a veritable patriarch, for eight years. Thus it was proved that while Song Sparrows continued

¹ The Birds of Nippon | By | Prince Taka-Tsukasa. | Volume 1 | Part 7 | The Bibliography | (continued) | Order Galli | (continued) | Addenda. | 4to, pp. cix-cxlviii, 327-358, pls. 18-19, 1 unnumbered, March 1, 1939; H. F. & G. Witherby, Ltd., London, and Yokindo, 7 Motozono-cho, Tokyo. 15 shillings.

 $^{^2}$ Nice, Margaret Morse. The Watcher | at the Nest | 8vo, 6 + 159 pp., illustr., 1939; The Macmillan Co., New York City. \$2.00.

from year to year in the accustomed haunts, actually the population underwent constant change, with an average life of about two and a half years for an individual bird.

In the latter half of the book we are given further intimate glimpses of the habits of Cowbirds, the nesting of Magnolia and Black-throated Green Warblers, the history of an Oven-bird family, the persistent but ill-fated attempts of a pair of Bell's Vireos to raise a brood, followed by accounts of the misfit mating of a pair of Mourning Doves raised as pets, and the upbringing of a Bob-white under human companionship. A final chapter gives a picture of spring in Oklahoma, with pointed comment on the destructive practices of agriculture in parts of the Great Plains of our Southwest, where, "unless we mend our ways" future generations will sadly miss the beauty and variety of unspoiled Nature.

The author has succeeded admirably in presenting for the general reader a wealth of valuable and revealing details concerning the lives of her subjects which should prove stimulating to the more casual observer and open his eyes to the significance of bird behavior and the wide range of vicissitudes with which bird life is beset. At the same time, despite a thoroughly sympathetic attitude in writing of her bird friends, she has avoided too great a tendency to humanize them over much. The pages are embellished with a number of black-and-white sketches by Roger Peterson, illustrating particularly the Song Sparrow in characteristic poses. Here is an excellent example of what valuable results may be derived from intelligent and persistent observation of even the commonest birds.—G. M. Allen.

Peterson's 'Field Guide.'—The publication of this second and improved edition' of the author's well-known 'Guide' is indicative of the success the book has already achieved. Its special feature is that it affords a ready means of identification of birds seen at usual field ranges rather than in the hand. To its preparation he brings the unusual combination of an artist's training in the discrimination of form and color with a thorough field knowledge of the birds themselves. For example, the distinctive differences between various ducks or gulls are indicated as they appear in birds sitting on the water at a distance or in flight. Series of diagrammatic figures grouped on the plates in similar poses illustrate these characteristic details in such a way as to make direct comparison easy, while the very brief paragraphs of text concerning each give added critical points in the determination. Where there are closely similar subspecies, these with their ranges are listed without attempting to show their minute distinguishing traits.

The first chapter explains the method of using the book, after which the various families or subfamilies are taken up in turn, following the A. O. U. 'Check-list' of 1931. Forms described since that date are purposely omitted. Of the forty full-page plates of birds, only four are in color. These show the jays, blackbirds, meadowlark, orioles, tanagers, warblers and finches. Here the individual figures, with over thirty to a plate of warblers, are necessarily small, but are so arranged as not to appear overcrowded and show color patterns fairly well, though perhaps in certain cases the four-color process of reproduction leaves something to be desired in the values of tints. The other plates are uncolored but indicate values in black, white or intermediate tones, with sometimes an added note indicating color with a leader drawn to the part intended. A number of other birds are shown in text-figures. The index includes references to the nearest page where each figure is found, and there is a

¹ Peterson, Roger Tory. A Field Guide | to the Birds | giving field marks of all species | found east of the Rockies. sm. 8vo, xx + 180 pp., 4 colored and 36 uncolored pls., numerous text-figs., 1939; Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Massachusetts. \$2.75.

concluding paragraph suggesting comprehensive works where the seeker may find more extended accounts of the birds.

This new edition is a decided improvement over the first, containing much additional matter in the way of further notes on identification, plate references in the text, sizes of birds in inches, and paragraphs on song and range. Besides a few more text cuts, four of the plates are new: two of shorebirds at rest, one of seabirds, and one of rails, gallinules and coots. Moreover, the area covered has been extended from the ninetieth to the one hundred and third meridian, so as to cover eastern North America to the eastern edge of the Rockies, a more natural division between East and West. The small size of the volume, with its abundance of illustration and its condensed statement of differential points makes it a thoroughly practical field book and companion, which cannot fail to be of value to the amateur as well as to the more experienced field naturalist.—G. M. Allen.

Menegaux's 'Birds of France.'—The fourth and concluding volume¹ of this pocket handbook has now appeared, forming the thirty-third in the series, 'Encyclopédie Pratique du Naturaliste' issued by Paul Lechevalier. On account of the death of M. Menegaux in 1937, this volume, containing the second half of the Order Passeriformes, from the tits, nuthatches and creepers through the wagtails, larks, sparrows, starlings and crows, has been prepared by his colleague Dr. Robert Didier of the Paris Museum. In this he has endeavored to make the book conform in method to the previous volumes, using so far as possible the unfinished manuscript left by Menegaux. As before, it consists essentially of two parts. In the first section, paged in Roman numerals, are keys to the families and genera of French birds, with a brief account of the important characters under each major group; then under each genus comes a key to the included species. Here, if the bird is of merely rare or casual occurrence, is given a brief description with statement of the general range, but if it is one of those regularly found in France, its name alone, in French and Latin, is given, followed by a page reference in Arabic numerals to the second section. Turning to the place indicated, the reader finds a full-page colored plate accompanied on the facing page by a longer account, giving the name in various European languages, a short description and a condensed statement of haunts, nesting, and general habits. The many colored plates are by J. Eudes, and show usually both sexes of the birds treated, with an inset figure of the egg. At first glance these aquarelles give a Christmas-card appearance, the birds often out of proportion, or with impossible feet and odd lumpy places, but a closer acquaintance makes one appreciate more and more a certain delicacy and charm imparted by the artist to the landscape backgrounds, affording an idea of the birds' haunts and habits, while the birds themselves in spite of the sometimes rather splotchy coloring, nevertheless produce a total effect that is rather pleasing. Thus the Skylark stands at the edge of a wheat field, lightly suggested, with red poppies scattered among the ripening grain, or a nuthatch pursues a brilliantly scarlet beetle on a pine branch; but one has a bit of a shock with a pair of Lapland Longspurs in a ferny growth at the edge of a birch forest.

An interesting and valuable feature is an account of the insects parasitic on the birds of France, with keys for their identification, and excellent outline drawings of the various genera of Mallophaga and bird flies, followed by a host list. This chapter is contributed by E. Séguy. Finally there is a thorough index to the figures and

¹ Les Oiseaux | de | France | par | A. Menegaux | Volume IV | Passereaux (tome II) |
. . . par le Dr. Robert Didier. small 8vo, pp. DCXIV-DCCXXXV, 213-402, 64
colored and 4 uncolored pls., 71 text-figs., 1939; Paul Lechevalier, Ed., 12, rue de Tournon,
Paris-vi, France. 60 fcs.

descriptions in the whole four volumes of the work. Despite some failings in the matter of convenient reference or in details of the colored plates, the set, neatly bound in gray cloth, makes an effective pocket guide to the birds of France.—G. M. Allen.

Peterson's 'Junior Bird Book.'-Close on the heels of his 'Field Guide,' this versatile author now presents a bird book designed to encourage an interest among school children not only in the familiar birds about them but also in a somewhat wider circle of eastern species. In this attractive little volume¹ the ten-year-olds will make acquaintance with some two dozen species, selected with a view to illustrating various representative types from eight orders of birds. Beginning with the Loon as an example of a large waterbird, the author takes up in succession the Canada Goose, the famous Canvas-back, the Red-shouldered Hawk, the Herring Gull, the odd little Burrowing Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, the bright-colored Blue Jay, the familiar Crow and various warblers and other commoner species. With each goes a page or two of very simply told narrative, bringing out the characteristics of the different birds and their human value in a conversational style that any child may follow with interest and profit. Abundant marginal sketches illustrate the appearance of young and old, and emphasize special habits, such as those of the Loon swimming at the surface or diving for fish; Crows mobbing an owl; Orioles at work on their pendulous nest; or the bounding flight of the Goldfinch. In addition a full-page colored plate shows each species in typical surroundings. These plates are mainly reproduced from Audubon leaflets and represent the work of various well-known artists—Allan Brooks, Fuertes, Horsfall (some of the last-named dating back to 1909 and still serving), while one of warblers is new, the work of the author himself. Although in all cases the reproductions are not equally good, they will nevertheless have much appeal to young persons. It was the part of wisdom not to make it a book of odd size as so often children's books are, nor to make it too ponderous with the many species to be treated. With its abundance of illustration, and the brief simple text, this will undoubtedly prove a treasured volume in any child's library.—G. M. ALLEN.

'Conservation in the United States' is a timely volume, written by four Cornell professors, designed to bring forcibly before the intelligent public the need for a wiser use of our natural resources, in order that we may not only derive present benefits from them but also may hand on to future generations their natural heritage in the enjoyment of these things. The pioneer days of thoughtless and profligate waste are over. Already we are seeing and feeling the effects of past years of exploitation. A generation ago, this began to be evident to far-seeing minds. A beginning has been made in the process of taking an inventory of our possessions with a view to correcting as far as may be the mistakes made in the past. In plain words, and with the aid of abundant illustrations, the authors set forth exactly what is happening in this land of ours as a result of a century or more of intensive and short-sighted use of what seemed boundless treasure.

In the Introduction by Professor Gustafson, is given a resumé of the history of Conservation in this country, with the strong admonition that the younger generation "must come to the realization that future supplies of food, clothing and other

¹ Peterson, Roger T. The Junior Book | of Birds. 8vo, xv + 92 pp., 23 pls. in color, 1939; Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Massachusetts. Price \$2.00.

² Conservation | in the United States | by members of the Faculty of Cornell University: | A. F. Gustafson, H. Ries, C. H. Guise, W. J. Hamilton, Jr. 8vo, xi + 445 pp., illustr., 1939; Comstock Publishing Co., Inc., Ithaca, New York. Price \$3.00.

necessities are being jeopardized by the uneconomical and sometimes careless or wasteful methods of the present day." He divides natural resources into two groups: those that are exhaustible, such as coal, many minerals, oil and gas; and those that are renewable, such as forests, soils, grazing lands and wildlife, provided that they have not already been too far depleted. In the body of the book, each of the co-authors contributes a section dealing with his special field. Part I by Professor Gustafson, treats of soils and water resources, the eventual source of our sustenance. Part II by Professor Guise deals with forests, parks, and grazing lands. Part III by Dr. W. J. Hamilton, Jr., considers our wildlife and its legitimate use, from both economic and esthetic points of view; while Part IV by Professor Ries surveys our mineral wealth and the use made of it.

Wildlife resources, from varied commercial fisheries to the less tangible but equally important uses of sport and esthetic enjoyment, are treated in a fair-minded and interesting manner. We are reminded of the former abundance of many kinds of animals, such as sturgeon, wild pigeons, bison, which have suffered through human destruction; of the past and present economic value of our fisheries and furbearers; and of the increasing enjoyment by our people of natural beauty, and the invigoration resulting from camping, hunting, and observing of wild animals. While herds of bison or bands of wolves cannot be compatible with intensive agriculture so that the reduction of some forms of life is unavoidable where they come in too close contact with expanding humanity, nevertheless wise provision may be made for a reasonable balance if we take the matter in hand before it is too late, for we are learning that predators and even pests may have their value.

Here is an attractive and authoritative volume that should be in every public library of our land, and in the hands of every teacher of economics or geography.—G. M. Allen.

'Zoological Record: Aves.'—The annual section on 'Aves' giving the list of titles on birds with analysis by subjects for 1937, is now ready, bearing the date of November 1938. The immense amount of work involved in its preparation is evident on most casual inspection. Compiled by W. L. Sclater, it is as usual divided into three sections. The first is a list of titles arranged alphabetically by authors, and comprises in all just over 1700, including a few of the previous year. The second section is a subject index in which the authors are listed with references to their titles by number, under the subjects of: General Works, Anatomy, Embryology, Physiology, Ethology (or habits), Aetiology (genetic and evolutionary aspects), and Geography; each group is divided by subtitles so that the investigator may readily find the literature on nearly every subject he may be interested in. The third or Systematic Section analyzes the titles according to the orders and families of birds, with very brief indication of the purport of the article in which the given species is treated. It is interesting to notice here that the number of newly described forms from all parts of the globe still continues to grow, but more particularly among the subspecific groups. Thus there are listed for the year 1937, no less than some 282 new subspecies, but only twenty-three 'full species' and a dozen or so new genera, most of which are fossil forms, or extinct birds named from old pictures such as the White Dodo of Réunion, or again, result from further subdivision of genera previously known. From this it is clear that the pioneer exploration of the world for new forms is over, and it remains chiefly for the systematist to review the material now in collections and to make further revisions and refinements in classification.

¹ Sclater, W. L. Zoological Record. Aves, 1937. 8vo, 116 pp., Nov. 1938; Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London. Price 7s., 6d.

There is no other index to the annual literature of the subject that covers so much and presents it in such a condensed and well-analyzed form. With the enormous output of ornithological publication year by year, the student would be immensely handicapped without this aid. It is clear, too, that a responsibility lies with authors not only to make their titles short but also to supply with longer articles a brief summary in order that the compiler of such a work as the 'Zoological Record' may get at the gist of a paper with the least labor. The section on 'Aves' is separately obtainable for a very small sum, and should be more widely in the hands of students of ornithology.—G. M. Allen.

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