

RECENT LITERATURE

Birds of Kutch.¹—Mr. Salim Ali, whose work on Indian birds is so well known, is to be congratulated upon the appearance of this volume which is a notable addition to the literature on the Indian avifauna. Kutch is the northwesternmost of the Princely States of Kathiawar, that peninsula projecting out of the western coast of India north of Bombay and more than half way towards Karachi. It is largely a desert zone, made remarkable by the physiographical feature of the Great Rann, a 'billiard table' of over 1200 square miles of barren, salty, waste land, which during the rainy season is frequently inundated for weeks at a time. It is here that the only known breeding ground of the flamingo occurs in India, here the western Indian wild ass is found, and here is the site of the most interesting area for observing bird migration in the whole sub-continent. The position of the country is such that it stands at the crossroads of two main migration routes, one from central and northern Asia running southwest to northeast, the other from eastern Europe and the Middle East running northwest to southeast. It is here that Mr. Ali hopes one day, with the willing and interested cooperation of the Maharao of Kutch and his son and heir, to establish observation and banding posts for migratory studies.

Mr. Ali's book gives a complete annotated list of the birds of the State with thorough references to all the pertinent literature and includes many valuable ecological notes. He lists the flamingo colony of the spring of 1945 as numbering over 200,000 adults with nearly 70,000 young. One interesting feature of the breeding cycle of the flamingos in the area is that not only their nesting may be rudely broken off at any time by adverse weather conditions (drying up of the Rann) in which probably absorption of the ova takes place, but also that in certain seasons there is no nesting whatsoever, during which time, presumably, production of ova is deferred.

'Birds of Kutch' is illustrated with photographs by the author and his colleague, Mr. W. T. Loke, and also with twenty colored plates by D. V. Cowen, the reproduction of which is unfortunately not up to the originals. This work is another example of Salim Ali's devoted attention to the subject of popularizing and creating an intelligent interest in birds in India.—S. DILLON RIPLEY.

Natural history in Cheshire, England.²—Mr. Boyd dedicates this volume to the memory of T. A. Coward whose friend and disciple he had been for a quarter of a century. Although he started to keep a "country diary" at the age of nine, the material encompassed in the present volume covers the period, 1933-1945. Although devoted chiefly to observations made in Cheshire, this continuity is broken by accounts of excursions to Wales, and other parts of England, Finland, Sweden, France, Spain, and Morocco.

As indicated by the title, the work is in diary style and although beautifully written, it becomes a little monotonous for prolonged reading. It is obvious that birds hold the chief interest of the author as the volume is replete with observations on spring and fall migrations, nesting, and other life-history details. Records of ringed (banded) birds, marked both at home and abroad, are scattered through the pages and in one section reference is had to the author's experience in operating traps. The local status of migratory waterfowl comes in for regular attention.

¹ SALIM ALI, 'The Birds of Kutch,' with thirty-two photographs and twenty colored plates. Large 8vo. Oxford University Press, 1945. Price 20 Rupees.

² BOYD, A. W. 'The Country Diary of a Cheshire Man.' 8vo., pp. 1-320, numerous photographs, 1946. Collins, 14 St. James Place, London S. W. 1, England. Price 12s. 6d.

Mr. Boyd's interest in natural history extends, however, to other fields as there is frequent comment on insects, amphibians, mammals, plants, and even mollusks. In connection with these, frequent reference is made to local folklore in which he at times uses old English words and phrases. The excellent illustrations which figure landscapes, birds, insects, and plants, are the work of several photographers.

The book itself is well printed and put together and will provide many hours of pleasant reading.—F. C. LINCOLN.

National Parks and Monuments.¹—The United States has a splendid asset in the National Parks and National Monuments that have been established through the years since Yellowstone Park was set aside in 1872. Not all the beauty spots or desirable homes for wildlife in the country have been saved for posterity in this way and those already established are by no means assured of permanence since they are under constant siege, either from vested interests that wish to have them opened for private exploitation, or from groups that want them turned into resorts and playgrounds of another sort. Some such efforts in the past have unfortunately been successful and have resulted in irreparable damage. It is hoped that the present booklet may make more friends interested in keeping these resources intact.

Twenty-six Parks and thirty-eight Monuments are individually discussed in this book, with a brief description of each area, its position and extent, its special attractions, something of its flora and fauna, perhaps its geological or more recent history, its accessibility, accommodations for visitors, and the seasons when it is open to the public. A fine series of photographs show the great variety of scenery to be found in these national domains and some of the plants and animals existing in them. The "National Primeval Parks Standards" of the National Parks Association, under whose aegis this book was prepared, are given, detailing the Association's recommendations for the adequate administration of these areas. There is also a brief account of certain of the "Nature Reservations Abroad" and a useful list of titles for further reading on the subject under discussion. The booklet deserves wide circulation and should interest those persons familiar with our national parks as well as others who have still to make their acquaintance.—J. T. ZIMMER.

Birds in photographs.²—Mr. Cruickshank's artistry in photographing birds has long been recognized. In the present collection of his pictures he has selected a series of avian portraits that amply sustain his reputation. Some of them have appeared previously in various places but their excellence justifies their reprinting here. Such, for example, is the unusual view of a Gannet about to make a "three-point landing." The beautiful symmetry of the Roseate Spoonbill and of the White Ibis in flight could not be shown to better advantage except perhaps in color, and other portraits are equally fine.

A brief paragraph or two, descriptive or anecdotal, accompanies each plate. The scientific name supplied for each of the species figured is that of the Fourth Edition of the A. O. U. Check-List without correction according to the subsequent Supplements which, perhaps, should have been consulted to bring the titles up to date if the Latin names were, indeed, necessary here.

Readers interested in the details of the photographic work will find a short discussion in the preface concerning photography of birds, and at the end of the volume the data with respect to the camera, lens, exposure, aperture, and filter used for each

¹ BUTCHER, DEVEREUX. 'Exploring our National Parks and Monuments.' 8vo, pp. 1-160, 65 figs., 1 map, 2 cover-figs. (col.), June 12, 1947. Oxford University Press, New York. Price, \$1.75.

² CRUICKSHANK, ALLAN D. 'Wings in the wilderness.' 4to, (unpaged), 125 pls., Oct. 2, 1947. Oxford University Press, New York. Price, \$6.00.

of the pictures. Whether or not the reader is a photographer, he will enjoy the excellent results shown in the plates.—J. T. ZIMMER.

Birds of Malaysia.¹—A handbook has long been needed to help the resident in, or visitor to, the Malaysian region to identify the birds he might find in that extensive area. Portions of the region have been variously treated in older ornithological works of one sort and another but they are not fully comprehensive nor up to date, nor are they compact enough to serve as handbooks if, indeed, copies of them are easily obtainable. There has been no single volume of the sort which is presented here in this latest addition to The Pacific World Series.

The region as covered in this volume embraces some 600,000 square miles of highly varied terrain supporting an extremely rich avifauna, largely endemic, with some affinities to adjacent regions. Captain Delacour has recognized some 780 species of which 660 are resident breeders and only 120 are visitors. The grouping is on a broad pattern, not only as regards species, but also with respect to genera and some of the families, with the result that parts of the arrangement may appear unfamiliar to bird students accustomed to the nomenclature of the earlier monographs and reports. The emphasis unquestionably is on relationships rather than distinctions.

The descriptive matter, in most cases, covers each species as a whole, but the various subspecies are mentioned with their individual distributions. Where notable racial distinctions are evident, the subspecies may be given special treatment. Common names are given only for the full species.

On the same generalized pattern, the behavior and other such characteristics of related species are given by families or their major subdivisions, although special details may be added for certain forms. There are very useful, simple keys for the identification of the members of each family or its major subdivisions, where there are more than one or two species to be considered. Line drawings of many of the species, by Earl L. Poole and Alexander Seidel, are, with few exceptions, excellent and lifelike.

With this book in hand, therefore, anyone visiting Malaysia should have the minimum of difficulty in the determination of those birds that he can see clearly enough to note the necessary details of form and pattern. There are many things yet to be learned about the lives of the birds of this distant country that there is a real opportunity for competent observers to add greatly to our existing fund of knowledge, and identification of the species concerned is of prime importance. For this there is no better guide than the present handy volume.—J. T. ZIMMER.

Darwin's Finches.²—The finches of the Galápagos Islands have occupied a prominent place in zoological study ever since they impressed Darwin in 1835 and led to his monumental speculations. The name 'Darwin's Finches' which Mr. Lack has adopted for them is thus a particularly happy choice and is worthy of universal acceptance. There is no doubt that they have continued to offer an unexcelled subject for the study of evolutionary processes and many authors have taken advantage of it. The latest and most satisfactory treatment is that given in the present work.

Mr. Lack visited the islands in 1938 to gain a personal acquaintance with the terrain and with these birds in their native home. Living examples of some of the species were brought back with the hope of laboratory study but world conditions prevented the fulfillment of the plan. Detailed examination of large series of

¹ DELACOUR, JEAN. 'Birds of Malaysia.' Demy 8vo, XVI + 382, figs. 1-84, map (end-papers), July 29, 1947. Macmillan Co., New York. Price, \$5.00.

² LACK, DAVID. 'Darwin's Finches.' 8vo, X + 208, frontisp. (col.), pls. 1-8 (3 col.), figs. 1-27, tables 1-32, A-E, June 3, 1947. Cambridge University Press (Macmillan Co., N. Y.). Price, \$4.50.

specimens in the larger collections of this country and England were made to round out the available evidence and a report was subsequently prepared and published as No. 21 of the Occasional Papers of the California Academy of Sciences, 1945. The present work develops the study in its evolutionary aspects with some alteration in the earlier views of the author.

Lack recognizes four genera and 14 species of these finches—a classification which is comparable, with some modifications, to Swarth's earlier arrangement. Considerable discussion is given to the differences in bill size which are considered as adaptations for taking food of varied sizes and which have resulted in food specialization enabling species with only slightly different food habits to live side by side without serious competition. Some of the species, furthermore, occupy somewhat different food niches on separate islands due to different groups of competitors on each. While the size and shape of bill appear to be highly adaptive in nature, not all the recognized specific characters of these birds are clearly adaptive although there may be other distinctions yet to be discovered that are so.

An interesting evolutionary tree is presented showing the probable lines of descent of the various species from each other or from the common ancestral stock. The single ancestor from the American mainland is unknown and it is suggested that it may be extinct or that Darwin's Finches have evolved too far to reveal the relationship. The purely oceanic origin of the Galapagos Islands is maintained as is the discontinuity of the islands from one another. Degree of endemism was found to vary directly with the isolation of each island and isolation is held (as it is usually considered elsewhere) to be of primary importance in the origin of new species.

As a basic thesis, the book maintains that the adaptive radiation of Darwin's Finches developed through differentiation of isolated geographical forms that subsequently invaded islands already occupied by other forms, leading to subdivision of the food supply and habitat among the competitors with consequent increased restriction of ecology and further specialization of structure.

It is impossible, in a brief review, to mention all of the points brought out in this important discussion. The data leading to the author's conclusions are presented in detail and variously tabulated, documented, and figured. All students of evolution, whether of birds or of other groups, will find it highly profitable to read Mr. Lack's most excellent and thought-provoking volume.—J. T. ZIMMER.

Birds at Ottawa.¹—Brewery Creek flows near the city of Ottawa and empties into the Ottawa River by a broad estuary whose banks are little disturbed by the proximity of the city. Across the river is the residence of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom to Canada. From 1941 to 1945 this post was held by the Right Honourable Malcolm MacDonald who found time, during those troubled years, to employ brief periods of relaxation in watching birds.

He chose for this purpose the estuary of Brewery Creek. This he reached by crossing the river on skis or snowshoes when it was frozen and by canoe when the water was open. In the present volume he recounts his observations during most of the year 1945. The account begins, for practical purposes, in March when the area began to show the first signs of returning spring, and continues by months until well into December.

Due to the regularity of visits to this limited area, Mr. MacDonald was able to follow the history of certain individual birds through their nesting cycles although, as he explains, the arrangement of the whole text by months results in interruption

¹ MACDONALD, MALCOLM. 'The birds of Brewery Creek.' 8vo, X + 334, 23 pls. (7 col.), Sept. 4, 1947. Oxford University Press, London, Toronto & New York. Price \$5.00.

of the history of each of these families. The earlier spring chapters are concerned with the arrival of the migrants, but their behavior also is described whenever it presented items of particular interest. Thus there are notes on courtship display, 'broken-wing' behavior, defense of territory, song, recognition marks, and other such matters. The theory is held at one point that the broken-wing behavior of the Killdeer is linked with sexual display, but later observation of the Spotted Sandpiper weakened the author's assurance of this linkage.

After the breeding season, the observations again renew emphasis on migrants and additions of still more species to the writer's local list. Numerous comments are scattered through the text that show the author's familiarity with birds in other places although the American species, or many of them, were first met on the estuary. In any case, the account contains much interesting information and shows Mr. MacDonald to be a careful observer. In spite of his early disclaimer of any scientific importance in the work, it may be read with profit, and being written with a light touch, it is easy to read.

The plates by Arthur A. Allen and W. V. Crich add to the interest of the book.—
J. T. ZIMMER.

PERIODICAL LITERATURE

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NOTES AND NEWS

THE EDITOR is very pleased to report that Mr. Edward A. McIlhenny, who has so generously contributed to the publication funds of The Auk since early in 1942, has renewed his financial support of the journal. With the increased costs of publication and the continuing accumulation of manuscripts by members of the A. O. U., this assurance of additional working funds is most gratifying.

In addition, it is gratifying to note that various contributors to the present number of The Auk have supplied funds as well as manuscripts. Mr. William H. Phelps and Mr. Aaron Moore Bagg have underwritten the publication costs of their papers; Mr. W. L. McAtee has done the same for a portion of the memorial of P. A. Taverner; and Mr. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., and Dr. George M. Sutton have subscribed toward the costs of the plates accompanying their respective articles. This practical coöperation is greatly appreciated.

NOTICE has come to hand of another set of The Auk available for purchase. Mr. Fred M. Dille, Honorary Life Associate, of 822 Grand Ave., Nogales, Arizona, is willing to dispose of his set which is complete to volume 64, including five Ten-year Indexes, and which he values at \$250.00, not including transportation.

Mr. A. C. BENT writes that he has completed the manuscript of his 'Life Histories' of the Icteridae and Thraupidae and is ready to receive photographs and notes on the behavior of the Fringillidae. All members of the A. O. U. who have material of value concerning the species from the cardinals to the crossbills, inclusive—which will comprise the first volume on this family—are urged to send it to Mr. Bent.