

## RECENT LITERATURE

**Bird display and behavior.**<sup>1</sup>—Some years ago (1942) Mr. Armstrong published an excellent volume entitled *Bird Display* (see review in *The Auk*, 60: 287–288, April, 1943). The present work is a revised and enlarged edition of that book. There has been considerable research and publication on the subject in the intervening years, and, in incorporating the various discoveries and theories in the text, Mr. Armstrong has needed to rewrite a considerable part of the earlier work interpolating on occasion and making several additional chapters from some of the expanded material.

As before, opposing theories are stated and documented and general propositions are given with the various exceptions thereto. The author thus presents a broad summary of what is known and thought of the multitudinous activities that make up a bird's world. He emphasizes the growing realization, too, that the behavior of birds is as integral a part of their makeup as is their anatomy, and their patterns of behavior need to be taken into consideration by taxonomists whenever the data become available as valuable clues to relationships. Unfortunately, as regards a vast number of the birds of distant regions, these data are too fragmentary at present to be of the fullest help, but they are increasing and will certainly lead to important discoveries in systematics.

It is in their own right, however, that the display and other behavior of birds are discussed here, as is evidenced by the thirty-eight pages of bibliography given at the close of the text, more complete than in the preceding volume. The literature on the subject is extensive, and to read all of it in the original would be a task that would require more time than most busy people have to devote to it, unless they have kept abreast of it through the years. The best alternative is a good review of the general topic with a bibliography of the many original references cited in the text to which the interested reader may go for fuller discussions when he so desires. This Mr. Alexander has given us and his volume thus constitutes not only a book that will repay reading for itself but that gives a guide for further study. It should be on every ornithological bookshelf.—J. T. ZIMMER.

**Australian bird life.**<sup>2</sup>—In this little book, Mr. Barrett has recounted interesting facts concerning many of Australia's interesting birds. Although first printed in 1945, the volume has not been reviewed in *The Auk* and deserves mention at this new appearance. It is not a handbook for the identification of species and does not give descriptions of the birds, themselves, but instead presents a running account of the members of the various families, their characteristic behavior, songs, nests and eggs, distribution, and other such details. Some of the account is general, but in the main the author has selected representative species (and a goodly number of them) and treated them, one after the other, adding many anecdotes from personal observations or recorded statements.

The reader may gain here a good view of the bird life of the Australian countryside, although if he is unfamiliar with the local species he will need to supplement his reading with a descriptive manual the better to visualize the birds about which Mr. Barrett is writing. A great deal of interesting information is condensed in the pages.—J. T. ZIMMER.

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<sup>1</sup> ARMSTRONG, EDWARD A. 'Bird display and behaviour. An introduction to the study of bird psychology.' 8vo, pp. 1–431, frontisp. (col.), pls. I–XXXII, figs. 1–30, 1947. Lindsay Drummond Limited, London. Price, 21 s.

<sup>2</sup> BARRETT, CHARLES. 'Australian bird life.' Crown 8vo, pp. 1–239. 38 pls. (7 col.), March 4, 1948. Oxford University Press (Printed in Australia). Price, \$3.25.

**Batrachian music.**<sup>1</sup>—The calls of many of the eastern frogs and toads have been transferred to four double-sided records for the phonograph in the manner followed earlier in the 'American Bird Songs' prepared by the same Foundation (*see review in The Auk*, 60: 288, April, 1943). Although not primarily ornithological, of course, these records are certain to be of interest to nature-lovers in general, many of whom must have wished to become familiar with the sounds of animals other than birds. It may be noted, incidentally, that a few bird voices have crept into these recordings, perhaps were purposely left there since the records are remarkably free from disturbing background noises. Some of the batrachian voices are, however, so powerful that other sounds accompanying them might not in any case be too intrusive!

The inside of the cover of the album contains a list of the species found on each record and the records, themselves, are individually labeled, while the well-known voice of Dr. Arthur A. Allen introduces each performer in turn. The album is thoroughly recommended to everyone interested in the sounds of nature.—J. T. ZIMMER.

**The Ruffed Grouse.**<sup>2</sup>—This fine report is the product of sixteen years of research; the work was initiated in 1930 when there was still much to be learned of practical methods of approach to the problems, but, as it developed, new lines of study were suggested and it expanded into the broad research project of which this volume is the final report.

From early times there have been alternating periods of abundance and scarcity steadily trending toward a definite decrease in grouse population, and this condition was the underlying reason for the investigation here recorded. It was realized that before adequate measures could be recommended for bringing back these birds the causes of their deterioration must be studied in detail. Not that supposed causes had not been postulated in times past; some 25 of these suggestions that have been given by two or more of 59 different writers from 1754 to 1933 are tabulated and show the interest which the problem has consistently aroused.

In any case, these and other possible factors have been critically examined. As a fundamental basis, the characteristics of the species were studied in detail—the anatomy, plumage, physiology, growth, general behavior, cover requirements and preferences, food and feeding habits, breeding behavior, reproductive capacity, enemies, diseases and parasites, influences of man, attempts at artificial propagation, restocking of land—all these and more received their share of attention. At the end it was possible to draw authoritative conclusions and suggest methods for making the best of the situation. Briefly, it was found that the fluctuations in numbers could not be ascribed to any single cause but to a multiplicity of factors, some of which appear to be in effect somewhere every year. When the local "low" periods have synchronized over a sufficiently wide area, the general effect has been marked and has produced a major decline.

The practical answer appears to be the proper management of land to give the birds the best possible conditions under which they can live and rear their young naturally—in other words, modern conservation in the real sense of the word. Without it other methods are likely to be futile.

<sup>1</sup> 'Voices of the night.' The calls of 26 frogs and toads found in eastern North America. Recorded by the Albert R. Brand Bird Song Foundation, Cornell University. Comstock Publishing Co. Ithaca, N. Y. Price, \$6.50.

<sup>2</sup> BUMP, GARDINER; DARROW, ROBERT W.; EDMINSTER, FRANK C.; CRISSEY, WALTER F. 'The Ruffed Grouse. Life history—propagation—management.' 4to, pp. XXXVI + 915, 4 pls. (col.), figs. 1-94, 122-168, 170-171, tables 1-186, 127 sketches, 1947. New York State Conservation Department, Albany, N. Y. Price, \$10.00.

There are numerous contributing authors who had a share in the production of this report, properly accredited in place though not listed on the title-page. There is also a very extensive group of collaborators whose assistance undoubtedly helped to make the study a success. To all who had a share in the work thanks are due from all persons interested in the Ruffed Grouse. Its future, we hope, is made more secure as a result of this fine study.—J. T. ZIMMER.

**Birds of Tranninh, Laos.**<sup>1</sup>—M. André David-Beaulieu, a Civil Service official of French Indochina, has spent some twenty-five years in that country. He is an enthusiastic ornithologist and a most energetic and successful collector who has taken every opportunity of studying the avifauna of the districts where he has been stationed. Excellent accounts of the birds of the various parts of Cochinchina and Annam have been published by him from time to time in *L'Oiseau*. From 1937 to 1943 he was the Resident of Kieng-Khouang, the chief town of the Tranninh Province of Northern Laos, a highland particularly rich in its bird life. This area had first been explored in 1923 by P. Jabouille, W. P. Lowe, and the writer of these lines who visited it again in 1938–1939, this time in the company of J. C. Greenway and F. Edmond-Blanc, when David-Beaulieu welcomed and assisted us greatly. During his first term of over five years he had collected over 6000 specimens of 505 species and subspecies. This fine collection, however, was completely and wilfully destroyed in 1945 by the Annamite rebels, who showed infinite patience in pulling to pieces every specimen, as well as every book and register—an irreparable loss to their owner and to science. Fortunately, David-Beaulieu had written an annotated list which was published at Hanoi in 1944, so that a record of this work in the full remains. But just a few copies of this report have been saved after the disorders of the last few years in Tonkin. One of these copies has recently reached us. Only a resident ornithologist can make a good study of the birds of a given district. The present study is of very special interest because it is full of first-hand observations. It is a true mine of information on the life habits and movements of many species of which we still knew very little. Most important are the lists of the species and subspecies arranged according to the season when they are found in the area. Since the book is unlikely to be available to many workers, I have summarized some of the more important data.

1. RESIDENT BIRDS, which may not all breed there but specimens of which have been met with throughout the year. Those which were found nesting are indicated; among the most interesting records are those of *Tringa ochropus* and *T. hypoleucos* occurring at all seasons; *Halcyon pileata*, a common breeder as also *Erythrura e. murati* and *Carduelis ambiguus*; of *Aethopyga gouldiae harrietae* as a sedentary sunbird.

2. RESIDENT BIRDS WHOSE NUMBERS INCREASE AT A GIVEN SEASON: *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* (summer); *Amaurornis phaenicura* (spring); *Zoothera dauma* and *Z. aurea* (winter, both nesting on the mountains); *Myophonus coeruleus* and *M. eugenei* (winter) and *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (winter), *P. inornatus* (autumn and winter), *P. proregulus* (winter); *Motacilla cinerea* (winter).

3. BREEDING SUMMER VISITORS: *Dendrocygna javanica*, *Rallus striatus*, *Amaurornis fusca*; *Cacomantis merulinus*, *C. sonnerati*, *Clamator coromandus*, *Apus affinis*, *Terpsiphone paradisi*, *Dicaeum modestum* (agile), *Mycerobas melanozanthos*, *Oriolus chinensis*.

4. WINTERING BIRDS, among which the most interesting records are those of *Rallus aquaticus*, *Amaurornis bicolor*, *Gallinula chloropus*, *Muscicapa strophhiata*,

<sup>1</sup> DAVID-BEAULIEU, A. 'Les Oiseaux du Tranninh.' 4to, pp. 1–225, 1944. Imprimerie d'Extrême Orient, Publication de l'Ecole Supérieure des Sciences, Université Indochinoise, Hanoi.

*M. concreta*, *M. hyperythra*, *M. vivida*, *M. thalassina*, *Seicercus superciliaris*, *Phylloscopus ricketti*, *Dicaeum chysorrheum*.

5. BIRDS PASSING IN THE SPRING ONLY: *Glareola maldivarum*, *Pluvialis apricarius*, *Porzana pusilla*, *Cuculus canorus*, *Prinia flaviventris*.

6. BIRDS PASSING IN THE AUTUMN ONLY: *Egretta garzetta*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Butorides st. javanicus*, *Dupetor flavicollis*, *Tringa glareola*, *Capella gallinago*, *C. stenura*, *Streptopelia tranquebarica*, *Tyto alba*, *Locustella certhiola*, *Sturnia sinensis*.

7. BIRDS PASSING IN SPRING AND AUTUMN: *Bubulcus ibis*, *Ardeola bacchus*, *Gallinix cinerea*, *Muscicapa hainana*, *M. banyumas*, *M. zanthopygia*, *M. latirostris*, *Acrocephalus stentoreus*, *A. bistrigiceps*, *Locustella lanceolata*, *Phylloscopus borealis*, *P. coronatus*, *Dicrurus macrocercus*, *Motacilla flava*, *M. indica*, *Anthus cervinus*, *Mirafra javanica*, *Emberiza aureola*.

8. BIRDS OCCURRING CASUALLY OR INSUFFICIENTLY KNOWN:

The importance of recording birds' movements in such a little-known part of the world can hardly be over-emphasized. The book is full of interesting notes on many species, but we can only point out a few, such as a record of *Rheinartia ocellata* which extends the range of the species for a hundred miles to the northwest; the description of *Chaetura caudacuta bourreti* (p. 89), a bird occurring at all seasons, which seems to be very near, if not identical with, the migrating *C. c. caudacuta*; and that of *Saxicola torquata delacouri* (p. 106). This is a puzzling bird, the type and unique specimen of which has been lost. It is smaller and more slender than *S. t. stejnegeri*, the common winter visitor of the district, with deep black upper parts, chin and throat (without any white on the sides of the neck), the feathers having faint dark brown borders; breast and abdomen dark reddish brown, the hidden part of the feathers black; rump and upper tail-coverts white slightly streaked with reddish buff; thighs and under tail-coverts white; primaries and secondaries dark brown narrowly edged with reddish; tertiaries deep black more broadly edged with reddish, the last ones with whitish; tail black. The type was found at Xieng Khouang, Nov. 26, 1942; wing: 67; tail: 47; tarsus: 18; culmen: 8 mm. It does not seem that this bird can belong to the species *Saxicola torquata*, and this description does not apply to any other known species or subspecies.

In a long introduction of 41 pages, with map, the author draws an excellent picture of the Tranninh country, which consists of 4,000–5,000-foot plateaus, cut and surrounded by mountains reaching nearly 10,000 feet, with a few lower valleys and small plains, some as low as 1,000 feet. Information on the history, geography, climate, ethnography, cultivation, industries, archeology, biotops and the general fauna are supplied, as well as a list of the localities where collections were gathered.

The general survey of the Indochinese avifauna conducted by the late Pierre Jabouille and the present writer since 1923 has resulted in a greatly increased interest in the birds of the country and in stimulating the work of local naturalists who since have made notable contributions to science. Among them, André David-Beaulieu and Pierre Engelbach are the two best ornithologists who have lived in Indochina during the last thirty years, and their prolonged researches on the terrain have very happily completed the pioneer work that we had undertaken. The present study is of exceptional value in the field of Indochinese ornithology.—JEAN DELACOUR.

**New England birds.**<sup>1</sup>—The island of Nantucket, although sporadically visited by naturalists and sportsmen for many years, has not previously been given a thorough investigation ornithologically speaking, and even yet it appears that much

<sup>1</sup> GRISCOM, LUDLOW, AND FOLGER, EDITH V. 'The birds of Nantucket.' 8vo, 5 pr. ll., pp. 1–156, 17 pls., 1 map, March 11, 1948. Harvard University Press, Cambridge. Price, \$3.25.

remains to be done before the status of all the birds that reach the island is clarified. The need, it seems, is for continuous investigations over a period of years rather than the relatively broken observations of the past, some of which may be misleading. Owing to the insular position of the area, it is on the regular migration route of some land birds, but apparently not of others, although these may be common on the mainland. Migration dates need to be correlated with mainland dates and flight lines determined. Details such as these can not be determined from a few casual records, and they invite study. Changes in the forestation of Nantucket through the years have produced obvious changes in the bird life. Various species once common are now rare and vice versa. These are worth continued investigation. The problems are outlined in the general survey that introduces the present work.

The authors have brought together the available information from past records and personal observations and have listed 274 forms that have been found on Nantucket and some of the adjacent islands and shoals. They give the local status of each and the inclusive dates of occurrence, as far as known, or the individual dates for the rarer birds. Further discussions are frequently added to amplify the bare facts.

A glance through the pages shows a surprising number of "casual," "vagrant," and "rare" or "very rare" species and of forms whose status has undergone various alterations, thus giving emphasis to the authors' introductory statement of the need for further work. Certainly there is here a fertile field open for future workers, and Mr. Griscom and Miss Folger have clearly pointed the way and shown what remains to be done.—J. T. ZIMMER.

**A bibliography of the ducks.**<sup>1</sup>—A copy of this rare book has come into my hands through the interest and kindness of Dr. Oliver L. Austin, Jr. The present work begins with 1925 when Dr. Phillips's bibliography ends and continues through 1940, but goes back as far as 1849 so as to include the geese and swans which Dr. Phillips admittedly did not include, and it also contains numerous references to papers in Japanese which were not mentioned in the Phillips bibliography. The extent of Dr. Kuroda's undertaking may be gauged by the fact that it contains 6539 separate items of which 2152 were published prior to 1926, the balance from 1926–1940. Each entry is briefly annotated to show the species referred to if the title does not contain such information. The arrangement is chronological; the authors, alphabetically by years; but any species reference is obtainable through the very comprehensive index occupying the last 32 pages of the volume. In using the index it must be realized that the figures refer not to the bold-face *number* preceding each entry in the text but to the *page* on which the species is mentioned. The book is well printed and all citations are in proper form, but it is to be regretted that a better quality of paper was not used for this very important and competently compiled bibliographic contribution to the literature of the Anatidae.—J. L. PETERS.

**Pennsylvania-German bird lore.**<sup>2</sup>—The experiences with birds possible to a Pennsylvania farmer are written of simply but feelingly in a chapter entitled 'Birds and the Common Life,' which ends by saying: "Birds had a place in that life of greater import and wider significance than most of us have so far been able to imagine."

<sup>1</sup> A bibliography of the Duck Tribe, / Anatidae, mostly from 1926 to 1940, exclu / sive of that of Dr. Phillips's Work. / Edited by / Marquis Nagamichi Kuroda, D.Sc. / [vignette] / Published by the Herald Press / Tokyo / October, 1942. Pp. [i-VI] + 852.

<sup>2</sup> RUFF, WILLIAM J. 'Bird names and bird lore among the Pennsylvania Germans.' The Pennsylvania German Society Proceedings and Addresses, 52: xi + 337 pp., illus., 1946. (Thomas R. Brendle, Sec'y., Egypt, Lehigh Co., Pa.) Price \$5.00.

In a section on 'Birds in Colonial America,' the author quotes or translates passages on birds from literature pertinent to his field and usefully identifies the species mentioned. His treatment of the Pennsylvania-German names, the heart of the work, is very full, collecting a high proportion of the total known information. The derivation, meaning, and often the history of the names are set forth. Beliefs, superstitions, and sayings about birds are collected and discussed, and excerpts are grouped to illustrate references in song and story to bird calls, sport and games based on birds, and popular appreciation of birds. The quotations are chiefly in Pennsylvania-German and the illustrations are mostly reproductions of woodcuts from school texts and other books of early times. The book is a compendium of its subject with which there is no work to compare for any other state nor, so far as I know, for an other country.—W. L. McATEE.

**Nebraska bird notes.**<sup>1</sup>—This little book has been long in the making and has an interesting history. The author's local bird observations began forty years ago, although the idea of the book developed much later. When the idea crystallized, Mr. Tout began organizing his notes for the purpose. Being editor of the weekly county paper, he established a column in which the account of one species was printed in each issue. The type was then saved until sufficient material was on hand to make one signature and after printing, the type was distributed. When all the signatures were thus on hand, the book was put together. It is thus a very personal production in more than one respect.

Lincoln County lies in the sandhill country embracing the fork of the Platte River on the old migration routes of the Whooping Crane and the Trumpeter Swan, and, like various parts of Nebraska, has an interesting mixture of eastern and western species. While its bird life is naturally less extensive than that of more varied terrain may be, Mr. Tout has recorded over two hundred and eighty species and subspecies, including birds found or reported by others as well as those personally observed. The list is thus as complete as could be made. Dates of regular or casual occurrence are given and personal observations extracted from the author's notebook or the circumstances surrounding various unusual records are recounted. The book is thus more than a check-list of the birds of the region as it is more than a simple personal record. The author has produced an interesting volume and has laid a good foundation for future chroniclers or for his own subsequent reports.—J. T. ZIMMER.

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