

## RECENT LITERATURE

**Ecologic races of song sparrows in the San Francisco Bay region.—Part I, Habitat and abundance. Part II, Geographical variation.** MARSHALL, JOE T. Condor, 50: 193–215, 233–256, 9 figs., 3 tables, 1948.—The San Francisco Bay region in west central California is only about 60 miles long, and little more than half as wide. Yet in this small space four subspecies of song sparrows, *Melospiza melodia*, occur as residents, three of them restricted to small ranges within this area, and the fourth more widespread. Of the three endemic subspecies, *M. m. pusillula* occupies the salt marshes of the south arm of the bay; *samuelis* occupies the salt marshes of the north arm of the bay; and *maxillaris* occupies the brackish marshes of a northeast extension of the north arm of the bay. The fourth and more widespread subspecies *gouldii* occupies the riparian, fresh water marsh, and chaparral habitats of the uplands surrounding the bay and west to the sea coast.

These races have been quoted as an example of the effect of ecology in producing subspecies and considered as ecological rather than geographical subspecies. The status of the various populations as subspecies may be questioned on the basis of lack of a range of any extent in which characters are constant, "no race possesses stable characters over a fixed area" "they are nothing but color races definable solely because they contain a population which is the culmination of some color gradient—entirely different races could be designated on the basis of some other character gradient" (p. 254). But the variations in color of upper and underparts, and in measurements are real, and, with names, populations are more easily discussed.

Song sparrow habitat and song sparrows are not distributed continuously over the area. The bayside marshes are interrupted by areas of open water or by ranges of hills projecting into the bay. Bayside plains largely separate the bayside marsh habitats from those of the uplands, though in almost all cases each area of marsh is connected with some upland habitat by a tenuous band of riparian habitat.

There seems to be some confusion as to what is meant by the "isolation" effective in producing subspecies. Many very different subspecies have developed within species with continuous ranges. Not infrequently the variation correlates with a difference in habitat, and there is usually a broader or narrower band of intergradation. The two subspecies are "isolated" in space, except for their zone of contact. Each subspecies may be developed with characters adapting it to its particular habitat, and to that extent it is an ecological subspecies. However, the bulk of each population is isolated in space, though there are no gaps in the range, no barriers or "geographical isolation." The concept of ecological subspecies, which has never been demonstrated for birds, is that a preference for one or another type of habitat may enable two subspecies of one species to occur throughout an area, "isolated" by habitat preferences, but without either spatial isolation or geographical barriers.

In the present case, though the characters of the various races are said to be not obviously adaptive, they are definitely correlated with ecology. And further, the various habitats replace each other geographically! The unusual feature is that this subspeciation has all occurred in such a small area.

From the detailed presentation on habitats and variation, it appears that several factors have been important: (1) the sedentary nature of the populations and the little wandering of individuals; (2) the relatively large blocks of marsh habitat at three separate places on the bay; (3) the dense population of song sparrows supported by these marsh habitats, compared with the more sparsely populated upland areas;

(4) the selective pressure of the marsh habitat; and (5) the isolation (gaps in distribution, that is, uninhabitable habitat) of various habitats, or parts of them.

Marshall perhaps tends to overemphasize the isolation factor to make his point, which is true, that these are not ecological races but geographical races. The importance of geographical isolation is shown by *samuelis* and *pusillula* each occupying salt marsh habitat, apparently alike, at opposite ends of the bay area, with gaps in the marsh habitat between. It is also shown by the lack of intergradation between bayside and upland populations, except along the narrow connecting corridors and in the few cases where a small salt marsh habitat adjoined an area of upland habitat and the population of the salt marsh habitat was not appreciably different.

The importance of habitat is evident in the general correlation of range of subspecies and extent of habitat. It is also evident where thin lines of song sparrows occupied territory joining salt marsh and uplands. The change (that is, zone of intergradation) from one subspecies to the next occurred not halfway along the connecting avenues, nor at the position on the avenue where the population is narrowest or least dense, but precisely at the zone of intermediate habitat.

Marshall's conclusion is inescapable—that these are not ecological races in the sense that within the same area two subspecies occur throughout, the one occurring at any point depending on the habitat available. Rather, they are typical geographical subspecies representing each other geographically.

In miniature, they represent what happens on a continental scale. Sharp ecological differences reinforced by partial geographical isolation (gaps in the range due to uninhabitable terrain) have greatly reduced the zone of overlap and made evolution possible on this small scale.—A. L. RAND.

**The parasitic cuckoos of Africa.**—FRIEDMANN, HERBERT. (Wash. Acad. Sci., Wash., D. C.), pp. xii + 204, 10 plates. January 10, 1948. Price, \$4.50.—This is the first in a series of monographs to be published by the Washington Academy of Sciences.

Following the general pattern established in his 'The Cowbirds' (1929) and in subsequent publications, Dr. Friedmann has brought together all available information on these birds. The data are derived from publications, personal experience, and correspondence over a period of some 25 years that he has been interested in brood parasitism.

The species and certain races of *Clamator*, *Cuculus*, *Pachycoccyx*, *Cercococcyx*, and *Chrysococcyx* are discussed in relation to their taxonomy, range, migration, courtship, eggs, parasitic behavior, species parasitized, and plumages at different ages. This mass of factual material is briefly analyzed and evaluated, in each account, in the light of the author's wide experience in this phase of ornithology. Such discussions give added value and interest.

As is noted in the introduction, there are many gaps in our knowledge of these cuckoos. This book fills out part of the story but, at the same time, the scantiness of the data in several sections re-emphasizes the need for additional field work before definite conclusions can be formulated. Even though this state of affairs may prohibit extensive theorizing as to the implications of parasitism in these species, the general ornithological reader would have been interested in a more complete treatment of Dr. Friedmann's comments or thoughts on this interesting group. Two pages of "concluding remarks" hardly do justice to the time and effort expended in gathering the data.—H. I. FISHER.

**Catalogue of Birds of the Americas and the Adjacent Islands.**—HELLMAYR, CHARLES E. and BOARDMAN CONOVER. Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Series, vol. 13, pt. 1, no. 3: vi + 383 pp., December 16, 1948.—The publication of two parts of such a series as this in a single year is without precedent, and the statement in the preface that the final part is now in course of publication foreshadows the completion of the magnificent enterprise initiated by C. B. Cory over 30 years ago.

The present part contains the Charadriiformes and conforms to the high standards set in the previous parts. The literature up to the end of 1944 has been taken into account and some new forms described since that date and prior to January 1, 1947, are mentioned in footnotes. In this connection it is interesting to note that the only known breeding station of the bristle-thighed curlew, discovered in 1948, is listed under the range of that species.

It is a pleasure to observe the degree of conservatism displayed in recognizing some of the new "discoveries", setting up of old names, and even continuing the recognition of forms named many years ago. Such statements as "the difference too inconstant for recognition", "divergence too slight to be expressed in nomenclature" appear in footnotes scattered throughout the work.

No radical innovations are introduced; generic concepts as a rule are maintained as at present, although *Endomychura* is lumped with *Brachyramphus* in spite of Storer's assertion that this course is incorrect. *Larus schistisagus*, *Larus occidentalis* and subspecies and *Larus dominicanus* and subspecies are all considered races of *Larus marinus*.

This volume maintains the high standards of thoroughness and accuracy which characterize the previous ones and which render the 'Catalogue of Birds of the Americas' an ornithologist's "must."—J. L. PETERS.

**Waterfowl of Japan.**—AUSTIN, OLIVER L., JR. (Gen. Hdqts., Supreme Comm. Allied Powers, Tokyo), Nat. Resources Sec., Rept. No. 118: 1-109, many ills. and tables. January 17, 1949.—This report is designed to acquaint members of the occupation forces with the kinds and status of waterfowl in Japan and to form a partial basis for action on the waterfowl problem.

The first two-thirds of the publication consist of species accounts in which the present status, distribution and field characters are stressed. These deal with 40 species of ducks, geese and swans. Of importance in these accounts are the results of banding work, heretofore not published. Records of occurrence are cited for the rarer forms.

The last 35 pages are devoted to a general treatment of the subject, including areas of winter concentration, flight routes, kill by districts, the total recorded kill from 1924 to 1947, and the means by which this kill was attained.

The importance of the wild waterfowl industry in Japan is shown by the fact that 10 per cent of all bird meat currently used comes from this source. Its annual market value probably exceeds one million dollars. The pressure of this use lies on a few species, for of the 40 species discussed, seven are reported as stragglers only and 19 are too scarce to be of economic importance. Only six species breed in Japan, and then to only a limited extent. None of the species are endemic to Japan alone.

Prior to 1900, the populations declined rapidly. Since 1900, the decline has been slowed down, but present kill is greater than the annual increment. Many deleterious methods of securing birds, such as kill-netting and liming have only recently been outlawed, and some still persist. In this connection it is interesting to note

that live-netting, under the proper conditions and supervision, could be made to work effectively as an instrument of game management.

From the standpoint of increase of knowledge of birds the significant sections of this paper are those concerned with banding. Results of banding in Japan have never been widely circulated. By analyzing the records from 1925, when banding operations were started, to 1942, when they ceased, it has been possible to define certain routes of migration and areas of concentration. It has, for example, been found that there is considerable exchange of individuals between areas of winter concentration and that most of the birds killed in Japan were produced elsewhere.—  
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#### OBITUARIES

SIR HUGH STEWART GLADSTONE, Lord Lieutenant of Dumfries County since 1946 and a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union since 1923, died at Thornhill, Scotland, April 5, 1949, in his 72nd year. Born April 30, 1877, the eldest son of the late S. S. Gladstone, he received his early education at Eton and