

RECENT LITERATURE

South Carolina Bird Life.—Sprunt, Alexander, Jr., and Chamberlain, E. Burnham. Edited by E. Milby Burton, Director of the Charleston Museum. (Univ. South Carolina Press, Columbia), pp. xiv + 585, 35 col. pls., 48 photos, 1949. Price \$10.00.—The appearance of this handsome volume marks the latest milestone in the progress of ornithology in South Carolina and the Southeast. The section "Ornithology in South Carolina," pages 1 to 27, impresses the reader with the fact that this state, especially the coastal section, is classic ground in American ornithology. Beginning with Mark Catesby in 1722 (earlier writers mentioned birds, but were more historians than ornithologists) the list of early workers on the birds of the state include such great names as Bartram, Wilson, Audubon and his friend Bachman, Coues, Merriam, Loomis, Wayne, and Brewster. The list of recent and contemporary bird students who have visited and made bird observations in the state reads like a "WHO'S WHO" of modern ornithology and adds much to the interest of this section of the work. A host of others, including the authors and the editor of this book, have played a great part.

The present publication is built on the firm foundation of Wayne's 'Birds of South Carolina' of 1910, which likewise marked a milestone in southeastern ornithology. In 1931 the present authors brought information on the bird life of the state up to date in 'The Supplement to Wayne's Birds of South Carolina,' published by the Charleston Museum. Sprunt and Chamberlain were coached and started on the ornithological road by Wayne. Both are lifelong members of the active resident group of bird students of the state and were highly qualified for their task.

Due to the fact, however, that by far the greater amount of field work has, from the first, been carried on in the "Low-country," knowledge of the birds of the coastal section is much more extensive than that of the other great natural divisions of the state, or the "Up-country." However, the latter has had several competent workers: Hoxie in the southeastern part of the state; Murphey in the Savannah River section near Augusta; Tomkins at the mouth of that river; and the early observations and collecting of Leverett Mills Loomis contribute much to balance.

Seven pages are devoted to "The Region," and a careful perusal of this section is essential to an understanding of bird distribution in the state. Five pages "On Studying Birds" are important reading for beginners in bird study, while "old timers" will enjoy it. These sections, as well as the extensive series of "Histories," are in the reviewer's opinion exceedingly well written and full of keen observations. A mastery both of writing and field ornithology is plainly evident.

The treatment of species and subspecies is uniform. After the name comes a line giving the Latin or Greek derivation of the technical names. There follows in abbreviated form—"Description," "Range," and "Status in South Carolina"—in small type and taking little space, but adequate in a work of this kind. Next comes the "History" which occupies from a quarter of a page, in the case of rarities, to two or more pages in many others. In the case of species widely distributed over the state, the known range is delimited by counties, following in principle the method of the A. O. U. Check-List with larger political divisions. This is perhaps the best presentation for South Carolina bird students with a clear mental picture of the location of the counties of their state; it proves somewhat inconvenient for others, for it makes necessary constant reference to a small map, with very small type. For use of outsiders, a brief statement of status in the Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountain sections would have simplified understanding of distribution.

Under "History" lies the unique and outstanding value of the work to bird students interested in the ornithology of the eastern and southern states. For the first time an adequate series of life history sketches of birds of a typical southeastern state has been made available in a single volume. It is a splendidly written account of the habits and behavior of birds living under southern conditions. This is in striking contrast to most bird books dealing with the Southeast, which have been largely compilations by out-of-staters, with comparatively little year-around field experience in the regions covered.

The authors write with perhaps undue assurance as to certain species being "two brooded," "three brooded," or "four brooded," or as "rearing" such multiple broods. An example is the case of the Bachman's Sparrow. Not in a spirit of criticism, but rather speculation, the reviewer wonders what the verdict will be when the birds in question have been investigated as intensively as the Song Sparrow, the House Wren and the Bob-white. Nesting attempts of small ground nesting birds are fraught with so many dangers that they are lucky to "rear" one brood after long-continued nesting attempts. Be that as it may, the present authors had to be sparing of qualifying words if their material was to be presented in one volume. One has in any case to take with mental reservations statements dealing with this phase of avian reproduction in most bird books of our day.

Due to the extensive collecting, especially of an earlier day, there are a great many study skins of South Carolina birds in the Charleston Museum (the oldest natural history museum in America) and elsewhere within and outside the state. These were carefully worked over by Dr. Harry C. Oberholser, and the matter of occurrence of subspecies brought up to date.

Four hundred and forty-two species and subspecies of birds are treated in the regular list, and 17 in the "Hypothetical List." Had the authors followed traditional custom, some 15 carried on the regular list would have been considered hypothetical until specimens are collected in the state. One of the greatest departures from usual practice is the assigning of trinominals to the Burrowing Owl in the absence of a specimen in hand. It is arbitrarily listed as the Western Burrowing Owl on the ground that the Florida race "is not known to be migratory." While the probability is in favor of the assumption being correct, it is a probability only. An article in 'The Auk' (63: 451, 1946) illustrates this. Re-examination of a specimen first determined as a Western Burrowing Owl, that was collected 50 miles west of Pensacola, Florida, was found to be a Florida Burrowing Owl. The points of capture or observation of the two specimens are approximately equidistant from the center of abundance of the Florida race. A sight record of the Burrowing Owl in Georgia is carried on the *Hypothetical List* under *binominals*. With such a real difference of opinion as to what should or should not go on a State List, it might be helpful in getting uniformity for the A. O. U. to appoint a representative committee, similar to its important Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of North American Birds, to lend a guiding hand. The unorthodox handling of this matter in the present work of course in no way detracts from its usefulness.

The colored plates (11 by Jaques, 10 by Peterson, 11 by Dingle and 4 by Dick) are superb and well reproduced, with one or two exceptions. The photographs are also of exceptional beauty, and the illustrations add much to the value and beauty of the volume. The book as a whole is splendidly gotten up, and it was quite a feat to present successfully such a mass of material in a single volume of convenient size. It is well indexed, and few typographical errors were noted in a careful reading. One, on page 5, giving Audubon's arrival in Charleston in 1931, is unfortunate.

The authors, editor, the publishers, and all others who labored on this book are to be congratulated on a fine piece of work. The volume is a big "buy" at the price, and of course this was only made possible in this day of high publication costs by many generous contributions of funds and of time, as is evident from a reading of the acknowledgments. The volume should be at the right hand of all serious bird students of the East and South. Those of the West will be interested in finding so many of their birds wintering in South Carolina, while bird lovers everywhere will derive much satisfaction from owning a copy, and will profit by its perusal.—
HERBERT L. STODDARD, SR.

The Cycle in the Gambel Sparrow.—Blanchard, Barbara D., and Erickson, Mary M. Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., 47 (11): 255-318, pls. 19-25, 16 tables, Oct. 28, 1949. Price \$1.50.—The present paper supplements the earlier study by Dr. Blanchard on two other subspecies of the White-crowned Sparrow (*op. cit.*, 46: 1-178, 1941), and adds important data confirming the previous conclusion that the reproductive cycle of the species is substantially an annual rhythm, modifiable only within narrow limits by environmental conditions.

Microscopic study was made of the testes of wintering males taken at two distant localities in California (Davis and Santa Barbara), and in two different years at Santa Barbara. The same stages in gonadal development were observed as described in the earlier paper, but a clearer picture is given of the incidence of recrudescence. The earliest recognizable change in structure was found in the development of Leydig cells in the intertubular tissue, that were completely absent up to a critical time. The earliest date of record for the initiation of this change was January 5 and the latest, at another place and year, February 4.

Volume and weight of the testes were found to be of little service in the establishment of the incidence of cytological change, due to the great amount of individual variation. The first average increase noted in volume above the maximum point of the winter fluctuations occurred some 50 days after the first appearance of the Leydig cells, and the first such increase in weight was noticeable nine days still later. It was concluded that gross field observation could not supply useful data on this early stage of development. The greatest increase in weight and volume appeared to be developed during the actual course of migration. The testicular cycle of young males was found to parallel that of the wintering adults, except that testis size in the young birds averaged slightly less than that of the adults on any given date.

Deposition of fat appeared to occur within a brief period immediately preceding migration, beginning about 12 days in advance of the movement. The earliest signs of the prenuptial molt were recorded on February 4; a slightly earlier date, January 28, is cited from other observers at Pasadena.

All these factors were correlated with various meteorological conditions—hours of daylight, solar radiation, temperature, and precipitation—during the periods concerned. As in the earlier experiments with the other subspecies, recrudescence was initiated at the time of the greatest severity of weather when the least meteorological change was in progress. At the time of the actual departure of the birds on migration, no definite alterations in the weather could be found to show evident correlation.

While, as the authors admit, there is no certain proof that there is a definite connection between gonadal change and migration, the evidence points to a cyclic chain of related factors beginning with the development of Leydig cells in the testes and culminating in the sexual and territorial activities on the nesting grounds. It is probable that the Leydig cells are, themselves, one source of the male hormones that are responsible for the subsequent secondary sexual characters of male behavior.

There are noted in the account various additional characteristics of the form under discussion—the distance covered in its migration, the proportions of adults and young at the autumn arrival on the wintering grounds, the quite restricted winter range of individual flocks, the voices of the two sexes, the increase of song in the spring, and such matters. These add to the completeness of the report and are taken into consideration with the other accumulated data. The authors' contention seems well supported that the entire cycle of breeding activities, including migration, forms a coherent annual rhythm on which local conditions may, at certain points in the cycle, have some additive effect, but that the process began long in advance of these conditions which, therefore, can not have been the primary cause of the incidence.

These conclusions must be compared with those reached by Alden H. Miller (*Journ. Exper. Zool.*, 109: 1–11, 1948) in his experiments with the congeneric Golden-crowned Sparrow. It will be recalled that, in these experiments, progressive increments of light begun on November 20 produced gonadal development in size and weight by February and March, while similar increments begun on October 20 before the testes had reached their lowest point of quiescence, not only failed to elicit a response but actually delayed normal development in the following spring. Dr. Miller's conclusions were, therefore, that the inherent rhythm of the Golden-crowned Sparrow is an imperfect timing device of only broad significance while photoperiodic stimulation provides the precision.

The two conclusions are, perhaps, not wholly incompatible, but correlation is difficult owing to the different techniques and objectives. Miller's experiments were conducted on caged individuals of a different species, and the increments of light were abnormally rapid and commenced with a sudden incidence of a half-hour's duration above normal. At the time the first gonadal development in the intertubular tissue was observed in the Gambel's Sparrow, there was no such increment nor daily total of light in occurrence, nor was there for some time thereafter, and observable changes in gonadal size and weight were not found until nearly two months after the appearance of the Leydig cells. Miller did not report on the microscopic structure on which Blanchard and Erickson base much of their results.

Miller admits the existence of an inherent rhythm, and Blanchard and Erickson admit a limited amount of influence on the rhythm by meteorological conditions, including light. There is thus a common meeting ground. One general conclusion seems inescapable at this point in the problem. There is a basic rhythm on which light, among other possible conditions, can exert a certain amount of influence. Perhaps, as may be the case with birds that winter or live throughout the year in the tropics, the rhythm alone is sufficient to insure the continuance of the cycle at critical times. There is much in the present paper to suggest that this explanation is near the mark.—JOHN T. ZIMMER.

Guide to the Birds of the USSR.—G. P. Dement'ev, N. A. Gladkov, E. S. Ptushenko, and A. M. Sudilovskaya (Moscow), pp. 1–449, 132 line drawings, 1948. Price, \$1.75. (in Russian, latin name indices, no foreign language summaries).—As editor and senior author of 'Guide to the Birds of the USSR,' G. P. Dement'ev completed preparation of the text before World War II. The outbreak of war delayed publication until 1948. Binding and paper of the edition in hand are of poor quality, reproduction of line drawing is inferior, but the type and general organization of the book are clear, readable, systematic, and generally easy to use.

The book is based upon two other general works that appeared in the Soviet Union during the past decade. The principal one of these is the 'Complete Guide to the Birds of the USSR,' appearing under the co-authorship of Buturlin and Dement'ev

in five volumes from 1934 to 1941. This constitutes a detailed and thorough conspectus of all the species and subspecies of birds occurring in the USSR with considerable attention paid to the geographic ranges; it also includes sections on general avian biology. It is unfortunately a work not readily available in America. The second general work of interest appeared in 1940 and is entitled 'Textbook of Ornithology.' The principal author and editor is G. P. Dement'ev. This is a very broad work on the subject including chapters on anatomy, physiology, life histories, ecology, and general systematics of birds of the world. Although the volume under review is largely based upon the two foregoing, it is by no means repetitious and constitutes the first single-volume publication in which a Soviet student can find a compact, comprehensive guide to all species occurring within that vast region.

'Guide to the Birds of the USSR' includes brief descriptions of 680 species known to occur, nesting or transient, within the Soviet Union as of July 1, 1945, the original manuscript having been constantly brought up to date during the war and directly before going to press. Dichotomous keys for identification of the orders, families, genera, and species are based upon material in the Zoological Museum, Moscow University. They do not deal largely with field characters and would be primarily helpful to the student with a bird in the hand. The illustrations, which consist for the most part of detail drawings of heads and feet, were prepared by A. A. Zachvatkin and N. N. Kondakov.

It is of interest to quote from the first paragraph of the introduction: "The bird fauna of the USSR consists of 679 species as follows: Rasores 20, Turnices 1, Columbae 11, Pterocletes 4, Ralli 11, Lari 33, Alcae 17, Gaviae 4, Colymbi 5, Tubinares 10, Anseres 52, Steganopodes 11, Gressores 22, Accipitres 46, Striges 18, Cuculi 6, Caprimulgi 3, Coraciae 8, Upupae 1, Macrochires 5, Picarae 13, Passeres 294. Thus we have 679 in all." It will be noted that only 595 species are listed. The Grues, Otidae, and Limicolae have been omitted. Referring to the check list in the appendix we find eight Grues, three Otidae, and 73 Limicolae, which bring the total up to 679 as stated. However, the check list actually shows 680 species numbered from one to 680. It develops that the authors recognize 53 species referable to the Anseres (not 52 as in the above cited paragraph). While it is regrettable that editorial inconsistencies of this nature do occur throughout the book, they should not divert one from appreciation of the fact that 680 species actually have been listed and described (compare the 600 more or less occurring in North America). Subspecies are noted where particular interest attaches to them, but they are not dealt with in detail. They are included in the check list, but not taken into account in the figure of 680 mentioned above. Though taxonomists may dispute some of the authors' choices in classification, it is obvious that their nomenclature results from thorough familiarity with recent literature as well as extensive first hand experience with the palearctic avifauna.—DAVID G. NICHOLS.

The Moas of New Zealand and Australia.—Oliver, W. R. B. Dominion Mus. (Wellington, N. Z.) Bull. No. 15, 206 pp., 143 figs., 31 tables, August, 1949.—This valuable monograph results from a re-examination of material reported upon by Archey in 1941, as well as that of others, and inclusion of studies of bones uncovered since that date. The main localities from which moas have been recovered are described and often illustrated; the history of discovery is also reviewed.

After discussing the general structure of moas, including eggs and soft parts where available, the author describes all the genera, subgenera, and species. He further proposes three new species of *Pachyornis*, one of *Euryapteryx*, two of *Dinornis* and sets up a new genus *Zelornis*. Some of the species seem to be based upon minor

qualitative differences, the major characteristics being quantitative. When one examines carefully some of the measurements, even these quantitative features fade away; the supposed differences in size should also be viewed with caution since animals of this magnitude often show considerable variation in size. Indeed, in the species *Pachyornis elephantopus*, of which there are perhaps the most specimens available, we find great variation in most dimensions.

Of outstanding value are the tables of measurements and the many excellent photographs of various elements; the measurements would have had more interest perhaps if they had been statistically analyzed to support some of the statements in the text.

The last part of the bulletin contains interesting information and speculation on the habits, the origin, and the evolution of the moas. There is a selected bibliography (from the more than 400 papers on the moas) which is classified by subjects.—H. I. FISHER.

A North Carolina Naturalist / H. H. Brimley / Selections From His Writings.—Edited by Eugene P. Odum. (Univ. N. Carolina Press, Chapel Hill), xvi + 205 pp., 44 photos., 1949. Price, \$3.50.—This is a collection of popular writings by Brimley who directed the North Carolina State Museum from 1895 to 1937. Included are some unpublished manuscripts which, incidentally, would have been of greater historical interest if the date of writing could have been given in all instances.

Diverse subjects—"Whales," "I like Blue Jays!", "Foot-rule and Scales," and "Old Times on Currituck"—are discussed in lively and interesting fashion. Of special interest is the section on conservation which mentions early references to world-wide conservation and the history of conservation activities in North Carolina. One illustrative example of change of attitude and feeling is that in 1884 he had to be classified as a "Fertilizer Inspector" before he could be hired to prepare mounts of waterfowl and fishes. As early as 1920 Brimley pointed out (p. 73) that bird conservationists overstressed the economic value of birds and tended to neglect the esthetic and sentimental aspects.

The last part of the book treats of the history and development of the N. C. State Museum.—H. I. FISHER.

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OBITUARIES

CHARLES DEAN BUNKER, elected a member of the A. O. U. in 1923, died at his home in Lawrence, Kansas, on September 5, 1948. Bunker, the youngest of seven children, was born in Mendota, Illinois, on December 12, 1870. His childhood was largely spent in the out-of-doors rather than in the school room, owing to the advice of the family physician. This may have had much to do with developing in Bunker an interest in natural history, for a great deal of his time was spent in collecting and