

until closely prest, when it would fly a short distance. After being chased up the beach some 200 yards it would fly out around the pursuer back to its original rendezvous. This procedure would be repeated over and over.

It is thus apparent that the stranger was a beach-comber in habits, just as are the song sparrows in the summer home of *M. m. caurina*, in Alaska, and quite different in habits from the resident race of the Humboldt Bay region. I am very much indebted to Mr. Clay for the above information, and especially for the privilege of putting his capture on record, it being, as far as I know, the first for California.—J. GRINNELL.

Red Phalarope in Southern California in Winter.—In the May number of *THE CONDOR* H. S. Swarth mentioned the scarcity of winter records for the Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) in California.

In November and December, 1907, C. B. Linton and myself found this species very abundant around Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands. This note was published by Mr. Linton and may be found in *THE CONDOR*, Vol. X, 1908, p. 126. This was probably overlooked by Mr. Swarth.

Many specimens of this Phalarope were taken at this time and are now in the collections of Mr. Linton and myself. During the last week of November there were thousands of the birds and some remained well into December. I do not believe, however, that they staid thru the entire winter.—G. WILLETT.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

The New A. O. U. Check List.—Now that the Third Edition of the Check-List of North American Birds has actually appeared the student may at last discard with safety his worn-to-tatters 1895 copy, interlined, crost-out, emended, and procure for himself a clean new copy. Having done so, if he be of progressive tendency, mindful ever of the signs of advance in his field, he will at once begin again to interline, erase, re-instate, amplify. And herein lies the enormous scientific value of such a periodic compendium as the Check-List: it constitutes a basis for departure anew.

During the fifteen years which have elapst—altogether too long a time to allow between revized editions of a work of this sort—since the publication of the Second Edition, numerous additions and changes in status relative to North American birds have resulted from the constant activity in their study. By means of frequent supplements, printed in *The Auk*, the A. O. U. Committee on Nomenclature has kept the public posted on those of the proposed changes of which it has approved. To the student who has watcht this series of supplements, therefore, the new Check-List offers no startling innovations on this score. Since the classification and sequence employed in the Third Edition is practically the same as used in the Second, the only remaining really great point of improvement is in the much more full and accurately exprest statements of the ranges of species.

The adoption of the modern method of expressing animal distribution in terms of life zones leads to a conciseness of statement not before achieved. And the interpolation of a colored map of the Zones of North America, compiled by C. Hart Merriam and his assistants of the Biological Survey, gives to the reader unfamiliar with this method an invaluable key to the situation.

It is a recognized difficulty to bild a statement of range consistent with all known facts and yet keep it within the small space necessitated by the practical limits of a hand-book. Loose statements in the ranges of species, as given in the Check-List, appear to be relatively rare. A few are apparent: The range of *Junco hyemalis pinosus* is stated to be "Coast strip of San Mateo and northern Monterey counties, California." There is thus no indication that the species is just as well known to occupy suitable ground in the intervening territory (Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties). It is stated that *Melospiza lincolni lincolni* "winters from San Jacinto Mountains" etc.; we were not aware that the bird wintered in any of our mountains.

The breeding range of *Passerculus rostratus rostratus* is given as "unknown, but probably from about San Pedro, California, to" etc.; this is most emphatically *not* probable, as the coastal localities of southern California are well known to have been pretty thoroly searcht without finding any conclusive evidence of the breeding of the species within the state. The breeding range of a species cannot be considered as establish by one or two instances of occurrence of individual birds in summer.

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