

newer work, "Wild Life Conservation", are unique books, and they have to be placed in a class by themselves. The fact that they are a contribution to a cause, from a man who is devoting his life to that cause, adds interest and force to them. The commendatory criticism of another great champion of wild life, Theodore Roosevelt, is to be found in the *Outlook* for January 20, 1915.—H. C. BRYANT.

DISTRIBUTION AND MIGRATION OF NORTH AMERICAN RAILS AND THEIR ALLIES. By WELLS W. COOKE. Contribution from the Bureau of Biological Survey. [Bull. U. S. Dept. Agric. no. 128, pp. 1-50, 19 figs. (maps) in text. Issued September 25, 1914.]

This paper is a continuation of Professor Cooke's valuable work on the distribution and migration of North American birds. Previous publications of the Survey along this line have dealt with the warblers, ducks, geese and swans, shore birds, herons and their allies, and the egrets. Many papers concerned with the distribution of North American sparrows have been published in *Bird-Lore*.

A total of forty-four forms are considered in the present contribution, which deals with the rails. Of these twenty-one are confined to the West Indies or Middle America, and two species are casual in Greenland, leaving twenty-one forms (18 species and 3 subspecies) which range into or through the United States. The ranges of the extralimital forms and those of casual occurrence are briefly considered, while the ones occurring in the United States are treated more or less at length, according to the amount of information which is available concerning them.

The general, breeding, and winter ranges, spring and fall migrations, and dates upon which eggs or young have been taken or observed, are considered in turn. Maps showing the localities from which birds have been recorded are provided for each of the species occurring in the United States, and for the Spotted Crake of Europe. These show the breeding records, occurrences in summer, in winter, and wintering or resident records. Tables of the spring and fall migrations, showing the numbers of years for which the records have been kept, and the average and extreme dates of first and last appearance, are provided for the better known species. For reasons unknown to the reviewer the Humboldt Bay record of the California Clapper Rail (Cooper and Suckley, 1859, p. 246) is omitted.

Altogether the paper is a valuable contribution to distributional ornithology and an important reference manual. It is to be hoped that other groups may soon be treated in a similar manner and that the publications already issued, when republished, may be provided with distributional maps as in the present paper.—TRACY I. STORER.

SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF THE BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY.—Mr. McAtee's paper¹ on "How to Attract Birds in Northeastern United States" is the first of a series of publications which the Biological Survey plans to issue on similar topics. When the series is completed the whole of our country will have been covered and the special methods to be adopted in each region thoroughly discussed.

The fencing of bird havens and methods of supplying breeding places are first described. Two types of bathing and drinking vessels are figured and the necessity for a water supply pointed out; then the matter of food supply is taken up. Under "Artificial Food Supply" the materials suitable for artificial feeding in order to attract the several kinds of birds in the region are named, and some of the devices for offering the food are shown in the accompanying illustrations. The "Natural Food Supply" is next considered, first as regards seed-eating birds, and then as regards the fruit-eating species. The paper concludes with a table showing the seasons of fruits, both native and introduced, which are available in the region and attractive to the birds found there, and a second table of the fruits which are useful to protect the commercial species by serving as counter attractions. The publication of future bulletins in this series will be awaited with interest.

In "Game Laws for 1914"² Dr. Palmer and his assistants have presented their fifteenth annual report on the progress of game legislation in the United States and Canada. The bulletin presents a brief but comprehensive review of the measures enacted during the year, arranging them by subjects under the several states and in a uniform style to facilitate comparison. The legislation of 1914 was smaller in amount than for any year since 1906. In general it was

¹McAtee, W. L., How to Attract Birds in Northeastern United States. U. S. Dept. Agric., Farmers' Bull. 621, 15 pp., 11 text figs., 1 map. Issued December 14, 1914.

²Palmer, T. S., Bancroft, W. F., and Earnshaw, F. L. Game Laws for 1914. U. S. Dept. Agric., Farmers' Bull. 628, 52 pp. Issued October 20, 1914.

notable in extending increased protection to game animals in various ways. The instigation of the enforcement of the Federal Migratory Bird Law resulted in several states changing their laws to accord with that measure, and other states attempted to make their local laws more uniform.

Of particular interest to ornithologists are the Regulations for the Protection of Migratory Birds, which, as amended, are here presented in full. Tables giving the open seasons for various species of game in the States and Provinces are given, and data are also presented concerning the shipment of game, its sale, bag limits, and licenses for hunting and shipping game.

Bird houses are not so extensively used in the West as is the case in the eastern United States, but Dr. Dearborn's bulletin on "Bird Houses and How to Build Them"³ will doubtless stimulate interest along this important line of bird attraction. The author first comments on the increase in the number of bird houses in use and then proceeds to give practical directions accompanied by complete and detailed illustrations, with measurements, of many types of bird houses. All, from the simple tin can wired in a tree to the elaborate many-roomed "hotels" for martins, are well described. A table gives the best dimensions and height above the ground for houses intended for the various species. Plans for some food shelters are also given. The bulletin closes with some remarks on the care of bird houses and gives some suggestions concerning the handling of bird enemies. It is hoped that bird lovers in the West will avail themselves of this bulletin and put the information which it contains to good use.

Mr. Kalmbach's work on "Birds in Relation to the Alfalfa Weevil"⁴ is the result of two periods of field work in north-central Utah in 1911 and 1912. This pest was only introduced into the region in 1904, so that the results are of more than usual interest in showing the ability of birds to adapt themselves to a new food species in a short period of time. Forty-five species of birds ranging from the California Gull to the Mountain Bluebird were found feeding on the weevil, although the majority of the species were ground-inhabiting passerine

birds. Among these, the sparrows and the blackbirds and their allies were the most effective agents in the destruction of the weevil. The English Sparrow is a very abundant species throughout much of the weevil infested area, especially in the outlying districts, and in consequence of this a very detailed study of its food habits was made. In general it was found that the species was aiding in the destruction of the weevil, and it was recommended that the bounty on these birds be removed but that they be not placed on the list of protected species. In addition to the information concerning the alfalfa weevil there is a great deal concerning the other constituents of the food of the species studied. Five plates, two of which, a Western Meadowlark and a Brewer Blackbird are by Fuertes, and three text-figures illustrate the work.

The paper of anonymous authorship on American thrushes⁵, which is stated to have been "prepared from data furnished by F. E. L. Beal", is here reviewed because of Professor Beal's remote connection with it and also to call attention to the evil results attending compilation by one not well informed or properly able to handle another's findings. All of the other articles in the 1913 Yearbook are signed by members of the various Bureaus of the Agriculture Department; but the author of this contribution seemingly felt it necessary to suppress his identity. The quite "breezy" style of the article reminds one more of a newspaper "story" than of a product from the scientific offices of the Federal government. The article is also marred by lack of definite organization, and irregularity of treatment, in these respects comparing unfavorably with the other articles in this volume and with the contributions which have appeared from the members of the Biological Survey in previous Yearbooks.

Statements concerning the insects found in the stomachs of the thrushes are sweeping in character, and, in general, exact quantitative statements are almost lacking. Rearranged, with superfluous matter eliminated and sweeping statements reduced, the article could be of value in disseminating information concerning these important and widely distributed birds, for the Yearbook reaches a vast number of readers; but in its present form this cannot be fairly said of it.—TRACY I. STORER.

³Dearborn, N., Bird Houses and How to Build Them. U. S. Dept. Agric., Farmers' Bull. 609, 19 pp., 48 text figs. Issued September 11, 1914.

⁴Kalmbach, E. R., Birds in Relation to the Alfalfa Weevil. U. S. Dept. Agric., Bull. 107 (Professional Paper), 64 pp., pls. I-V, 3 figs. in text. Issued July 27, 1914.

⁵Anonymous. The American Thrushes Valuable Bird Neighbors. Prepared from data furnished by Prof. F. E. L. Beal, Biological Survey. U. S. Dept. Agric., Yearbook, 1913, pp. 137-142, frontisp. and pl. XV. Issued 1914.