

Mr. John W. Mailliard is at work upon a revised list of the birds of the Lake Tahoe district of east-central California, to be published in an early issue of the CONDOR. Mr. J. R. Pemberton has in preparation an article on the breeding birds of the southern coast district of Texas. Mr. Laurence M. Huey has spent a portion of the summer collecting vertebrates in the White Mountains, Mono County, California, in the interests of Mr. Donald R. Dickey.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

MATHEWS AND IREDALE'S MANUAL OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS*.—This is to be a well-ordered, down-to-date, and complete systematic compendium of the ornithology of Australia, if standards set in volume I prove to be maintained to the end of volume IV as announced. Efforts have been made to condense a great amount of information into small space, with eminent success it seems to the reviewer. The diagnoses of genera and higher groups are based on the latest researches, the synonymies are adequate, and the descriptions of the species are full, including appropriate consideration of the various plumages, nest, eggs, breeding season, incubation period and distribution. A special feature is the reduction of mention of subspecies to within the text of a paragraph with side-head "Distribution and forms". The bold-face headings have to do with full species only. While 188 full species are thus formally treated in the present volume, nearly 700 subspecies are given the brief form of mention indicated.

The Introduction contains short but suggestive essays on "nomenclature", "classification", and "zoogeographical distribution". A thing emphasized in discussing classification is the short-coming of morphologists generally, in each giving overweight to the structural features with which he happens to be dealing. Thus one man has constructed his system of classification on the skeleton, sometimes upon only one portion of the skeleton; another man has emphasized peculiarities of the circulatory system; another, pterylography; etc. Mathews and Iredale are undoubtedly warranted in their

complaint of one-sidedness on the part of most previous taxonomists. Their own efforts have been towards reducing the evidence from all available sources to a fair level, and building the classification here presented accordingly. The authors resent the casual "excursion", as they call the basis of the average contribution to avian morphology, as compared with the long-continued type of study upon which chiefly will the stable classification of the future depend. This is a point the reviewer is prone to complain of, himself: Many current contributions to ornithology are "theses" from persons who have worked in a given field but two or three years, and who rarely ever again publish upon the same subject.

Several of the colored plates show natal and juvenal plumages and serve to bring out a principle made much of by the authors, namely, that young plumages are to be given great weight in indicating phylogeny in birds—more weight relatively than many adult structures such as have been assigned great importance by most previous taxonomists.

Our comments upon the general text will concern some of the matter relating to American ornithology or American ornithologists, and hence most likely to be of interest to the majority of CONDOR readers.

Under "Fleshy-footed" Shearwater (*Hemipuffinus carneipes*), of which it is stated four subspecies have been indicated, it is further remarked that (p. 29) "This species has been procured off the coast of California, and Loomis's measurements suggest that this is a larger race still." In other words there is a possibility that the Flesh-footed Shearwaters visiting the ocean off California come from some breeding ground as yet unknown, but not necessarily south of the equator at all, as once inferred by Loomis from the facts then known to him. Here is a case where careful subspecific discrimination would be of service.

Under Sooty Albatross (*Phoebastria fusca*) the following statement (p. 49) occurs: "Nichols and Murphy contrasted Mathews's measurements with their own; but we would point out that their method of measuring is unknown to us and we cannot reconcile any of their figures with our own data." The reviewer has not verified this; but can it be that any modern writer on technical ornithology has failed to indicate so clearly just how his measurements were taken that his figures are not intelligible to a worker in another part of the world?

*A Manual of the Birds of Australia by Gregory M. Mathews and Tom Iredale, illustrated with [10] coloured and [36] monochrome plates by Lillian Medland. Volume I [four volumes to complete the work], orders Casuarii to Columbæ. H. F. & G. Witherby, 326 High Holborn, London, [March 9,] 1921. Crown 4to, art canvas, gilt top, pp. xxiv+279, illustrations as above. [Price £3 3s. per volume.]

Under "Light-mantled Sooty Albatross" (*Phoebetria palpebrata*), Mathews and Iredale point out that Nichols and Murphy slipped up (as had Mathews himself) in using the name they did (*antarctica* Mathews) for one of the recognized races, since that name already existed in the synonymy of "typical" *palpebrata*. The former authors therefore here (p. 50) propose a new name, *P. p. murphyi*, for "the South Georgian form." This new name is run in in a text paragraph, and, as with six other new names in the volume under review, it is distinguished in no special way (as by bold-face type) so as to prevent its being easily overlooked. There is, to be sure, a list (p. xxiv) of new names proposed; but this does not suffice. A most reprehensible practise here, as in other works by Mathews and Iredale, is that of omitting any designation of type specimen or of exact type locality.

Under "Royal Albatross" (*Diomedea epomophora*), it is stated (p. 57) that Murphy's "new subgenus", *Rhothonia*, based on the "new species," *Diomedea sanfordi*, "is obviously a form of the present species, agreeing in all details of structure." If this be true, it is a sad case of misunderstood variation. Again, Mathews and Iredale remark "We do not understand Murphy's measurements. . .".

We note (with alarm!) that the Knot of America becomes (p. 125) "*Calidris canutus rufus* (Wilson)." It seems that the authority for the genus name *Calidris* is "Anonymous"! Its type (by tautonymy) is (p. 123) *Tringa calidris*=*Tringa canutus* Linnaeus. It takes space precedence over *Canutus*. Hence our A. O. U. Committee, who we had hoped settled the case in the Seventeenth Supplement, will have to reconsider it. However, it must be said of Mathews and Iredale, in all fairness, that they have pursued nomenclatural questions with remarkable industry and, seemingly, great care, so as to bring their terminology into exact accord with the rules of the International Code.

As the above paragraphs intimate, Mathews and Iredale are free with criticisms of authors generally. They appear even hypercritical in places, though this impression may be due to the decided lack of criticism which obtains in most other current ornithological literature. When not overdone, the critical attitude is stimulative, and will make for more careful scrutiny of their materials and inferences on the part of future workers.—J. GRINNELL, *California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, June 19, 1921.*

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS NORTHERN DIVISION

JUNE.—The June meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology on the 23rd at 8 P. M. In the absence of the President and the Vice-President, Mr. Joseph Mailliard presided. The following were in attendance: Mesdames Allen, Bamford, Bridges, Burk, Flinn, Griffin, Mead, G. T. Roe, Schlesinger, Thomson, Van Gassbeek; Messrs. Baker, Farber, Grinnell, Hungate, Loomis, Mailliard, Miller, and Wheeler; visitors: Mesdames Howard, Hungate, Mellon, Thomson, and Wheeler, Mr. Martens and Miss Everson.

The minutes of the May meeting were read and approved and May minutes of the Southern Division were read. Mr. Robert Cunningham Miller, 2406 Fulton St., Berkeley, was proposed for membership by J. Grinnell. Mr. Grinnell reported on the steps necessary to the establishment of a University prize for an essay in Ornithology. Further action in the matter was postponed until the next meeting.

Mr. Grinnell then gave a resume of his eastern trip, touching upon his train censuses, his problems for investigation in different museums, his conferences with bird students, and the newest methods of investigation of bird life.

Adjourned.—AMELIA S. ALLEN, *Secretary.*

AUGUST.—The regular meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club for July was postponed until August 3, in order that it might be held in connection with the meetings of the Pacific Division, A. A. A. S. The Club convened at 7:30 P. M. for the transaction of business with President Wright in the chair. About 50 members and visitors were present.

The minutes of the June meeting were read and approved. Dr. Grinnell reported on the acceptance of the Cooper Prize in Ornithology by the University of California. Dr. Evermann made an announcement concerning all meetings of the Pacific Division. The following papers were presented as special program for the evening:

Joseph Grinnell, The Principle of Rapid Peering, in Birds.

Ralph Hoffmann, First Impressions of California Bird Life.

Barton Warren Evermann, The White Pelican Colonies of Anaho Island, Pyramid Lake, Nevada; Illustrated with lantern slides.

Adjourned.—TRACY I. STORER, *Secretary pro tem.*