

NOTES AND NEWS

At the eightieth meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in Salt Lake City in August of this year the following officers were elected or continued in service: President, Austin L. Rand; First Vice-President, Roger Tory Peterson; Second Vice-President, Robert W. Storer; Secretary, Lawrence H. Walkinshaw; Treasurer, Robert J. Newman; Editor, Robert M. Mengel. New Councilors elected were John W. Aldrich, Thomas R. Howell, and Charles G. Sibley.

The Brewster Award was made to Albert Wolfson.

New Fellows elected were William J. Beecher, Philip S. Humphrey, Robert J. Newman, and Robert K. Selander.

Niko Tinbergen was elected an Honorary Fellow. Corresponding Fellows named were Friedrich Goethe, A. J. Ivanof, Maria Koepcke, and John M. Winterbottom.

Persons added to the class of Elective Members were Walter Bock, Crawford Greenewalt, Lawrence Kilham, George W. Salt, Paul Slud, and Richard Zusi.

Important to all working ornithologists is the appearance in August of 1962 of volume XV of the Check-list of Birds of the World, edited by Mayr and Greenway—the continuation of Peters' work. This volume includes the weaverbirds, starlings, Old-world orioles, drongos, wood-swallows, Australian butcherbirds, bowerbirds, birds of paradise, crows and jays, and several smaller families.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

HANDBOOK OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS. VOLUME 1. LOONS THROUGH FLAMINGOS. Edited by Ralph S. Palmer. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, vii + 567 pp., 6 color plates, many black and white illustrations, 1962; \$15.00.

The appearance of a volume as eagerly awaited by American ornithologists as the first volume of the Handbook of North American Birds should be an event which a reviewer could report with a great deal of pleasure. Unfortunately, this is not the case. After such a great outlay of time, effort, and money, one can only regret that the final product is, in general, so unsatisfactory.

The area covered by the volume coincides with that of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list, except that the Mexican peninsula of Baja California is omitted. Included are Green-

land, Canada, the United States except Hawaii, and various islands including the Bermudas.

The introduction discusses the method of treatment of a number of kinds of information, including such topics as higher categories, plumages and molts, color specification, measurements, voice, distribution, and the like. These topics are discussed in considerable detail, perhaps, in some instances, in too much detail, but at least there is little chance that the reader will misunderstand the manner in which these subjects are treated in the species accounts. A chromatic hexagon by J. Villalobos is included which makes for some degree of standardization in text references to color. One of the worst features of the book is the use of the nomenclature of molts and plumages devised by Humphrey and Parkes (Auk, 1959). A perusal of recent issues of the three leading American ornithological journals reveals that very few American ornithologists have adopted this system. As a result, nearly all readers will have to refer repeatedly to page 3, on which the old, familiar classification of molts and plumages is equated with the "new" classification, if they are to understand the material on molts and plumages in the species accounts.

The species accounts present the following information compiled by 26 contributors: a brief characterization of the species; description (including descriptions of each plumage, measurements, and geographical variation within the species); subspecies; field identification; voice; habitat; distribution (a brief statement of range and a distribution map); migration; banding status; reproduction (including reproductive behavior); habits; and food. Although the array of subjects covered is impressive, the species accounts are too often treated as receptacles into which a vast number of facts is thrown without regard to relative importance or possible duplication.

The characterization of each species preceding the general account should have been omitted as it adds little and too often duplicates material in other sections. For example, consider the account of the Great Shearwater, which starts as follows: "Great Shearwater—*Puffinus gravis* (O'Reilly). Greater Shearwater of A. O. U. list; Hagdon of fishermen on Grand Banks of Nfld.; Petrel of Tristan da Cunha. Large, heavily built, dark-billed, long-winged, short-tailed, brown and white shearwater with clearly defined dark cap, also dark back and tail; a pale collar, whitish band