

ELECTION OF MEMBERS.

The following names are proposed for active membership in the Wilson Chapter. Adverse votes should be sent to the Secretary, John W. Daniel, Jr., 3146 Q street, Washington, D. C.:

R. L. Baird, Oberlin, O.

Alex. W. Blain, Jr., 131 Elmwood avenue, Detroit, Mich.

Frank Bruen, 264 Main street, Bristol, Ct.

Homer L. Bigelow, 330 Commonwealth avenue, Boston, Mass.

LEAST TERNS—A CORRECTION

In the W. O. C. BULLETIN, No. 36, the writer stated that some least terns (*S. antillarum*) "were found breeding in Martha's Vineyard Island, near West Chop, by Dr. H. Smith, late in July." This information came to me through a man who was supposed to have seen the terns. Later in the summer, after I had sent the above mentioned note to the publisher of the BULLETIN, I talked to Dr. Smith himself about the terns, and learned that the breeding place was not near West Chop, but on the farther side of Martha's Vineyard, near Katama. R. M. STRONG.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

STORIES OF BIRD LIFE. By T. Gilbert Pearson.

This book is brimful of interesting sketches of birds, many of which have been individualized, as the Arredondo Sparrow Hawk, Ruffle-breast (Logger-head Shrike), Bibneck, the Plover, etc. While primarily for the young student, it is written in such a manly, sympathetic and accurate vein, without the least trace of offensive sentimentalism, as to be profitable and pleasant reading for all. It is emphatically the better sort of popular ornithological literature. The reader might, perhaps, wish that the perpetrators of the indiscriminate slaughter on the college campus and elsewhere, as so feelingly portrayed by the author in the closing chapter, might be turned over to the tender mercies of the Audubon Society. Professor Pearson permits the reader to draw his own inference after submitting the facts. The text is charmingly illustrated by John L. Ridgway and Miss Elsie Weatherly.—F. L. B.

BIRDS OF MADISON COUNTY, NEW YORK. By George Charles Embody, B. S. (Presented as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science, Colgate University, 1901.)

This is a careful and intelligent list of 192 species and subspecies, a number of which are quite rare. Black-capped Petrel, American Scoter, Black Brant, Knot, Hudsonian Godwit, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Nelson's and Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Plumbeous Vireo, Orange-crowned and Hooded Warblers; and is followed by a hypothetical list of 16 more species of which no satisfactory records have been made, but by reason of their occurrence in neighboring counties, future observations may reveal them. Based chiefly upon five or six years' active field work by the author, supplemented by all other data obtainable, an extremely creditable paper has resulted; one that will require little correction in the future. The description of the physical conditions, vegetation, etc., of the district, furnish the facts from which we can more than surmise the reason of the scarcity or abundance of certain species. The author is to be congratulated upon the appearance of his paper, and also upon his able assistants, whose aid and suggestions he so generously acknowledges.—
F. L. B.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NEBRASKA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, at its Second Annual Meeting, Omaha, Neb., January 12, 1901.

Although young as an organization, the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union exhibits every mark of being among the foremost of State Associations in active field work. The proceedings are preserved in a substantial volume of one hundred pages and ten plates. In addition to the matter belonging strictly to the organization—abstract of minutes, constitution and by-laws, list of members, and President Trostler's address—one of the most important papers is by Prof. Lawrence Bruner, on "Birds in Their Relation to Agriculture." Superintendent Wilson Tout offers some sensible suggestions in relation to "Ornithology in Schools." "A Late Nest of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird," by Frank I. Shoemaker, and "Young Rose-breasted Grosbeaks," by Elizabeth Van Sant, are interesting accounts of young in nest. The oologist will be pleased with "Notes on the Breeding of the Prothonotary Warbler, and Observations on Traill's Flycatcher," by M. A. Carriker, Jr.; "Breeding Habits of Bell's Vireo," by Merrit Cary, and "Birds that Nest in Nebraska," by Prof. Lawrence Bruner. Edwin H. Barbour touches upon "A Peculiar Disease of Birds' Feet Observed in Central Nebraska," and Henry B. Ward on "The Internal Parasites of Nebraska Birds." On "Migration Records and Our Nebraska Records," R. H. Wolcott unfolds a scheme for the "accurate numerical valuation of terms relating to the abundance of species and for an accurate and uniform method of

recording migration observations." A number of shorter papers are equally valuable.—F. L. B.

CATALOGUE OF A COLLECTION OF HUMMINGBIRDS FROM ECUADOR AND COLOMBIA. By Harry C. Oberholser. From the proceedings of the U. S. National Museum, Vol. XXIV., pages 309-342.

The collection of hummingbirds here described was "gathered by Messrs. Claude Hamilton and Walter Goodfellow during their trip to Ecuador and Colombia, in 1898 and 1899." With the possible exception of that brought together by Baron, it is probably the finest single collection ever made, comprising, as it does, 1136 specimens, almost all in fine condition of plumage, and accompanied by proper data. Although some of them are from Colombia, by far the greater number were collected in Ecuador. One hundred and nine species and sub-species are represented." Three new forms are described. Notes touching the life history of some of the species, by the collectors, add interest and value to the paper.—L. J.

BIRD-LORE'S FIELD IDENTIFICATION BLANK.

Just as we go to press this useful little pocket blank appears. It is intended for those who are beginning the study of birds—live birds—but will prove useful to those who are trying to extend their acquaintance beyond the ordinary. Cuts of the heads of five species appear on the front cover, all natural size, while the back cover contains the contour topography of a Bluebird, with every part named. A six-inch scale on the outside of this cover completes the equipment for field study, so far as a notebook can. The first page of instructions for field work is followed by fifteen pages, upon which descriptions are to be written. Each of these pages contains a place for locality, date, haunt, length, size and shape of bill; length and shape of tail, color (twelve parts of the body), voice, movements, etc., with the reverse side for remarks. This little blank should prove useful to those who are anxious to know how to begin the study of birds. It may be obtained from the J. Horace McFarland Co., Crescent and Mulberry Sts., Harrisburg, Pa., for ten cents a copy.—L. J.

SUMMER BIRDS OF FLATHEAD LAKE. By P. M. Silloway, Principal Fergus County High School, author of "Some Common Birds." Prepared at the University of Montana Biological Station, under the direction of Morton J. Elrod.

This 83 page bulletin is accompanied with 16 half tones representing the region studied, and a number of nests and eggs of the region. The 128 species recorded are about equally divided between the strictly western species and those which range pretty much over the entire country. But that part of Montana lies

almost upon the dividing line between some of the forms, and at the western range of others.

The author concludes: "Of the 123 species included in the foregoing list, it is probable that at least eight are fall migrants, breeding in the far north and entering the United States early toward the close of summer. It is likely that the remaining 120 species breed in the Flathead Lake region, or near the northern border of the state. At least thirty of the birds listed for the region are permanent residents; the others are summer residents only, spending the cold months in more southern localities."

The annotations under each species are well considered, for the most part, and add materially to the value of the paper. We trust that a further study of the birds of the region will give the altitudes at which the different ones nest, and to which they range.—L. J.

THE FOOD OF THE MYRTLE WARBLER. By Clarence M. Weed and Ned Dearborn. New Hampshire College Agricultural Experiment Station, Technical Bulletin No. 3, November, 1901. Pages 117-128.

In this contribution to economic ornithology, remarks upon the life history of the Myrtle Warbler, as found in New Hampshire, are followed by a detailed study of about forty specimens taken at different times and places during the month of October, 1899, supplemented by the examination of the stomach contents of two specimens taken, one in March the other in May, 1900. A detailed summary table gives the following result in percentages: Insecta, 29.65; Arachnida, .02; vegetable matter, 62.25; undetermined matter, 7.13. The authors state that this rather large percentage of vegetable matter is due to the abundance of the myrtle berries during the autumn months, but that during spring, when such a source of food is almost gone, a much larger proportion of insects is consumed. It thus becomes clear, when we know that the vegetable matter eaten has no economic value, that the Myrtle Warbler is worthy of protection at all times. The destruction of bird life to such a moderate extent, for the purpose of determining its true status as an aid to man, we hold justifiable. But once the status is determined, there can be no justification for any further sacrifice for study looking to the same end.—L. J.

BIRD KILLING AS A METHOD IN ORNITHOLOGY. By Reginald C. Robbins. Cambridge, Mass.

From the pen of a layman who has the welfare of the birds upon his heart, we have twelve pages of rather abstruse reasoning to prove that "Bird Killing as a Method in Ornithology" is not justifiable. If we rightly understand the author's argument, it may be briefly stated thus: Since every bird is an individual, and as

an individual therefore different from every other bird, and therefore representing, in its individual capacity, some line of variation, it will be impossible to determine the ultimate variations in ornithological classification until the last individual bird has been critically examined. Manifestly this is a logical reasoning. It is possible, however, to place a limit upon the extent to which variation shall be recognized in classification. It may be safe to assume that in any well-defined region of limited extent, where practically all conditions are the same throughout this region, that there will be no variation worthy of notice among the species inhabiting it. But of course there will be a degree of variation. If, as the author argues, we must go into these slight individual variations, then his argument that all birds are doomed stands out clearly.

We are pleased to note that the author does not place the ban upon killing birds for any purpose whatsoever. He recognizes the claims of those who are pursuing lines of original investigation, but limits the privilege to those persons. His argument, therefore, has the more weight for this conservative attitude. We believe that the time when collecting for the sake of building up a small private collection for selfish purposes, with no notion of making a contribution to our knowledge of birds by means of that collection, lies in the past. We have outgrown that.

While the author assumes an extreme attitude toward those who kill birds for "scientific" purposes in general, we believe the note of warning is not wholly out of place, and should be one of the influences for checking the tendency to unduly reduce the bird life of the country.—L. J.

BIRDS OF NORTH AND MIDDLE AMERICA. By Robert Ridgway.
Part I. Fringillidæ. United States National Museum, Washington, D. C., 1901.

It is a pleasure to record the appearance of a book which treats of the Fringillidæ of the whole of North America, and to note that it is but the first of its kind. When those which are to follow are finished, we shall have, for the first time, the whole North American bird fauna. The check-list of North American birds has always been misleading to the uninitiated. The unfortunate necessity of putting limitations upon a well-defined geographical region has, of course, been manifest, but we trust that this necessity may be disappearing with the better facilities of travel and the greater activities of naturalists.

This volume of 715 pages, and some 30 pages of prefatory matter, supplemented by 20 admirably executed plates illustrating the heads, wings, tail and feet of type species, is one of the most important books upon birds published. It fitly opens the new century as a most important work.

This volume is concerned with a single family, the Fringillidæ

(sparrows, finches, etc.), and the "attempt is made to describe every species and sub-species, or definable form, of bird found on the continent of North America, from the arctic districts to the western end of the Isthmus of Panama, together with those of the West Indies and other islands of the Caribbean Sea (except Trinidad and Tobago), and the Galapagos Archipelago; introduced and naturalized species being included, as well as accidental or casual visitors."

The list includes 389 species and sub-species. Of these 389, upwards of 230 are given three scientific names. The increase of trinomials over previous lists and catalogues is partly due to the extension of the application of trinomialism to each member of a group in which a trinomial occurs, instead of distinctly separating off the type form by using for that one the binominal name. This practice is entirely logical, but we cannot but deplore its adoption into a system which is already too cumbersome. Furthermore, it seems almost an introduction to a system of further multiplication of scientific names to the quadrinomial or n th power. We cannot overlook the fact that there are intergradations between species and higher and lower groups also, but it seems entirely feasible and sane to place a limit upon what shall be called a recognizable form by determining what that limit is from a practical standpoint. It makes no practical difference whether the particular Cardinal in question is a *Cardinalis cardinalis cardinalo-floridanus*, or a *Cardinalis cardinalis floridano-cardinalis*. Furthermore, the adoption of an ultra scientific system which can be used only by the expert in color values and careful measurements of many specimens, is divorcing the scientific from the practical. Science can lay claim to recognition, in these enlightened days, only by its contribution to the welfare of the largest possible number of people. We no longer have use for a science which is wholly for scientists. There is a middle ground between the scientific and popular which is both accurate and understandable.

The author's name is sufficient guaranty of the accuracy and completeness of the work. The bibliographical references alone almost stagger us with their suggestion of the work involved. Add to this the time and work involved in the examination of specimens in the National Museum and other collections to which he had access, and some conception of what this volume represents of work and study may be obtained. We trust that the author's life may be spared to complete what has been undertaken, and of which this is the first of eight volumes.

The difficulty involved in beginning this series with the highest instead of the lowest group in the contemplated series, does not seem great when it is known that the nomenclature followed is that of the A. O. U. If, as we have reason to hope, this nomenclature will again be revised so that we may have a wholly logi-

ical catalogue instead of one thrown together with little reference to logical sequences below the higher groups, the question of nomenclature or sequence would be the same wherever the beginning should be made.

The author has the hearty thanks of all who have the interests of a more comprehensive literature relating to the birds of this continent at heart. There is no "Imperialism" involved in the invasion of Mexico and the Central American States for ornithological research.—L. J.

Amateur Sportsman, The, XXVI., No. 4, 1902.

American Monthly Microscopical Journal, The, XXIII., Nos. 1 and 2, 1902.

American Ornithology, II., No. 1, 1902.

Bird-Lore, IV., No. 1, 1902.

Birds and Nature, XI., Nos. 1 and 2, 1902.

Bulletin No. 57, Pennsylvania State College Agricultural Experiment Station.

Maine Sportsman, IX., No. 12, 1902.

Osprey, The, I., No. 1, 1902. New series.

Plant World, The, V., No. 1, 1902.