

## REVIEWS OF PUBLICATIONS

## THE BIRDS OF NORTH AND MIDDLE AMERICA.

## PART VI. BY ROBERT RIDGWAY.

The sixth part of this monumental work comprises the Picariæ with the families Picidae (152 forms), Capitonidae (4 forms), Ramphastidae (14 forms), Galbulidae (3 forms), Buceconidae (13 forms), the Anisodactylæ with the families Alcedinidae (10 forms), Todidae (6 forms), Momotidae (20 forms), Caprimulgidae (39 forms), Nyctibiidae (5 forms) and the Striges with the families Tytonidae (9 forms) and Bubonidae (94 forms). Quite a number of new forms are here given for the first time and many critical remarks on already diagnosed forms are made. For instance in regard to the further subdivision of the genus *Centurus* among the Picidae. When it is stated that the forms of *Dryobates villosus* and *pubescens*, of *Colaptes auratus* of *Phlæotomus pileatus* show a gradual increase in size from Florida northward without any material change in coloration one is inclined to ask has the naming of all these forms a practical value besides the mere scientific value? A great deal depends of course upon the point of view in such cases, but when it comes to being a science for science's sake only, when the scientific and the practical are thus separated we are inclined to ask, "cui bono?" On the other hand, some of these problems must be solved along these lines, and no man is better able to solve them than Professor Ridgway, the distinguished author of this work. It is interesting, too, to notice the different views, which for instance Professor Ridgway and Dr. A. Reichenow, express in their respective works about such a family as the Striges. Space forbids us to enter upon any details, but a careful study of both authors will show that either view has some points in its favor, and that Dr. Reichenow's ideas cannot be disposed of with a few remarks, as was done in the review of his work in the Auk some time ago, which only showed and proved that the reviewer had not in the least understood the fundamental principle of Dr. Reichenow's classification, and in his ignorance of the case had simply squelched its merits. *Cryptoglaux acadicus scotæus* is considered an individual variation of *acadicus* proper, and *Otus flammeolus idahoensis* is referred to *flammeolus*, and *Otus xantusi* is made a subspecies of *asio*, and we think in every case that Mr. Ridgway is correct. The same principle will perhaps apply to *Glaucidium gnoma hoskinsii*, which applies to *Cryptoglaux acadicus scotæus*. Altogether Mr. Ridgway is to be congratulated upon the completion of this volume, and we hope that the other parts will speedily follow.

W. F. H.

## THE BIRDS OF VIRGINIA.

BY HAROLD H. BAILEY.

This neat and attractive volume of 362 pages treats of the breeding birds of the great state of Virginia, practically all of which have been hunted up and critically recorded by the author and his father. One hundred and eight generally good halftones from various sources accompany the text, as also fourteen full page colored plates by Mr. Earl L. Poole, of Philadelphia. We have seen some of the original paintings of this young artist and do not hesitate to declare that they are both highly artistic and scientifically correct, and absolutely equal to the best which have been produced in this country, and we have seen the paintings of them all. The text is carefully written and shows that Mr. Bailey, who is an ardent Oölogist, has put his knowledge acquired in watching the nesting habits of the birds to good use, and is a splendid protector of the feathered tribe, as every true Oölogist should be. We regret that he has not added a short list of all the birds recorded in the state, and that he has not used the metric system in giving measurements of eggs. We can highly recommend this pleasing volume to all who love to read about and study the birds in their haunts. W. F. H.

A Monograph of the Genus *Chordeiles* Swainson, Type of a new Family of Goatsuckers. By Harry C. Oberholser. U. S. National Museum Bulletin 86. 1914.

The author seems to have made out a good case for the addition of a new family to North American birds. He has evidently gone into the subject deeply and spared no pains to prove his case. The same seems to hold for the erection of a new genus to separate the Whipoorwills from the Chuch-wills-widow group. The paper is thorough in treatment and is nearly the last word as related to the Goatsuckers. There are still a few forms whose winter distribution is not known. L. J.

A Distributional List of the Birds of Arizona. By Harry S. Swarth. Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 10. Published by the Cooper Ornithological Club, May 25, 1914.

There are here included 362 species and subspecies, grouped as 152 resident, 72 summer visitant, 57 winter visitant, 30 transient, 51 of casual occurrence, and a hypothetical list of 24. The large number of resident species is explained as due to the fact that many species which are truly migratory merely migrate from a higher to a lower altitude but do not leave the state. A colored map of the state is a great help. The paper closes with lists of species grouped according to faunal regions, and with a voluminous bibliography. This contribution is in every way the equal of other numbers of this valuable series of papers. L. J.

The Birds of El Paso County, Colorado. I and II. By Charles E. H. Aiken and Edward R. Warren. Colorado College Publications, General Series Nos. 74, 75, 76. May, June-September, 1914.

The life zones included in this county are Upper Sonoran, Transition, Canadian, Hudsonian, and Arctic-Alpine. Lists of the birds which are peculiar to these several zones are given. A history of the work done in the county is given, the climate is described, and the altitudes given. The birds are divided according to occurrence as resident throughout the year, 46 species; summer residents, 84 species; breeding birds which occasionally winter, 7 species; non-breeding birds which winter, 28 species; non-breeding birds which pass through in migration, 52 species; non-breeding birds of occasional occurrence, 51 species; exterminated species, 3; introduced species, 4, making a grand total of 275 species. There are many good halftone pictures from photographs, and in the treatment of the species in the body of the paper the annotations are interesting and valuable. This paper is a distinct contribution to local ornithology.

L. J.

The Birds of Waukesha County, Wisconsin. By Alvin R. Cahn. Bulletin of the Wisconsin Natural History Society, Vol. XI (New Series), No. 4, December, 1913. Pages 113-149.

A good map of the county makes clear the great number of lakes which it contains, and the large amount of swampy area. It would have helped to have also indicated the tamarack areas. A description of the topography of the county and an account of the work done upon which the list is based, with acknowledgements, is followed by the annotated list of 202 species, 8 of which are given as hypothetical. There are 15 Residents, 7 Winter residents, 69 Summer residents, 79 Migrants, 11 Migrant and summer residents, 7 Migrants and winter residents, and 6 Rare visitants. These various groups are given in separate lists in a recapitulation at the close of the paper. The author has evidently taken pains to make certain of the identification of each species before giving it place. In this he is to be commended. There are four good halftone plates from photographs, each plate containing two pictures. Probably the author is not responsible for the capitalization of the part of the compound words which follows the hyphen. This is consistently done throughout the paper. We are glad to have this faunal local list.

L. J.

The Red-winged Blackbird: A Study in the Ecology of a Cat-tail Marsh. By Arthur A. Allen. From Abstracts of Proceedings, Linnaean Society of New York. Nos. 24-25, 1911-13. Pages 41-128.

We have seen few papers which can compare with this one in thoroughness of the work done, interpretation of the facts gathered, arrangement of the material, selection, and makeup. The numerous halftones from photographs are not only uniformly good, but they tell something

worth recording. It is not possible to begin to do justice to this paper in the space at our disposal. Everybody who is at all interested in the side of bird study illustrated by this paper ought to possess a copy. We hope that there are plenty of them to be had. L. J.

On the Habits and Behavior of the Herring Gull, *Larus argentatus* Pont. By R. M. Strong. From "The Auk," Vol. XXXI, January and April, 1914. Pp. 23-49, 178-199.

This paper is based on studies carried on among the breeding colonies of these gulls upon the islands in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The limits of this review preclude anything like an adequate treatment of this excellent paper. The field studies are supplemented by painstaking investigations in the laboratories of the University of Chicago. The pictures—half-tones from photographs—are carefully chosen and each one has its peculiar contribution to make to the paper. There is little left to be desired in the field which this paper covers. If a similar study of the winter habits of these gulls could be as carefully done we should then know about all of the life history. L. J.

#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

A Further Study of the Home Life of the Brown Thrasher—*Toxostoma rufum* Linn. By Ira N. Gabrielson. From the Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science for 1913. Pp. 299-304.

A Heronry near Indianapolis. Pp. 57-58.

Further notes on Indiana Birds. Pp. 59-65.

Birds that Destroy Grapes. Pp. 53-55.

All by Amos W. Butler. From Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. 43.

Use and Value of Wild Birds to Texas Farmers and Stockmen and Fruit and Truck Growers. Compiled by H. P. Attwater. 1914. Texas Department of Agriculture Bulletin. May-June, 1914. No. 37.

Birds in Relation to the Alfalfa Weevil. By E. R. Kalmbach, Assistant Biologist. Bulletin of the U. S. Dept. of Agri. No. 107.

The Ontogeny of the White Ibis; Specialization of Tail Down in Ducks; Effect of Postponed Moults in Certain Passerine Birds; Preliminary Pheasant Studies. By C. William Beebe, Curator of Birds. Zoological Scientific Contributions of the New York Zoological Society, Vol. 1, Nos. 12-15.

The Extermination of America's Bird Fauna. By R. W. Shufeldt. Separataftryk Af, "Nyt Magazin for Naturvidenskaberne." Christiania, 1914.

Osteology of the Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*). By R. W. Shufeldt. From "The Auk," Vol. XXXI, No. 3, July, 1914. Pp. 358-362.

Notes on the Louisiana Clapper Rail (*Rallus crepitans saturatus*) in Texas. By George Finlay Simmons. From "The Auk," Vol. XXXI, No. 3, July, 1914. Pp. 363-384.