

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

NATURALIST'S GUIDE TO THE AMERICAS. By Victor E. Shelford, and a group of special editors. Williams and Wilkins. 1926. Pp. 1-761. Price \$10.00.

The Naturalist's Guide appeared in the summer of 1926 after several years of effort on the part of the editors to produce a manual with descriptions of areas suitable for collecting and field studies. Such an object does not permit of complete accomplishment, but the editors deserve the congratulations of naturalists for approaching the objective as nearly as they have. The book will be of great value to naturalists who are traveling or taking up new headquarters in parts of the country with which they are unacquainted.

Descriptions of localities are written by many authors, all of whom are well known scientists selected from the hosts of field naturalists, evidently with considerable care and on the ground of their acquaintance with the regions which they describe. More than a hundred writers were engaged in the preparation of the descriptive portion of the work. Nineteen short papers form an introduction under the title "Uses, values, and management of natural areas." We find here many suggestions as to the administration of wild lands and conservation of wild life, along with other useful information. This is followed by about twenty-five pages of discussion of the original biota of America, together with a bibliography of the same subject.

The bulk of the book treats of "Natural Areas and Regions," and these regions are numerous within the extensive boundaries of North America and northern South America. The classification of these natural areas is based upon general ecological features, and is as follows:

Northern North America: Ice covered areas, Tundra, and northern Coniferous Forest.

Southern Canada and the United States.

- A. States, Provinces and Forest Districts, chiefly Coniferous Forest.
- B. States chiefly Deciduous Forest.
- C. States with Deciduous Forest, southeastern Coniferous Forest, and large Swamp Areas.
- D. States chiefly Oak Grove Savanna.
- E. States chiefly Grassland or Steppe.
- F. States chiefly Desert and Semi-Desert.

The Tropics north of the Equator.

- A. Mexico and Central America.
- B. Northern South America.
- C. Islands in the Atlantic and adjacent waters.
- D. Pacific Islands.

In the descriptions of the regions listed under each one of the subheadings indicated by capital letters above, there is no very close adherence to one outline, but in general the descriptions discuss the following: General Conditions, Geology, Physiography and Topography, Drainage, Maps available, Climate, Biota, Routes of travel, Soil, Pollution, etc. Lists of animals and plants are included. Some of these attempt completeness, while only the more important or prominent forms are selected in others. Ornithologists will find some useful bird lists, such as the Hudson Bay and Alaska region (p. 118), Athabasca region (p. 123), Yukon region (p. 135), Ohio (p. 357), Michigan (p. 381), and Mexico (pp. 580-593). About half of these lists give only the vernacular names of the species.

Locations of refuges, reservations, and National forests are given, with much else of value to the field naturalist, which will aid him in selecting regions for special investigations or faunal studies.

Little can be said in the way of adverse criticism of the Naturalist's Guide. As noted, such a work cannot approach completeness, but the lack of symmetry in treatment of the biota of many regions is puzzling and cannot be accounted for through lack of published information on the groups not treated. Fishes, amphibians, reptiles, insects, and mollusks are given little attention. In the case of the insects and other invertebrates the authors explain the omissions by referring to the small amount of ecological work that has been done on the invertebrates. This is surprising to the reviewer in view of the work of Forbes, Adams, Kofoid, and others in Illinois, Comstock, Baker, and Needham in New York, and Smith in New Jersey, as well as other work which might be cited. Omissions are explained by saying, "The principal users will be students of mammals, birds, or general ecology including plants." In view of the disproportionate treatment of biota, one may question the fitness of the title. Perhaps the publication should have been called a manual of ecology of terrestrial vertebrates. It is hoped that the book is the beginning of a series of similar works, the others treating the forms omitted in this one; then it will justify its present title, the "Naturalist's Guide."

The many bibliographies in the book will be found helpful to bird students, as well as others. Notwithstanding the disappointments that will come to some naturalists, who fail to find their limited fields adequately treated, the work is a valuable one, and excellent "as far as it goes." Bird students, and ecologists generally, will ever be grateful to Dr. Shelford, and the other editors and many authors, for making available so much useful information in a compact, handy, and well-bound field manual.—T. L. HANKINSON.

BIRDS OF WESTERN CANADA. By P. A. Taverner. Museum Bull. No. 41, Victoria Memorial Museum. Published by the Canada Department of Mines, Ottawa, Canada, September, 1926. Pp. 1-380, 80 colored plates. Price, 75 cents in paper covers, \$1.00 in cloth.

After an interval of seven years this book appears as a complement to the earlier work by the same author on the "Birds of Eastern Canada." The new work makes a portly volume, which, with the beautiful colored plates, will be received as a welcome addition to our ornithological literature. The text is organized on the plan of the earlier volume; in places the earlier text is borrowed, but with much revision and with the addition of much new matter. Each species is described and annotated as to "distinctions," field marks, nesting, distribution, and economic status. All forms are discussed as species, but the recognized subspecies are mentioned and briefly discussed in a separate paragraph. This procedure is to be commended, we believe, in a work of this kind. This mode of treatment mitigates much of the inherent objection to the sub-specific gradation. To the average reader subspecies are of but incidental interest, and he does not wish to be annoyed by having them thrust upon his attention. With the subjection of subspecies as effected in this work the reader is not likely to be annoyed, and he may even take an interest in the subject.

The illustrations are especially noteworthy. Altogether there are 315 text figures in black, showing characteristic structures, such as head, bill, feet, tail, feathers, etc. Especially valuable are the flight silhouettes of the birds of prey,

which also show, in some cases, useful diagnostic field marks. Each colored plate presents two or more species. Some of the paintings are the work of F. C. Hennessey, and first appeared in the "Birds of Eastern Canada." All of the new plates are by Allan Brooks, the authority on birds of the northwest. In comparing the work of these two artists we notice that Mr. Hennessey minimizes the background by using pale colors. Major Brooks, on the other hand, produces darker backgrounds with usually greater detail, thus approaching the style of Thorburn, the English artist. For this reason we believe the work of Brooks is more pleasing in its general effect, though we do not extend this comparison to the portraits of the birds, necessarily.

In general, the work presents the appearance of scientific accuracy, and will, at the same time, be acceptable as a popular treatise on the birds of the area treated; this area is so extensive, however, that the work is not local, and is by no means so limited in its usefulness.—T. C. S.

DELINEATIONS OF AMERICAN SCENERY AND CHARACTER. By John James Audubon. With an introduction by Francis Hobart Herrick. 1926. G. A. Baker & Co., 247 Park Ave., New York. Pp. 1-349. Price \$4.50.

We note with satisfaction an apparent renewal of interest by American publishers in the older ornithological literature. Those who are familiar with Audubon's Ornithological Biography will recall that the first three, of the five, volumes contained chapters giving details of Audubon's travels, observations, and personal experiences, these chapters being intercalated among those on the birds. Audubon's powers of observation were very keen, his literary style is unique, his place in ornithological history is well known and unquestioned; all of which combine now to make the writings of this early naturalist unusually entertaining. These writings, hitherto, have not been available to most present-day readers. The plates have been prohibitive in cost, and even the text, the Ornithological Biography, sells for about fifty dollars when a set can be found.

The title here reviewed presents in one volume all of these chapters, sometimes called "episodes," fifty-nine in number, together with the introductions to Volume II and Volume III. Professor Francis H. Herrick has written a biographical introduction, which gives briefly an appreciation of the great naturalist; we believe, however, that a typographical error has been made in the date at the bottom of page xi. The republication of this material is a distinct service to the great body of nature lovers, who, we believe, will be fully appreciative.—T. C. S.

WILD BIRDS IN CITY PARKS. By Herbert Eugene Walter and Alice Hall Walter. Pp. 1-111. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1926. \$1.50.

This small volume now appears in the twelfth edition, and shows considerable enlargement and revision. Earlier editions treated 145 species, while the present one includes 203 species, with an additional briefly annotated list of 108 rare, extinct, and introduced species. The present edition arranges the species in the order of the A. O. U. Check-list, rather than in the order of spring arrival, as in earlier editions. In the principal list each species is described with special attention to the field marks, the most diagnostic characters being italicized. A very ingenious field key which seems to be workable, and useful in reducing an unknown bird to a small number of possibilities, forms one of

the features of the book. Several other tables and charts combine to make this book serviceable to beginners in bird study in the northeastern United States.—T. C. S.

REPORT ON COOPERATIVE QUAIL INVESTIGATION: 1925-1926. By Herbert L. Stoddard. 1926. Pl. 5, pp. 1-62. Privately published by the Committee supporting the Quail Investigation in the South, in co-operation with the U. S. Biological Survey.

This paper is a continuation of the report of progress issued last year for the year 1924. The quail investigation now extends over an area of at least 20,000 acres, this much of the area being mapped in detail. Two men are at work on full time. Native quail to the number of 2,100 have been trapped and banded, thus being permanently identified. Of these banded 135 were later "returned" by hunters, while "fully another hundred" were retrapped by the banders. Out of seventy birds banded in the spring of 1925, 49 per cent (34 birds) were recovered during the next shooting season (seven to eleven months) within a quarter of a mile; 17 per cent (12 birds) were recovered at distances ranging from one to seven miles.

Some data are presented toward the solution of the problems of covey personnel and covey permanency. It is stated that remnants of reduced coveys often unite to form larger groups resembling original coveys. Although the hunter may leave a part of an apparent covey for "seed," he may in reality "be harvesting what has already been left for seed from several coveys" by previous hunters.

A favorite argument for the slaughter of quail is the assertion that shooting them up is necessary for dispersing the coveys in order to prevent the harmful and degenerative effects of inbreeding. On this subject the author states (page 26): "Harmful inbreeding would only seem possible in regions where quail are scarce and the coveys separated by considerable distances, and under such conditions only would a shuffling of the coveys be of possible value." We take it that this statement implies that inbreeding may be harmful and may result in degeneration if allowed to occur, even in nature. We wonder whether this is a biological fact. Where is the demonstration that healthy stock degenerates under inbreeding?

A very interesting chapter on the food habits of quail, by Mr. Charles O. Handley, is included in the report; the facts are summarized in tabular form. Considerable attention is given to the subject of quail enemies and diseases. The two reports indicate that the quail investigation has already been abundantly productive of results, and that the future is full of promise.—T. C. S.

NOTES ON THE BIRDS OBSERVED IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA. By Ernest G. Holt and George Miksch Sutton. Reprinted from *Annals of the Carnegie Museum* (Pittsburgh), Vol. XVI, No. 3-4, 1926. Pp. 409-439, 1 colored pl., 10 half-tones.

The area covered by this list includes the southeastern coast of Florida between Palm Beach and Biscayne Bay. One hundred and twenty-three species are recorded in the list, most of which are quite fully annotated. Considerable work has been recently published on the birds of Florida, and the U. S. Biological Survey also has a survey in progress. The present list contributes to our knowledge of distribution.—T. C. S.

BRITISH BIRDS. By Archibald Thorburn, F.Z.S. Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd. New York and London. 1926. Demy 8 vo. Volume IV. Per volume, \$5.50.

Volume IV of this splendid work has now reached this country. We expect to offer an extended review in a later issue.—T. C. S.

REPORT ON A COLLECTION OF BIRDS AND MAMMALS FROM THE ATLIN REGION, NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA. By Harry S. Swarth. Univ. Calif. Pub. in Zoology, Vol. 30, No. 4, 1926. Pp. 51-162, pl. 4-8, 11 text figures.

This report is based on work done partly in northern British Columbia and partly in southern Yukon Territory in the summer of 1924, under the patronage of Miss Annie M. Alexander, who has shown much interest in the exploration of this northwestern country. Mr. Swarth was accompanied by Major Allan Brooks during the greater part of the summer. The frontispiece is a colored plate of the Golden-crowned Sparrow, immature and adult, by Major Brooks.—T. C. S.

REPORT OF CHIEF OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. By E. W. Nelson, Chief of Bureau. 1926. Pp. 1-20.

One of the most interesting publications of the Biological Survey is the annual report of the Chief of the Bureau, giving a summary of the results of the year, a statement of the problems under investigation, and mentioning reports about to be published. The present report for the year ending June 30, 1926, contains much material of interest to ornithologists. Blackbirds were found to be doing enough damage to the rice crops in certain areas of the south to justify the use of poison and shotgun as deterrents. Fish-eating birds, such as the cormorant, great blue heron, bittern, loon, kingfisher, several gulls, terns and grebes were exonerated from any charge of serious damage to the food and game fishes in the north central states. The passing of Currituck Sound as a wild fowl paradise is noted. Considerable information is given on bird refuges and game preserves. There is also a report from the division charged with the enforcement of the federal game regulations.—T. C. S.

REPORT ON A COLLECTION OF BIRDS MADE BY J. R. PEMBERTON IN PATAGONIA. By Alexander Wetmore. Univ. Calif. Pub. in Zoology, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1926. Pp. 395-474, pl. 12-14, 11 text figures.

The title is explanatory of the work. The three plates in black and white are by Louis Agassiz Fuertes.—T. C. S.

HOMES FOR BIRDS. By E. R. Kalmbach and W. L. McAtee. Farmers Bull. 1456, U. S. Dept. Agric. July, 1925. Price 5 cents.

The bird lover has here a brief manual touching most of the problems concerning the construction and location of many types of bird houses.—T. C. S.

The *Journal of the Tennessee Academy of Science* for April, 1926, contains three interesting articles by our members. One article on the summer birds of the Great Smoky Mountains is by Mr. A. F. Ganier; another, by Prof. G. R. Mayfield, is entitled "Magni fumosi conservandi sunt," and will be remembered as a paper which was read at the Nashville meeting of the W. O. C. Another article, by Prof. Jesse M. Shaver, is on the flowers of the Great Smokies. There is still another article on the trees of this region. Those who have visited, or who expect

to visit, the area which is proposed as a new national park in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee will find this number of the *Journal* of much interest.—T. C. S.

The 1926 Year book of the Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee, which was issued in the fall of 1926, contains three ornithological papers, viz., "Making a three reel heron picture," by Owen J. Gromme; "On the trail of the Sandhill Crane," by Owen J. Gromme; "Photographing and banding Red-tailed Hawks," by Irving J. Perkins.

The October number of the *Chemical Bulletin*, Chicago, contains a most readable article on "Ornithology as an Avocation," by A. W. Schorger, Madison, Wisconsin.

Nature Notes from Yellowstone Park for August, September, and October have appeared. Herein are recorded many interesting observations in all phases of natural history, including numerous notes on bird life.

We have received from Mr. Alfred M. Bailey, of Colorado, the reprints of his ten articles in the *Condor* on the birds of northwestern Alaska and regions adjacent to Bering Strait.

COMMUNICATIONS

THE RIDGWAY MEMORIAL CAMPAIGN

The Wilson Ornithological Club, in co-operation with the American Ornithologists' Union, and the Cooper Ornithological Club of California, is now actively forwarding plans for a suitable memorial to the work and services of Robert Ridgway, the dean of American ornithologists. This memorial will, it is proposed, take the form of a sanctuary for birds and other wild life. The tract of land comprising eighteen acres, situated near Mr. Ridgway's home at Olney, in southern Illinois, named by him "Bird Haven," on account of its attractiveness to bird life, is admirably adapted to this purpose. Its varied topography of little hills, ravines, streams, woods, and open grasslands accounts for its remarkably large number of different trees, bushes, and flowering herbaceous plants, and for its variety of bird life. Nearly 150 species of birds have in the last few years been recorded from this area.

Mr. Ridgway has offered to donate this property for a wild life sanctuary if a fund sufficient for its maintenance can be obtained. This is therefore an unusual opportunity to save this area for the preservation of birds and plants, and at the same time to erect a fitting memorial to America's great bird lover.

A fund of \$35,000 is considered necessary to carry out this project. To raise this amount a committee has been appointed consisting of Dr. Harry C. Oberholser, of the United States Biological Survey, Washington, D. C., Chairman, representing the American Ornithologists' Union; Mr. Percival B. Coffin, 39 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois, representing the Wilson Ornithological Club; and Mr. Harry Harris, Box 123, Eagle Rock, California, representing the Cooper Ornithological Club. Bird lovers and all persons and organizations interested in conservation are urged to co-operate in raising the funds necessary to establish the Bird Haven Wild Life Sanctuary.

Remittances should be made out to the "Ridgway Memorial Fund" and may be sent to any member of the committee above mentioned.—HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.