

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS AND OTHER NEW ENGLAND STATES. By Edward Howe Forbush. Part II, Land Birds from Bob-whites to Grackles. Issued by authority of the [Massachusetts] Legislature, 1927, and distributed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth (Room 118, State House, Boston). Pp. i-1+1-461. Col. Pls., 28; halftone figs., 33; maps, 18; text figs., 34. Price \$5.00.

This volume continues the work begun two years ago under the same auspices, and which was reviewed in the WILSON BULLETIN at the time (XXXVIII. 1926, pp. 60-61). The present volume begins with an "introduction" which discusses the topography, climate, faunal areas, changes in bird life and causes, enemies of birds, etc., and which, with the preliminary pages covers the first fifty pages. The text proper treats the gallinaceous birds, pigeons and doves, birds of prey, cuckoos, kingfishers, woodpeckers, goatsuckers, swifts, hummingbirds, and passerine birds up to and including the blackbird family. Thus are included 21 families and 106 species. The order of treatment and nomenclature agree with the official A. O. U. Check-list. The account of the Passenger Pigeon is especially full and of general interest. The section on the Heath Hen is likewise of interest. The few outline maps of the state showing distribution of local records of certain species are much appreciated by the busy reader.

While the text of the work will engage the full attention of the New England bird student, the outsider is likely to be especially attracted by the colored plates. The twenty-nine colored plates, most of which illustrate several species, are all by the late Louis Agassiz Fuertes; and they probably represent the last of his work to be published. As we turn from plate to plate, observing especially the perfection with which the birds are placed in posture, we find ourselves at first overlooking the skill with which the background and accessories are handled. For instance, as we look at Plate 50 we see the two pairs of Three-toed Woodpeckers, admirably done; but, with continued examination, our attention centers on the dead tree trunks, with their wonderful detail of light reflection. On Plate 54 the wings of the hummingbird are drawn indistinctly, just as they are always seen in photographs, which leads us to wonder whether a sharp photograph of the hummingbird's wings in action has ever been made. The artist evidently admired the coloring of the Blue Jay, for he made two figures of it (Plate 58). The plate showing the color contrast between the Horned Lark and the Prairie Horned Lark is of much interest (Plate 57); likewise the comparison on one plate of the Purple Grackle and the Bronzed Grackle.

Of all the plates, however, our choice is Plate 46, showing the Great Gray, the Great Horned, the Barred, and the Snowy Owls. There is something about it which is striking and fascinating. It is difficult to analyze one's reactions to this picture. It contains four strong and arresting figures, each with its own setting. Yet each background blends perfectly with the others. The whole is bold and incisive, clear and correct. Not only is this one our choice of the plates in this volume, but we can not recall any other plate of bird portraits by any artist that exhibits the artistry shown in this one, in our own humble opinion, of course. Our particular volume now falls open at this plate.

The present work is not a state list, nor is it continental in scope; nevertheless, we believe its merits warrant comparison in the latter class. And we are prone to regard it, when completed, as one of the masterpieces in American

ornithological literature. We understand that Volume I is out of print, and selling at a premium, although 5000 copies were printed. Of volume II, 7500 copies were printed, of which 6000 have already been sold. We trust that all who may desire a copy will be able to secure one. It is announced that Volume III will appear before the close of the present year.—T. C. S.

LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN SHORE BIRDS. Order Limicolae (Part I).

By Arthur Cleveland Bent. Bull. 142, U. S. National Museum. Washington, 1927. Pp. i-ix+1-420. Pls. 55. Price, 85 cents.

This title makes the seventh in the series, and includes three families, viz., Phalaropodidae, Recurvirostridae, and Scolopacidae (in part), with forty-one species. The author uses seven nomenclatorial changes, and includes three forms new to North America, which have recently been discovered on the Alaskan coast.

This volume contains a marked typographical improvement over its predecessors in using the running head on the recto page to indicate the species which is treated on that page; this is a simple time-saving device which will surely be appreciated by the users of the book.

Dr. Charles W. Townsend has prepared the accounts of the Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, while six European species found as stragglers in this country are treated by Mr. F. C. R. Jourdain. Mr. F. C. Lincoln has assembled the distributional data, as in the previous number.

In our review of the preceding volume in the series we made some criticism of the treatment of distribution. Our remarks were, due in part to a misunderstanding of the method of naming localities in such a manner as to form an enclosed area. It was not, and is not now, our desire to comment on the accuracy with which this method was, and is, used, although we still believe it would be difficult to discover this method in the text unaided—simply for the reason that localities are mentioned which lie within outer ones mentioned. This is, however, of very secondary importance, and we would not bring it up anew. Our only point of criticism, as now restated, is that the method employed does not lend itself readily to visualization. We are inclined to believe, still, that this point is well founded, though it may be more or less irrelevant, because it may be taken for granted that the later volumes will follow the style of the earlier ones. And since we can not have a map of distribution, we are glad to have the verbal detail.

In passing we may remark on the great amount of labor which has necessarily been expended in selecting the best contributions of other authors upon the various habits of each species; many such selections are from unpublished manuscripts. The author's own observations are extensive. The student will not overlook the value of the comprehensive bibliography. It is doubtful if any other ornithological work is in greater demand than this series by Mr. Bent, and the constant call for the first volume in the series (Bull. 107, on the Diving Birds) is evidence of this.—T. C. S.

BIRDS OF THE PACIFIC STATES. By Ralph Hoffman. Houghton, Mifflin Company. New York. 1927. Pp. i-xix+1-353. Price, \$5.00.

Mr. Hoffman's book is a descriptive catalogue of the birds of the Pacific coast, and treats nearly 400 species, while the paragraphs on "distribution" treat the subspecies distinctly. The book has the appearance of thorough preparation, and we may suppose that it will be accepted as an authoritative text on the birds

of the western coast. The judicious use of type faces facilitates the finding of particular material. The descriptions are prepared to be of particular help in field identification. Distribution is given separately for each of the three Pacific coast states. The illustrations are all by Major Allan Brooks, including ten colored plates showing several birds each, and many text figures. The illustrations are of more than ordinary beauty and poise.—T. C. S.

THE BIRDS OF PYMATUNING SWAMP AND CONNEAUT LAKE, CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA. By George Miksch Sutton. *Annals Carnegie Museum*, XVIII, pp. 19-239. Pittsburg, 1928.

"There is about every wooded swamp or open marsh an alluring mystery." With these opening words the author arouses our immediate attention and interest, because our experience tells us that it is so. Pymatuning Swamp lies in Crawford County in western Pennsylvania. The swamp covers about 10,400 acres, in what was once a preglacial valley draining into Lake Erie. The outlet became closed by morainic deposits, and the drainage was deflected southward, and into the Mississippi system. The old valley has been filled up by the growth of vegetation, and it is now in the bog stage. The densely forested swampland presents a typical wilderness in which the wild life remains practically undisturbed by man.

In discussing the interactions among the animals the House Wren is reported as abundant (though observers did not find it present at all twenty-five years before), and "is probably a mild enemy of its neighbors, for it is known to prowl about, destroying the eggs or nests of other birds."

The author's visits to the region began in 1922, and in each succeeding year, at different seasons, some time was spent there. Two hundred and forty-four species of birds are listed as occurring within the area treated. The classification follows the order in the A. O. U. Check-list, but the nomenclature varies from it in many instances. We have no doubt that these unofficial changes are sound, and may some day be officially accepted. But there is still a chance that some may not be. Possibly the A. O. U. Committee is functioning too slowly. At any rate authors appear to be unwilling to wait for the new check-list.

Besides a topographic map of the region, the volume contains eight plates in black and white and one in color. The frontispiece is a beautiful four-color plate, from a drawing by the author, depicting the male Northern Pileated Woodpecker, which is becoming rare in this region. This report is based upon a painstaking and exhaustive field study of the region, and makes a valuable addition to the avifanna of the state.—T. C. S.

ANIMAL LIFE OF THE CARLSBAD CAVERN. By Vernon Bailey. Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore. 1928. Pp. 1-195. Price, \$3.00.

This volume is issued as Number 3 in a series of monographs on American mammals. Our interest is attracted by a chapter on the birds of the region. The Carlsbad Cavern is in the southeastern corner of New Mexico—in the Pecos Valley. The largest single room of the cavern is said to be 450 feet wide and 250 feet high, in places, while there are other large rooms. A little over four years ago the cavern was made a national monument. Important chapters are included on the following subjects: description of the cavern, neighboring life zones, conspicuous vegetation, mammals, birds, and reptiles of the region. Roughly counted, about eighty species of birds are mentioned, most of which are characteristic of the desert country. It is a non-technical and interesting book about an interesting region.—T. C. S.

BIRDS AND MAMMALS OBSERVED BY LEWIS AND CLARK IN NORTH DAKOTA. By Russel Reid and Clell G. Gannon. Published privately, Grand Forks, 1927. Pp. 1-24.

The authors here give us a list of the birds and mammals recorded by Lewis and Clark within the area now comprised within the state of North Dakota, and identify these species in terms of modern nomenclature. The work is well done, and is a useful piece of compilation, not only for North Dakotans but others as well. A somewhat similar piece of work was done some years ago by Professor Shimek and entitled, "Early Iowa Locality Records" (Proc. Ia. Acad. Sci. XXII, 1915, pp. 105-119); and also for South Dakota by Professor W. H. Powers (Proc. So. Dak. Acad. Sci., IX, 1924, pp. 16-33). Professor W. H. Over has also published a similar review of the records of birds and mammals observed in the Dakota Territory by Audubon in 1843 (Proc. So. Dak. Acad. Sci., VII, 1922, pp. 41-55). These correlations between early explorations and recent conditions become valuable and necessary as time passes.—T. C. S.

OUR MIGRANT SHOREBIRDS IN SOUTHERN SOUTH AMERICA. By Alexander Wetmore. Tech. Bull. 26, U. S. Dept. Agric. Washington, October, 1927. Pp. 1-24. Price, 5 cents.

This bulletin is a survey of the status in South America of the snipes, sandpipers, and plovers which breed in North America and migrate south of the equator in winter. The report is based upon studies made by the author in Argentina, Chili, Paraguay, and Uruguay from May 29, 1920 to May 19, 1921, or one year.—T. C. S.

THE MAGPIE IN RELATION TO AGRICULTURE. By E. R. Kalmbach. Tech. Bull. 24, U. S. Dept. Agric. Washington, October, 1927. Pp. 1-29. Price, 10 cents.

Topics discussed are, distribution, life-history, food, and control methods. It is found that the Magpie possesses both harmful and beneficial habits. The evidence shows that a wholesale destruction of the Magpie is unwarranted. Under the head of control measures, full instructions are given for killing these birds by poisoned bait. In one local campaign in Oregon it was "conservatively estimated that 5,000 Magpies were killed." A full-page drawing of the Magpie and a map showing its distribution, with several other cuts, enhance the bulletin.—T. C. S.

GENERAL ORNITHOLOGY LABORATORY NOTEBOOK. By A. A. Allen, L. A. Fuertes, and M. D. Pirnie. Published by the Comstock Publishing Company, Ithaca, N. Y. Price, \$4.00 (\$3.00).

This is a guide for the instruction of beginning students in laboratory and field ornithology. In a brief introduction the authors offer an argument for the use of the laboratory method in the teaching of elementary ornithology; if such a practice needs defence, it is well given here. Doubtless most courses in ornithology contain some laboratory work, as well as field training, and class room instruction. To what extent each method is used will vary, perhaps, in every course.

It seems that this Cornell notebook might readily be adapted to nearly any situation. It provides for the study of the external anatomy of the bird, and the skeleton; complete analytical keys for the genera and families of North American birds; a page with spaces for listing twenty-seven bird skins identified

to order and family; a page with twenty-six spaces for listing skins identified to genus and species (we believe that about four of these sheets should be included); a list of the orders and families of North American birds, according to the new classification, with spaces for listing examples of each; a printed and illustrated copy of Dr. Allen's key for identification of birds' nests (which has been previously published, but which is here made readily available); a list of birds found in central New York (the teacher may substitute his own local list); a number of ruled pages for the student's migration records (which should have contained directions for use); and finally, 125 pages on which to record the facts of distribution and life history. These last sheets contain outline maps of the western hemisphere and an outline figure of the species to be treated. And if the student fills out half of the information for half of these sheets, he has had a pretty fair elementary training in the subject.

A course in ornithology is rather an expensive one for the average student. By the time he pays his laboratory fee, buys a Handbook and a field glass, and figures in some railroad fare for field excursions, the teacher may be a little reluctant to add an expensive notebook. Nevertheless, this notebook is a good one, doubtless the best extant, and it will be a great help to many teachers who have not taken time to work out so complete an outline of work; and in behalf of such teachers the authors may be thanked for making their work generally available.—T. C. S.

SHORT PAPERS ON OHIO BIRDS. By Various Members of the Wheaton Club. Ohio State Museum Bulletin, Vol. I. No. 1, April, 1927. Pp. 1-79. Price, \$1.00.

A new publication medium is thus established by the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society. This initial number contains seventeen papers on the bird life of central Ohio, two of which are, unfortunately, anonymous. A paper by Mr. E. S. Thomas reports interesting observations on the nest life of the Black Vulture. Other papers describe the fish eating habit of ducks, Ohio nesting of Henslow's Sparrow, Snowy Owl records in Ohio, etc., etc. The creditable showing in this publication indicates a gratifying local activity in the study of bird life.—T. C. S.

THE NATURE ALMANAC: A HANDBOOK OF NATURE EDUCATION. Edited by Arthur Newton Pack and E. Laurence Palmer. Published by the American Nature Association. Washington, D. C. 1927. Pp. i-viii+1-312. Price, \$1.00.

The secondary title would be more indicative of the subject matter. The "nature calendar" covers only two dozen pages, but is much condensed and includes a quantity of information. The following pages contain a comprehensive catalogue of organizations concerned more or less in promoting nature study, with some description of the work of each; a catalogue, by states, of the various activities in nature study, together with a mention of many of the local leaders in such work; a surprisingly long list of nature study teachers, and the institutions with which they are connected. These catalogues represent a considerable amount of original compilation. "Nature study" seems to be a movement which has acquired a momentum, and it should help to produce a generation of nature lovers and conservationists, an enlightened race with better appreciation and support of scientific work. The book in hand gives us a glimpse of the progress toward this end. About two years ago the Doubleday, Page & Company published a "Nature Program" of about 180 pages, which reports the chief changes in nature month by month.—T. C. S.

DAKOTA BIRDS. By Loren G. Atherton and Nora M. Atherton. Published by J. Fred Olander Company, Pierre, S. D. 1925. Pp. 1-238. Figs. 39, 12 colored plates. Price, \$2.00.

This book, though published two years ago, has just come to our attention. It is strictly a home product—on Dakota birds, by Dakota authors, published by Dakota printers. Many of the common birds of South Dakota are appropriately discussed in a way to interest beginners. The biographies are informal and follow no uniform mode, each specific account presenting the outstanding habits or characters. The water birds and the birds of prey are not treated; but, beginning with the woodpeckers, the families of land birds are included. The book contains a number of plates, in both black and color, by the junior author.—T. C. S.

A STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE COMMON WOODPECKERS IN RELATION TO OREGON HORTICULTURE. By Johnson Andrew Neff. Privately printed, Marionville, Missouri, 1928. Pp. i-viii+1-96. Tables, 11; graphs, 6; plates, 8. Price, \$1.50.

Mr. Neff here gives us an excellent survey of the economic relations of the woodpeckers which are found in the orchards of the northwest. For the purposes of the discussion the author divides these birds into six groups, viz., Hairy Woodpecker Group, Downy Woodpecker Group, the Sapsuckers, the California Woodpecker, the Lewis Woodpecker, and the Flicker Group. For each of these groups there is a concise resume of the general knowledge of the forms, the local distribution, and the habits. Following this discussion the author presents his own original observations and data. The conclusions are based upon the examination of stomach contents, upon field study by the author, and upon testimony of farmers and orchardists. The report is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of these birds, and will need to be consulted by all economic ornithologists, and by any students who are especially interested in the Picidae.—T. C. S.

RETURNS FROM BANDED BIRDS 1923 TO 1926. By Frederick C. Lincoln. Tech. Bull. 32, U. S. Dept. Agric. Washington, December, 1927. Pp. 1-96. Price, 20 cents.

This bulletin is a mass of records of returns of many species of birds which had been previously banded. The tables show the banding station, date, locality of return (except where the word "same" is used, leaving an uncertainty of meaning). During the two and a half years covered by the report 234,692 birds have been banded in North America, from which 10,338 returns have been secured.—T. C. S.

A YEAR'S PROGRAM FOR BIRD PROTECTION IN PENNSYLVANIA. By George Miksch Sutton. Bull. 9, Board of Game Commissioners of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. [1928]. Pp. 1-50. Thirty-six figures. Free.

The cover of this pamphlet is adorned with a beautiful figure of the Cardinal in color, by Dr. Sutton. Two of Dr. Sutton's drawings, of the Screech Owl and of the Goshawk, are reproduced in the pages. The text is, to a large extent at least, a reprinting of Bulletin No. 7, which was issued in 1925. This attractive bulletin contains a wealth of information, and it is hoped that it will have a wide distribution. We would suggest that the bulletin might well be dated.—T. C. S.

THE SNAKES OF IOWA. By J. E. Guthrie. Bull. 239, Agric. Exp. Station, Ames, Iowa. September, 1926. Pp. 147-192. Twenty-one figures.

We trust we may be pardoned for including a title on this subject in this department. The bulletin is so well organized, and appears to be so useful an aid in identifying the common snakes of the middle west, that we thought some of our readers would be glad to know of it.—T. C. S.

Outdoor America for January, 1928, contains an article by George Miksch Sutton entitled, "A Fair Deal for the Hawks and Owls." This is an unbiased and sane educational discussion of the pros and cons of these birds. Dr. Sutton is a new leader in the revolt against protecting birds on purely economic grounds; he believes that birds should be allowed to live as well for their beauty. At the same time he recognizes that there are bad birds, which must be restrained or controlled, not exterminated necessarily. In noting this judicial appraisal of the birds of prey by one of Pennsylvania's game officials, we reflect upon the advance in viewpoint over four decades ago, when a Pennsylvania legislature placed the famous "scalp act" on the books. In the article here mentioned we find a reproduction of the painting of the Goshawk which Dr. Sutton made for the WILSON BULLETIN about two years ago.

In Professor E. H. Strickland, of the University of Alberta, we find a skeptic as to the importance of birds in the control of insect pests. He has published an article on "Can Birds Hold Injurious Insects in Check?", in the *Scientific Monthly* for January, 1928. He says that, "Extravagant claims are made regarding the financial debt we owe the birds in their role of saving the crops from complete destruction by insects." He believes that birds are a factor in producing the annual mortality of 99.3 per cent among such insects, but that there are other factors, such as parasitic insects, local food supply, direct effect of climate, etc. Then after a lengthy and instructive argument he states his conclusion thus, "that the annual destruction of plant-feeding insects by birds has no appreciable effect upon their ultimate abundance."

The January-February number of the *Condor*, much enlarged, is devoted to a biographical sketch, by Harry Harris, of Robert Ridgway, the "dean of American ornithologists." Besides being very profuse in illustrations, it includes an extensive, probably complete, bibliography of Mr. Ridgway's writings—540 titles. This is a notable and welcome contribution to American biography, for the publication of which the Cooper Ornithological Club deserves the congratulations and gratitude of all ornithologists.

The *Cardinal* for January, 1928 (II, No. 3), is devoted to the biology of Cook Forest, in northwestern Pennsylvania. A colored frontispiece by George Miksch Sutton shows a pair of Canada Warblers, with a background of rhododendron blossoms. There are articles on the flowers, birds, mammals, and reptiles of the region.

Dr. E. W. Nelson has a profusely illustrated article on bird banding in the *National Geographic Magazine* for January, 1928. Among the pictures are snap shot portraits of many of the leading banders. Separates of this article have

been distributed by the Biological Survey through the courtesy of Mr. S. Prentiss Baldwin.

We may again refer to the *Nature Notes from Yellowstone Park*, which continues to appear at monthly intervals. This mimeographed periodical is edited by Mr. E. J. Sawyer, Park Naturalist, and published in the office of the Superintendent of the Park. We think that it may be obtained by those who are interested in the natural history of the Park. It contains notes on the birds, mammals, flowers, geysers, etc., for all seasons of the year. The issue for September, 1927, contained a partial census of the wildfowl in the Park; these figures included 261 Barrow's Golden-eyes for the region around Yellowstone Lake alone.

American Game for January, 1928, contains an article on the "Food, nesting and decrease studies of the Bob White," by Herbert L. Stoddard. The Quail Investigation in the South is now in its fourth year, though originally planned for three years. The present article is a resume of recent results of these studies.

Professor A. C. McIntosh has written an article on the "Biological Features of Cascade Valley and Vicinity" (published in *The Black Hills Engineer*, January, 1928, pp. 68-83), in which he gives an account of the wild flowers, birds, lower vertebrates, and insects of this locality in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

The State of Pennsylvania has issued a neat little booklet entitled "How to Know the Trees and Shrubs of Pennsylvania, Native and Introduced." By Geo. S. Perry. Published over the imprint of the State Department of Forests and Waters, Harrisburg, 1926.

We are indebted to Mr. Harry Harris for a copy of the illustrated leaflet announcing the exhibition of the work of Maj. Allan Brooks, held in connection with the third annual meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Club, May 4-6, at San Diego, California.

Some of our readers may be interested to know that the fourth, and much enlarged, edition of "American Men of Science," has recently been issued. This book, of over eleven hundred pages, contains biographies of 13,500 American scientific men and women. It is published by the Science Press, Grand Central Terminal, New York, and is sold at ten dollars.

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