ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

COURTSHIP AND DISPLAY AMONG BIRDS. By C. R. Stonor. Country Life, Ltd., London. 1940: 5½x8¾ in., xvi + 144 pp., 57 pls. 8s. 6d.

In this handsome volume the author, writing from an intimate acquaintance with birds in the Zoological Gardens at Whipsnade and with a background of work in the British Museum of Natural History, besides a wide field experience, gives us minute descriptions of many spectacular and typical displays used by birds in courtship and in combat, with discussion of the principles involved. Mr. Stonor takes the view that most display, though it may be used in fighting, had its origin in its value for courtship purposes. He brings out clearly the three main types of display—that of male before female (or in certain families the reverse state of things of the female wearing and displaying the ornaments); that of mutual display of the two sexes, sometimes with the male playing the leading part and sometimes with absolute parity between male and female; and, thirdly, communal display, such as prevails with the Ruff and the Prairie Chicken. In mutual display the sexes are dressed alike or nearly so, while in the other two types one sex, usually the male, wears the ornaments. The use of special display grounds is also discussed at some length, with detailed descriptions of the courts of the Manakins, the mounds of the Lyre Bird, and the bowers of the various species of Bower Bird.

The descriptions of the displays, reinforced by a set of remarkable photographs largely taken at close range in the Zoological Gardens, show a surprising variety of methods, even in members of the same family. The displays of the Birds of Paradise, for instance, are almost incredibly varied, and each is correlated with the structure of the bird and the disposition and characters of its ornamentation. Where, as usual in this family, the body plumes are the most gorgeous, it is they that are most displayed, and the stiffer plumes of the Great Bird of Paradise are erected over the back, while the long and delicate plumes of the Lesser are arched back to form a drooping cascade of "indescribable grace" and the cobweb-like plumes of the Emperor of Germany's Bird spread a mist about their wearer as he hangs by his feet from the twig of a tree. These are a few of the many displays used by this remarkable family, and the well-known displays of many of the grouse are not less wonderful.

Though the author does not go quite so far as to insist that every peculiarity of plumage, color, and form is adaptive, he leaves the reader with the impression that in his opinion the vast majority have been preserved because of their value to the race; and, indeed, it is hard to disagree with him in view of the evidence he presents. The sexual selection argued in this book is sexual selection up to date—not the mistaken idea that the female is supposed to choose deliberately a male from among many that present themselves, not even the Darwinian theory pure and simple that the most attractive male inevitably attracted the most females, but the theory that, to follow the author in quoting F.H.A. Marshall, "It is the pair which have the highest capacity for mutual stimulation which are, so to speak, selected by Nature for the perpetuation of the race." After discussing hormones, endocrine glands, and the effect of visual images upon the pituitary, the author very pertinently adds, "This is far from shutting out altogether any aesthetic point of view; I for one find it impossible to believe that the harmony of colouring, the brilliance, and the beauty of ornament that so many birds show in their courtship can have been evolved merely because they happen to serve the right purpose, and without their owner or their recipient in the display being in the least conscious or appreciative of them."

Mr. Stonor cites some cases of display that appear to him to be purely for aggressive purposes. Among them he includes the head-shaking of the Ruffed Grouse in which the ruff is expanded. In this, of course, he follows Dr. A. A.

Allen, whose observation of captive birds led him to the conclusion that this display was a threat. Cleveland Grant, however, has shown us in a recent film a wild grouse using this display before a wild female that has approached his drumming-log, and it would seem that only a complete acceptance of the theory that all courtship is actually a matter of intimidation would admit the belief that that female would linger about there for the express purpose of being intimidated.

In treating of communal displays the author mentions the great variety of color and pattern in the ornamental plumes of the Ruff and shows that the females actually appear to select their mates from among the many that are gathered together. He also cites the suggestion that these striking ornaments and the habit of exhibiting them in assemblies may have been evolved for their effect as a mass of color like that of a flower-bed visible from a distance.

The probability that the use of display changes and develops from generation to generation needs emphasis. Everyone knows how such changes as the adoption of trees for roosting by the Rock Dove have come about within a comparatively few years; and Mr. Stonor mentions the belief on the part of some ornithologists that the Lyre Bird's display and care of its display mounds have outgrown their function as a part of the nesting cycle and have become largely recreational in character.

The author stresses the importance of concealing coloration as a factor to be considered when studying the development of display plumage. He even goes so far as to say, "Probably the greatest thing a bird is up against, the most vital and ever-pressing need of its whole existence, is that it must at all costs blend and tone in with its surroundings." Is it possible that the views of Abbott Thayer are at last coming into their own? The reviewer, who, though no blind follower of that extremist, long ago took occasion to ask for a respectful hearing for Mr. Thayer as an expert on color as it appears in nature, is glad to meet with this statement, exaggerated though it may be, and equally glad to see another statement with which Thayer might not have agreed—"But when it comes to courtship, it [the bird] is concerned with the very opposite—with the need for making itself as conspicuous as it possibly can to attract and stimulate a mate, and (probably with a separate ceremony) to drive off potential rivals." And again, still following Thayer, we have, "It seems beyond reasonable doubt that the greens of the Parrots, the bizarre colours of the Fruit Pigeons, the brilliance of the Kingfishers, are not there for use in courtship, and would appear to have concealment from enemies or (with the Kingfishers) prey as their most important object."

There is some discussion of the decisive factors in the development of display. Considering especially the Birds of Paradise, in which the most obvious ornaments throughout the family are the flank plumes, the author thinks that here form preceded function, though he finds the general opinion of ornithologists favoring the view that "it is the display which decides the evolution and development of its mechanism." It might be reasonable to suppose that the two developed concurrently and that neither one actually preceded the other.

This book was written for "the non-specialist interested in natural history and for ornithologists who have not had the time to go deeply into this branch of their subject." Ornithological readers will regret the absence of adequate bibliographical notes and will wish the author had made a point of naming his authority in all cases where he referred to a particular writer. It may be of *some* value to know that the behavior of certain manakins was described to him by a "traveller in Brazil" and that though it "sounds like a real 'traveller's tale,' " it is "confirmed by the independent account of a German naturalist," but the names might have added to the reader's confidence in the story. A minor criticism might be made of the use of the ambiguous word "pairing" when actual coition is really meant.

The book seems to deserve very well the hearty commendation given it by that distinguished ornithologist Mr. Percy R. Lowe in his Foreword.—Francis H. Allen.

ISLAND YEARS. By F. Fraser Darling. Illustrated from photographs by the author. Oxford Press, Toronto, 1940: 6 x 9 in., xii + 306 pp., 37 photos, 5 maps. $3.00.

INAGUA. By Gilbert C. Klingel. Illustrated from photographs taken by the author. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1940: 6 x 9 in., xii + 385 pp., 34 photos. $3.00.

Life on an island holds a special appeal to the field worker, for not only is it an isolated unit in world biology, conveniently delimited and tangible, but its study has an adventuresome flavor that freshens the imagination. These truths, perennially acceptable, are in themselves good reason for the appearance of "Island Years" and "Inagua."

Ornithologists who recall Dr. Darling's splendid books, "Bird Flocks and the Breeding Cycle," "A Naturalist on Rona," and "Wild Country," will find his latest volume, "Island Years," particularly welcome. Here is the human story behind the obtainment of the subject matter of those books, the personal experiences of Dr. Darling, his wife and son, on the uninhabited Scottish islands: Eilean a'Chleirich, Lunga, and inaccessible North Rona. The purposes of the lengthy sojourns on these remote areas are explained briefly for the sake of the story value; the results achieved receive no special attention. And rightly so! Important among these pages are the ways in which the family confronted alone the restless elements, finding moments of great exhilaration and excitement alternating with times of disappointment and despair; numerous episodes such as the serio-comic lot of "Doormat" who, though "the lowliest member of a pack of scriddy hens" brought to Eilean a'Chleirich, performed many a "deed of valour" by being the only member of the flock with sufficient courage to ward off a Raven intruding upon the flock's food supply.

Great Inagua is the southeasternmost island of the Bahamas. Like the Scottish islands it is desolate and forbidding even though inhabited by a small group of dark-skinned natives. On a well-planned, personal, scientific expedition to the West Indies in a ship especially designed for the occasion, Gilbert Klingel unexpectedly landed on this island when his ship became hopelessly wrecked on its shores. Undaunted by this hair-raising and disastrous accident, he turned immediately to the study of the island's web of life and returned on a second expedition to continue it. "Inagua" is a popular account of the investigations conducted from the barren interior to the surrounding depths, sometimes by night, sometimes under glaring sun and against wearisome wind. Although the author's chief interests centered on the races and distribution of numerous lizards of the island, his story brooks no such limitations. Careful detailed descriptions abound; they are elegant, thoughtful, but never sentimental. Ornithologists will find their special interests gratified in many sections of the book, especially in the vivid account of a visit to a colony of Flamingoes numbering three thousand birds and the quest of the Roseate Spoonbills when vast multitudes of mosquitoes brought unendurable torture to the author.

Both of these books are to be strongly commended. Having read one, there is all the more reason for reading the other. Well written, decidedly personalized, entirely authoritative, beautifully illustrated by many thrilling photographs, comparisons between the rich biology of these two dissimilar environments and the differences in the authors' reflections and adjustments are very enjoyable and instructive. Dr. Darling and Gilbert Klingel are ecologically minded to a high degree reached by few popular authors to date.—O. S. Pettingill, Jr.

ORNITHOLOGY LABORATORY NOTEBOOK. By Arthur A. Allen. Comstock Publishing Co., Ithaca, N.Y., 1941: Fourth ed., 8½ x 12 in., [viii] + 204 + 64 unnumbered pp., illus. $3.00.

Most teachers of ornithology in the United States are doubtless familiar with previous editions of this laboratory notebook, and it is certain that the author himself is well known to students of birds. The present fourth edition is based in part upon the experience of thirty-five years of teaching ornithology at Cornell University. Its chief advance over the third edition lies in the inclusion of material on birds of other parts of the country than the eastern United States, thus making the book more widely applicable.

The notebook is well printed, with few typographical errors, on good quality, moderately heavy paper, and the covers are of heavy, tan-colored paper with cloth reinforcement on the back. Its size, 8½ x 12 inches, is convenient for use in a standard looseleaf notebook if one wishes; indeed, some of the sheets are punched for such use. About four-fifths of the book is made up of pages on which the student fills in data obtained from field and laboratory observation of birds and from available literature. Five sets of outline drawings are to be labeled by the student, and so provide a basis for becoming acquainted with the topography of a bird, natural groups of feathers, parts of a feather, and the more important skeletal features. The two blank pages following furnish an opportunity to use this knowledge in sketching and discussing types of feathers and in writing a formal description of some particular bird.

Three good, though largely artificial, keys to all orders and families of birds occurring in the United States and to the nests of common species breeding in the eastern states are a feature of the notebook. All are well illustrated, by line drawings for the keys to the groups, and by excellent photographs of most of the types of nests for that key. Many of the nest photographs show eggs as well, and nearly all include some of the natural surroundings of the nest. For use with the keys to orders and families are several pages for recording the ordinal and familial names of birds identified in the keys. There is a list of the orders and families of North American birds, with blank lines for listing three diagnostic characteristics of each. Two pages provide captioned columns for recording the Latin and vernacular names of the birds previously identified to order and family.

A section is devoted to condensed statements of the winter and summer ranges of birds that have been found in the vicinity of Ithaca, New York. The addition of local dates and regularity of occurrence increases the value of this section for students in central New York. The reviewer feels that the title of the section, "Summer and Winter Ranges of North American Birds, including migration data for central New York" is somewhat misleading in its implied scope. This title, combined with the use of subspecific names and the non-detailed character of the statements of range, would lead most beginning students to think that other races and species do not occur in the eastern part of the country. For example, three races of Horned Lark are given because all have been found at Ithaca, but only one race each of Savannah Sparrow and Song Sparrow. An excellent feature of this section is the presence of accent marks on Latin names. This should prove of much help to students, who usually have difficulty with the pronunciation of these names.

The largest section in the notebook is a series of 100 "life history and identification charts." On each chart is captioned space for data on many features of species identified in the field. Included are places for notes on migration, habitat, habits, sounds, food, economic status, nest, recognition marks, plumages, and eggs. Each page bears a map of the larger land masses of the western hemisphere, which should be a great aid to the student in visualizing and learning distribution and migration routes after they have been indicated on the maps in color. Unfortu-

nately, the maps are Mercator projections, which makes difficult the comparison of size of ranges at different latitudes because of the exaggerated size of northern regions. Twenty-four checklists of species of eastern North America are intended for abbreviated records of information obtained on field trips. Extra spaces are provided at the bottom of each page for additional species.

Another large section comprises 188 fine outline drawings of 200 species of birds, mostly by Louis Agassiz Fuertes and William Montagna, for coloring by the student. Most of the figures are of eastern species, but kinds found in other parts of the country are included, and other figures are so generalized that they can be used for any one of several closely similar species in different regions. Several hawks are shown from the under side, thus bringing out clearly markings of value in field identification. In this connection, the reviewer feels that most beginning students would be saved considerable time by some indication of the kinds of characters most useful in field identification. The egg shapes shown at the end of the section would be more descriptively named, we think, if called ovoid, ellipsoidal, and pyriform, rather than "normal," "oval," and "pointed," respectively.

The notebook has been made more useful to bird students in the west and south by expanding the keys to include all North American families and orders, and by adding generalized drawings and drawings of additional species. Even so, numerous common species are omitted. Of western birds, for example, there are no drawings of Williamson and Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Townsend Warbler, Linnet, Cactus Wren, Evening Grosbeak, Green-backed and Lawrence Goldfinches, and others.

The main purposes of the notebook, as indicated in the preface, are to aid students in identifying birds and to introduce them to other phases of ornithology. For the first of these objectives, the notebook is, in general, well adapted. It seems to the reviewer, however, that certain phases of the latter might well be further emphasized by including exercises on such things as physiology, migration, social habits, habitat relations, song, and geographic variation. Some of these topics are included on the life history charts, but in such a way that there is collected a great mass of detailed information, from which only the exceptional student learns general principles and fundamental information. Specific exercises would provide a firm foundation on which detailed observations of individual species could be built. A few sentences might well be included to explain the concept of life zones, especially as a full-page, colored map of life zones in North and Central America forms the frontispiece, and life zones are used in most of the definitions of ranges. References to a few important books and papers on birds should prove helpful to a beginner.

For learning to identify birds and as a repository for detailed information on species seen in the field, the Ornithology Laboratory Notebook should be of value to many students and teachers in all parts of the country.—Frederick H. Test.

MODERN WILDERNESS. By William Arthur Babson. Illustrated with two paintings by Clifford R. Babson and photographs taken by Carl H. Lester, Jr., and others. Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York, 1940: 6 x 9 in., xix + 261 pp., 2 col. pl., 24 photos. $3.00.

This book purports to be the story of a wildlife sanctuary—a strip of swamp and woodland in New Jersey bounded by civilization—where the author has made observations of the locality's many forms. But the book has unfortunately missed its mark, for it is no story at all. It is instead a hodgepodge of unrelated chapters showing wildlife—mainly birds—at the perpetual mercy of human interferences: young owls and crows being removed from nests, photographed and reared in captivity; Wood Duck eggs being transferred from natural nests to nests of

domestic hens; surplus jays and squirrels being "popped off" with a .410; innumerable visits to nests resulting in the terrified reactions of the birds in possession. In a few instances there are accounts of observations made after watchful hours but the interpretations of events seen are weak and of little significance. The author shows a knowledge of different species of birds but his references to other living things are couched in such vague terms as "small brown spider," and a "bee of some species smaller than a honey bee." The style of the writing is uneven and rambling; the humor is stilted and unnecessary.

The book is illustrated by two puerile paintings and numerous photographs. The majority of the photographs are either slightly out of focus, over enlarged, retouched, or too contrasty.

Altogether this book gives an impression which is not only unfavorable, but also distasteful.—O. S. Pettingill, Jr.

SHORT PAPERS

ALEXANDER, W. B. The Index of Heron Population, 1940. *Brit. Birds,* **34,** No. 9, Feb., 1941: 189–94. (Presumably the Common Heron, *Ardea cinerea*).

BASKETT, THOMAS S. Production of Pheasants in North-Central Iowa in 1939. *Jour. Wildlife Management,* **5,** No. 2, Apr., 1941: 168–74.

BLAIR, R. H. and B. W. TUCKER. Nest-Sanitation. *Brit. Birds,* **34,** Nos. 10 and 11, Mar. and Apr., 1941: 206–15; 226–35.

BOND, JAMES. On Some Birds from Grand Manan, New Brunswick. *Canad. Field-Nat.,* **55,** No. 3, Mar., 1941: 34–5. (Supplementing O. S. Pettingill's 1939 paper).

BORROR, DONALD J. Migration Dates for the Birds of Central Ohio. *Ohio Wildlife Research Station Release* No. **159,** Mar. 15, 1941: 1–14. (Mimeo.) (Compiled primarily from the records of members of the Wheaton Club. Covers the area within a 40-mile radius of Columbus).

BRIGHAM, EDWARD M. Some Sight Records of the Blue Grosbeak in Michigan. *Jack Pine Warbler,* **19,** No. 1, Jan., 1941: 19–20.

BURLEIGH, T. D. Further Notes on the Birds of Athens, Clarke County, Georgia. *Oriole,* **6,** No. 1, Mar., 1941: 5–7.

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CRISWELL, ELIJAH H. Lewis and Clark: Linguistic Pioneers. *Univ. Missouri Studies,* **15,** No. 2 (313 pp.). (Origin of the common names of many western birds discussed.)

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EINARSEN, ARTHUR S. Contributions to the Management of California Valley Quail. *Murrelet,* **22,** No. 1, Jan.–April, 1941: 8–11.

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EYLES, DON E. Status of the Gray Kingbird in Georgia. *Oriole,* **6,** No. 1, Mar., 1941: 1–5, fig. 1.

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MOORE, ROBERT T. New Races of Flycatcher, Warbler and Wrens from Mexico. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash.,* **54,** Mar. 21, 1941: 35–42. (New subspecies of *Megarhynchus pitangua, Vermivora superciliosa, Cistothorus platensis,* and *Salpinctes obsoletus.*)

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Correction—We were very sorry to find that after we saw the last proof of the March *Bulletin* the printer inserted an erroneous line on page 54 of Ludlow Griscom's able book review. The line is the fourth line from the end of the first paragraph. Instead of, "their habitats . . ." it should read:
"habitats, the Red-wing occurs in C only. The Lincoln's Sparrow is assigned to D"