

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

THE DUCKS CAME BACK: THE STORY OF DUCKS UNLIMITED. By S. Kip Farrington. Coward-McCann, New York, 1945: $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10$ in., xvi + 138 pp., illustrated by Lynn Bogue Hunt. \$5.00.

"The Ducks Came Back" is reviewed here because it is a book about birds, not because of its intrinsic merit. Attractively put together and plausibly written, it has potentialities for great harm: if it is widely read and accepted as truth, it will hinder the real job of waterfowl conservation more than any other single statement.

The book consists for the most part of warmed-over material from the files of the organization which it eulogizes, Ducks Unlimited, and follows faithfully that organization's "party line." It speaks glibly of "drought proof nesting grounds," of "safeguarded" and "restored" nesting grounds, and of "permanent waters"—but many of these have already gone dry. It bases a detailed mathematical analysis of waterfowl productivity on appallingly little actual evidence. It interlards staged photographs among the genuine, captioned in such a way as to be taken at face value.

Farrington adds his own personal touch. In late 1945 he urges the return of baiting and live decoys, batteries and sink boxes. He speaks of the many refuges "throughout the United States which were put in to harbor ducks that are increasing by the thousands, and which have hurt the sport of duck shooting for miles around, not to mention the farmers' crops" (p. 106). He declares that, largely because of Ducks Unlimited, ducks have increased "over 500 per cent" (p. 36). And further: "This organization will be able to take care of all the emergency contingencies that arise, such as duck sickness and other unforeseen dangers, as well as drought; and there will always be cycles of drought in the Canadian breeding grounds" (p. 127).

As a final example: "It is to me a very convincing fact which cannot be overlooked that the ducks immediately began to show an increase the minute D.U. started the job in the prairie provinces, and as they increased their efforts, the water [fowl] population has steadily increased with them. The good Lord may have supplied them with a trifle more moisture than had come from the heavens during the drought period, but rain is of little value in that country if proper preparations are not made to receive and hold it for our web-footed friends" (p. 119). It is an even more convincing fact that, at the end of the last drought, the waterfowl began to increase as the rains increased, *before* Ducks Unlimited went to work; that waterfowl continued to increase as long as the rains continued; and that with the return of drought there is now a critical decline, despite Ducks Unlimited's continued and enlarged program.—F. N. Hamerstrom, Jr.

BIRDS OF THE PHILIPPINES. By Jean Delacour and Ernst Mayr. [The Pacific World Series.] The Macmillan Company, New York, 1946: $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ in., xv + 309 pp., with line drawings by Earl L. Poole and Alexander Seidel. Cloth. \$3.75.

This is another of the handy guides of the Pacific World Series, put out under the auspices of The American Committee for International Wild Life Protection. It would have been a boon to those American servicemen interested in natural history stationed in the Philippines, and it must be regretted that a delay of more than a year in press prevented its appearance at the time when it would have found its widest use.

The treatment is succinct, but each of the 450 species now known from the Archipelago finds a place, with mention of its principal characters for field recog-

dition; subspecies are mentioned under the species, with range and main distinguishing features. With the practical keys and the hints on distribution, habitat, and habits, it should be possible for any student to identify the birds he may see in the islands.

Remarks on habits are brief and are based almost wholly on what is known of a given species (or genus) in other countries of its range. It is a curious fact that, although Philippine ornithology has a history of almost 200 years, our knowledge of Philippine birds is almost wholly derived from the study of museum skins (sometimes a single specimen or a small series obtained by one collector); they "have been fairly completely listed," but are "in every other respect still the least known of the whole Pacific world."

The scientific names used are in accordance with the progressive taxonomic views of the two authors, with which I usually agree. An English name is given for each species, in many cases that previously used by McGregor and Hachisuka, but others apparently appear here for the first time. It is perhaps invidious to object to anything so arbitrary as a vernacular name, but exception might be taken to "Oriental Screech Owl" for a bird whose notes are "a monotonous series of high-pitched notes, as *hook, hook*," and especially to the use of "Mannikin" for a group of weaver finches, inasmuch as "Manakin," derived from the same Dutch word, has been applied since the time of Brisson to the neotropical Pipridae.

The artists, working from study skins, have had varying success in presenting the characteristic attitudes of the several species. The portraits of the Fantail (*Rhipidura*) on page 206 and of the Bulbul (*Microscelis*) on page 174 might have been taken from life, or at least from photographs of living birds; on the other hand, the Bush Lark (*Mirafra*) on page 156 exhibits, not the squatting position of this genus at rest, but the standing position of a pipit. The figures will, nevertheless, prove of the greatest service to those making a first acquaintance with the Oriental avifauna.

Since this volume represents the only inexpensive and up-to-date work on the birds of the Philippines, it is to be highly recommended for the use of residents and travellers, both Filipino and others, who wish to add to our knowledge of the fascinating avifauna of the islands or merely to know the names of their doorway neighbors; needless to say, its perusal will be a renewed delight to those who already have a speaking acquaintance with the birds of tropical Asia.—H. G. Deignan.

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* Titles of papers published in the last number of *The Wilson Bulletin* are included for the convenience of members who clip titles from reprints of this section for their own bibliographic files. Reprints of this section are available at a small cost.

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