

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

ALKEN. By Knud Paludan. Einar Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1947: 6 × 9 in., 107 pp., 20 pls. (1 colored), 8 figs. Dan. cr. 12.

This is a careful, detailed study (in Danish) of the breeding biology and occurrence of the Razor-billed Auk, *Alca torda*, in Denmark. After a short preface, the author gives a history of the occurrence of the species in Denmark based on the recorded observations of the last 200 years. To those of us of the present day who know Pontoppidan chiefly as the author of some scientific names of birds, it is refreshing to find that the good bishop also was interested in living birds and made some observations of the Razor-bill in his country. Denmark is largely south of the breeding range of the Razor-bill, but nesting colonies have been known for many decades on the island of Bornholm, an outlying part of the Danish Kingdom in the Baltic. Since 1922, another colony has been recorded annually on Graesholm, a small islet off Bornholm. A lone breeding record in the southern Kattegat, north of Holbaek (in Zealand, the main island of the Kingdom) is regarded as doubtful.

The bulk of the paper is concerned with the breeding habits of the species in and around Denmark. A list of breeding localities, chiefly along the Norwegian coast, but also on the Swedish and Finnish coasts, is given with those in adjacent areas. During the winter months, the birds show little inclination to remain in or even near these localities, and the first sign of the awakening of the reproductive urge is described in a subchapter entitled "Interest in the Breeding Localities Begins." In March, individuals begin to return to their nesting grounds, but it is not until April that they remain there constantly; the earlier arrivals go off considerable distances in their daily search for food—they are not really settled on their nesting grounds but are merely feeding offshore from them. The next step, "The Auks Go to Land. Mating Time," starts during during the middle of April, and the birds appear to have gathering places and also mating places. Quickly following this comes "nest-building," which in this species does not involve any real construction, and egg laying. The first eggs are laid about May 5; in 1943 and 1944 the last were laid by June 20, although in 1941 and 1942 egg laying continued into the first half of July. Series of measurements and weights of the eggs are given.

During the period (25 to 35 days) of incubation and of caring for the young while they remain in or near the nest, both sexes share the family tasks. The author has made some curiously intensive though discontinuous observations on selected nests, and he proves by needlessly elaborate means (such as his diagram on p. 50) what he could have said very simply—the sexes take turns incubating the eggs and brooding the young.

The development of the young is discussed in detail, with graphs showing the growth rate (weight in grams plotted against days of age) and also the daily change in rate of growth. The latter is surprisingly uneven, the curve revealing periods of retarded as well as of accelerated growth rate. The greatest speed in growth is usually shown in the third and fourth, or third, fourth, and fifth days after hatching.

Following the description of the young and their development, a short chapter presents the actual nest "journals" of the author, covering in detail 14 nests, a statement of observational data with which the reader may judge the validity of the author's interpretations and accounts of the breeding activities. This, in turn, is followed by an account of the changes in the whole populations of the colonies on and around Bornholm from year to year. A final chapter on winter records for the Razor-bill in Denmark completes the study, and the paper concludes with a bibliography of the species in Danish waters. The 20 plates, reproducing 43 excellent photographs of the birds, and 8 text figures (including 2 maps) abundantly illustrate the text of this valuable study.—Herbert Friedmann.

LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN GULLS AND TERNS: ORDER LONGIPENNES. By Arthur Cleveland Bent. Reprinted. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1947: $6\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ in., xii + 333 pp. \$5.00.

Dodd, Mead and Company, publishers of the reprint of Bent's "Diving Birds" (Bulletin 107), reviewed in the March issue of *The Wilson Bulletin* (vol. 59, pp. 46-47), have now produced a second volume, called an "unrevised reprint" of Bent's "Gulls and Terns," first published in 1921 as U. S. National Museum Bulletin 113.

This time the main body of text seems to have been reproduced very faithfully—apparently even arranged the same, line for line, except on pages 162, 204, and 253. The introduction has been slightly altered, omitting all reference to the illustrations and also omitting the paragraph referring to a quotation from T. S. Roberts which had been included by error in the original Bulletin 107. (This omission of this quotation, as noted before, was one of the revisions in the "unrevised reprint" issued last year by Mr. Bent's new publishers.)

Since all illustrations have been left out of the reprint, the twelve pages of "explanation of plates" (pp. 329-340) have likewise been omitted, and the reader thereby loses a considerable amount of detailed data which Mr. Bent supplied in his original volume. The index seems to be unchanged, though spaced somewhat differently on the pages.

It was surprising enough that the color plates had been omitted from the reprint of Bulletin 107 and substitution made among the half-tone plates, but the complete and unexplained omission of all illustrations from the present reprint is beyond my understanding.—Josselyn Van Tyne.

A PRELIMINARY LIST OF BIRDS OF MARYLAND AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. By Irving E. Hampe and Haven Kolb. The Natural History Society of Maryland, Baltimore, 1947: $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in., xii + 80 pp., 9 pls., map. Lithoprinted. \$1.00. [Address orders to: 2101 Bolton St., Baltimore 17, Md.]

Except for the Washington-Baltimore region, Maryland has received singularly little attention from ornithologists. Yet the introduction to this new list characterizes Maryland (quite correctly I think) as "a state which was, it would seem, especially cut out to exhibit the maximum of geographical diversity in the minimum of area. . . ."

Although its land and water area is only 12,327 square miles, it fronts on the Atlantic, encircles the head of Chesapeake Bay, crosses the valley-and-ridge physiographic province, and reaches the Allegheny Plateau and the Mississippi basin west of the Allegheny Backbone. Furthermore, it is strategically located between North and South. Where else in a comparable area might one find Chuck-will's-widows, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Boat-tailed Grackles, Winter Wrens, Mourning Warblers, and Purple Finches, all as breeding birds?

The present list includes annotations on 338 species and forms, plus 27 species of the hypothetical list. It is precisely what the title states, a preliminary catalogue, and forms an excellent point of departure for future work; it is now being supplemented constantly by the work of Stewart, Robbins, and other observers. Literature dealing with Maryland and the District of Columbia has been carefully scanned and evaluated, and I can find but few significant omissions. I am well aware of the difficulty of evaluating sight records for inclusion in a State list; yet I confess some surprise at finding many of my own sight records accepted when Wetmore's record of Wilson's Phalarope is given only hypothetical status.

The authors divide Maryland into five regions: the Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland, the Baltimore-Washington Region, Central Maryland, and Western Maryland. An excellent example of the surprising gaps in our present ornithological knowledge is afforded by the Central Maryland region. This is an area

close to Washington and Baltimore, and it has three considerable towns, Frederick, Hagerstown, and Cumberland. Yet data on many common species are lacking.

A final word of approval should be said for the Natural History Society of Maryland, which sponsors this publication. This organization is made up largely of amateurs; its members work "for the fun of it." Yet it has consistently made valuable contributions to our knowledge of Maryland's biology, geology, and ethnology. This bulletin is a worthy example of their work.—Maurice Brooks.

BIRDS OF MALAYSIA. By Jean Delacour. [The Pacific World Series.] The Macmillan Company, New York, 1947: 5¾ × 8 in., xvi + 382 pp., with line drawings by Earl L. Poole and Alexander Seidel. Cloth, \$5.00.

This "popular" guide to the Malaysian avifauna follows the general pattern of its valuable predecessors in the Pacific World Series (especially that of "Birds of the Philippines," which the same author published jointly with Ernst Mayr in 1946). In a remarkably compact volume are treated briefly, with references to their numerous insular races, all the 660 resident and 120 visiting species of the Malayan, Sumatran, Javan, Bornean, and Paláwan zoogeographical provinces. The birds of Paláwan and its neighboring islands have, for reasons of politicogeography, already been dealt with in "Birds of the Philippines," to which the reader is referred, but they are at least mentioned here.

An idea of the phenomenal richness of the bird life of the Malaysian Subregion is given by the fact that the author, well known as a "lumper," has nevertheless found it necessary to recognize so many specific entities; in Java alone (48,504 square miles, against 88,737 for Great Britain), he accepts 337 breeding species.

In a work of so broad a scope, one must not be surprised to find occasional paragraphs that promise to be more or less misleading to the novice in Malaysian bird study. One such appears on page 45, where *Accipiter badius* is alleged to occur in Malaya, Sumatra, and the islands to the west, with the comment: "A common hawk, even in gardens." This hawk, the "Shikra," is indeed common in the compounds of India and the Indo-Chinese countries, but, despite an old record from Nias, probably does not reach Malaysia proper at all. Since members of this genus are with difficulty distinguished even in the museum, and no "sparrow hawk" other than *badius* is stated to be common, it may be expected that amateur users of this book will shortly report *badius* from all manner of unlikely localities.

On page 223, it is asserted that *Pycnonotus brunneus* has the eyes red, while *P. simplex* has them white; there is unfortunately no indication of the fact that since the race of *simplex* inhabiting Borneo; Billiton, and the South Natunas (*perplexus*) has red irides (and is distinguished from *P. s. simplex* solely by that character), the species is in all these places not separable, in the field, from *P. brunneus*.

I cannot forbear from commenting also on one or two species in which I feel a vested interest. It should be noted that *Pitta guajana irena* (p. 191) was described from Sumatra, and *P. g. riplei* from Malaya, rather than the reverse as Delacour states here. And the Malayan race of *Dicaeum ignipectus* (pp. 305-306) should bear the (somewhat forbidding) subspecific name of *dolichorhynchum* instead of *ignipectus*.

The illustrations are on the whole well made and should prove to be of the greatest assistance to the student. A few of them are reproductions of those used in the earlier work of Delacour and Mayr, but the others are wholly new. A map inside the front cover, beautifully drawn by D. F. Levett Bradley, is one of the book's most valuable features, since few non-specialists may be expected to be familiar with the complicated geography of "Island India."

The volume is fittingly dedicated to the memory of Frederick N. Chasen, whose death by enemy action in 1942 closed prematurely a brilliant career devoted to study of Malaysian ornithology and mammalogy.—H. G. Deignan.

WINGS IN THE WILDERNESS. By Allan D. Cruickshank. Oxford University Press, New York, 1947: 8 × 10 in., 18 unnumbered pages + 125 plates with legends. \$6.00.

This very attractive book presents 125 excellent, large-scale reproductions of Cruickshank's deservedly famous bird photographs. Some of the pictures have been reproduced before in *Audubon Magazine* and elsewhere, but many seem to be new, and all of them are well worth preservation in book form. Nevertheless, it is disappointing to find that in selecting 125 pictures for this book from his "collection of 30,000 negatives" Cruickshank decided to use again 10 pictures that had appeared in his earlier book ("Birds around New York," 1942).

The text includes only a table of contents, preface, a short paragraph opposite each picture, and a list of "photographic data" (i.e., camera, lens, and exposure used for each picture).

The book would have been more valuable to scientists and, I believe, more interesting even to laymen if full ornithological data had accompanied each plate.

However, these minor criticisms should not obscure the fact that the author and publishers have given us a very impressive and biologically valuable series of bird portraits.—Josselyn Van Tyne.

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See also *Techniques*: Latham.

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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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See also *Life History and Behavior*: Mowat; Yocom. *Population*: Kenyon.

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See also *Food and Feeding Habits*: Graf.

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See also *Physiology*: Favalaro. *Parasites . . . and Disease*: Chappell. *Distribution and Taxonomy*: Taber. *Migration and Flight*: Rust. *Population*: Frank; Lack and Arn; Rand.

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See also *Population*: Gullion.

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PALEONTOLOGY

SEE *Anatomy*: Fisher.

LIFE HISTORIES OF FRINGILLIDAE

To the Editor of The Wilson Bulletin: Some of your readers may be interested to know that I have finished my work on the Life Histories of the Icteridae and Thraupidae, and am now starting work on the Fringillidae. The first volume on this family is to contain the birds on the 1931 A.O.U. Check-List, from the cardinals to the crossbills inclusive, for which I am ready to receive contributions of notes on habits and photographs.

A. C. BENT

Taunton, Massachusetts
September 25, 1947