

## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

GRØNLANDS FUGLE. THE BIRDS OF GREENLAND. Part 1. By Finn Salomonsen. Ejnar Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1950: 9 × 13 in., 158 pp., 17 color-plates and numerous decorative sketches by Gitz-Johansen. Paper. To be published in three parts, each at 60 Dan. kr. (\$8.72), but parts cannot be supplied separately.

This handsome work, which promises to bring us up to date on the birdlife of the world's largest island, possesses to a remarkable degree the charm and rugged beauty of that island. At the beginning of each species writeup the Danish, English and Eskimo bird names are given in large type, together with a little drawing of the bird itself in black and white. The text is presented in two columns, Danish at the left, English at the right. The roughness of the color plates reminds us instantly of wind, cold sea water, and hard ice and rocks. The distributional paragraphs are a kind of symphony of place-names. Some of these all-but-unpronounceable agglutinated words (e.g., Seqineqarajugtoq and Tingmiakulugssuit, the names for certain mountains) will not bewilder students of the Eskimo language, for their etymology is clear enough; but even the initiated—those who recall that Angmagssalik is on the east coast and Upernavik on the west—will long for that "small scale map" which is, according to a statement in the introduction, to appear "at the back of the present book" (i.e., presumably, at the end of Part 3).

The distributional material of Part 1 might well have been shortened, simplified, or summarized. Users of the book will welcome detailed discussion of the areas throughout which a given species is known to breed. They cannot object to what at first seems to be over-use of long local names for cliffs, islands, fjords and tide-rips so long as certain general statements remain perfectly clear. But when, in order to ascertain just how far north and how far south a species breeds they have to resort to underlining they may well object to the obfuscating detail. A few statements are regrettably unclear or unidiomatic—e.g., that pertaining to *Branta bernicla*, a species which "has been recorded a few times as breeding south of its actual nesting-range" (p. 82). Some of the general summaries of species-distribution are not wholly satisfactory either. I know from personal observation that *Branta bernicla hrota* breeds southward as far as Lat. 64°N. on Southampton Island, and Gavin (1948, *Wilson Bulletin*, 59: 198) has reported its breeding in the Perry River district just south of Queen Maud Gulf, yet Salomonsen flatly states that the "pale breasted form (*B. b. hrota*) [is] restricted to Spitzbergen, N. Greenland, N. Ellesmere Island and Axel Heiberg Land" (p. 84).

The distributional data on the whole are excellent and exceedingly timely in view of the fact that the forthcoming Fifth Edition of the A.O.U. Check-List will cover Greenland as well as the Arctic Archipelago. The author makes clear that Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) is not actually known to nest in Greenland; that the nest of the Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) has yet to be found anywhere on the island; that the Pintail (*Dafila acuta*) breeds in some numbers on the west coast; that the Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) has not actually been found breeding though it occurs with astonishing regularity in spring (adults) and from mid-September to mid-November (young birds); that the Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) breeds "only in the low-arctic region of the West-coast, from 64° to 72° 30' n. lat." (p. 59) and winters "in the British Isles, chiefly in Ireland" (p. 63). Definite statements of this sort have been made possible through banding. One banded Greenland White-fronted Goose has been recovered in December in North America—at Metis Beach along the St. Lawrence River.

Most of the 22 species written up in Part 1 are treated quite fully. The author has had wide experience in the north, but in discussing nesting habits, courtship, molts migration and the

like he has, fortunately, drawn extensively on the experiences and writings of others. His repeated reference to the failure of certain species to breed during adverse summers, notably on the east coast, causes us to wish that this whole subject, as well as the irregularities of the mild periods he has written about elsewhere (1948. *Dansk Orn. Foren. Tidss.*, 42: 85-99), might have been discussed at greater length in the introduction. In many of the life history discussions use of the word 'nocturnal' is unfortunate in that it is almost certain to connote *darkness* to many readers. Students who have observed birds during the breeding season in the far north know full well how little actual darkness there is. The birds come and go, sing, court and feed almost literally at all hours, for the sky is light even in the middle of the night.

Of very special interest are the author's graphic discussion of the cliff-nesting of the Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*); the striking difference between the colonial nesting of the Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) on islets in salt water and the strictly non-colonial nesting of the King Eider (*S. spectabilis*) inland; the remarkable dependence of the Harlequin Duck (*H. histrionicus*) upon swiftly moving water; the migration of Brant across the notorious ice-cap; and the presence of the beaks of certain cephalopods in the stomachs of virtually all specimens of Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) examined. Hagerup's guess was that the Fulmars ingested these cephalopod beaks when eating "the faeces of the smaller whales, which feed on cuttlefish."

The Gitz-Johansen drawings are bold and sketchy to say the least. Their technique is exciting. They are not, primarily, bird illustrations at all, but Greenland landscapes or seascapes in which birds happen to figure. Crude as they are, their plant life, rocks, horizons, and skies are authentic. The most successful of them, possibly, is that of the Fulmar—a brisk study chilly enough to make one reach for one's overcoat. Among the least successful is the flying Oldsquaw (*Clangula hyemalis*), which is too small headed, too small footed, too dark in eye-color, and utterly motionless despite its spread wings.—George Miksch Sutton.

DISTRIBUTIONAL CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF MEXICO. Part 1. By Herbert Friedmann, Ludlow Griscom and Robert T. Moore. Cooper Ornithological Club, Pacific Coast Avifauna, Number 29, Berkeley, California, June 30, 1950: 202 pp., 2 colored plates (used also in *The Condor*). \$4.00.

The authors of this first published list of Mexican birds make it quite clear in their introduction that they expect the work to be out of date just as soon as interested readers have had time to point out overlooked data in the literature and to correct the ranges of various species with which they may be individually familiar. Although a few published records have been overlooked, the big gaps in the ranges of many species are no doubt due to lack of published data. For example, the eastern range of the Rufescent Tinamou (*Crypturellus cinnamomeus*) is given as "southern Tamaulipas south through Central America," whereas the bird ranges northward through western Tamaulipas and eastern Nuevo León at least as far as the hills south of Linares. The Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) is said to be "locally common to June 11" in Baja California, and to occur in certain other Mexican states in winter, whereas actually it is fairly common in several states throughout the summer. Adult and young birds may be observed on prairie lakes in Zacatecas and from the paved highway along the west shore of Lake Chapala, in Jalisco, in June and July. Such large and easily observed birds as the Wood Ibis (*Mycteria americana*) and Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) are not listed for the big state of Oaxaca, although both species are quite common in the marshes around Salina Cruz. Since it is probable that anyone using the book will consider the stated ranges as merely suggestive, these faults may be taken lightly. The thing of importance is that we do now have a published list and that some definite points in the range of each species have been set down. The Check-List is welcome and well worthwhile.

The family arrangement is that of Wetmore's "A Systematic Classification for the Birds of the World." The family name is given first, followed by the scientific and common name of the species. The general distribution of the species is given next. This is followed by the scientific name of each subspecies and the detailed range of each. The Mexican common name (usually Spanish, sometimes Mayan, etc.) of each subspecies is also given. Finally there is an excellent index of all the common and scientific names. The subspecies included are largely those recognized by Peters in his "Check-List of Birds of the World" but the authors have exercised "independent judgment" when that has been deemed advisable. In the Accipitridae they do not accept *Accipiter cooperii mexicanus* on the grounds that it seems doubtfully distinct; on the other hand they do accept *Cathartes aura teter* which would seem to be equally doubtful. No two taxonomists will ever agree on such points as these and until there is a definite rule adopted for the acceptance of subspecies on a statistical basis, such arguments will continue. On the whole, the subspecific treatment is sound and conservative.

In an attempt to make the list as useful as possible to field students and to visitors to México who do not collect, each subspecies which the authors believe can be identified in the field has been marked by an asterisk. Such thoughtfulness is certainly commendable. The inclusion of Mexican common names possibly was intended to serve somewhat the same purpose. However, if amateur field students attempt to use these names they will soon find that many of them are not the ones used locally. This is not a criticism of the distinguished Mexicans who supplied the names. We still have somewhat the same trouble in this country with common names supplied by the A.O.U. committee even after four editions of the Check-List.

There is, in the museum at Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, a mounted Jabiru (*Jabiru mycteria*) specimen said to have been taken on the river near the city. Other Jabirus are reported to have been seen at the same locality. Since Miguel Alvarez del Toro, who is curator of the museum, is the only Mexican who has been contributing regularly to our ornithological magazines (several short papers or notes from him have appeared in *The Condor* and *The Auk*) it seems strange that he was not consulted. The Check-List indicates that the inclusion of the Jabiru was based on one lone record from Cosamaloapam, Veracruz.

In comparing the various groups in the list, the reviewer received the impression that the hummingbirds were more carefully covered than most other families. If true, this might suggest that the authors became more thorough as they progressed, for this is the last family in the book.—L. Irby Davis.

CANADA GEESE OF THE MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AN ILLINOIS FLOCK. By Harold C. Hanson and Robert H. Smith. Bulletin of the Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana, Illinois, Vol. 25, Article 3, March, 1950: 6¾ × 10 in., pp. 67–210, frontispiece, 92 figs., 47 tables, bibliography. Paper, 1 copy free; cost of more than one copy to be determined by correspondence.

The authors have been far afield in gathering the material for this informative and detailed report. Hanson, as Game Specialist, spent several years at the Horseshoe Lake Refuge in Illinois where approximately 50% of the Mississippi River Valley Canada Geese wintered during the time of this study. He also spent parts of two summers in the James-Hudson Bay goose nesting area. Smith, as Flyway Biologist for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, observed this and other Canada Goose populations in various areas of Canada and the United States.

Starting in the north, the authors discuss goose breeding grounds from the standpoint of geography, geology, vegetation, and nesting sites preferred by the geese. Information on the last point should be of great value to those attempting to rebuild Canada Goose breeding populations throughout areas in which the birds once nested commonly.

From this James-Hudson Bay production area the geese are followed south over their fall

migration routes to various wintering concentration points in the United States. One of the more important stopping places in the fall is the famed Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary at Kingsville, Ontario. Here approximately 31,000 Canada Geese were banded between 1915 and the spring of 1944. A discussion of certain outstanding banding records is given.

The various wintering areas of the Canada Geese are taken up, with special emphasis on the Horseshoe Lake Refuge. In the discussion of this particular refuge, the annual hunting losses, the behavior of the geese, and the hunting methods are given primary importance. These points should also be of great importance to states such as Michigan and Wisconsin which each have a number of goose refuges.

The annual bag of the Mississippi Valley geese is separated into three main parts: that taken by Canadians, that taken by Indians on the goose breeding grounds, and that taken by people in the United States. Crippling losses and additional mortality factors are also included in this discussion. A summary of the material on productivity follows.

Having information on productivity, as well as trapping and banding data of the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary and the Horseshoe Lake Refuge, the authors went further and tried to determine population survival; they found the data inadequate and biased however, so felt that their findings were only approximate.

One of the most important results of the study of the Jack Miner banding data was the discovery of a distinct and heretofore unrecognized group of Canada Geese that winter in the inland areas of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and the Gulf Coast of Florida. Because management of the Mississippi Valley goose population should be guided to some extent by a knowledge of neighboring goose populations a brief summary of the breeding and wintering ranges, as well as the migration paths of this newly defined group of Canada Geese, named the 'Southeast population', is given. Other flyway populations are also described.

To meet the problems of the Mississippi River Valley goose population, created by the geese of the Horseshoe Lake Refuge, proper management techniques were applied. At present the population has responded and recovered from its low point of 1945-46.

In summary, this bulletin with its numerous illustrations and well-founded and detailed information should certainly be studied by all concerned with game management and related subjects. The authors have done a very commendable job in bringing together data from widely separated areas on this species.—Laurence R. Jahn.

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