

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

THE BIRD LIFE OF GREAT SALT LAKE. By William H. Behle. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City; 1958: $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ in., (12) + 1-203 pp., 43 figs., 28 tables. \$4.50.

The reader who buys by title alone will be surprised when he opens this book. The subtitle, "The life history, ecology and population trends of the California Gulls, White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants and Great Blue Herons, together with an account of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge," is more indicative of the contents of the book than is the title.

As the subtitle suggests, Professor Behle's book is principally a presentation of information concerning the natural history of four species of colonial-nesting birds found on islands in Great Salt Lake. This information comes from some 25 years of field work by Behle, and others, in the area, and an exhaustive review of the literature.

Following an account of each of the islands studied, the California Gull is treated extensively under such headings as geographic range, seasonal status, flight, time of nesting, nests, egg laying, incubation and behavior at nesting sites, dispersal of young, migration of adults, the plumage cycle, homing instinct, etc. There then follows a similar, but less extensive, section on the White Pelican. The Double-crested Cormorant and the Treganza Great Blue Heron are each treated in a brief chapter. The small breeding population of Caspian Terns is considered briefly, as are a few of the birds occurring on the waters and shores of the lake. A list of birds, other than those that nest in colonies, is presented for each of the islands included in the study. The chapter on the Bear River Refuge includes a check-list of 198 species and subspecies of birds recorded at the Refuge by its personnel. An excellent list of literature cited by the author follows the text. There is no index.

Objections concerning the book are few, and of minor significance. The maps (Figures 2, 24, and 43) have no scale of miles, and Oklahomans may feel slighted by the omission of their state from the map on page 91. Particular figures, most of which are excellent half-tones, are difficult to find due to the omission of page numbers from the list of illustrations. Behle's use of "nuptial plumage" may draw some criticism; he points out that the California Gull reaches maturity in three years, but he speaks of nuptial plumages in the first and second years.

The book is to be recommended to those interested in the avifauna of Great Salt Lake and its environs, and particularly to those interested in the natural history of gulls, pelicans, cormorants and herons.—THANE S. ROBINSON.

ARCTIC BIRDS OF CANADA. By L. L. Snyder. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1957: $6 \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ in., x + 310 pp., illus. \$4.75.

This book has far more to offer than the title and the author's precise delineation of its scope might indicate. It is a fascinating guide to a fascinating group of birds, and the information contained within its pages is of value to amateur or professional ornithologists whether they visit the arctic regions or not. Even the author's appraisal of the book as being not one having appeal as a literary companion would not be true if it weren't for the interminably long passages that perhaps reduce the number of pages, but make it hard to keep one's eyes open.

In the introductory chapter the author has established the limits of the Canadian Arctic as defined by him, given the objectives of the text, discussed the process of identification through elimination, provided a key to the orders of birds of the Canadian Arctic, made a

broad classification of arctic habitats and the birds most likely to be found in these habitats, and has written a short but well-done summary of the nature of arctic birds. While the order key is little affected, I personally object to using other than a dichotomous means of separation. His separation of the Gruiformes, Charadriiformes, and Galliformes is done by a triplet rather than a couplet method.

There are nine orders covered in the main body of the text and each family discussed under these orders is given a general discussion on features that distinguish the particular family. Here will be found information, though aimed primarily at the amateur, that will often provide quick reference for the professional. Following the general discussion, each species is described under the following categories: additional names, status (general, arctic, migratory), habitat, characteristics and remarks. A most interesting feature useful to visitors of arctic regions has been the inclusion of the Eskimo names for each bird species. The section on characteristics often occupies three or four pages and includes features seldom found in identification guides. This section describes the appearance of the adult in the field and when held in the hand. It describes the young in the field, in the hand, and also in the down. The eggs and the nest are also detailed. The remarks section is primarily devoted to problems of classification and distribution.

In addition to the main text there is an appendix list of bird species that are not characteristic of the Canadian Arctic, but whose occurrence is occasional, a fairly complete glossary, a partial bibliography of some 52 titles, and a good index.

The publishers are to be congratulated on the appearance of the book and its freedom from typographical errors, and a review would be incomplete if mention was not made of the illustrations that are of the usual high quality that we have come to expect from T. M. Shortt.—P. B. HOFSLUND.

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