

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

A whole book devoted to a single species of bird is a novelty. The idea might not prove a success in very many cases; but it certainly does in the present instance. Readable thru-out is MERSHON'S THE PASSENGER PIGEON. Even of absorbing interest are the historical accounts of the vast flights and nestings of the bird. The author's own boyhood experiences are incorporated and there is some other previously unpublished material. But the book is avowedly, and of necessity, a compilation. In the one volume we find brought together practically all that has been recorded concerning the Passenger Pigeon.

It was soon after the year 1880 that the species, existing previously in millions, largely disappeared; and since 1886 has it only occasionally been noted. A few evidently still inhabit the states of Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin; and a "large flock" is said to have been seen in Greene County, New York, in April, 1906.

"Many theories have been advanced to account for the disappearance of the wild pigeons, among them that their migration may have been overwhelmed by some cyclonic disturbance of the atmosphere which destroyed their myriads at one blow. The big 'nesting' of 1878 in Michigan was undoubtedly the last large migration, but the pigeons continued to nest in Michigan and the North for several years after that * * *. Therefore the pigeons did not become extinct in a day * * *. The cutting off of the forests and food supply interfered with their plan of existence and drove them into new localities, and the ever increasing slaughter could not help but lessen their once vast numbers."

If space permitted we could quote selected pages of interesting accounts of habits, food, methods of netting, shooting and marketing; but we must only refer our readers to the book itself. An attractive feature are the colored plates of the Passenger Pigeon by Fuertes, and of the Band-tailed Pigeon by Brooks. All records of the Passenger Pigeon from the Rocky Mountains westward doubtless refer to the Band-tailed Pigeon.—J. G.

An ingenious and doubtless useful adjunct for the aid of the amateur is GERBERDING'S BIRD NOTE BOOK 2. It is of the separate-leaf style, with fillers of several sorts. One of

these, by means of what look like short-hand symbols, serves for the record of previously unidentified species. Another serves for the recording of subsequent field notes.—J. G.

THE WARBLERS OF NORTH AMERICA, by FRANK M. CHAPMAN, impresses us as a worthy undertaking well carried out. It seems to be above criticism from a technical standpoint, and indeed its author is sufficient guarantee of its accuracy. In this respect it is a refreshingly trustworthy book as compared with many other popular works by less experienced ornithologists.

There are no keys, but these are unnecessary in view of the beautiful and accurate colored plates. The chief distinguishing characters are concisely stated for each species and subspecies in their various plumages.

While the migration data and illustrations have previously appeared in *Bird-Lore*, much of the biographical matter is wholly new. A large number of observers have contributed to the fund of information set forth, and this cooperative feature has in this instance proven very successful. Many of the MS-quoted sketches of our western birds are from the pen of Dr. W. K. Fisher, and a good deal is quoted from various other authors as originally recorded in THE CONDOR.

Mr. Chapman's general discussions of the Distribution of Warblers, Migration of Warblers, and Mortality Among Warblers are well-considered and instructive. To one statement, however, we would take exception: "The death-rate among North American Warblers is doubtless higher than that which prevails in any other family of American birds." It is generally accepted as an axiom that the yearly death-rate equals the birth-rate (that is, on an average among all birds, for some species may be increasing in numbers from year to year while others are decreasing). As the Warblers lay 4 or 5 eggs per year on an average, probably nearer the first number, certainly their death-rate cannot be as great as that of the Titmouse Family (*Paridae*) in which 6 eggs are deposited, or the Wren Family (*Troglodytidae*) with 6 or 7. And how about the Kinglets, Ducks, Pheasants, Grouse and Quail!

The plan of THE WARBLERS OF NORTH AMERICA is logical, and the whole treatment satisfying. The present reviewer can heartily recommend the volume to amateur and advanced student alike.—J. G.

1 The Passenger Pigeon | By | W. B. Mershon | [Vignette] | New York | The Outing Publishing Company | 1907 (our copy received May 8)—pages i-xii, 1-225, 9 full-page plates, 3 in color.

2 Bird Note Book, for use in Identification of Wild Birds as seen in their native haunts. Devised and Published by Richard H. Gerberding, 1319 Waveland Ave., Chicago, Ill. 1906.

3 The Warblers | of | North America | by | Frank M. Chapman | with the cooperation of other ornithologists | with twenty-four full-page colored plates, illustrating every species, from drawings by Louis Agassiz Fuertes | and Bruce Horsfall, and half-tones | of nests and eggs | [Vignette] | New York | D. Appleton & Company | 1907 [Received April 5]—pages i-x, 1-306, plates I-XXIV (colored), 12 half-tones.