

Economic Publications of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.—

Several important papers have been published recently by the staff of the Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, relating to economic ornithology. One by Ned Dearborn deals with the English Sparrow.¹ Continued investigation has only emphasized the fact that these birds are everywhere a nuisance,—noisy, filthy and destructive, and the little good they do in destroying some noxious insects is far overbalanced by the damage they inflict. This bulletin deals mainly with the best methods for their destruction and recommends the continual breaking up of their nests and the trapping of the old birds, as the most efficacious means for lessening their numbers. Several styles of traps are figured and described in detail.

A bulletin on the economic status of nineteen common Game, Aquatic and Rapacious birds is the joint work of W. L. McAtee and F. E. L. Beal,² though the former author is responsible for the bulk of the sketches. As in other similar publications the distribution and general habits of the several species are briefly considered, while the results of the study of stomach contents are given in considerable detail. Several birds are here treated which have not been included in previous publications of the Department.

Mr. W. L. McAtee has another paper in the Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture dealing with the 'Bird Enemies of the Codling Moth.'³ He finds that birds are the most effectual natural enemies of this pest and 'in some localities they destroy from 66 to 85 per cent of the hibernating larvæ.' The most useful species are the Downy Woodpecker, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole and Bush-Tit.—W. S.

The Food of Birds in India.⁴—Under this title Mr. C. W. Mason brings together most of the recorded knowledge upon the food of Indian birds, and presents also field observations of his own, as well as the results of the examinations of 1325 stomachs. The work is edited by the Imperial Entomologist, H. Maxwell-Lefroy, who adds a section summarizing the value of birds to agriculture. Mr. Mason has done a very useful thing in collecting the notes on bird food from the 3 most important Indian scientific journals, and from 10 standard reference works on the avifauna of India. It greatly lightens the task of future students of economic ornithology in India. Moreover the generous leaven of new material gives point and vitality to the whole paper.

"From the economic point of view," says Mason, "the scientific identi-

¹ The English Sparrow as a Pest. By Ned Dearborn. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin, 493, 1912, pp. 1-24, figs. 1-17.

² Some Common Game, Aquatic, and Rapacious Birds in Relation to Man. By W. L. McAtee and F. E. L. Beal. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmer's Bulletin, 497, 1912, pp. 1-30, figs. 1-14.

³ Bird Enemies of the Codling Moth. By W. L. McAtee. Yearbook U. S. Department of Agriculture for 1911 (1912), pp. 237-246. (Also separate.)

⁴ Mem. Dept. Agr. India. Ent. Ser. Vol. III, Jan., 1912, 371 pp.