

**Strong on Teaching a Bird Course.**<sup>1</sup>— Dr. Strong outlines his methods of conducting bird classes at the University of Chicago and his suggestions will prove valuable to teachers engaged in the same line of work. Laboratory work consists of identifications from skins which, to avoid wear and tear are wired onto handles upon which their measurements are marked. Lantern slides are also shown to test ability in identification, the students writing down the names of the birds as they appear on the screen. Field work is conducted twice a week in the spring from 7.40 to 9.10 A. M., full observations being recorded on each species observed. As Dr. Strong remarks the main object of students selecting this course is to learn to identify the birds and consequently the course is adapted to this end.— W. S.

**Beal on the Food of our More Important Flycatchers.**<sup>2</sup>— The food habits of these birds are discussed at length by Prof. Beal in the manner made familiar to our readers in previous publications of the Biological Survey.

Analyses of stomach contents of the 17 species of Flycatchers here considered shows that 94.99 percent. of their food consists of insects and spiders. Of this hymenoptera — bees, wasps, etc. constitute more than a third and as these insects are for the most part beneficial, this element must be weighed against the destruction of noxious species, which Prof. Beal considers more than balances it. Curiously enough the destruction of honey bees popularly charged against the Kingbird seems to have been greatly exaggerated and the greatest harm done by the birds lies in the destruction of small parasitic hymenoptera.

Admirable plates by Fuertes, all but one in colors, illustrate this valuable bulletin.— W. S.

**Beal and McAtee on Food of Some Well-known Birds.**<sup>3</sup>— The results of stomach examinations and field observations on twenty common birds not included in Bulletin No. 54 are here set forth, two of the species being treated by Mr. McAtee and the rest by Prof. Beal. In these publications the Department of Agriculture is spreading broadcast information on the habits and value of our birds, the influence of which has had much to do with the constantly increasing attention that is being given to bird preservation in America.— W. S.

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<sup>1</sup> Some Ideas on Teaching a Bird Course. By R. M. Strong. Nature Study Review, Vol. 8, No. 5, pp. 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> Food of our More Important Flycatchers. By F. E. L. Beal. Bulletin 44, Biological Survey, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, pp. 1-67, plates I-V. September 19, 1912.

<sup>3</sup> Food of Some Well-known Birds of Forest, Farm, and Garden. By F. E. L. Beal and W. L. McAtee. Farmers' Bulletin, No. 506, U. S. Department of Agriculture, pp. 1-35, figs. 1-16. September 25, 1912.