

itself without protective legislation, and that it might be as well to leave it in that category, as it is now in most of the states where it occurs. Then in case of any undesirable development in its habits, its numbers could be checked without waiting for the repeal of a law. The bird is not now shot for any purpose and is so wary that it is difficult to approach near enough to shoot it in any numbers.

The historical account of the introduction and spread of the Starling given by the authors of this report is not so accurate as that given in Mr. Forbush's report of 1915—a publication by the way which is not mentioned, although Mr. Forbush's investigations were carried on in part under the auspices of the Biological Survey. The Starling as a matter of fact was established at Trevoise Pa. by 1904; at Philadelphia by 1905 and at Cape May, N. J., by 1910; all duly published records, the last of which would have made some change in the authors' chart on page 5 had they looked it up. The great roost too at Doylestown, Pa., described in 'The Auk' for 1917, pp. 338-340 is not mentioned.

In the earlier reports of the Biological Survey authorities and references were always given for statements and data quoted from others, either published or manuscript, and other reports on the same subject mentioned, but this practice has for some reason been discontinued in later years. This is not only very annoying to those who would like to trace such authority but is contrary to the custom of scientific publications and the best of the economic works, such as 'The Game Birds of California,' Forbush's reports, etc. The excuse of lack of space which might be made in the case of Government publications is hardly a valid one as the matter could easily be arranged so as to allow for quotation of authorities. In the present report, for instance, this information would be of far greater value than the long columns of technical names of insects upon which the Starling feeds which mean nothing to anyone but an entomologist, the more important ones having already been mentioned along with their English names in the text. These remarks on methods of publication however in no way reflect upon the conscientious work to Messrs. Kalmbach and Gabrielson and the unprejudiced attitude in which they have handled the rather difficult problem of the Starling's economic status. An excellent color plate from a painting by the senior author forms a frontispiece to the report.—W. S.

**Mathews' 'The Birds of Australia.'**—The last two parts of Mr. Mathews' work continue the treatment of the Muscicapidae, the former bringing to a close the eighth volume—the first of the Passeriformes, including two pages of corrections to the "Check-List" which is to be bound up with Volume VIII.

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<sup>1</sup> The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews, Volume VIII. Part 5. December 15, 1920. Volume IX, Part 1. February 15, 1921. H. F. and G. Witherby, 326 High Holborn, W. C. I. London.

As new names proposed in this part we notice three races of *Lewinornis rufiventris* and two of *Eopsaltria griseogularis* as well as a new genus *Peneanthe* (p. 273) for *E. leucura*.

In the preface the author further explains his views on the importance of anatomical characters in classification, emphasising the importance of a full knowledge of the subject but stating that "insignificant items have been given great degree and the higher classification based on variable anatomical details of little import." After all, the relative importance of anatomical and superficial characters seems to be a matter of personal opinion. Mr. Mathews objects to our use of the word "sure" in the statement "we find just as much divergence in external characters among species which we feel sure must be closely allied"; but he immediately follows with the statement that in "a group—\* \* \* \* \* whose evolution as to superficialities is *known* [italics ours] their morphology should be contrasted and the degree of anatomical variation determined." But if we claim to *know* how external characters have developed why may we not be *sure* of anatomical relationships? We are however heartily in accord with Mr. Mathews in his reliance upon external characters in conjunction with morphological features in improving our classification and our criticism was due really to a lack of clarity in his former statements regarding the matter.

The first part of Vol. IX covers the old genera *Rhipidura* and *Myiagra*. *Setosura setosa davidi* (p. 31) appears as a new name for *S. s. macgillivrayi*, preoccupied; while *Leucocura leucophrys carteri* (p. 41) is described as new. It is not always clear whom Mr. Mathews is naming his new forms after, as he rarely tells us. An appendix to one of his lists containing information would be valuable historically.—W. S.

**Van Oort's 'Birds of Holland'.**—A double part (7-8) of this important work<sup>1</sup> consists entirely of plates (61-80) of ducks, the text to which will be issued in Part 9. These plates are excellent in execution and are of especial interest to American ornithologists since the Blue-winged Teal, Pintail, Shoveller, European Widgeon, Goldeneye, Old-squaw, Greater Scaup and the Scoters are among the species depicted. All sexual and seasonal plumages are shown especially the eclipse plumage and the downy young which makes this a work of reference of the greatest importance. We do not recall another work in which the plumages are so fully illustrated. W. S.

**Wetmore on Cave Birds of Porto Rico.**—Among the mammal remains recently obtained and reported upon by H. E. Anthony from the

<sup>1</sup> Ornithologia Neerlandica. De Vogels van Nederland door Dr. E. D. Van Oort, directeur van 's Rijks Museum van Natuurlijke Historie te Leiden. Met ongeveer vierhonderd gekleurde platen. Martinus Nijhoff. Aflevering 7-8.

<sup>1</sup> Five New Species of Birds from Cave Deposits in Porto Rico. By Alexander Wetmore. Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington 33, pp. 77-82. December 30, 1920.