

**Mabbott, on the Food Habits of Seven Shoal-Water Ducks<sup>1</sup>.—**

In 1918 Mr. W. L. McAtee published (Bull. 720 U. S. Dept of Agriculture) an account of the food habits of the Mallard and Black Ducks and the late Mr. Mabbott in the present paper has covered the other river ducks—the Gadwall, Baldpate, Teal, Pintail and Wood Duck. The Shoveller seems to have been omitted although the European Widgeon, a mere straggler in America, has been included.

These reports are published as a result of the recent increase in duck farming in the United States and the consequent demand for information on the natural food of the several species. The food of these river ducks is found to be from 70 to 98 per cent. vegetable, pond weeds and sedge seeds predominating, while the animal food is mainly confined to certain mollusks and aquatic insects.

The data are compiled mainly from autumn and winter specimens and food habits during the nesting season may be found to differ to some extent. The food of the same species in different localities must vary very considerably and in the case of the Wood Duck the high percentage of cones of the bald cypress consumed would fall off completely in those parts of the country lying north of the range of this tree. In the summary published five-eighths of the specimens examined were from Louisiana which of course accounts for the prominence of this item of food.

Mr. Mabbott had prepared a valuable report and it is fortunate that it was left in such shape that its publication was possible. While all will honor his prompt response to his country's call and the supreme sacrifice that he made, it is a matter of deep regret that such a promising young ornithologist must needs be cut down at the very beginning of his career.—W. S.

**Shufeldt on Pictures of the Passenger Pigeon.<sup>2</sup>**—This paper, read at the 1920 meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, gives an interesting summary of the various illustrations of the Passenger Pigeon known to the author with some history of the works in which they appear. It forms a valuable contribution to the history of this famous bird, covering, as it does, ground that has been almost entirely neglected. Discussion at the meeting, when it was presented, demonstrated how very few persons there are still living who can accurately describe the appearance and actions of this species, or can judge authoritatively of the relative merits of its portraits. Dr. Shufeldt has added greatly to the value of his paper by furnishing photographic reproductions of twelve of the best published

<sup>1</sup> Food Habits of Seven Species of American Shoal-water Ducks. By Douglas C. Mabbott, Assistant in Economic Ornithology. Bull. 862, U. S. Dept. Agriculture. December 30, 1920. pp. 1-67. Price 25 cts. (Order from Supt. of Documents, Gov. Printing Office, Washington, D. C.)

<sup>2</sup> Published Figures and Plates of the Extinct Passenger Pigeon. By Dr. R. W. Shufeldt. Scientific Monthly. May, 1921, pp. 457-480.

plates of the bird together with several of the last individual, taken from life, and after it had been mounted by the late Nelson R. Wood. Incidentally he states that the plates of Wilson's 'Ornithology' were engraved by Warnicke but we are at a loss to know what authority he has for the statement. If the great majority of them are not the work or Lawson it is high time that proof of the fact were presented.—W. S.

**Lincoln's Instructions for Bird Banding.**<sup>1</sup>—This is a clear and concise series of instructions on how to band birds, how to catch them for banding and study, and how to keep the necessary records. So many important problems can be solved by thus tagging birds, and keeping records of their recapture at the same place or elsewhere, that the Biological Survey has adopted the practise as one of its regular lines of research and volunteers are solicited to aid in the banding. The present pamphlet is issued especially to furnish the necessary instructions for carrying on the work. It seems to admirably fill the requirements.—W. S.

**Murphy on the Sea Coast and Islands of Peru, IV and V.**<sup>2</sup>—Dr. Murphy continues in the 'Brooklyn Museum Quarterly' his interesting account of his recent trip to the Peruvian coast. One installment deals with the Chincha Islands and the Guano industry and is prefaced with an account of a visit there fifty years ago by Dr. Frederick A. Lucas, which was written at Dr. Murphy's request to contrast conditions at that time with those of today. The other installment relates to the ancient mummies of the coast region and to Independencia Bay where the Chilean Flamingo was found.—W. S.

**Speck on Bird-Lore of the Northern Indians.**<sup>3</sup>—This is a delightfully written account of the fables and beliefs of the Penobscot Indians which relate to the wild birds. The Great Auk we learn was regarded as the chief of a tribe which is visited by the chief deity of the Penobscots when his uncle desires to secure a wife. The Petrel's name in the Penobscot language means "picking up grease," referring to the bird's habit of skimming the surface of the water. The Owls, to the primitive Indian mind, were of deep portent and almost all the species are distinguished by name.

The Redstart is "little fire," and the Thrushes, "birds of evening,"

<sup>1</sup> Instructions for Bird Banding. By Frederick C. Lincoln. U. S. Dept. Agr. Department Circular 170. April 1921. pp. 1-18. Price 5 cents (from Supt. Documents, Government Printing Office).

<sup>2</sup> Brooklyn Museum Quarterly January, 1921, pp. 1-28 and April, 1921, pp. 35-55.

<sup>3</sup> Bird-Lore of the Northern Indians. By Frank G. Speck. Reprint from Volume VII, Public Lectures by University of Pennsylvania Faculty, 1919-20. Philadelphia, Pa. Published by the University, 1921.