

We have frequently urged the importance of supporting such an invaluable publication as the 'Zoological Record' without which the nomenclature of systematic zoology would become more or less chaotic, and its progress greatly hampered. The condition that now faces us is critical. Since the suspension of the 'International Catalogue of Scientific Literature' the Zoological Society of London has been publishing the 'Record' at a constantly increasing cost which has now reached approximately £2000 annually. It has undertaken the publication of the volume for 1920 and is sending out blank forms, soliciting subscriptions for that of 1921. If the response is not liberal the publication cannot go on. The subscription price of the entire volume will be £2.10s. and of the 'Aves' section 7s 6d. The British Museum has subscribed for six copies of the 'Record' and it seems as if several of the larger museums of America could do likewise, while *every* museum and university should have one copy and every systematic ornithologist should become a subscriber to the 'Aves'. The progress of ornithology depends upon the continuation of this yearly record of what has been published.—W. S.

**Grinnell's 'The Principle of Rapid Peering in Birds.'**<sup>1</sup>—Dr. Grinnell divides birds into two groups, those which wait passively for the appearance, within reach, of moving objects of food value, and those which are more or less constantly in motion seeking items of food which are stationary. He considers that there is no such thing as "excess-of-vigor" and "joy-of-living" as they are used to explain the lively, joyous actions of many birds, and that an adequate explanation of such activity, involving stern utility should be looked for. He finds that an object moving at a distance is easily picked up by the human eye but a stationary object, like a golf ball in the grass for instance, is looked for by constant, movement of the searcher and, within certain limits, the greater the activity, the sooner the object will be found. It is moreover the rapid movement of the eye as much as anything else that brings success. With birds the critical food period is winter and the nervous activity of birds like Kinglets at this season is really the intense effort to find enough food to satisfy their needs, in which the principle of "rapid peering" plays a most important part. Dr. Grinnell's explanation is ingenious and doubtless correct, while it is an excellent illustration of the attitude of mind necessary to study problems of animal behavior.

Incidentally he refers to such "humanistic terms" as "joy-of-living" being often used "even in our more serious ornithological literature." We question (and doubtless Dr. Grinnell will entirely agree with us) whether there is not a perfectly proper side of ornithology that without humanizing the birds to the ridiculous extremes that some popular writers have done, and without entering the field of ornithological romance,

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<sup>1</sup> The Principle of Rapid Peering in Birds. Univ. of Calif. Chronicle, XXIII, No. 4, October, 1921 pp. 392-396.

makes use of such terms as this in giving us a word picture of the bird and its activities that could be accomplished in no other way. Indeed Dr. Grinnell's very use of such terms shows us clearly just what activities he is going to explain in terms of "stern utility."

Bereft of all such terms what would be left of the writings of Audubon and hosts of others which have their place in serious ornithological literature as much as the equally serious studies of animal behavior which latter however have sometimes but little "literary" claims.

All of this however has no bearing on the excellence of Dr. Grinnell's paper.—W. S.

**Murphy on the Seacoast and Islands of Peru.**<sup>1</sup>—The seventh instalment of Dr. Murphy's account of his recent expedition to Peru describes Asia Island and the visit to Callao. The destruction of tens of thousands of Cormorant nests by the Condors is described and the necessity on the part of the Guano industry to kill off these noble birds when pillaging the islands is admitted. A number of interesting pictures of cormorants, penguins, etc., from photographs illustrate the article.—W. S.

**Kirke Swann's 'Synopsis of the Accipitres.'**<sup>2</sup>—Part one of a Second Edition of Mr. Swann's 'Synopsis' has appeared, "revised and corrected throughout," and with all new forms described up to 1920. It follows the plan of the first edition, the present instalment covering *Vultur* to *Accipiter*.—W. S.

**Sewerzow on the Zoogeography of the Palaearctic Region.**<sup>3</sup>—This pamphlet is a reprint of a communication presented before the Russian Geographic Society in 1877, and which showed an understanding of the subject on the part of the author far in advance of his time. He divides the region into two parts Boreal and Austral, the former containing the Polar; Northern Wooded Zone (including the North-European, Ural-Siberian and East Siberian Provinces) and Intermediate Zone, (including the Middle European, Ural-Arabian and Drurian Provinces). The Austral sub-region contains the South-West Zone (Atlantic and Mediterranean Provinces) and the Desert Zone, (Lybian, North African, West Asian, Middle Asian, Thibetan and Sind Provinces). He has in addition

<sup>1</sup> The Seacoast and Islands of Peru, VII. By Robert Cushman Murphy. Brooklyn Museum Quarterly, October, 1921, pp. 142-155.

<sup>2</sup> A Synopsis of the Accipitres (Diurnal Birds of Prey). Part I (Vultur to Accipiter). By H. Kirke Swann. Second Edition, revised and corrected throughout. Sept. 28, 1921, pp. 1-63. Price 6s. Wheldon and Wesley Ltd., 38 Great Queen St., Kingsway, W. C. 2., London, England.

<sup>3</sup> Über die Zoologische (hauptsächlich ornithologische) Gebiete der ausserhalb der Tropen gelegenen Teile unseres Kontinents. Von Nikolai Sewerzow. Übersetzt und eingeleitet von Hermann Grote. Mit einem Bildnis Sewerzows. Dultz and Co. München. 1921 pp. 1-32.