

these papers attention might be called to the author's report¹ on a collection made at Parana in 1910 and 1911 which apparently appeared in 1912.—W. S.

Oberholser on Bird Life in the Great Basin.²—One naturally associates Dr. Oberholser's name with the most technical treatises dealing with nomenclature and taxonomy, and the present paper will doubtless come as a pleasant surprise to many who are unacquainted with his versatility. He has here presented us with an admirable popular sketch of the physical characteristics and bird life of one of the most interesting of the desert areas of the west—the Great Basin.

The habits and appearance of many of the water and shore-birds of Tule and Pyramid Lakes are described in some detail as well as of a number of the more truly desert birds which are not dependent upon the presence of bodies of water. The student of the life history and behavior of our native birds will find Dr. Oberholser's paper one well worth consulting. While no scientific names appear, one cannot but notice some of the peculiarities of the English names, for which the author is probably not responsible. Instead of following the standard forms established by the American Ornithologists' Union and in very general use, we find the editor of the Smithsonian Report, insisting that "humming bird" and "mocking bird"³ consist of two words with not even a hyphen, though "meadowlark" and "nighthawk" pass as single words. In another report from the same institution however, we find "humming-bird" hyphenated!—W. S.

McAtee's Community Bird Refuges.³ In this attractively gotten up pamphlet the author calls attention briefly and concisely to the advantages of increasing the number of birds on or about our farm lands. While the average number of birds to the acre throughout the country is shown to be two, the number has been increased by the offer of suitable inducements to as many as 59 pairs. At an annual average value of 10 cents each to the farmer, as insect destroyers,—a ridiculously low estimate, the birds of the United States effect a saving of four hundred million dollars every year, and it is readily seen that the more we can attract to our grounds the better.

The usual methods of erecting nest boxes, winter feeding, planting of berry bearing bushes, etc., are mentioned, with references to other available publications on the subject. A novel feature however, is a plea for

¹ Compt. Rend. Soc. Scient. de Varsovie, 1912, V. Ann., fasc. 8. pp. 452-500. [In Polish with condensed reprint in French].

² Glimpses of Desert Bird Life in the Great Basin. By Harry C. Oberholser. Smithsonian Report for 1919, pp. 355-366. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1921.

³ Community Bird Refuges. By W. L. McAtee. Farmers' Bulletin 1239. U. S. Dept. Agr., December, 1921, Svo. pp. 1-14.

the improvement of roadsides and railroad right-of-ways. "There exists" says the author "in most parts of the United States either a superstition, a conviction, or a legal requirement that roadsides be shorn of their vegetation at least once a year." The result is a dusty, shadeless, uninviting road, which could be remedied by the proper planting and care of trees and hedges, which would be pleasing to the eye and would furnish shelter and nest sites for birds.

Mr. McAtee has prepared a timely and useful pamphlet. A new edition, is we understand, already called for which is encouraging although we fear it will require several of them to overcome the ridiculous notions about clearing the fence rows which are inherent in the minds of the majority of our farmers.

Apropos of popular nomenclature the Biological Survey seems to be establishing another code of names different alike from the A. O. U. 'Check-List' and the idiosyncracies of the Smithsonian Reports. We find "eastern bluebird" used consistently all through this paper though "robin," "hermit thrush," "mockingbird" and "meadowlark" appear without the geographic modifier. If the improvement is desirable in one case, why not in all? "Yellow-shafted flicker" is another vernacular not in the A. O. U. 'Check-List.' These are but minor matters but the constant tendency toward individuality in nomenclature and the ignoring of the once authoritative 'Check-List' are alarming and seem to serve no purpose but to effect ultimate chaos.—W. S.

Wetmore on Body Temperature of Birds.¹—Few recent ornithological papers contain as much "meat" as is crowded into the fifty odd pages of Dr. Wetmore's treatise on the body temperature of birds. His studies have covered a number of years and with painstaking perseverance he has personally collected no less than 1558 dependable temperature records from recently killed birds representing 327 species and 50 families while compiled data swell the list of species to 406. His records were taken with special self-registering clinical thermometers, carried constantly in the field, ready for instant use, and inserted through the throat or rectum into the body cavity immediately after the bird was shot, later readings being found to be useless.

Dr. Wetmore corroborates the statements that the temperature of a bird increases a few degrees as the day advances and that the temperature of the female is usually slightly higher than that of the male. In the Phalaropes however, he finds that the reverse is true, doubtless correlated with the well-known reversal in the duties of incubation and rearing of the young in these birds. The same reversal of temperatures, however, prevails in the Avocet, and Dr. Wetmore has evidence pointing to the probably assumption of most of the duties of incubation by the males

¹ A Study of the Body Temperature of Birds. Smithsonian Misc. Collns. Vol. 72, No. 22. By Alexander Wetmore. pp. 1-52. December 30, 1921.