

collect sight records from a large number of people with whose "personal equation" we are not familiar, we are forced to the alternative of hurting their feelings by ignoring improbable records not properly substantiated or of pleasing them by printing their records and thereby rendering our publication untrustworthy from the scientific standpoint. We have tried to discourage the publication of doubtful records and must admit that the task is a hard one and that the pages of 'The Auk' are not blameless but we always insist upon full data and the name of the responsible person. In view of all that has been said and written of late on the greater need of care and forbearance in the publication of unusual sight records it is discouraging to find such careless work in such high places.—W. S.

Witherby's Handbook of British Birds.¹—A double number of this important book, which is rapidly approaching completion, is before us, covering the Grebes, Loons, Doves, Sand Grouse and most of the Limicolae. The general plan and character of the work has been fully discussed in the reviews of the earlier parts and it only remains to say that the present installment is fully up to the standard of its predecessors. There are two half-tone plates of the downy young of various species and numerous text figures of bills, heads, wings etc.

Following the English custom the name *Podiceps* is used for the Grebes and *Colymbus* for the Loons following the designation of Gray 1855. (see antea p. 147.)

The generic standard is very conservative as may be seen from the fact that *Eudromias*, *Pluvialis*, *Oxyechus*, *Charadrius* and other less generally recognized genera are united under the last name while *Pelidna*, *Canutus* and *Erolia* are combined under *Calidris* the latter dating from "Anonymous" 1804 where it is based on the Knot. For the Sanderling *Crocethia* is employed, while under *Tringa* we find the species of *Actitis* and *Totanus*.—W. S.

Mathews' 'The Birds of Australia.'²—Volume ten of this great work begins with the genus *Sericornis* and follows with *Tasmanornis*, *Oreoscopus* and *Acanthorhis*, which have been split off from the former genus as originally understood, and a beginning is made on the genus *Malurus*, comprising the beautiful Blue Wrens so characteristic of the Australian avifauna. Several subspecies are described as new: *Sericornis laevigaster tweedi* (p. 16) Tweed River; *S. magnirostris yorki* (p. 19) Cape York; *S. maculatus inopinatus* (p. 28) New South Wales; *S. m. gouldianus* (p. 28) South Australia; and *Tasmanornis humilis archibaldi* (p. 38) North Tasmania. The author's peculiar ideas on nomenclature are well illustrated on page 1 where he erects a new subgenus *Megathiza* for the bird he calls *Sericornis magnirostris keri*, in order to emphasize the fact

¹A Practical Handbook of British Birds. Edited by H. F. Witherby. Parts XIV–XV. Vol. II, pp. 449–624. Sept. 6, 1922.

²The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. Vol. X. Part I. September 28, 1922, pp. 1–56 with six plates.