

Mrs. Myers' 'Western Birds.'—Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers has prepared, under this title, and for the needs of the many amateur bird students of California and other western states, a book which describes the appearance, habits, etc., of some 200 species of our Pacific Coast birds, as well as a few from farther inland and some of the familiar eastern species. The preface and advertisement call them "song birds" but over a quarter of the volume treats of Cuckoos, Woodpeckers, Flycatchers and other species which do not come under that category. To be more exact the scope includes everything after the Owls in the order of the A. O. U. 'Check-List.' The information is presented in a clear, unassuming style and is based upon the author's personal experiences, covering many years of bird study and the most reliable books and reports dealing with the species under consideration.

As an officer of the California Audubon Society, Mrs. Myers is eminently fitted to know just what her readers desire and she seems to have made a most satisfactory selection from the published material at her disposal, while her personal observations are interesting and instructive. There are numerous half-tone illustrations from photographs by the author and others, of wild birds and nests, and a certain number of others from mounted specimens.

We regret that in a work designed as we are told, to be "so plain and simple that the most unscientific of readers may enjoy and become more familiar with our feathered wild life," it was thought necessary to drag in technical names, especially when they are so unfortunately jumbled as in the present instance. On the first page of the text the name of the order comes first, then the genus followed by the suborder, the species, the family and finally the subfamily, while for some reason the generic name in large letters is repeated before each species with the family name after it! For example "Genus Sayornis: Black Phoebe. Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*. Family—Flycatchers." Matters are still worse when the wrong names are used as "*Bombycilla*: Rough-winged Swallow" and "*Phaenoptilus*: Hummingbirds, Goatsuckers etc." It looks as if these headings had been added after the text had been prepared, by someone unfamiliar with the use of technical names. They fortunately do not affect the value of Mrs. Myers' book and the readers who will use it will probably—and rightly—not concern themselves with the technical names at all.—W. S.

Van Oort's 'Birds of the Netherlands.'²—The last two parts of this important work consist wholly of plates. They cover mainly the

¹ Western Birds. By Harriet Williams Myers, Author of "The Birds' Convention," Vice-President of the "California Audubon Society" New York, The Macmillan Company, 1922. pp. 1-391. Price \$3.50.

² Ornithologia Neerlandica. De Vogels van Nederland. door Dr. E. D. Van Oort. (20 plates.) Martinus Nijhoff, 'sGravenhage. Aflevering 16 and 17, November 1922, Aflevering 18 and 19, December 29, 1922. (19 plates.)

Plovers, Sandpipers and other Limicolae illustrating as heretofore the seasonal plumages, including the downy young, of all species which breed in Holland. There are in addition plates of several of the Hawks, Gallinaceous birds and Rails. The plate of the Ruff shows admirably the large number of confusing plumages which this remarkable bird assumes, while those depicting the Black Cock and Ring-necked Pheasant are also interesting in showing seasonal and other variation.—W. S.

Hartley's 'The Importance of Bird Life.'¹—This volume covers a much wider field than one would suppose from the title. The value of birds to agriculture and the means taken for their protection are fully considered, but unlike most similar works it does not stop there but includes chapters on the value, history, etc., of domestic fowls and pigeons; accounts of birds that are trained to hunt, to sing, and to perform in other ways; the history of the plume industry, of guano, of game birds and game laws. There is thus a large amount of information to be found here which would have to be sought for in various special publications and would not be available to the general reader. We gather here data on the flight of Homing Pigeons and learn that their fastest flight is at the rate of ninety miles an hour and that this is also the fastest accurately recorded rate for flying ducks. We can also obtain information on the history of falconry and the principles of poultry raising and of breeding for egg laying hens, some of which have now reached the record of 200 eggs a year. A number of half-tones from photographs illustrate many of the chapters. Mr. Hartley's book will prove a valuable work of reference for those desiring information on many branches of bird study not contained in the usual popular ornithological works. So far as we can judge from a hasty perusal of the volume the information is accurate, although we cannot quite share the author's optimism on the absolute success of the war on the plume trade, especially in the case of England where the protectionists do not seem to be satisfied with the working of the plume law, nor can we become enthusiastic on the future of our wild game for the preservation of which, we fear, vast protected breeding grounds must be provided and the number of gunners reduced, unless we are to be contented with and successful in breeding game for stocking private shooting grounds.

In the account of the nature of feather coloring the author is not quite clear, as he seems to say in one paragraph that in blue and metallic feathers the colors are "chemically composed and may be extracted by means of reagents," while in the next he states that blue feathers owe their color to surface structure which if eradicated will bring out the basic color which was previously concealed. We think there has been some typographical error in the former sentence while in the latter, though mainly

¹ *The Importance of Bird Life. A Popular Account of its Economic Significance and Conservation.* By G. Inness Hartley. Illustrated. New York. The Century Co. 1922. pp. 1-316. Price \$2.00.