

Mr. Preble discusses the life zone relationships of the group, which is of course most closely allied to the Arctic but "there are many elements that forbid its unqualified reference to that zone." The small size and rugged contour of the islands, severe winds, isolation and abundant food supply have combined to produce a fauna and flora peculiar in many respects.

No less than 137 species of birds are now known from the Pribilofs of which twenty-three breed. There are also seventeen regular migrants, and six of less regular occurrence, while the rest of the list is made up of species that have occurred only as occasional visitors, many of them but once, of these no less than twenty-one are visitors from Eurasia.

The authors are to be commended for giving footnote equivalents to the A. O. U. 'Check-List' so that those not conversant with the various new genera recently proposed may understand to what the names refer. There is a growing tendency especially in Government ornithological publications among those using "up to the minute" nomenclature, that has not been accepted in the A. O. U. 'Check-List' or other standard lists, to give no clue to where the new names originated or in what sense they are used. Even trained ornithologists cannot ascertain these facts without much laborious research, whereas a word of explanation or a footnote reference as here used would supply the clue.

Messrs. Preble and McAtee are to be congratulated upon producing a valuable contribution to American ornithology.—W. S.

Miss Cooke on Bird Censuses.¹—This interesting report summarizes the history and results of the bird census work conducted by correspondents of the U. S. Biological Survey from 1916 to 1920.

The object of bird censuses is to ascertain as accurately as possible the number of breeding birds in selected areas. The counting of singing males at the height of the nesting season is the most satisfactory method and about 80 acres seems to be the area best suited for a single observer, provided it includes reasonably diversified country. The count should be made several times as a check on its accuracy. From the data so far obtained, fragmentary as it is, it has been possible to draw some fairly accurate conclusions. In the northeastern States, for example, the average bird population per 100 acres for the four years 1916, 1917, 1918 and 1920 was respectively 159, 124, 95 and 140 pairs and for the north central States, 139, 129, 150 and 124 pairs. In the northeastern States the Robin proves to be the most abundant, comprising 8.3 per cent of the bird population, Song Sparrow, 7.7; English Sparrow, 4.3; Chipping Sparrow, 3.9; Catbird, 1.7; and Meadowlark, 1.0.

In the north central States the order of abundance differed: English

¹ Report of Bird Censuses in the United States, 1916 to 1920. By May Thatcher Cooke, Assistant in Biological Investigations. Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Dept. Agriculture; Dept. Bull. 1165. July 20, 1923, pp. 1-34, 10 tables. Price 5 cts. Supt. Documents, Gov't. Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Sparrow, 8.7 per cent; Robin, 6.2; Meadowlark, 4.0; Song Sparrow, 2.8; Catbird, 2.5; and Chipping Sparrow, 1.5.

While no doubt subject to future correction these illustrations show the possibilities of this line of work while a series of yearly counts of a single area will show the increase or decrease of given species, and the tabulation of many such records will show whether this is local or general.

As the author points out, censuses, to be of any value at all, must be made by experienced observers capable of identifying every species in the area. Censuses containing only a few species of those known to be present, unlike similar migration reports, are useless. So while migration work may be undertaken by those familiar at the start with but half a dozen species, census taking is a task for the trained ornithologist. There are many detailed accounts of censuses in various parts of the country which prove interesting reading.—W. S.

Mathews' 'Birds of Australia.'¹—Three parts of this work have appeared since our last issue. Parts 6 and 7 of Volume X complete the Cractidae, and the latter contains the title page, contents and index for the volume. There appear to be no new forms proposed in these parts. Mr. Mathews states in the preface that the close of the work is now in sight, as the manuscript is completed.

The remaining part is entitled "Supplement No. 2," and comprises the second instalment of the author's 'Check-List' of Australian birds covering the Pittidae to Sylviidae inclusive, with four pages of corrections to part one and a bibliographic appendix covering 1907-1921.—W. S.

Witherby's 'Handbook of British Birds.'²—Part XVII of this excellent work completes the Gulls and covers the Skuas and part of the Auks. The plumages are considered in much detail with the aid of several plates and numerous text cuts, one of the former being devoted to the downy young and another to Gulls in flight, all with wings similarly extended so that a comparison of color pattern can be made.

The pointed and rounded central tail-feathers of the Razor-bill and Brunnich's Murre are well contrasted, an important point since mis-identifications of these birds are frequently made.

The substitution of the name "Wedge-tailed Gull" for "Rozoy Gull" does not seem warranted, as changes in English names should be avoided wherever possible.—W. S.

¹ The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews, Vol. X, No. 6, June 5, 1923; No. 7, July 26, 1923; Supplement No. 2. 'Check-List,' Part 2. July 26, 1923.

² A Practical Handbook of British Birds Edited by H. F. Witherby. Part XVII, June 28, 1923. Price 4s 6d per part. H. F. & G. Witherby, 326 High Holborn W. C. 1, London.