

so this Death Valley region is cut off from the rest of the Colorado Desert area by the "higher" Mohave Desert belt which surrounds it and this barrier has prevented many species characteristic of the Colorado Desert from entering, although there is no doubt but that they could flourish in the Death Valley had they been able to spread into it. The region is therefore an extremely interesting one from the standpoint of zoogeography.

The Furnace Creek Ranch presents another interesting feature. It consists of about sixty acres which are kept under cultivation by irrigation and forms a green oasis in the desert, like an island in the sea, which attracts migrant birds just as does the island of Heligoland in the North Sea, and Dr. Grinnell thinks that if regular observations could be maintained here during the migratory flights the results might be quite as interesting.

The main part of the report consists of an annotated list of 124 species based upon two trips by the author in April and May, 1917 and April 1920, and all published and unpublished matter that could be found. Of the list 25 species are regarded as casuals, 45 as regular transients, 32 winter visitants, 10 summer visitants and 12 residents. The last consist of the Prairie Falcon, Burrowing Owl, Road-runner, Say's Phoebe, Western Raven, California Linnet (House Finch), Leconte's Thrasher and Rock Wren, all wide-ranging in the area, the Killdeer and Western Meadowlark which depend upon the maintenance of the ranch, and the introduced Desert Quail and English Sparrow. Only one of the summer visitants is known to breed, namely, the Bullock's Oriole, which is also dependent upon the ranch; so that there are now only 13 species known to breed in the below-sea-level area. Other interesting features of the paper are the lists of actual censuses which, as the author truly says, give one the best idea of relative abundance of species; and the weights of specimens which we are informed are as useful as measurements in distinguishing closely related forms.—W. S.

Bailey on Birds of the Santa Rita Mountains, Arizona.—As is well known to the readers of 'The Auk,' who have read Mrs. Bailey's delightful contributions on the birds of the Santa Ritas, she and her husband, Vernon Bailey of the U. S. Biological Survey, spent the period from November 1920 to May 1921 at McCleary's Ranch in this range. The interest thus aroused in the avifauna of these mountains and the fact that no satisfactory account of it had been published, have induced Mrs. Bailey to review the ornithological history of the Santa Ritas, to examine critically the several collections made there and to prepare a comprehensive account of the bird life which has just been published by the Cooper Club as Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 15.¹

¹ Birds Recorded from the Santa Rita Mountains in Southern Arizona. By Florence Merriam Bailey. Pacific Coast Avifauna Number 15. Cooper Ornithological Club. Berkeley, Calif., November 8, 1923. pp. 1-60, figs. 1-4. Price \$1.50 (W. Lee Chambers, Bus. Mgr., Eagle Rock, Calif.)

The introduction consists of a historical résumé of work done in the mountains from 1872, when Bendire first entered them, to 1923; a brief account of the more striking physical features, and several lists of species seen or collected by some of those who have worked in the region. Then follows an annotated list of 174 species, with records of specimens taken by earlier collectors, mainly hitherto unpublished and short accounts of habits and abundance from Mrs. Bailey's personal observations. The work forms a valuable record of the bird life of this interesting range which may now be accurately compared with that of the Huachucas and Santa Catalinas which have already been published upon, and in conjunction with Mrs. Bailey's articles on the habits of the species ('Auk', 1922, p. 424 and 1923, p. 373) gives a pretty clear picture of the avifauna.—W. S.

Trotter on the Origin and Relationship of American Song Birds.

—In this paper¹ Dr. Trotter reviews the opinions of various authors as to the difficulty of clearly delimiting the accepted families of the Oscines, pointing out which are clearly defined groups and which are not, as well as which are apparently primitive and which derived types. He also contrasts the classification of the Passeres and the Colubrine snakes noting that the characters used to distinguish families in the former are of about the same rank as those used for generic separation in the latter.—W. S.

Reichenow on a Collection of Birds from the Upper Congo.—

Dr. Reichenow's retirement from his professional ornithological responsibilities has not affected the continuance of his researches as evidenced by the present paper.² This is a report on a collection obtained in the Lualaba District of the Upper Congo by L. Frobenius. Thirty-three forms are listed of which two are described as new; *Colius leucotis congicus* (p. 3) and *Ploceus cucullatus frobenii* (p. 4). *Vanga cristata* (p. 5) from Nossibe Island is also described.—W. S.

Sumner on the Origin and Inheritance of Specific Characters.—

The subject of this recent paper³ of Prof. Sumner's is of interest to the increasing number of ornithologists who are concerning themselves with the broad problems of the origin of species and even if mainly based upon a study of mammals it applies equally to birds and should be read by ornithologists. Many of us will be pleased with his opening statement that "it seems reasonable to suppose that the geographic races or 'subspecies'

¹ An Inquiry into the Origin and Relationship of Certain North American Song Birds. By Spencer Trotter. Transactions of the Wagner Free Institute of Science of Philadelphia. Vol. X, 1923, pp. 29-41.

² Ueber eine Vogelsammlung vom oberen Kongo und eine neue Wurgerart von der Insel Nossibe. Von Ant. Reichenow. Sonderabdruck aus: Mittl. aus dem Zoologischen Staatsinstitut und Zoologischen Museum in Hamburg. XL. Jahr. 1923.

³ Some Facts Relative to a Discussion of the Origin and Inheritance of Specific Characters. By Dr. F. B. Sumner. American Naturalist, Vol. LVII. May-June, 1923.