

Swarth on the Birds of the Skeena River Region, B. C.—This is a report¹ on the results of another of the field explorations conducted by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California under the patronage of Miss Annie M. Alexander during the summer of 1921. The region covered lies on the east of the Coast Range, with a flora and fauna related to the interior country and similar in a general way to that of the Upper Stikine River district, already reported upon by the same author. Mr. Swarth found the fauna of the valleys to be Canadian while a well defined Hudsonian belt was present on the mountains and the treeless peaks showed Alpine-Arctic characteristics. We note in the portion of the report relating to the birds that the Rock Ptarmigan of the region proved to be quite distinct from *Lagopus r. dixonii* of the Aleutian Islands and probably represents a new sub-species. Material obtained seems to show that *Dryobates p. glacialis* Grinnell, of Alaska, is identical with the Rocky Mountain Downy Woodpecker *D. p. homorus* which however should be known by the earlier name *leucurus* Hartlaub. The specimens of Pigeon Hawks obtained show pretty clearly that the three forms, *columbarius*, *suckleyi* and *richardsoni* are all subspecies of a single species, *Falco columbarius*. Mr. Swarth also considers that *Parus hudsonius columbianus* Rhoads is a valid form, while he gives some interesting data on the molt of the Pipit. The report is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the fauna of the north-west.—W. S.

Sclater's 'Systema Avium Ethiopicarum.'²—The first part of this important work is before us, covering the families from the Struthionidae through the Picidae, essentially in the order adopted by A. H. Evans in the bird volume of the 'Cambridge Natural History.' The plan of treatment follows that of the A. O. U. and B. O. U. 'Check-Lists' in practically all details, a binomial group name appearing at the head of each series of subspecies, the usual generic headings, with references and type localities, etc. In addition there are foot notes referring to certain changes from current nomenclature and references to revisions of groups. The nomenclature follows the International Code as nearly as possible, but, as the author truly says, there is a certain amount of ambiguity in the application of some of the rules which leaves the correct names for certain species still in doubt.

Common names are given to all recognized forms but some of them are so cumbersome that they are little better than Latin trinomials and will

¹ Birds and Mammals of the Skeena River Region of Northern British Columbia. By Harry S. Swarth, Univ. Calif. Publications in Zoology. Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 315-394, pls. 9-11, January 24, 1924.

² Systema Avium Ethiopicarum. A Systematic List of the Birds of the Ethiopian Region. By William Lutley Slater, M. A., M. B. O. U. Prepared in conjunction with Special Committees of the British and American Ornithologists' Unions, Part I. Pp. 1-304. Published 30th April, 1924. Published by the British Ornithologists' Union and sold by Wheldon and Wesley, Ltd., 2-4 Arthur Street, New Oxford Street, W. C. 2. 1924. Pp. i-iv + 1-304. Price £1.1.0 (\$4.89).

hardly commend themselves to general usage. Examples of such names are the "Fernando Po Chocolate-backed Kingfisher" and the "Gold Coast Thick-billed Honey Guide."

We particularly endorse the conservatism in the recognition of genera and the frequent use of the convenient sub-genus, which serves all the purposes of the present day "genus" without destroying familiar nomenclature.

The value of a work of this kind which brings together all the forms of African birds under one cover cannot be overestimated. Furthermore we feel that the best and perhaps the only way to produce works of this sort is to place the task in the hands of one man who can consult as many others as he may desire but who can make the final decisions on moot points himself and thus establish a reasonable uniformity of treatment not to be attained by any Committee ruling. While we cannot speak for the B. O. U. Committee, Mr. Sclater, so far as the A. O. U. Committee is concerned, has been absolutely unhampered and we fear that there has been some little misunderstanding regarding the cooperation of the American Committee since the proofs were certainly not approved by this body as stated. Indeed the Committee has held no meetings since they were prepared and the reviewer who happens to be Chairman of the Committee never saw them. We make this statement in no spirit of criticism but simply to give credit where credit is due—namely to Mr. Sclater. We shall look forward with interest to the remaining part of this 'Systema' and trust that others on the same plan may soon make their appearance.—W. S.

Hellmayr and Zimmer on New South American Birds.—Two important papers have appeared in the publications of the Field Museum describing new birds obtained by the Captain Marshall Field Expeditions recently sent to South America, one dealing with Chilean species by Dr. Hellmayr¹ and one on Peruvian forms by John T. Zimmer.² In the former are proposed *Sclerorchilus albicollis atacamae* (p. 71) Caldera, Atacama; *Geositta cunicularia deserticolor* (p. 72) Caldera, Atacama; *Muscisaxicola rufivertex sanborni* (p. 73) Romero, Coquimbo; and *Troglodytes musculus atacamensis* (p. 74), Rio Loa, Antofogasta.

Mr. Zimmer proposes twelve new forms of the genera *Gymnopolia*, *Chalcostigma*, *Siptornis*, *Cranioleuca*, *Xenops*, *Euchlornis*, *Phrygilus* and *Cassicus*.

By a casual mention under one of the descriptions it would seem that specimens were borrowed for comparison from other institutions in the preparation of one of these papers at least. If this is so, by all customs and courtesies, existing among ornithologists, the fact should be stated in the

¹New Birds from Chile. By C. E. Hellmayr. Field Museum of Natural History Publication 219. Zool. Series XII, No. 5, April 19, 1924. Pp. 71-75

²New Birds from Central Peru. By John T. Zimmer. Ibid No. 4, April 19, 1924. Pp. 51-67.