

Birds Caught by Burdocks.—On the annual trip of the Brookline Bird Club to Plum Island on the Massachusetts coast, we were watching birds on a deserted farm midway between the dunes and the beach at the lower end of the island, when our attention was attracted toward a movement in a clump of burdocks about two feet in height. On approaching it I found a Golden-crowned Kinglet almost dead and a Red-breasted Nuthatch very much alive, both caught in the burrs. The Kinglet soon died but the Nuthatch was able to fly after being released. The rest of the burdocks were searched thoroughly and in another clump was found a dead bat.—LESLIE T. LITTLE, *Waltham, Mass.*

RECENT LITERATURE

Murphy's 'Bird Islands of Peru.'—In this handsome volume¹ Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy describes in detail his sojourn on the west coast of Peru during the latter part of 1919 and the early months of 1920. Through his lectures and shorter articles many of the readers of 'The Auk' have already gained some knowledge of this interesting region and their appetites have been whetted for more, so that the present volume will prove most welcome.

The object of Dr. Murphy's trip was to study oceanic conditions which are responsible for the abundant life that is found on this coast as well as its inter-relationship and distribution. On the islands lying off the Peruvian coast are located the famous guano beds which form an important source of revenue for the government and this industry, as well as the life histories of the birds which nest there and deposit the guano—the Cormorants, Boobies and Pelicans, naturally come in for much attention, the famous *guanay* or Peruvian Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax bougainvillei*, which Dr. Murphy terms "the most valuable bird in the world", being considered at length.

Dr. Murphy is very happy in the style of treatment of his subject and his book is at once a scientifically accurate account, to be relied upon as a work of reference, and an extremely interesting narrative which holds one's attention from beginning to end. There are vivid descriptions of the old Peruvian towns and their people, with bits of history and anecdote scattered through. Other sea birds beside the guano-producing species are mentioned through the text and the Condor and the Sea Lions come in for attention as well as the fisheries of the coast, and the more striking species of reptiles, crustaceans and insects.

The climatic conditions of this arid coastal district and the curious

¹ *Bird Islands of Peru. The Record of a Sojourn on the West Coast.* By Robert Cushman Murphy. Illustrated from Photographs by the Author. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York & London. The Knickerbocker Press. 1925, pp. 1-xx, + 1-362, numerous illustrations. Price \$5.00.

influence of the cold Humboldt Current which washes up from the Antarctic, bringing with it the Penguins and other denizens of the far south, are interestingly discussed and give us a clear understanding of the possible influence of ocean currents on land faunae, a factor which we are likely to overlook in regions where it is not so distinctly manifest. Dr. Murphy's chapter headings give a very clear idea of the topics covered in his book and we cannot do better than to quote them: The Ancient Capital and its Environs; The Seacoast of the Incas; Guano and its Producers; The Most Valuable Bird in the World; The Chincha Islands; Ancient People of the Coast; Independencia Bay; The Humboldt Current; San Gallan; Asia Island and the Central Coast; Peruvian Fisheries; Creatures of the Sea Surface, the Air and the Isles; The Fisherman's Isles and the Guanapes; and The Lobos Islands. There is also a bibliography and an excellent index.

The illustrations form one of the most attractive features of the book. There are upwards of fifty from photographs taken by Dr. Murphy, some of them being part of his notable motion pictures, and many diagrams and charts. Most of the photographs depict the Guano birds in their various activities from individual groups of young and old to congested masses of breeding birds which cover the ground as far as the eye can reach, forming probably the most remarkable bird gatherings that exist on the earth today.

In 'The Auk' for 1920 and 1921 will be found more detailed reviews of some of the chapters of this work which were published previously in less elaborate form in the 'Brooklyn Museum Quarterly.'

Dr. Murphy's book is one of the most important contributions to the natural history of South America that has yet appeared and one that we can commend to the attention of the general reader as well as to the ornithologist or student of geographical distribution.—W. S.

Wheeler's 'Birds of Arkansas.'—It seems but a very few years ago when Arkansas was, so far as detailed information was concerned, a terra incognita to the ornithologist. Then came Howell's list which gathered together all the scattered information on the birds of the State and added much data collected by the U. S. Biological Survey, establishing a State List of 255 species and subspecies.

Since then there has been a constantly increasing interest in the birds by residents of Arkansas until we have now a publication¹ issued by the Bureau of Mines, Manufactures and Agriculture, and prepared by Mr. H. E. Wheeler of Little Rock, an ornithologist evidently well equipped for the work that he has undertaken. This list brings the number of Arkansas birds up to 287, some of which, however, are included upon such

¹ The Birds of Arkansas, A Preliminary Report. By H. E. Wheeler. Published by State Bureau of Mines, Manufactures and Agriculture. Jim G. Ferguson, Commissioner, John C. Small, Assistant. pp. i-xxvi + 1-184, 113 illustrations. [Little Rock, 1925.]