

RECENT LITERATURE.

Brewster's 'Birds of the Lake Umbagog Region of Maine.'—The second part of this posthumous work¹ of the late William Brewster is before us and it carries on the admirable series of sketches through the shore birds, gallinaceous birds and birds of prey, following the order of the A. O. U. 'Check-List.' This part, referring as it does to birds of unusual interest, commands at once the attention of both the technical ornithologist and the layman, while Mr. Brewster's accuracy of observation combined with his painstaking care in composition makes the 'Birds of Umbagog' one of the best series of ornithological biographies that has yet appeared.

The account of the habits of the Ruffed Grouse full of direct extracts from the author's diary is particularly interesting, especially the details of its method of drumming and the conversion of his guides from their previous ideas, that the sound was produced by beating the wings on the log or on the breast of the bird, to his view that it was caused by beating on the air alone. The opinion too that the "budding" of fruit trees by the Grouse prevents overbearing and makes for an annual crop of apples instead of a biennial one, is well worthy of the serious attention of the economist as another illustration of nature's methods of conservation upon which man is ever trying to improve.

The record of the occurrence of Wild Pigeons at the Lake from 1870 to 1882, when Mr. Brewster saw his last individual, is one of the few careful records of the final stage in the disappearance of this noble bird.

The accounts of the Hawks, Eagles and Owls, birds which have attracted much attention of late years, are replete with interesting and important observations.

Beside the pleasure that one derives from reading the pages of the 'Birds of Umbagog' we are impressed with the fact that the work is bound to become one of the most important and reliable works of reference on the life histories and activities of the birds of eastern North America, a field that is yearly absorbing the attention of more and more of our ornithologists.

As plumage variations and geographic distribution become completed studies in this area we are naturally concerning ourselves more with the detailed activities of birds, from which studies we evolve characters of action, if we may so term them, for each species quite as distinctive as color or structural characters, and we naturally would fain compare our observations and conclusions with those of others. No loose and slipshod or second-hand notes will serve for such purpose and it will be upon works like this of Mr. Brewster that we shall place our reliance.—W. S.

¹ The Birds of the Lake Umbagog Region of Maine. By William Brewster. Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool. Vol. LXVI. Part 2. Cambridge, Mass. February 1925. pp. 213-402. Price \$1.50.