

RECENT LITERATURE.

Bailey's 'Birds of Florida.'—A state bird book may be prepared with various objects in view: it may be an unillustrated, scientific account of the avifauna with statements on the time and character of occurrence of each species fortified by definite records; it may consist of life histories based upon careful field studies of the birds; it may deal solely with the economic value of the various species, or it may make illustration its main feature, picturing in color all the birds of the state with a brief explanatory text, and it seems only fair to consider each work according to the plan that has been followed in its preparation.

Mr. Bailey's 'Birds of Florida,'¹ with its seventy-six full page color plates and 146 pages of text, obviously belongs to the last category and bases its claims primarily on its illustrations. Its numerous excellent colored figures depicting all the birds of Florida in their varied plumages will please a host of bird students and visitors to the state and help them to recognize the birds that they see, while the short accounts, about fifteen lines to a species, comprising a brief statement of the time and character of its occurrence and a few words on its habits, food or nesting, will furnish desired information.

The plates are all reproduced from paintings by George Miksch Sutton, now state ornithologist of Pennsylvania, made especially for the present work and are, for the most part, admirable representations of the birds. There are few works in which the artist has been enabled to depict all the birds of a state, and Mr. Sutton has made good use of his opportunity. As is usually the case the crowding of the figures in many instances detracts from the artistic beauty of the plates, but this cannot be helped unless the expense of the work be vastly increased. The most regrettable feature of the present work, however, is the fact that in some of the plates the blue has been given entirely too much prominence and has been used in shading the under side of white-breasted birds so that we find the White-throated Sparrow with a bright blue breast and the Willet with blue and black wings and a blue belly, while the overlay of blue on the yellow of the Prothonotary Warbler and some other yellow-breasted species renders these parts a vivid green. We can hardly imagine that the artist was

¹ The Birds of Florida | A Popular and Scientific Account of the 425 | species and subspecies of Birds that are now, | and that have been found within the State | and its Adjacent Waters; with a Special Reference to their Relation to Agriculture | By | Harold H. Bailey | of Miami, Florida | Author of "Birds of Virginia" | Member, C. O. C., W. O. C., Am. S. M., | F. S. N. H., Etc. | Illustrated with 76 Full Page Four- | Color Plates,—Figuring over 480 Birds | By | George M. Sutton | and | with an Outline Map of the State Showing | Areas; and a Topographical Drawing of a Bird | Complete in One Volume | Limited Edition | Privately printed for the Author by | The Williams & Wilkins Company | Baltimore, Maryland | 1925 | size 11 3/4 × 8 3/4 | pp. 1-xxi + 1-146. Price \$20.00.

given an opportunity to pass on the colors of the reproductions and whoever approved them was woefully incompetent.

Nevertheless the plates make a most attractive series of illustrations and Mr. Sutton is to be congratulated upon a beautiful set of paintings.

The letter press is well printed on heavy paper and the binding is very attractive, making all in all a very handsome and presentable book of which the author may well feel proud.

While we have considered the book as a popular illustrated work on Florida birds, which we infer is the position in literature that its author intended it to take, we feel that a word must be said as to its standing as a state list. In this respect it is open to criticism, from the fact that some twenty of the birds included have never been definitely recorded from Florida, while a like number apparently listed as breeders have never been so recorded, and in none of these cases does the author offer confirmatory data. All three Phalaropes are mentioned as of regular occurrence along the coast, and the time of their spring and fall migration is definitely stated, and yet we have searched in vain for any published record of the occurrence of any of them in Florida. Then there is the case of the White-winged Crossbill, which is figured and described as a Florida bird, and yet when we look up the reference, which in this case is given, we find that it refers to the Red Crossbill instead!

In reading the statements about the nesting and the number and size of eggs of such species as the Baltimore Oriole, Black-billed Cuckoo, etc., one would naturally infer that they bred in Florida, but as there is no evidence of the fact, we assume that Mr. Bailey was drawing upon his experience with them in the North.

It is unfortunate, too, that scientific names have been used in a work of this kind, especially since many of those employed by the author are not to be found in the A. O. U. 'Check List' nor in any other standard work on North American birds, and can therefore be of no possible use to the reader. Furthermore, a number of them have been misspelled, a fault that now and then extends to the English names as well, since we find the Kittiwake consistently called "Kitterwake," and the malar region referred to as "molar" region.

These errors, however, will not affect the use of the work by those for whom it is especially adapted, and the attractive and accurate plates will interest many persons in Florida birds and their protection, while the book at once places the state in the ranks of those which have their avifauna adequately illustrated. The scientific reference list of the birds of Florida with full and definite data, however, is still to be written.—W. S.

Forbush's 'Birds of Massachusetts'—Considering the fact that Massachusetts has led the country in the number of its ornithologists and bird students and was the birth place of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, the parent of the American Ornithologists' Union, it is rather surprising that it has never had an adequate state "bird book."