

The paragraphs on distribution are full and detailed and there are tables of measurements for each species.

Dr. Dwight's knowledge of the plumages and molts of birds is exhaustive and his more important contributions to ornithology have all been in this field, but in the present work we feel that he has outdone himself and has surpassed in detail and accuracy any of his former studies.

In matters of classification and nomenclature, his treatment of the group has not, perhaps, been quite so happy. While it is convenient, for instance, to have an alphabetical list of the species names and those of the genera, with their equivalents indicated according to the author's views, it would have been far more satisfactory, in the case of the genera, to have had the type species indicated in every case. Thus while "*Chroicocephalus* = *Hydrocoloeus*" in the sense that they both belong to the same generic group in the present work, they are by no means *equivalent* and each is available for generic use if we cut our genera finer, yet nowhere in the work can we ascertain what the type species of *Chroicocephalus* is, or just what species it should be associated with.

Again, in the matter of the recognition of genera, while Dr. Dwight conforms to the current attitude as to most genera, he attempts to divide the species of the great genus *Larus* into *Larus* and *Hydrocoloeus* without being able to present clearly defined characters for their separation. As a matter of fact, as it appears to the reviewer, there are a number of subgenera of *Larus*, which Dr. Dwight recognizes, but these must all be left as subgenera or all elevated to generic rank, and nothing is gained by attempting to divide the lot into two grand divisions where no clear line of demarkation exists. Such an attempt smacks more of a *genus de convenance*—a desire to reduce the number of species in *Larus* rather than the discovery of a natural distinction, and the necessity of calling so many species by a generic name with which they have never before been associated does not advance science.

We note a few evident slips apparently due to changing names while the work was going through the press. *Chroicocephalus* is thus retained on pp. 111 and 394 where we presume *Hydrocoloeus* is intended, and under Franklin's Gull a type locality is quoted under *franklinii* but none under *pipixcan*, the name adopted. However, slips are inevitable in a work of such scope and, as the author truly says, nomenclature is largely a matter of personal opinion so that we can afford to pass over such trivial matters and congratulate Dr. Dwight upon a splendid piece of ornithological work which places him at once in the enviable position of high priest of the "Laridists."—W. S.

Wright and Dewar on 'The Ducks of India.'—The present work,¹ we

¹ *The Ducks of India: Their Habits, Breeding Grounds and Migrations; together with other Useful Information for the Sportsman and Observer.* By R. G. Wright & Douglas Dewar. With Twenty-two Full-page Plates in Colours. H. F. and G. Witherby, 326 High Holborn, London, W. C. 1., 1925, pp. 1-2311. £ 3/3/net.

are told in the preface, was undertaken to present better colored plates of the Indian Ducks than those "now before the public," and in the opinion of Mr. Dewar the plates made from Mr. Wright's paintings are superior to any on the subject which have yet appeared. In this view we can hardly concur, as we consider Grönvold's plates in Stuart Baker's 'Indian Ducks and Their Allies' much more satisfactory for purposes of identification. The delicate landscapes of Mr. Wright's plates, almost Japanese in their effect, and their impressionistic character, doubtless appeal to the artist, but the blotches of color and the lack of detailed drawing in many of the birds make the figures unsatisfactory for the purposes of the ornithologist. We might add that the plates in neither of the works mentioned compare with those of some of the same species recently produced by Thorborn and Fuertes.

The text by Mr. Dewar is intended for the sportsman and contains full descriptions of plumage and distribution with accounts of the habits and food of each species, the latter largely taken from the works of Hume and Stuart Baker to whom credit is given. The up-to-date nomenclature of Stuart Baker's work is wisely adopted while the names occurring in the older books are given as synonyms, with a good list of English and Indian vernacular names. Preliminary chapters deal with 'The Distinguishing Features of Ducks,' 'Duck-shooting in India'; 'Ducks in Kashmir' by R. G. Wright; 'Migration'; 'The Breeding Grounds of Migratory Ducks'; 'The Eclipse Plumage of Drakes'; 'The Economic Importance of the Ducks of India'; 'Snaring Ducks'; and 'The Value of Shooting Records.' Curiously enough while the usual form "ducks" is used in three of these chapters, in the others the less common plural form "duck" is used.

The book is beautifully printed on extra heavy paper and the delicate plates most carefully reproduced, so that it forms an extremely attractive volume and one which will undoubtedly prove popular with sportsmen.—W. S.

Simmons' 'Birds of the Austin Region.'—This excellent work¹ is far more than a local list. Under each species are arranged paragraphs dealing with general geographic distribution, habitat, local haunts, general habits, feeding habits, flight, voice, migration, breeding, nest location, nest construction, eggs, description, field marks, popular names and remarks, while a preface briefly reviews the physical features and location of the "Austin Region," its soil formation, weather conditions, early history, etc., and also explains the author's sources of information, how birds are classified, how birds are named, and "who's who" in Texan ornithology. Instead of quoting each author's name in outlining the distribution and recording of the various species, each one is given a letter,

¹ *Birds of the Austin Region*. By George Finlay Simmons, M.A., Instructor in Zoology in the University of Texas. Published by the University of Texas, Austin. University of Texas Press. 1925, pp. i-xlii + 1-387.