

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.

and a series of letters in each case shows who have observed the species in their respective localities.

The work seems to be accurately compiled and certainly furnishes the local student with a wealth of information. The area of Texas is so great that no State bird book has yet been issued and it is a question whether local treatments of the subject, such as the present volume, will not serve the purpose better. Several of these, notably for the Rio Grande Valley Region, have appeared but nothing on the scale of Mr. Simmons' book, so that we welcome it as our most extensive work on Texan ornithology.

While it is stated that the nomenclature follows that of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' with the addition of certain forms, it is noticeable that a number of changes in nomenclature which have appeared in the list of "proposed changes" but which have never been adopted by the A. O. U. Committee are included. This is unfortunate as is also, to our mind, the omission of the word "Texas" from the title, as the work will be listed far beyond the area in which the location of Austin is known.

Many suitable illustrations have been loaned by the publishers of standard works and there are original half-tone portraits of local ornithologists. Among these is the late Prof. Thomas H. Montgomery, Jr. whose fame in the broader fields of zoological research almost entirely obliterated his early work on birds. In 1891, when a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania, he was an active member of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club and bade fair to develop into one of our leading ornithologists, but other interests took all of his time in succeeding years, although at Woods Hole and at the University of Texas he again took a lively interest in teaching ornithology and in field studies, and it is thus fitting that his name should be permanently associated with the first field of science in which he was interested.

We congratulate Mr. Simmons on an excellent piece of work which will, we are sure, develop many an ornithologist in the Austin Region in the future.—W. S.

Spitzbergen Papers.—This volume¹ contains the results of the first Oxford University Expedition to Spitzbergen in 1921. Like many other University publications it consists of separates from various journals bound up together with an explanatory preface. The expedition consisting of eighteen members under the leadership of Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain included six ornithologists and a taxidermist, and, as might be supposed, its primary interest was the study of birds. Explorations in other fields were carried on, however, and papers dealing with topography, geology, ecology, botany and invertebrate zoology were published and are here presented.

Besides the results of its immediate work the expedition stimulated the making of other trips to this interesting and easily accessible portion of the

¹ Spitzbergen Papers, Volume I. Scientific Results of the First Oxford University Expedition to Spitzbergen (1921). Oxford University Press, London. Humphrey Milford. 1925. Price \$10.00.