

## RECENT LITERATURE

**Chapman's Distribution of Bird-Life in Ecuador.**—In 'The Auk' for April, 1918, it was our privilege to review at some length Dr. Frank M. Chapman's now classic work on 'The Distribution of Bird-Life in Colombia.' Since that time he has continued his studies of Andean ornithology and made several trips to more southern points in South America to strengthen his knowledge of the broader problems involved in the distribution of the birds—the general physical features, climate etc. etc. As the natural region for a second intensive study he selected the republic of Ecuador, lying just south of the field covered by his previous volume, and a country long noted for the richness of its avifauna, containing according to Dr. Chapman, one-fourth of all the species of South American birds and one-twelfth of those of the entire world. Here he concentrated his collectors and in a few years, mainly through the efforts of W. B. Richardson, Geo. K. Cherrie, Harry Watkins, Geoffrey Gill, G. O'Connell and the native collectors Olalla and Sons, the American Museum of Natural History obtained a series of some 13,500. Ecuadorean birds, which from the basis of Dr. Chapman's study which has just appeared from the press under the title of 'The Distribution of Bird-Life in Ecuador.'<sup>1</sup>

This is a portly volume of 784 pages with 30 plates, and 20 text figures.—including numerous photographic views of the country, maps, and five colored plates of birds from paintings by Fuertes and forms vol. LV. of the 'Bulletin' of the American Museum.

In all respects this is "Volume 2" of Dr. Chapman's study of the bird-life of the Andes, carrying on the same line of research as the Colombian report, confirming the statements there made and strengthening the theories there advanced. The method of treatment is also the same, with the same care and the same admirable handling of the subject. We can therefore do no better than to extend our favorable estimate of "Volume 1" to cover also the present work, and refer our readers to our review of it for many details which are the same in both. One decided improvement in the Ecuador report is the inclusion in the systematic section of all the forms so far recorded from the country instead of merely those obtained by the museum collectors, though the thoroughness of their work may be realized when we learn that of the 1357 species and 150 additional subspecies recorded from Ecuador all but 33 are represented in the Museum's collections, mainly by Ecuadorean specimens.

After an historical review of Ecuadorean Ornithology we have in Part I, considerations of the physiography of Ecuador, distribution of forests,

<sup>1</sup> The Distribution of Bird-Life in Ecuador. A Contribution to a Study of the Origin of Andean Bird-Life. By Frank M. Chapman. Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History. Vol. LV. 1926. pp. 1-xii + 1-784, pls. I-XXX, figs. 1-20.

climatic conditions, and life zones and their bird-life. This last section contains, as it were, the motif of the whole work—the application of the details enumerated in the systematic portion, which follows, to the working out of the life zones, their origin and the probable history of the development of the Andean mountain chain.

The characteristics of each zone are considered; the habitats which it exhibits, lists of characteristic species, with comparison with those of other zones, and finally the summary and conclusions.

This portion of Dr. Chapman's work is a really notable contribution to zoögeography and should be read by all intended in this fascinating field.

Part II, the systematic portion, naturally takes up the greater part of the volume and is an admirable piece of work, following almost exactly the plan adopted in the Colombian report. The new forms discovered seem all to have been described in preliminary papers.

Dr. Chapman professes "a profound lack of interest in questions of nomenclature, as such" and is willing to adopt a "statute of limitations or a perpetually closed season on synonymy hunting \* \* \* the principles of *auctororum plurimorum, nomina conservanda* or any others that will prevent the ceaseless tinkering with names." We can heartily sympathize with him but like most writers, who make such protests he suggests no definite remedy. Perhaps some nomenclatural League of Nations may someday prevent the warfare of names but we must admit the outlook so far is not promising! And so like Dr. Chapman we each continue to select the names we like the best.

It is impossible in the space at our disposal to adequately review a work of the scope of the present volume. Our readers must consult it for themselves and they should all of them, read the discussion of the Andean life zones as it has an interest and bearing far beyond the limits of Ecuador. We congratulate Dr. Chapman upon another notable work which strengthens him in his position as one of the leading authorities on neotropical bird-life. We trust he may pursue his way down the Andes, leaving in his wake a whole series of these portly volumes and then turn his attention to the great Tropical lowland, stretching away from the mountains to the Atlantic, for none is better qualified for the task.—W. S.

**Nesbit's 'How to Hunt with the Camera.'**—There have been quite a number of books and articles on nature photography but none we believe which at all compare with Mr. Nesbit's sumptuous volume<sup>1</sup>. It is written, he tells us, not for the person who is content to push the button and trust to luck, but for those who are willing to give considerable thought and much hard work to the subject. All photographers of the latter class should undoubtedly possess the work if possible and will, we are sure, turn

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<sup>1</sup> *How to Hunt with the Camera. A Complete Guide to all Forms of Outdoor Photography.* By William Nesbit. With many illustrations. New York, E. P. Dutton & Company, 681 Fifth Avenue. Quarto pp. i-xiv + 1-337. Price \$10.00, postage extra.