

storehouse of information, a reference work to turn to, and an entertaining piece of ornithological literature. We notice an ever increasing list of acknowledgements and would once more urge those who have the time for field work and have secured information that they have reason to think would prove acceptable, to communicate with Mr. Bent at once. There may yet be time to include items regarding the Shorebirds while the life histories of all of the "land birds" are yet to come.—W. S.

Hoffman's 'Birds of the Pacific States.'—Mr. Ralph Hoffmann, well known for his 'Guide to the Birds of New England and Eastern New York,' has for some years been a resident of California and is now director of the Museum of Natural History at Santa Barbara. Fortunately for himself and for many others his interest in bird life has not suffered by his change of residence, and he has made good ornithological use of his time to judge by the little book¹ that he has just issued on the 'Birds of the Pacific States.' The keynote to this publication is field identification and the 400 odd species are described with this object always in view. Under each specific heading is from half to three quarters of a page descriptive of the mode of occurrence, characteristic actions, song, etc., of the bird under consideration; then come the measurements of length and extent and a concise description of the points best seen in the field followed by a brief statement of the bird's distribution in California, Oregon and Washington. If there happen to be two or more subspecies they are usually listed in this distributional paragraph with the range of each in the three States, but with no mention of their distinctive characters. Occasionally, however, the same treatment is given subspecies as that accorded to a species as in the case of the three White-crowned Sparrows and the Olive-backed and Russet-backed Thrushes. The various races of Song Sparrows are however all lumped together as are those of Hermit Thrushes and Fox Sparrows.

Inasmuch as subspecies are based not upon degree of difference but upon the criterion of intergradation, while field identification is concerned with degree of difference without caring whether intergradation occurs or not, it seems perfectly proper to be inconsistent and to treat as "ornithological units" all forms that are sufficiently different to be clearly identifiable in the field.

The practical elimination of the subspecies in this work gives us what Dr. Joseph Grinnell suggested sometime ago as an interesting experiment *i. e.* a list of the *species* of Californian birds. A still more striking feature however is the adoption of the classification of the new A. O. U. 'Check-List' so that this book of Mr. Hoffmann's is the first to present the birds

¹ Birds of the Pacific States, Containing Brief Biographies and Descriptions of about Four Hundred Species, with especial reference to their appearance in the Field. By Ralph Hoffmann, with Ten Plates in Color and over Two Hundred Illustrations in Black and White, By Major Allan Brooks, Boston and New York. Houghton Mifflin Company. The Riverside Press Cambridge. 1927. pp. i-xix + 1-353. Price \$5.00.

of any part of the United States in the new sequence. After forty years of the old classification it seems strange to find the Thrushes in the middle of the Passeres and the Finches at the end while the Birds of Prey are in between the Ducks and the Gallinaceous species, but this is the sequence that we shall all have to accustom ourselves to for some time to come and the sooner we learn it the better. Some of us began years ago with the Birds of Prey at the top of the list and then for a time were accustomed to beginning instead of ending with the Thrushes and have found little trouble in making the changes.

Mr. Hoffman has, we consider, produced an admirable work, one of the best field books, in fact, that has yet appeared.

So much for the text but the illustrations demand separate consideration they are all by Major Allan Brooks and comprise ten plates in color and 200 line drawings in the text. They show Major Brooks at his best. The colored plates are beautifully delicate paintings—notably those of the Phalaropes and Hummingbirds, but some of them seem to have received too much red in the printing. The line drawings are especially notable for the originality of posing and as we turn the pages it is a constant delight to see a familiar bird in a characteristic position not usually portrayed by an artist. This is particularly the case in the number of species drawn in flight. Usually we find only the Gulls, Terns, Hummers, and Swallows so drawn, but here we see the Loon, Cormorant, Shrike, Magpie, most of the Hawks, Woodpeckers, etc., on the wing.

Both Mr. Hoffman and Major Brooks are to be congratulated upon their work which will be in great demand by residents and visitors interested in learning from personal observation something of the bird life of the Coast.—W. S.

Grinnell and Wythe on Bird Life of the San Francisco Bay Region.—Dr. Grinnell and Miss Wythe have compiled a work on the Bird Life of the San Francisco Bay Region¹ that is rather different from anything in the way of a local list that has yet appeared. In fact the authors have termed it a "directory" and their object in its preparation has been to provide help and incentive toward an increased knowledge of the bird life of the region covered and to furnish an accumulation of facts and citations likely to prove useful to the student of the living bird.

The publication seems to realize the intention of its authors admirably. Not only is there a bibliography arranged according to counties and towns but under each species is a statement of the character of its occurrence with lists of localities where it has been found, also information regarding its nesting, migration dates and references to the most important publi-

¹ Directory to the Bird-Life of the San Francisco Bay Region. By Joseph Grinnell and Margaret W. Wythe. Cooper Ornithological Club, Pacific Coast Avifauna Number 18. Berkeley, California. Published by the Club March 29, 1927. pp. 1-160. Price \$4.00. W. Lee Chambers, Drawer 123, Eagle Rock, Los Angeles, Calif.