

cations relating to it. The obvious result is to equip the earnest student with the most important facts regarding the bird so far accumulated, in the shortest possible time, so as to enable him to go on and add to our knowledge instead of spending years in acquiring this information by personal observation. It has always struck us that the saddest thing about the acquirement of knowledge was the impossibility of any individual passing on to his successors more than a fraction of what he has accumulated and if Dr. Grinnell's plan will remedy this condition, as it doubtless will, it is very well worth while.

There is but one criticism that we have to make of the work and that is the camouflaging of familiar birds under a host of new names—"common names" in this instance, and often only lengthened or modified, yet all sufficient, we fear, to confuse the very persons who are expected to benefit by the work.

Apparently the idea is to have the English names parallel the Latin ones so far as possible and make them into a trinomial whenever the latter name takes that form, as for instance, "Slender-billed White-breasted Nuthatch," but everyone knows the bird as "Slender-billed Nuthatch," and all the literature for years back is under that name. Furthermore the field student, so far as our experience goes, does not care whether it is a subspecies of the White-breasted Nuthatch or not. Moreover he will wonder why the California Cowbird and the Nevada Cowbird escaped trinomialism and whether they are somehow full species and why the California Purple Finch was not shortened to a binomial to match its Latin equivalent. If we have to rely on the Latin names to answer these questions why not let them explain *relationship* in all cases and leave the English names, our only hope of stability, alone. Already we have a query from an oölogist, a group who very properly use only English names in their business, as to whether Dr. Grinnell has made a new race of the Black-throated Blue Warbler that breeds in Canada since he lists an apparently new bird as the "Canadian Black-throated Blue Warbler!"

It is impossible to make a consistent system of "common" names and in any attempt they immediately become book names and are no longer "common." Surely one set of names built up on a system is enough so let our vernacular names be monosyllables or sesquipedalian but stick to them, and where we have none adopt one book name which may eventually become a vernacular.

We know that Dr. Grinnell was most sincere in his effort and intention but we fear that he has to some extent defeated his object by his innovations. Others have tried similar schemes but apparently the new names have never become current and we cannot imagine such cumbersome names ever being generally adopted.

For every other feature of the "Directory" we have the highest praise.—  
W. S.

**Mailliard on the Birds of Modoc Co., California.**—A preliminary

trip in 1923 followed by more extended trips in the three following years furnished the main materials for this report<sup>1</sup> to which have been added notes furnished by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and those gleaned from published accounts of the region.

Modoc is the extreme northeastern county of California and for that reason is particularly interesting in connection with the distribution of species and the possibility of the occurrence of additional forms. Mr. Mailliard lists 196 species and subspecies of birds so far detected within its boundaries, and presents interesting field notes regarding many of them. Both Little Brown and Sandhill Cranes occur and local hunters contend that flocks of the two can easily be distinguished by size and habits.

Five additional birds are given in a hypothetical list and an annotated list of the mammals of the county is appended.

Mr. Mailliard has made a valuable contribution to the faunal lists of California.—W. S.

**Bailey's 'Biological Survey of North Dakota.'**—A welcome publication is Vernon Bailey's 'Biological Survey of North Dakota'<sup>2</sup> even though the bird portion has been postponed for a time, to appear as a separate publication. The present volume is devoted almost entirely to the mammals which are treated at length but there is a two page preface and a consideration of physiography and life zones covering fourteen pages, with an excellent map. This nearly level State is almost wholly in the Transition Zone with a small Canadian area in the center of the northern boundary where the Turtle Mountains reach over from Canada and three intrusions of the Upper Austral fauna following up the Yellowstone, Little Missouri and Missouri Rivers.

Characteristic species of mammals, plants and birds are given for the three zones, the Junco and White-throated Sparrow being the only Canadian birds breeding in the State. In mentioning the earlier explorers of the State Mr. Bailey omits Dr. William L. Abbott who spent the month of July 1879 at Pembina and vicinity, though probably purely ornithological papers were purposely omitted. At any rate Dr. Abbott published an account of the birds he observed, in 'Forest and Stream,' XIII, p. 984-5, and his collection made on this occasion is preserved in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.—W. S.

**Bannerman on the Birds of Tunisia.**—In the early part of 1925, Messrs. Willoughby P. Lowe and David A. Bannerman made an extensive expedition through Tunisia for the purpose of securing a representative

<sup>1</sup> The Birds and Mammals of Modoc County, California, By Joseph Mailliard. Proc. California Acad. of Sciences. Fourth Series, Vol. XVI, No. 10, pp. 261-359, 1 text figure. April 27, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> A Biological Survey of North Dakota. I. Physiography and Life Zones. II. The Mammals, By Vernon Bailey. U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Bureau of Biological Survey. North American Fauna No. 49. pp. 1-226, pls. 1-21 and 8 figures. Price 60 cents.