

Chapman on *Saltator aurantiirostris*.—Dr. Chapman having worked out the distributions and variations in this interesting species proceeds in the paper before us¹ to name three new subspecies and then to discuss at length the meaning of the variations and the probable origin of the seven recognized races, as well as of *Pitylus nigriceps* which he now regards as a *Saltator* closely allied to *aurantiiostris*.

The paper is worthy of the careful study by all engaged in systematic ornithology as well as those interested in the subject of the origin of species, and the author's conservatism in matters nomenclatural as well as his hesitancy to theorize too far will we think be generally endorsed.

Briefly summarized his theory is that in *aurantiiostris* we have in all probability the ancestral form of the group, a species of great individual variability. If it possessed no tendency to extend its range or if there were no available habitats into which it might spread, the history of the species would end at this point. As a matter of fact however both these conditions have been present and new environments combined with the inherent plasticity of the species have produced new races all along the Andes which show interesting and confusing departures from, or reversions to, individuals of the original variable form. His evidence and its discussion furnish an excellent illustration of the impossibility of correctly interpreting nature by merely naming variations in color and size and trying to place every specimen accordingly. To quote Dr. Chapman, "The variations exhibited by *S. aurantiiostris* are mutational in origin and have become subspecific characters under environmental conditions." We further gather from his discussion that cell variation (mutation) and environmental influence may work together in the evolution of species, which seems to us quite in accord with other recent discussions on evolution which apparently show that not one but several factors or methods, are usually involved.

Numerous text figures illustrate variations in pattern in the various forms discussed while a map gives one a clear idea of their distribution. Dr. Chapman is to be congratulated upon another contribution to the broader side of ornithology and demonstrates a comment made by the reviewer some years ago that ornithology presents some of the best material for the study of evolution if ornithologists could be induced to turn their attention to that phase of the science instead of sticking so closely to the purely systematic side.—W. S.

Griscom on Birds of Yucatan.—Two recently published papers² by Ludlow Griscom deal with the ornithological results of the Mason-Spinden Archaeological Expedition to Yucatan which he accompanied as a representative of the ornithological department of the American Museum of Natural History.

¹ The Variations and Distribution of *Saltator aurantiiostris*. By Frank M. Chapman. American Museum Novitates, No. 261. March 28, 1927.

² The Ornithological Results of the Mason-Spinden Expedition to Yucatan Part I American Museum Novitates, No. 235, November 18, 1926. pp. 1-19.

Part II. Ibid. No. 236. November 19, 1926. pp. 1-13.