

The book is of small pocket size and is illustrated by 88 excellent plates from photographs by various ornithologists—mainly Americans—and drawings by the author, showing the color patterns of various species in flight.—W. S.

Pleske's 'Birds of the Eurasian Tundra.'—The first publication from the income of the William Brewster Fund of the Boston Society of Natural History,¹ is a voluminous report on the bird life of the Eurasian Tundra by the Russian ornithologist Theodore Pleske.

The work was originally intended to be merely a report on the collections obtained by the Russian Polar Expedition of 1900-03 under the late Baron Edward von Toll. The author, however, realized that so many papers dealing with arctic bird life were written in Russian and were thus unknown to most ornithologists, and that these as well as the rich unpublished material in the Russian Zoological Museum added so much to our knowledge, even to the data contained in such monographs as Schalow's 'Fauna der Arktis,' and decided that a broader treatment covering the entire tundra of Europe and Asia and not merely the region to which the work of the Expedition was restricted, would be preferable.

The result has been a splendid monograph of the birds of arctic Europe and Asia with the results of the Polar Expedition woven into the general account. Part I consists of an outline of the course of the Russian Polar Expedition. In Part II, the systematic report, seventy-one species are considered as belonging to the tundra fauna and are here treated at length while many others are mentioned as casual visitors with the records of their occurrence. Part III lists papers dealing with the birds of each of the twenty-one sections into which the author divides the Eurasian tundra with corresponding lists of the birds recorded from each, each list prefaced with a sketch of the location and physical features of the section. Part IV contains the author's conclusions,

He regards the tundra as a part of the Arctic Alpine Life Zone and denies the necessity of elevating it to the rank of an independent zone as has been done by certain zoogeographers. A thorough analysis of the avifauna of the Eurasian Tundra is presented and comparisons made with the works of Schalow and Palmen. The Holarctic Region is divided into the Atlanto-European Province (including East Greenland), the Sibero-American Province and the North Pacific Province; each with an Alpine (tundra), Subalpine (brush), and Sylvan (forest) zone.

There are seventeen plates from photographs illustrating scenery and nests and eggs of birds, and six plates in color depicting a nest full of young Snowy Owls, the downy young of the Sanderling, eggs of the Curlew Sandpiper and Sanderling, downy young of the Knot, eggs of the Knot and the Turnstone, and *Lagopus rupestris* in mottled autumnal plumage.

¹ Memoirs of the Boston Society of Natural History, Vol. 6, No. 3. Birds of the Eurasian Tundra. By Theodore Pleske. With twenty-three Plates. Boston: Printed for the Society, April, 1928, pp. 111-485, pll. 16-38.

Without a detailed perusal one cannot realize the vast amount of data contained in this notable volume which will long stand as a leading work of reference on arctic bird life. When we consider the amount of labor that the author must have expended in the preparation of the manuscript we must not forget the equally notable service of the editor, Dr. Glover M. Allen, who, we understand, translated the entire manuscript from French into English in preparing it for the press, and to him as well as to the author we owe a debt of gratitude.—W. S.

Whistler's 'Popular Handbook of Indian Birds.'¹—As the author of this excellent work truly says, the books on Indian birds are either too scientific, too expensive or too elementary, and his object has been to provide a dignified treatise, giving all the information desired by the student or traveller, but not in too scientific a manner and at a price within reach of all. That he has succeeded admirably we think everyone will agree.

Matters of distribution, migration, and nomenclature are explained in a lucid manner in the introduction and following this the birds are considered in systematic sequence beginning with the Passeres. There is a brief description, a paragraph on field identification, another on distribution—in which the various subspecies occurring in India are distinguished, and finally an account of habits, etc.

Seventeen halftone plates from paintings by Grönvold (four in color) depict the most striking species while text cuts of heads or entire birds illustrate additional forms. The author's sketches of the habits of the various species are particularly interesting and show his familiarity with his subject as well as with the literature of ornithology. Many Indian birds belong to groups entirely unknown in America or else have habits utterly unlike those of our species which makes the book interesting reading for those desiring to broaden their knowledge of bird life.

Of the Palm Swift, a bird distantly related to our Chimney Swift, Mr. Whistler says: "It may be said to be parasitic on the fan-palm, and is only found in the areas where that tree grows. The nest is built on the leaves and the birds spend their lives hawking for insects in the vicinity. They sometimes cluster together on the leaves and move up and down the fronds with a shuffling mode of progression. Colonies of bats are found in similar situations and a single tree may contain a colony of both bird and mammal." As in many of the other sketches a vast amount of information is presented for which one would have to search widely through ornithological literature.

Mr. Whistler has placed us under obligations by furnishing a most valuable work of reference and a book that will be of the greatest service to ornithologists visiting India as well as to local students.—W. S.

¹ Popular Handbook of Indian Birds. By Hugh Whistler, F. L. S., F. Z. S., late Indian (Imperial) Police. Gurney and Jackson, London: 33 Paternoster Row, E. C. Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court, 1928, pp. i-xv, 1-438, pl. 1-17, figg. 1-85. Price 15 shillings net.