

RECENT LITERATURE.

Mrs. Bailey's 'Birds of New Mexico.'—Comprehensive illustrated works on local ornithology have hitherto been limited to the Eastern States or those of the Pacific Coast and now for the first time we have before us an adequate ornithology of one of the less known commonwealths of the South-west, in Mrs. Florence Merriam Bailey's 'Birds of New Mexico.'

The publication of such a work as this¹ is an expensive matter and that fact is mainly responsible for the comparatively small number that have appeared. In the present case Mrs. Bailey has had the support of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the State Game Protective Association and the Bureau of Biological Survey of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and last but not least "the kindly interest and financial assistance of Mr. and Mrs. George Deardorff McCreary Jr., of Silver City, New Mexico" and formerly of Philadelphia.

To Mrs. Bailey's literary ability and wide field experience, together with that of her husband, Vernon Bailey, and other members of the staff of the U. S. Biological Survey on their many expeditions through the Southwest, we are indebted for a most complete account of the bird-life of this interesting region, while much credit is also due those who have generously made possible the publication on such a sumptuous scale.

The whole plan of the work is admirable. Beginning with an adequate description of each species and subspecies in its several plumages, there follows in most cases a paragraph on "Comparisons," contrasting the species with its nearest allies especially as seen in the field. Then comes the range of the bird and a summary of "State Records" covering its distribution in New Mexico, the latter mainly compiled by the late Wells W. Cooke. Other paragraphs cover nest and eggs, and food. Then in larger type is a sketch of the "General Habits" of the species which demonstrates not only the extent of the author's field experience but her thorough knowledge of the literature of American Ornithology, since she quotes interesting and appropriate items bearing on the life histories of the various species from a very wide range of publications as well as from the unpublished records in possession of the Biological Survey.

¹ *Birds of New Mexico.* By Florence Merriam Bailey, author of *Handbook of Birds of the Western United States*. With Contributions by the late Wells Woodbridge Cooke, formerly Assistant Biologist of the Biological Survey. Illustrated with Colored Plates by Allan Brooks. Plates and Text Figures by the late Louis Agassiz Fuertes, And Many Other Cuts from Drawings, Photographs, and Maps. Based mainly on field work of the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture. Published by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish in Coöperation with the State Game Protective Association and the Bureau of Biological Survey. 1928. pp. i-xxiv + 1-807, pl. 1-79, fig. 1-136, maps 1-60, diagrams 2. Price \$5.00. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

At the close of nearly every biography is a list of "Additional Literature" bearing on the species in question for the benefit of those who desire to pursue the subject further.

Those familiar with Mrs. Bailey's published volumes and magazine articles will require no further assurance of the readable character of her text and of the amount of interesting matter that she has brought together in a comparatively small space.

Like Forbush's 'Birds of Massachusetts' the 'Birds of New Mexico' is by no means only a state work but is in fact a notable contribution to the ornithology of North America, as well as our first comprehensive account of the avifauna of the Southwest; most of the species being also birds of Arizona and many of them extending their range into southern California or western Texas, either as the same or closely allied subspecies. As no other section of the United States is, perhaps, so distinctive in the character of its avifauna, being as it were a derivative of Old Mexico, this work is particularly welcome.

While we have spoken of Mrs. Bailey's book as the first adequate description of the bird life of a neglected corner of the country we must remember, as she has pointed out, that "New Mexico has the distinction of being the first state in the Union from which bird notes were recorded by white men." Francisco Vasques de Coronado, Spanish governor of New Galicia, in western Mexico, made an expedition in 1540-42 through the present states of Arizona and New Mexico and in the report of his explorations made brief mention of birds. No further ornithological notes relative to the state appeared, however, until the report of Long's expedition in 1820, after which William Gambel (1841) and the various naturalists of the government expeditions laid the foundations of our present knowledge of the fauna of the Southwest. But of all those who have studied the avifauna of the state we find that none have had such a wide field experience as Mrs. Bailey and her husband.

Beside the main text of the work there is an introduction with a brief discussion of the life zones of New Mexico, the distribution of the birds, value of birds to the state, organizations interested in conservation, lists of birds first described from New Mexico, of fossil birds found in the state and of collections made there.

The greater part of New Mexico lies in the Upper Sonoran zone, the Lower Sonoran entering along the valleys of the Gila, Rio Grande, Sacramento, Pecos and Red Rivers, while the mountains are Transition with some Canadian peaks while the high summits of the north central portion of the State support also areas of Hudsonian and Arctic Alpine.

An interesting chapter by the late Prof. Cooke discusses the itineraries of expeditions and reports of field work in the state, the various explorations being considered in chronological order from Coronado (1540) down to the present time. There is also a list by the same author of localities where collecting was done, and a glossary of technical terms,

while at the close of the volume is a list of "Literature Cited" which includes most of the publications on New Mexican birds and many other papers and books from which quotations have been made in the text.

We note an omission in the summary of field work and collections which for the sake of future reference might be mentioned. The reviewer published in the 'Proceedings' of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (May 7, 1903), pp. 26-29 a list of birds seen or collected by Mr. J. A. G. Rehn during some three months' field work in Otero County mainly at Alamogordo and vicinity, the collection being preserved in the museum of the Academy. Mr. Wharton Huber also made an extensive collection for Col. John E. Thayer (1920) at Las Cruces and another for himself (1915) in the same vicinity, but so far as we are aware no accounts of these were ever published.

The sequence of species, which will appear novel to most readers, is that to be followed in the forthcoming new edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' and the nomenclature has been revised so far as possible to accord with the same work, although in the popular names the possessive "s" has been dropped in accordance with the policy of the Biological Survey in the past.

The illustrations of Mrs. Bailey's book are noteworthy. There are twenty-three colored plates by Allan Brooks and one by the late Louis Agassiz Fuertes, depicting fifty-nine species of the characteristic birds of the Southwest. There is also a colored faunal map and fifty-five half-tone plates from photographs from nature, from groups in the Colorado Museum of Natural History and from paintings by Fuertes, also a useful drawing by Brooks of soaring hawks, while text figures to the number of 136 and sixty distributional maps add to the wealth of illustrations. The maps are particularly useful as in no other way can distribution be so clearly indicated.

Many of the half-tones are from previous publications of Mrs. Bailey or the Biological Survey.

Major Brooks' paintings add to the beauty of the work and are fully up to his high standard although a few of the postures do not seem to us quite as characteristic of the birds as in the case of his paintings of more northern species with which he is more closely familiar.

The work is one that should be in the library of every ornithologist, in every reference library, and in every school of the Southwest. It treats of a field not covered by any of our other bird books and will be a factor of the greatest importance in developing a love of birds and bird conservation in the rapidly growing population of our Southwest—this indeed has been the author's chief aim and every effort has been made to attract the attention and interest of those who should know the birds of their state.

To the author, artist, publisher, and patrons we owe a debt of gratitude for producing one of the notable ornithologies of recent years.—W. S.