

come and the convenience of the volumes already at our disposal makes us all the more anxious for the others that are to come!—W. S.

**Bond's 'Birds of the West Indies.'**—While several excellent works on the birds of individual islands in the West Indies group have appeared during the past few years, there has been no book on the avifauna as a whole since Charles B. Cory's 'Birds of the West Indies' published in 1889, and this consisted entirely of descriptions, synonymy and a brief statement of range.

The work<sup>1</sup> before us is quite different in plan being designed, as the author tells us, "to combine the technical with the popular" and we think that he has most successfully realized his idea. There are good original descriptions of all of the species and detailed statements of their range, while line cuts and one colored plate from originals by Earl L. Poole serve as excellent illustrations. For interesting sketches of the habits and details of nesting, song, etc., the author has drawn largely upon his personal experiences during ten trips to the islands.

He has endeavored, like a number of other authors, to use the "species" as his systematic unit referring to the subspecies only in the paragraphs on distribution and nesting, although the particular race upon which his description is based is always given and the ways in which other races vary from it. The species which are only winter or casual migrants from the United States or elsewhere, are treated together at the end of each family, after the endemic species, and without the generic headings provided for the latter. The accounts of habits and nesting are presented under the generic heading as most of the West Indian endemic genera are monotypic and it was thought that it would require much repetition in other cases to discuss these matters under each species separately. Synonymy and references to places of publication are omitted as they are apart from the main object of the book and even the authorities for the names are omitted in the main text but are to be found in a complete list of the species and races given at the end of the volume. An additional valuable feature of the work is a list under each species of its local names in English, French or Spanish as the case may be.

In the introduction the author discusses the faunal relationship of the West Indies and points out the preponderance of North American types in its bird life. We cannot place too much weight upon this fact, however, as the relationship of the mammals, especially of the fossil forms, is Neotropical and the fauna of the group was doubtless acquired at different times and from different sources as geological conditions and land connections changed. There are also helpful suggestions to those who visit the islands as to how to obtain an idea of their avifauna which will be very welcome to tourists. Mr. Bond is peculiarly well fitted for the task which he has performed so satisfactorily, as he has personally visited no less than 50 of the islands and has discovered several hitherto unknown races as well as rediscovered two species that were supposed to have been exterminated.

The 'Birds of the West Indies' will prove a handy reference book as well as a field handbook both for visitors to the islands and natives who desire to know something of the bird life about them. We congratulate Mr. Bond upon a task well done.—W. S.

**Priest's 'Birds of Southern Rhodesia.'**—The third volume<sup>2</sup> of this excellent work has recently appeared covering the Broadbills, Pittas, Larks, Pipits, Babblers,

<sup>1</sup> The Birds of the West Indies. By James Bond. Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. 1935. Pp. i-xxv + 1-455. Price \$4.50. [Reviewed from final proofs.]

<sup>2</sup> The Birds of Southern Rhodesia. By Captain Cecil D. Priest, etc. etc. Vol. 3. William Clowes and Sons Ltd., London and Beccles, 1935. Pp. i-ix + 1-355. Price 30 shillings. To be had from the publishers, 94, Jermyn St., London, S. W. 1.

Bulbuls, Flycatchers, Thrushes, Warblers and Swallows. The fourth volume, which we understand is about ready to go to press, will complete the systematic treatment but the author contemplates a supplementary fifth volume to set forth the varied character of the country and the habitats of the birds, with numerous illustrations.

The volume before us follows exactly the plan of its predecessors as already described in these columns (Auk, 1934, p. 263). The colored plates, which like most of the text figures are from pencil drawings by Norman Lighton, of Pretoria, are unique in the fact that the birds only are in color, the background etc. being in gray halftone.

There is much of interest to the general reader in Capt. Priest's volumes beside the descriptions and distributions which constitute matter for future reference. It is interesting to read that when the flights of locusts are on at Chiferi Bluff "every bird seemed to disappear from off the face of the earth. One would find a lovely Paradise Flycatcher cowering under the banks of a small stream with his long tail dangling in the water; an Eagle would quickly be forced to earth; small birds hid in the dense underbrush; no bird sang—none were to be seen."

There is an interesting account of the "Long-claw" or "Cut-throat Lark" (*Macronyx*), a Pipit with almost exactly the same pattern of coloration as our Meadowlark. We learn that "as soon as the grass is burnt we notice them by the side of the road fluttering away with their wings vibrating rapidly, the tail extended in a fan shape. They will alight in some patch of unburnt grass and hide till we have passed." Evidently they resemble our Meadowlark also in habits and we wonder whether there is not some curious relation between these two resemblances of color-pattern and habit.

Larks abound in Rhodesia, no less than six species being found there. One of the most interesting is the "Flappet Lark" (*Mirafra*) "which has the singular habit of rising 15 or 30 feet perpendicularly, making a sharp cracking sound with its wings, uttering a long shrill *phew* and then falling as abruptly as a stone might. This action is repeated at intervals of a minute or two for an hour or more." Other Larks (*Eremopteryx*) are of the build and size of the English Sparrow and are appropriately known as "Sparrow Larks." Rhodesia also possess no less than eleven species of Pipits and Wagtails and fifteen Swallows in striking contrast to our comparative paucity of such birds.

There are three appendices to the volume. One consisting of a biography of Linnaeus reprinted from Jardine's 'Naturalist's Library'; another presenting an account of the Fish-eating Owl (*Scotopelia*) additional to that in the previous volume, and the last on the breeding habits of *Gymnogenys* and sketches of two Rhodesian ornithologists—Thomas Ayres and Johan C. D. Wilde. We wish Capt. Priest all speed in the completion of his excellent work.—W. S.

**Systema Avium Rossicarum.**<sup>1</sup>—This important work<sup>1</sup> has been published in instalments in 'L'Oiseau et la Revue Francaise d'Ornithologie' from July, 1933, to October 1, 1935, and will be continued in that journal. The Accipitres, Striges and Passeres have now been completed and they are published separately as volume I of the work which is entirely by G. P. Dementiev, the remaining groups which will constitute volume II, will be by S. A. Buturlin.

All species and subspecies recorded from within the limits of the U. R. S. S. (both Russia and Siberia) are included, and each is treated in exactly the same manner

<sup>1</sup> Systema Avium Rossicarum (Catalogue critique des Oiseaux de l'U. R. S. S.). Volume I. Accipitres — Striges — Passeres. Par Le Professor Georges P. Dementiev, Chef de la Section Ornithologique du Musee Zoologique de Universite de Moscou. etc., Paris, 1935. To be obtained in America from Dr. Ernst Mayr, American Museum of Natural History, New York, \$1.25 plus postage. Pp. 1-288, pl. 8 and map.