

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.¹—This important work¹ 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

¹ 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.

regardless of whether it is denoted by a binomial or trinomial name, just as is done in the recent A. O. U. 'Check-List' and other modern check-lists. Under the name is given the original reference and the type locality, followed in many cases by the more important synonyms, and finally a more or less detailed statement of distribution with frequent discussion of relationship of related races and in the case of the Nutcracker with a list of its periodic occurrences. No less than 709 forms are listed and the study has been based mainly upon the collections of the University of Moscow.

The work is thus, as the author states, a critical systematic and geographic revision of the avifauna of the region which it covers. The plates published in 'L'Oiseau' are included and there is an introduction by M. Jean Delacour to whose forethought and generous assistance the publication has been made possible.

It is a great boon to anyone working on Palaearctic ornithology to have such a reference volume, as much of the information contained applies to other countries besides the U. R. S. S. and we owe a debt of gratitude to all concerned with its production. It is particularly commendable that it is printed in French and not in Russian.—W. S.

Raven on Wallace's Line and the Distribution of Indo-Australian Mammals.¹—While this is entirely a mammalogical paper, the subject matter is of such interest to ornithologists that some notice of it in these pages seems warranted. Mr. Raven's object was primarily to refute the statement of Dr. N. Van Kamopen to the effect, "that such a sharp boundary as Wallace drew does not exist," not only where he drew it but nowhere in the archipelago. From his own extensive knowledge of the region, and from an exhaustive search through the literature, Mr. Raven has tabulated the distribution of no less than 2240 forms of mammals and plotted many of them on maps. As a result he "regards Wallace's Line as well established, since, except at its upper end it serves to mark the boundary of the old continental shelf, which was also the eastern limit of the great majority of East Indian mammals."

To quote from only one map we find not a single record of Marsupialia west of the line and no records of Proboscidea, Edentata, Perissodactyla or Dermoptera to the east of it! We may therefore retain our enthusiasm acquired many years ago when we first read the classic 'Island Life' and 'Geographic Distribution of Animals.'

Mr. Raven has done a fine piece of work, and his detailed discussion will be read with interest by everyone concerned with zoogeography.—W. S.

A Vertebrate Fauna of Forth.—This notable Scottish "Fauna"² has been planned as a continuation of the series proposed by the late Dr. Harvie Brown, all of which have now been published except those relating to the Clyde and Solway areas. The authors are thoroughly qualified for the work that they have undertaken for as long as the present editor of 'The Auk' has been reviewing the 'Scottish Naturalist' it has been his pleasure to notice the excellent annual "Reports on Scottish Ornithology" by Leonora J. Rintoul and Evelyn V. Baxter, indeed whenever the birds of Scotland are mentioned their names at once come to mind.

Scotland is rich in historic nature lore and the authors have traced the history of each species back to the earliest records with abundant recent observations by a host

¹ Raven, Henry C. Wallace's Line and the Distribution of Indo-Australian Mammals. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. Vol. LXVIII, Art. IV. Pp. 1-293. April 5, 1935.

² A Vertebrate Fauna of Forth. By Leonora Jeffrey Rintoul and Evelyn V. Baxter. Fellows of the Linnaean Society; Fellows of the Zoological Society; Honorary Members of the British Ornithologists' Union; Corresponding Fellows of the American Ornithologists' Union, etc. Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; Tweeddale Court, London: 33 Patternoster Row. E. C., 1935. Pp. i-iv + 1-397. Price 25 shillings net.