

RECENT LITERATURE

Peterson's 'Field Guide to Western Birds'¹ is a counterpart of his well-known 'Guide' to eastern birds which has proved so successful a *vade mecum* for amateur as well as more experienced ornithologists in providing a ready means for identifying birds in the field. It follows the method adopted in the former volume, grouping side by side semi-diagrammatic colored figures of the various smaller land birds while the waterbirds, shorebirds, owls and hawks and some others are in black and white. Thus the main characters obvious in the field are brought out, rather than the more minute details of difference, while the accompanying text presents a brief supplementary description of each species, with a line or two concerning the voice and range. It covers the region west of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific. Since the field discrimination of closely similar subspecies is not practicable, the difficulty is remedied by including at the back of the volume a chapter listing under each species, geographic races and breeding range. Finally there is a brief list of reference works and an index.

The author makes the pertinent suggestion that the vernacular names of some of the subspecies should be revised to include some hint of the racial affinity. Thus, while we have the San Diego Song Sparrow, the Rusty Song Sparrow, and other forms of the Song Sparrow, the several races of Steller's Jay as given in the A. O. U. 'Check-list' are called by such names as Black-headed Jay, Blue-fronted Jay, Coast Jay, which give no clue to the fact that all are likewise subspecifically related. Very likely appropriate book names could be suggested that would remedy this difficulty and aid the amateur who is apt to find Latin names somewhat beyond his mental horizon.

The book is of a convenient size to fit a capacious pocket, and in spite of the very small type of some of the chapters, is clearly printed. We predict for this handy volume a warm reception and a wide usefulness by all interested in the "sport of birding."—G. M. ALLEN.

'The Audubon Guide to Attracting Birds'.—Pertinently, the editor of this handbook² (for such it really is) asks at the outset, Why attract birds? He and his collaborators then proceed to answer this question and its consequent, How? For one very soon learns that bringing wild birds to one's dooryard may involve much more than strewing crumbs and confining the cat.

In the seven opening chapters, Mr. Roger T. Peterson sets forth concise and practical directions as to how, when and where to look for birds, useful hints in the sport of wildlife photography, tested methods of attracting birds by plantings for food and shelter. There are well-considered instructions for preparing various mixtures of artificial foods, making and placing proper nesting boxes, the importance of watering stations and the development of ponds for waterbirds. Mr. Richard Pough's clear statement of the 'balance of Nature' concept with its instructive diagrams will prove illuminating to many in pointing out the value of natural predators and the relation of reproduction rate to the population constant, with the pointed conclusion that the way to have more birds is not to

¹ Peterson, Roger Tory. A Field Guide to Western Birds. sm. 8vo, xviii + 240 pp., illustr., June 1941; Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass. Price \$2.75.

² The Audubon Guide / to / Attracting Birds / Edited by / John H. Baker / Executive Director / National Audubon Society / 8vo, xviii + 268 pp., illustr., 1941; Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., Garden City, N. Y. Price \$2.50.

eliminate natural enemies but to provide more food and shelter. Other chapters tell how a sanctuary for wildlife may be maintained and made to function as a valuable community center. Finally Mr. J. H. Baker sets forth an outline of the varied aims and endeavors of the National Audubon Society in its splendid work of conservation and popular education. An appendix presents in tabular form a list of trees, shrubs and vines recommended for different uses in planting and there is a list of useful references grouped under various heads.

The many practical hints and specific directions based on the combined experience of these and other investigators give this volume unusual value as an authoritative popular manual of the subject. Coming at a time when people turn more and more to the revivifying influence of association with birds it should prove of immediate helpfulness. (Parenthetically, we wish we might entirely agree with Mr. Baker that without birds, "trees, shrubs and vines would wither; crops would not thrive; . . . lawns would deteriorate; ponds and streams would become polluted, soils would erode.") The photographic illustrations and Peterson's handsome colored frontispiece of Great Blue Herons taking off are in keeping with the high standard set by this volume.—G. M. ALLEN.

Jørgensen and Blackburne's 'Glossarium Europae Avium.'—Ornithology shows us how many and varied types of related vertebrates may live in the same region yet get on together with a minimum of friction. This convenient glossary,¹ giving the Latin names of the usual birds of Europe, with their vernacular equivalents in some seventeen European languages, cannot fail, as Dr. E. Stresemann says in his Foreword, to prove of great value to newspapers, to bird-banders, to international organizations for bird protection, to ornithologists and other students, particularly those desiring to extend their ornithological knowledge beyond the confines of their political areas, but also it may prove a potent help toward furthering an "international understanding in the literal as well as in the higher acceptance of the term." In this understanding, men of science still lead the way. In all, 451 species are listed, with the polyglot equivalents. Separate indexes for the names in each language are given and there is a brief bibliography of works consulted. Miss Jørgensen is herself an accomplished linguist as well as an excellent amateur ornithologist, and with her collaborator makes acknowledgment to those in different countries who have aided in this unique undertaking. One may marvel at the spirit that makes possible in these times the production of such a work in Denmark.—G. M. ALLEN.

Miller on Speciation in the Genus *Junco*.—This elaborate monograph² on the juncos is intended less as a revision of the group than as a minute study of the evolution of the characters developed by the various populations. The method of approach is somewhat novel for instead of making deductions concerning the interrelationships of the component forms through a comparison of skins alone, as previous reviewers have done, Dr. Miller has carefully studied many of the forms in the field, has based his division into races upon series of breeding specimens, and emphasizes the fact that laboratory experiments, as in making crosses, imply unnatural conditions, since the natural environment in different parts of the wide range over which juncos occur, constitutes in itself a vast laboratory

¹ Jørgensen, Harriet I., and Blackburne, Cecil I. *Glossarium Europae Avium*. sm. 8vo, 192 pp., 1941; Ejnar Munksgaard, København.

² Miller, Alden H. 'Speciation in the Avian Genus *Junco*.' Univ. of California Publ. in Zool., 44 (no. 3): 173-434, 33 text-figs., May 24, 1941. Price \$3.00.

wherein Nature herself is the experimenter. Thus, in the southern part of the range, in Mexico and Central America, sundry representative forms have restricted ranges as on islands or on mountain-tops, where resident populations have no opportunity for interbreeding with their nearest neighbors. Here the results of isolation may be studied, with the added factors of closer inbreeding and varying environment. Further, if such populations owe their present distribution to the effects of the Ice Age, as is usually assumed, it may be possible to measure approximately the amount of divergence taking place over a given period of time.

Farther north, as the range of the genus becomes less broken, the effects of diverse climatic conditions may be correlated with areal distribution. Again, there is evidence that certain races that have evolved in isolation from one another, may at length extend their ranges and come together again, with resulting hybridization rather than intergradation, if the characters concerned have become stabilized. The hybrids, thus resulting, are different from either parent. Apparently many cases could be brought together of western species or subspecies which have developed such distinctive characters that they hybridize rather than blend where ranges now overlap.

The feather pigments of juncos prove on analysis to be eumelanin, or granular black pigment, and phaeomelanin, a more oxidized type; in various dilutions the former gives the blacks and grays and the latter the browns, reds, and pinkish. These tints have characteristic distribution in areas of plumage (as pink sides) or may occur in special parts of the feather (as eumelanin peripherally in the barbules).

Considerable attention is given to the study of variation in coloration and in the amount of white present in the individual feathers of the tail as racial characters. In both these factors there is a considerable variation within the race or species that may be more or less characteristic of given populations. In the reviewer's experience, white markings (that is, unpigmented areas) in both birds and mammals, are seldom definite in extent, but show considerable variation. Other characters of juncos, including size and proportions, are also subjected to minute analysis. The author summarizes his systematic results by grouping the birds into two divisions, the yellow-eyed juncos of southern distribution in Guatemala north to the United States border, comprising the *alticola* and *phaeonorotus* series ('Artenkreise'); and the dark-eyed juncos to the northward, comprising three 'Artenkreise,' the *caniceps* series, the *oreganus* series in the West and the *hyemalis* series in the East and North. In the case of the forms covered by the last edition of the 'Check-list,' the only changes in nomenclature suggested are: the association of *dorsalis* as a race of *J. caniceps* instead of being a race of *J. phaeonorotus*; the reduction of *J. mearnsi* to a subspecies of *J. oregonus*; and the recognition of Dwight's *J. h. cismontanus* as a valid form. Altogether, the review presents a comprehensive survey of race formation such as we have for few other groups of North American birds.—G. M. ALLEN.

Hendricks's 'Field List of the Birds of Berkshire County' is intended for the use of local bird students, especially in connection with Peterson's 'Field Guide' within the covers of which it readily fits. It follows the plan devised by S. G. Emilio for a similar Essex County list, giving on the left-hand pages the names of birds likely to be met with in the field, followed in each case by symbols expressing their local status and by lines extending across the month-columns to denote graphically the times of appearance of each. The right-hand pages are ruled in spaces for brief field notes. Additional birds, for which there are but one or few records, are

given in a supplementary list, so that in all some 264 species are included. Neatly bound in stout paper covers it¹ forms in itself a convenient summary list of the birds of the county and is issued "with the hope that it will prove a challenge to extend our knowledge of the status of Berkshire birds."

To the increasing number of persons taking active interest in the local avifauna of this diversified portion of Massachusetts, it should prove a useful field companion.—G. M. ALLEN.

Sawyer on Making Bird Boxes.—In the ten years that have elapsed since the first edition of this guide appeared as 'Bulletin No. 1' of the Cranbrook Institute of Science, no less than 3500 copies have been sold, necessitating a second edition in 1938, and now a third edition,² brought up to date and enlarged. The text has been entirely rewritten and its scope has been widened to include allied western birds and four new illustrations have been added. Its directions for making simple but practicable nest boxes for hole-nesting birds from wren to Wood Duck, are brief but effective, with specific directions concerning what not to do as well as what should be done to make them suitable for desired tenants. Thus to be successful a nest box must be made not 'for birds' but for a particular kind of bird. There are also explicit directions for making attractive bird baths and feeding shelters from well-tested designs. All these are illustrated with artistic pen and ink drawings which help to make this a useful as well as intriguing guide in the art of encouraging the presence of familiar birds.—G. M. ALLEN.

Mack on the economic status of cormorants.³—In Australia shoots are organized for the persecution of cormorants and there is even a body of people in Melbourne whose purpose is the 'sport' of killing these birds. Much shooting is done at nesting colonies. Commercial fishermen at the Gippsland Lakes blamed depletion of the fisheries upon the cormorants. An investigation was made covering four species, the most important of which was the Large Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo novae-hollandiae*). The information is presented by the volumetric method, which the author strongly endorses. The results are those usual in such cases but which 'practical' men apparently cannot foresee, namely, that the more abundant, hence more easily obtained non-commercial fishes greatly predominate in the food of the birds.

The decline in the fishery was due to the cutting of an inlet allowing diffusion of salt water into the formerly fresh lakes with consequent change in their entire ecology. The author well says, "There is only one way out and that is to seek to know intimately these natural conditions or laws, and to work with not against them."

The case reminds one of Stump Lake, North Dakota, where increasing alkalinity due to desiccation destroyed the fishes. Cormorants were persecuted as the cause even when the lake had become so alkaline that the only vertebrates left in it were mud-puppies (*Ambystoma tigrinum*) upon which the remaining birds were feeding.

¹ Hendricks, G. Bartlett. Field List / of the / Birds / of Berkshire County / Massachusetts, 24 pp., 1941; published by the Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Mass.

² Sawyer, Edmund J. Bird Houses / Baths and Feeding Shelters / How to Make and Where to Place Them / Bull. Cranbrook Inst. Sci. (Bloomfield Hills, Mich.), no. 1, ed. 3, 40 pp., illustr., Dec. 1940. Price 20 cents.

³ Mack, George. Cormorants and the Gippsland Lakes fishery. Mem. Nat. Mus. Australia, 12: 95-117, 15 figs., 1941.

Such misapprehensions and misguided actions convince one of the justice of Hamlet's sarcasm, "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! How infinite in faculty . . . in apprehension how like a god!"—W. L. McATEE.

PERIODICAL LITERATURE

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