

RECENT LITERATURE

A Naturalist Afield in Ireland.¹—This volume, which somehow escaped earlier review in 'The Auk,' is one of the most sympathetic studies of nature by recent authors. One is unable to read its pages without finding himself carried into the woods and hills of Ireland with which the author is so familiar. Whether he is describing a boyhood discovery of a wren's nest, a study of the young Cuckoo's efforts to eject a foster-parent's egg (or an apple) from the nest, or the activities of a Short-eared Owl, he is at once the careful observer and the critical recorder. When he recounts a visit to Strangford Lough in summer and again in winter, a journey to Ratlin Island or to Lough Neagh, the scenes and the bird life become alive. Woven through the descriptions and observations on the wild life of the region are bits of folk-lore and legend, of which Ireland is full, and of authentic history. Interspersed also are pertinent discussions of birds and bird behavior in Ireland as well as in other lands that the author has visited. The style is that of the essayist, not the closet naturalist, and the book makes pleasant and stimulating reading. An assortment of excellent photographs, almost all of birds, gives added value to the book which deservedly brought the author the John Burroughs Medal of 1942.—J. T. ZIMMER.

British Birds.²—Mr. Fisher has prepared an interesting survey of British bird life, giving a brief summary of the natural conditions in the British Isles in relation to the native avifauna and the changes that have taken place through the years, with something of the notable figures among British ornithologists. A list of the British birds, grouped as residents, seasonal visitors, rare vagrants, etc., closes the text. Of equal interest are the numerous illustrations which are reproductions of the work of twenty different artists that have appeared in many standard works, such as Albin, Audubon, Bewick, Grönvold, Gould, Lodge, Millais, Thorburn, and Wolf, to mention some of the best-known. The little volume forms one of a series known as 'Britain in Pictures.'—J. T. ZIMMER.

Conservation in Action.³—One of the most potent factors in the struggle to preserve vanishing forms of animal life from virtual or total extinction on the North American continent has been the establishment of wildlife refuges in suitable places throughout the land. Progress has sometimes been slow—species near extinction can not suddenly recover full-fledged vigor and sometimes not at all—but the results are becoming increasingly obvious. The growth of the sanctuary idea was equally slow from the first-recorded state refuge in California in 1870 through the first federal refuge in 1903 to the extensive system of national, state, and private reserves, parks, and monuments that now dot the map. The good work was started none too soon. The abundance of animal life that the early colonists found here closed their eyes to the unalterable laws of diminishing returns, and the vast herds of bison and flocks of Passenger Pigeons and wildfowl sooner or later showed signs of the continued persecution. Fortunately the effort did come, late but not too late for many of the threatened forms, but it has been a persistent struggle against lethargy and opposition and it still requires constant watchfulness to prevent a loss of all that has been gained.

¹ Armstrong, Edward A. 'Birds of the Grey Wind.' 8vo, xv + 228, 32 pls., 10 figs., map (end papers), 1940. Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto. Price, \$3.50.

² Fisher, James. 'The Birds of Britain.' 8vo, 48 pp., 12 pls. (col.), 26 figs., 1942. William Collins, London.

³ Gabrielson, Ira N. 'Wildlife Refuges.' 8vo, xiii + 257, pls. 1-32, figs. 1-17, 1943. The Macmillan Company, New York. Price, \$4.00.

It has been found that simple protection may not be enough to assure the welfare of the inhabitants of a refuge but that scientific management is required. Under such management, it has been found that the refuge may prosper to such an extent that it may serve to furnish new life to the surrounding terrain or to give a stock from which may be drawn supplies to repopulate more distant areas. Added to these advantages is the glimpse that the parks preserve for present and future generations of Americans of the natural paradise that once was here.

Dr. Gabrielson, head of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is eminently qualified to write of the wildlife refuges and their problems. He has prepared a most readable and informative summary of their inception and history, with descriptions of the individual reserves, their purposes and their accomplishments. It is a heartening account and the book is a mine of information on the subject.—J. T. ZIMMER.

The Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America.¹—This important work is one of the most useful books on North American birds that has appeared in recent years, and is destined to be of great service not only to the ornithologist but also to the sportsman. The author modestly disclaims any originality in the book which, he maintains, is taken solely from the researches and writings of others. Nevertheless, he cannot escape a great deal of credit for the assemblage of the data and the manner of their arrangement and presentation. Each species is treated in exactly the same manner so that it is very easy to find the comparable data concerning the species that it may be desirable to contrast with each other.

The pronunciation and origin of the scientific names are given, followed by a list of colloquial names and the description of the various plumages of adults and young. 'Specimen Identification' gives a résumé of the characters of special utility in distinguishing the form in question in comparison with others with which it might be confused, with special reference to a bird in hand; 'Field Marks' does the same for the bird in life, on the water or in flight, and adds a description of its voice. Under 'Life Story' is a general discussion of behavior, food, and other interesting details. A map shows the breeding and winter ranges of the form in question.

In preliminary pages are descriptions of the family and the subfamilies, illustrations showing the topography of a duck and details of the structure of the wing and leg, a glossary of special terms, a discussion of scientific nomenclature, a general discussion of molts and plumages, keys to aid in identification, methods for age and sex determination, a few longevity records, speed of flight, hybridism, and notes on duck sickness and lead poisoning. Chapters on migration (by F. C. Lincoln), banding (by Lincoln), and conservation (by Ira N. Gabrielson), are included. Weights and measurements of the various species are given in a table near the close of the book. In all, there is a wealth of general and special information throughout, surprising in that it can be compressed into the space it occupies.

In addition to the distributional maps and the series of numbered illustrations (those to which direct reference is made somewhere in the text) there are numerous other line-drawings and a great many interesting vignettes showing the different species in characteristic attitudes. A series of colored plates shows each of the

¹Kortright, Francis H. 'The Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America. A *vade mecum* for the naturalist and sportsman.' 8vo, viii + 476, pls. 1-36 (col.), figs. 1-57 + 32b, 150 figs., 57 maps, 1942. American Wildlife Institute, Washington, D. C. Price, \$4.50 (de luxe edition, \$10.00).

species, usually the adults in winter plumage, details of wing-pattern, various hybrids, examples of eclipse plumages and molts, and the downy young of each species, all the work of T. M. Shortt. The book is to be highly recommended to all who are interested in any way in the North American members of this group of birds.—J. T. ZIMMER.

Joseph Grinnell—Naturalist.¹—Among the writers on the birds and mammals of North America, particularly those of the western coast, there has been none more versatile and stimulating than the late Joseph Grinnell. Possessed of an unusually active mind and keen powers of observation, he published voluminously on a wide variety of topics and usually approached his subject with a fresh outlook. Even his shorter articles were likely to contain some broad discussion of especial interest. To the lasting regret of his wide circle of associates and friends, he never wrote the work he had in view that would have summarized his conclusions on the subjects to which he gave a lifetime of study. Science is thereby the loser.

Perhaps he would have altered some of his earlier views—perhaps merely amplified them—for his was an open mind. Nevertheless, he left behind him published papers from which may be gleaned his developing philosophy of nature. Dr. Alden Miller, editor of the present selection from those writings, has made an excellent choice and wisely arranged the material chronologically. Twenty-eight articles are here reprinted, covering such widely divergent topics as 'Call Notes of the Bush-Tit,' 'The Role of the Accidental,' 'Barriers to Distribution as Regards Birds and Mammals,' and 'The Museum Conscience.' Those long familiar with Grinnell's writings will find old friends collected here in convenient form; those not so familiar (and there can not be many such among active American zoologists) will receive inspiration and enjoyment from the reading.—J. T. ZIMMER.

An Australian Ornithologist.²—This little brochure contains an autobiographical sketch of the author of 'Birds of Australia' and other works on the birds of the Antipodes. The latter part deals with the building up of the magnificent collection of Australian birds that came to the American Museum of Natural History with the Rothschild Collection and of the probably equally complete collection of books on the same subject that Mr. Mathews generously presented to the Australian National Library at Canberra. The present work has been prepared as an adjunct to the latter collection. Mr. Mathews's many friends will find these reminiscences interesting reading. An introduction has been supplied by Tom Iredale, private secretary to Mr. Mathews for a number of years.—J. T. ZIMMER.

Fossil Birds of California.³—The history of palaeornithology in the State of California begins in 1901 with the description by F. A. Lucas of a flightless auk, *Mancalla californiensis*, encountered in Pliocene beds during the excavation of the Third Street tunnel in the City of Los Angeles. The present work, complete to December, 1940, covers records for 157 species with notes on more than 40 in addition whose identity, except to genus or family, has not been definitely determined. The tremendous increase in our knowledge in this field covers the period

¹ Grinnell, Joseph. 'Joseph Grinnell's Philosophy of Nature. Selected Writings of a Western Naturalist.' 8vo., xv + 237, frontisp. (portr.), 7 pls. (2 col.), 1 map (fold., col.), 4 figs., 1943. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. Price, \$2.00.

² Mathews, Gregory M. 'Birds and Books. The Story of the Mathews Ornithological Library.' Royal 8vo, 70, 7 pls., 1942. Verity Hewitt Bookshop, Canberra. Price, 10s.6d.

³ Miller, Loye, and DeMay, Ida. 'The Fossil Birds of California. An Avifauna and Bibliography with Annotations.' Univ. California Publ. Zool., vol. 47, no. 4, October 17, 1942, pp. 47-142. University of California Press, Berkeley. Price, \$1.00.

of active work to date of the senior author, and in large part is definitely representative of his individual efforts and of his precepts and influence on others. The fossil bird life of California now is better known than that of any other similar area in the world.

The introduction gives a brief description of the 30 fossil bearing horizons of the state that to date have yielded bones of birds, 6 in the Miocene, 9 in the Pliocene, and 15 in the Pleistocene. The great deposits in the last have yielded some of the finest material known, upwards of 100,000 specimens of more than 100 species having come from one locality. Bird bones have been obtained from such diverse places as marine shellbeds, diatomaceous earths, river gravels, tuff beds, oil-well borings, and above all from asphalt deposits.

The list of species gives in detail the various occurrences, with references to literature, and there is a bibliography that covers nearly four and one-half pages, followed by carefully prepared indexes. The authors have assembled a carefully written summary of the field, in synoptic form, that will serve as the basis for further studies. The data on identifications here presented are available elsewhere only through extended search in literature, and have in connection with this much interesting interpretation as to ecological conditions, ancient distribution and presumed migrations. The whole is in such useful form that we may regret the statement in the foreword that in the interest of brevity various discussions have been eliminated from the original manuscript.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

An Ornithologist in New Guinea.¹—Mr. Ripley had the good fortune of an invitation to join an expedition that set sail in early December, 1936, to cross the southern Pacific in a fifty-nine-foot schooner to northwestern New Guinea. The expedition was primarily anthropological but Mr. Ripley, as ornithologist of the party, was in search of birds for the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and succeeded in bringing back a fine collection. His book is not entirely concerned with birds although, as may be supposed, birds find a large place in it. There are numerous descriptions of the appearance and habits of some of the fine species with which New Guinea is so generously supplied. The running account is one in which the general reader, also, who is interested in travel and the story of experiences and impressions in a strange country among strange people, will find entertaining, amusing, and informative on a variety of subjects.—J. T. ZIMMER.

A Text-book of Zoology.²—Dr. Storer has written a volume for the classroom and reference shelf that is both comprehensive and practical. The book is divided into two sections. The first deals with the general subject of zoology, discussing the fundamental structures and physiological processes of animal life (using the frog as subject), the factors of heredity and genetics, ecology, and distribution, evolution and the principles of classification and nomenclature, and the history of the science. Brief characterizations are given of the higher groups from subkingdom to class.

The second and larger part takes up the animal kingdom group by group, phylum or class, and presents the details of structure, development, and function,

¹ Ripley, Dillon. 'Trail of the Money Bird; 30,000 miles of adventure with a naturalist.' 8vo, xii + 306, 16 pls., maps (end papers), 1940. (Second edition, 1942.) Harper and Brothers, New York and London. Price, \$3.50.

² Storer, Tracey I. 'General Zoology.' 8vo, xii + 798 + 5 (unnum.), 556 figs., 1943. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York and London. Price, \$5.75.

the natural history, distribution, activities, economic status, relations to man, fossil antecedents, and other such pertinent facts. The groups of median rank, down to orders or sometimes families, are briefly characterized on the basis, so far as possible, of the external features most easily observed. Throughout, the emphasis is on the animal as a living organism, not merely as a laboratory specimen, with the result that the student is encouraged to interpret structure in terms of function. Examples are taken, when possible, from the North American fauna.

An excellent variety of illustrations, mostly new, is provided and those relating to each chapter are separately numbered with indication of the chapter number, making reference easy. The text is clear and as simple as the subject matter permits. A short list of references is provided at the end of each chapter for the use of the student who may wish to delve more deeply. The book appears deserving of a long and useful career.—J. T. ZIMMER.

BOOKS NOTED BUT NOT RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

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- GORDON, SETON. 'In Search of Northern Birds.' Second impression. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Eyre and Spottiswoode, London. April, 1942.
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- POLYAK, S. L. 'The Retina.' The anatomy and the histology of the retina in man, ape, and monkey, including the consideration of visual functions, the history of physiological optics, and the histological laboratory technique. Superroyal 8vo, x + 607 + (114 unpagged), figs. 1-100 (1 col.). University of Chicago Press, Chicago. October, 1941.—Largely non-ornithological but with inclusion of some discussions of avian eyes such as that of the binocular vision of hawks and eagles.
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- ous species concerning their taxonomy, type localities, etc. The new forms from the collection were described elsewhere.
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