

RECENT LITERATURE

Cuban Ornithology.¹—In 1923, Dr. Thomas Barbour published his 'Birds of Cuba' which gave an account of the birds of that fertile island as known at that time, with further discussions of the climate, geology, and ornithological history of the region. There were then 273 species and subspecies known from Cuba. In the intervening twenty years there have been various changes in the country, in its avifauna, and in what is known about the birds. The present quarto volume brings this knowledge down to date. There are now 297 species and subspecies on record including certain new species as well as new visitors. Some of the forms have an altered status and have declined in numbers; others are more commonly seen. Dr. Barbour has been a faithful and regular visitor, himself, and is hence in a particularly advantageous position to discuss these matters.

The treatment of the present work is similar to that of the old. The scientific and English names, and occasionally the local vernacular terms, are given, the status of each form in Cuba is discussed, and there are frequent accounts of the birds' characteristics or the author's experiences in searching for them. The earlier chapters on history, geology, and climate have been omitted as needing no repetition or change, but the introductory chapter gives information on alterations in the countryside and the recent development of ornithology and ornithologists on the island. The book thus makes an interesting and welcome addition to the literature of West Indian ornithology.—J. T. ZIMMER.

Bird Watching, a hobby and a science²—I wish I could have had this guide when I was a budding ornithologist! How much time and effort it would have saved me! Bird watching is something that has to be learned just like a language or a trade. It is not sufficient to fill the gas tank of your car, seize a pair of field glasses and then cruise the country until you have a list of 125 species or whatever 'record' you are after. The novelty of this type of sport soon wears out; the bird watcher gets bored and takes up another hobby. The obvious need for a guide in this field is perhaps best proven by the fact that J. Fisher's booklet on bird watching, published three years ago in England, sold 100,000 copies in little more than a year's time. There was a demand for a similar book for American bird students and to fill it, Hickey has written this guide.

Beginning with the most elementary advice and ending with suggestions to the veteran expert, it treats in six chapters the following subjects: how to begin bird study; migration watching; bird counting; bird distribution; bird banding; and life history studies. There is included in tables and text a surprising amount of original information. The chapter on bird distribution, for example, is a well-balanced treatment of bird ecology, as indicated by the subtitles: food, cover, water, singing perches, other factors in habitat selection, succession in bird life, life zones, and forest types. A similar, well-classified treatment is given in the other chapters.

Hickey presents his material in a very readable manner, and I feel certain that anybody will enjoy the accounts of the author's adventures on birding trips and the numerous anecdotes about better-known or less-known ornithologists. I, for one, read the entire volume in a single session and so did another bird student

¹ Barbour, Thomas. 'Cuban Ornithology.' *Memoirs of the Nuttall Ornithological Club*, no. 9, pp. 1-144, 2 pls., August, 1923.

² Hickey, Joseph J. 'A Guide to Bird Watching. With illustrations by Francis Lee Jaques and bird tracks by Charles A. Urner.' 8vo, xiv + 263 pp., 41 figs. (6 on end papers), 15 vignettes, 32 tables, 1943. Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto. Price \$3.50

I know. Some of the more technical information is relegated to five appendices which treat: bird tracks; some results of breeding censuses; an extremely useful outline for a life history study (a classified list of about 350 questions and suggestions); an annotated list of books important to the bird watcher (32 pages); and a list of the local bird clubs in U. S. A. and Canada. In this list I notice the omission of the northern and southern chapters of the Cooper Club. Otherwise I have found very few errors or omissions. The only serious criticism I have is that the publisher charges \$3.50 for a book that is so eminently suitable for mass distribution.

It is a volume that should not only be in the hands of every amateur bird student in the country, but which even the expert will read with advantage. We ornithologists believe that the study of birds is the noblest of all hobbies. Hickey shows us how to make our favorite pastime even more useful and enjoyable.—
E. MAYR.

Waterfowl in Iowa.¹—Modern game laws are justifiably specific in their requirement that hunters be able to recognize the birds on which they train their guns. Aside from this fact, many of the hunters, and other persons as well, are interested in the birds for their own sake, and the ducks, geese, and swans receive a considerable share of their attention. The variety of plumages which these birds often show in their seasonal changes and in the differences of age and sex have been the source of much confusion to many observers, and a book is welcome if it helps to resolve some of these difficulties.

To those living in Iowa, the present inexpensive little volume should prove particularly interesting, but its use may well extend beyond the boundaries of that state as the birds herein discussed have their ranges far beyond these boundaries. Thirty-four species and subspecies are accepted as definitely established visitors, including the two debatable forms of Black Ducks, of which more will be said below. Two other species are of accidental occurrence and eight are listed as hypothetical, of questionable record. The established forms are discussed in comparable detail regarding field marks, descriptions of the various plumages, measurements and weights, calls, breeding range, migration, winter range, nesting, food, and status in Iowa. A synoptic key also covers the different plumages and eight good colored plates by Maynard F. Reece are further aids to identification. Shorter notice is given of the accidental and doubtful forms. A systematic list of all North American ducks, geese, and swans serves to place the Iowa birds in the larger series. A glossary of technical terms and illustrations of the topography of a duck and certain morphological details are useful adjuncts. Chapters on variations in the plumage of waterfowl, migration and flyways, enemies, and lead poisoning, and a good index to the volume add to the value of the account.

The supposed two subspecies of Black Ducks are here recognized as distinct, as in the A. O. U. Check-List of 1931. Data have been published within the year (*cf.* Shortt, *Wilson Bull.*, 55: 3-7, 1 pl., Mar., 1943) that will be difficult to refute, showing that the supposed two forms are no more than adults and young of the same form. Since this problem has been the subject of many intense discussions of recent years, it is regrettable that the most recent evidence could not have been presented for the benefit of the readers of this book who may not have seen the original account.

¹ Musgrove, Jack W. and Mary R. 'Waterfowl in Iowa.' 8vo, VIII + 113 + 9 (index), pls. 1-12 (8 col.), 11 vignettes, 1943. State Conservation Commission, Des Moines, Iowa. Price \$1.00.

This does not, however, detract from the general excellence of the Musgroves' book which gives a compact presentation of much useful information, in text and illustration, that will be of great service to those for whose use it was prepared.—
J. T. ZIMMER.

A monograph on the field behavior of passerines.¹—This book is at once an extraordinarily thorough study of the behavior of one of our most common and familiar species, and at the same time a clear and concise review of the highly scattered literature on the field behavior of passerine birds. On either count it would be a notable contribution to knowledge. Combined in its present form, no field ornithologist can afford to miss it.

The book gradually carries the fledgling Song Sparrow from hatching to maturity and its own cycle of reproduction. Here and there pauses are made, and chapters are given over to some special subject, like innate and learned behavior, the course of development in young passerines, awakening and roosting, pair formation, and territory. An interesting appendix summarizes 21 different vocalizations of the Song Sparrow, tabulates and discusses dominance in six hand-raised birds, lists 12 orders and 16 families of birds in which injury-feigning has been reported, and records miscellaneous items of Song Sparrow behavior. Each chapter carries its own summary. The reader may browse as he wishes, or go over the volume intensively as his fancy suits.

In abundantly demonstrating the results of the observational technique in the field, Mrs. Nice has to some extent under-emphasized the possibilities of field experiments in the study of bird behavior, but the work of others along such lines is given full recognition in the text. The theories and concepts of Lorenz, Tinbergen, and Howard are repeatedly used in interpretations of the phenomena encountered.

The author's studies of behavior in young birds will be a revelation to many. Most of us have heretofore regarded the raising of young birds as a problem for school children rather than a superb opportunity for exploration by ornithologists. Seventy pages are devoted to observations and discussions of this subject. The main account is slow here, as the problems are objectively unfolded, but many episodes will startle a discerning reader. In one incident a brood of Song Sparrows prematurely fled their nest, but "psychologically" remained in it and gave characteristic reactions. On another occasion, a young bird failed to react to its first contact with water, but an hour later went through all the motions of bathing! In the Song Sparrow, five separate stages of development are recognized, and the maturation of 61 activities is here recorded. The appearance of most of these occurs in this species with remarkable regularity. A detailed account of them for five passerines studied by the author is one of the book's most signal achievements and is bound to influence the study of all important life histories of birds in the future.

The chapters on song are perhaps the best in the book and constitute a landmark in bird watching. Over 600 observations on the awakening song of the male are used to show its dependence upon light and other environmental factors. Eight years' study of a large color-banded population disclosed that Song Sparrows did not inherit individual songs from their direct ancestors, nor did they learn

¹Nice, Margaret Morse. 'Studies in the Life History of the Song Sparrow. II. The behavior of the Song Sparrow and other passerines.' *Trans. Linnaean Society, N. Y.*, 6: viii + 328 pp., September, 1943. Price \$2.00 when ordered directly from the Society, c/o American Museum of Natural History, New York, N. Y.

them during the first four weeks of life. "The form, length, timing and even the number of the songs are typical of the species, but not the quality . . . The pattern is innate." Young Song Sparrows were observed to sing when 13 to 20 days old. Frequency of song in adult males of this species reached as high as 325 songs per hour; one male gave 2,305 songs in a single day. During a six-year period, this same bird sang from 5 to 65 days each fall (average 35). The list of species in which females sing now totals 56, and implies the need of more discriminating observations by field-workers. One is impressed with the probability that we now also stand on the threshold of a fascinating series of explorations in which the hormonal control of bird song will be shown for age classes, for the two sexes, and for different species.

Publication of this volume has been achieved in spite of considerable handicaps. Completion of the manuscript actually followed the incidence of a long and critical illness from which the author has not yet recovered. Before final proofs were available, the Linnaean Society's editor (Dean Amadon) was called to military service. As a result, typographical errors have crept into the text at various places; but these do not, I feel, detract from the readability of the book nor its authority. Special attention, moreover, should be called to the publisher's price. Few, if any, bird books today can match it and offer half as much.—J. J. HICKEY.

Audubon's Missouri River journey, 1843.¹—Apropos of the 100th anniversary of the visit of J. J. Audubon to the upper Missouri River country, Prof. O. A. Stevens of the North Dakota Agricultural College has reviewed, with commentary, the story of his journey. Stevens's account rests upon the well-known Maria R. Audubon and E. Coues edition of 'Audubon and his Journals' (1897), the subject of a critical review by J. A. Allen (Auk, 15: 198-205, 1898). More recently, D. C. Peattie has reproduced portions of the Missouri River journal in his 'Audubon's America.' The object of this expedition was not primarily ornithological but to obtain materials for the 'Quadrupeds of North America.' Nevertheless, five birds were actually found for the first time. Each bears the name of some naturalist-collector and Stevens gives some brief biographical sketches of these, especially if there has not heretofore been much notice given of them in the literature. This commentary is interjected into the running account and appended to the close of the story of the 1843 journey. The whole makes most pleasant reading and contains some historic notes of novelty. In the beginning, Stevens characterizes Audubon as "about the last of the noted travelers" into the Missouri River country. This is true but, in addition to the familiar names which he mentions, there are other lesser known men who contributed to our knowledge of the natural history of the region—William Baldwin, Nathaniel Wyeth, Alexander Gordon, Charles Geyer, J. G. Cooper, and others. Moreover, fur trade was hardly the 'incentive' for many of these naturalist-explorers!

Audubon had just preceded John C. Frémont up the Missouri River. Frémont reached Kansas City on May 17; Audubon had passed there about two weeks before. Frémont had travelled down the Missouri in October, 1842, from the confluence of the Platte to St. Louis. With him was Charles Preuss, "a native of Germany," topographic assistant to Frémont, who also collected plants for him (*cf. Astragalus Preusii* Gray). It was probably Preuss to whom LaBarge referred as "Mr. Prou"—Frémont's, not Audubon's, "botanist"!—a name not identified by Stevens.

¹ Stevens, O. A. 'Audubon's Journey up the Missouri River, 1843.' North Dakota Historical Quarterly, 10 (2): 63-82, 3 pls., April, 1943.

That Audubon was assisted with the plant materials used for the backgrounds of his bird plates by various individuals, for example Joseph R. Mason (*cf.*, Herrick, 'Audubon the Naturalist,' 1: 315, 1917) cannot be news, but the fact that Isaac Sprague (1811-1895) played such an important part in the preparation of the last Audubon plates is heretofore unnoticed. It was this same artist, Sprague, who illustrated Asa Gray's 'Botanical Textbooks' of many editions. Stevens offers some interesting notes on Sprague. That he sketched some of the floral backgrounds for Audubon's last plates (*e.g.*, 485, 488, 490, 493, and 497) there can be little doubt. But, as truly, Audubon apparently did certain backgrounds himself (*e.g.*, plates 486, 489, and 495), for two distinctly different treatments are evident—*viz.*, one artist's interest in botanical exactness for floral detail, when the background actually vies with the bird subject for interest (Sprague's plates) and an artist's effort in giving general impressions of habitat, when the backgrounds are clearly subordinate to the bird subject (Audubon's plates). These plates are unaccompanied by identifications, as were many of the early bird plates, and Stevens attempts to make them for the reader. He finds the drawing of *Malvastrum coccineum* (plate 489) difficult to accept as that mallow but I see no question as to its being that familiar plant. Aside from the brief allusion to the topic of botanical backgrounds of Audubon's plates given by Peattie (*l.c.*: 135), there has been no particular study made of this subject. Herein Stevens's notes on these later plates are a clear contribution to Auduboniana.—J. EWAN, *University of Colorado*.

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