

birds had for generations been accustomed to man. Such a bird, however, is of none the less interest, because available close to a great metropolis. In fact this contingency adds general interest. The Osprey has been treated before in many places, both biographically and photographically, but, in spite of its accessibility, always in a desultory fashion. It seems strange that expeditions are continually being undertaken to remote regions for the purpose of making life studies of particular birds seldom known even by name to the people at large. But then, in these cases, there are the elements of travel and adventure, which give that thrill which seems usually necessary to supply the impetus to both the contributors of expenses and the active agent in the enterprise.

Mr. Abbott has established a most commendable precedent, both in his selection of a close-at-hand subject for intensive ornithological study, and in the success with which he has observed facts and presented them in concise and literarily correct form.—J. GRINNELL.

THE BIRDS OF NORTH AND MIDDLE AMERICA: [etc.] by ROBERT RIDGWAY, [etc.] Part V. | Family Petroptochidae—The Tapaculos. | Family Formicariidae—The Antbirds. | Family Furnariidae—The Ovenbirds. | Family Dendrocolaptidae—The Woodhewers. | Family Trochilidae—The Hummingbirds | Family Micropodidae—The Swifts. | Family Trogonidae—the Trogons. | [etc.]. =Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 50, Part V, pp. i-xxiii, 1-859, pls. i-xxxiii; "issued November 29, 1911."

Part V of Ridgway's great work shows a consistent maintenance of the very high standard set in Part I, which appeared ten years ago. The enormous value of the work as a whole to systematic and faunistic ornithologists is becoming increasingly apparent as a larger proportion of the undertaking yields to completion. We are informed in the preface of the fifth part that the number of species and sub-species described in the five volumes is 2038, and that about 1200 forms remain to be treated in the subsequent parts of the work.

The scope of the present installment is indicated in the title, quoted in its essential details above. The great bulk of the species belong to Mexico and Central America. Only the hummingbirds and swifts include regular representatives north of the Mexican line. Among these we note, of nomenclatural interest, that the limits of the genus *Nephocetes* are extended to include our Black Swift,

which becomes accordingly *Nephocetes niger borealis*.

In the statements of ranges of certain of our hummingbirds, notably the Allen and Rufous, we regret to see lack of accord with the facts as now recognized. These inaccuracies are the result of accepting many really erroneous records of occurrence at face value. A lamentable thing, borne in upon us strongly of late, is the confusion that has evidently arisen even among experienced field ornithologists in the identification of breeding hummingbirds. Discrimination has not been carefully drawn between species actually nesting, and species which merely appear in transit through a region even though the latter may occur at a season when other species have eggs or small young. The breeding of the Rufous Hummingbird on the Santa Catalina Mountains, Arizona, and in Santa Clara County, California, are extreme instances of unlikelihood. That the Allen Hummingbird is "resident" throughout the greater part of its range is very much to be doubted.

We call attention to this misfortune here, not in criticism of Mr. Ridgway, who in his function of compiler cannot be expected to analyse at all critically the vast numbers of records to be considered and incorporated, but to point out wherein we must revise our conclusions in the light of more careful field work. Even the last (1910) edition of the A. O. U. *Check-List* is pretty shaky in its "ranges" of hummingbirds.

But let us again refer to Ridgway's *Birds* in the more happy vein, which it most emphatically deserves. The detailed descriptions, drawn up by an experienced hand, are alone of inestimable value, especially as regards the species of tropical America. A thing we have observed is the tendency, and oftentimes expediency, of adopting well worded and accurate descriptions when once drawn up, in subsequent literature. Mr. Ridgway has already provided characterizations which are recognizable as his, copied far and wide in popular and semi-scientific books on North American birds. In the further development of ornithology of the now lesser known parts of the American continent, Ridgway's skilled treatment will always be the basis.—J. GRINNELL.

THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF BIRD LIFE BY RICHARD H. SULLIVAN. [=Agricultural Education, Kansas State Agricultural College, vol. 3, no. 7, pp. 1-47, 30 figs. in text.]

At the present time there is considerable discussion as to the value of the great flood of bulletins that are yearly poured out from

our agricultural experiment stations. Doubtless many of them, if measured by the amount of reading they receive, are hardly worth the paper they are written upon. But often among them appears a paper, and not uncommonly one more popular than scientific, which fills a certain need and therefore finds a wide use.

Before the reviewer is a pamphlet entitled "The Economic Value of Bird Life," by Richard H. Sullivan and published by the Kansas State Agricultural College. Although largely a compilation of facts taken from other authors, yet we believe it meets a need and for this reason will find wide use.

The interest shown by the average farmer as regards a knowledge of the food habits of the common birds is seldom realized. The exhibit which has probably attracted the most interest and attention on the Agricultural Train here in California the last two years, has been one attempting to show the relation of native birds and mammals to agriculture. And in spite of the excellent work on California birds published by the U. S. Biological Survey, there has been a constant demand for a knowledge of the food habits of the common birds and especially for a handbook giving the identification and food habits of the common birds.

"The Economic Value of Bird Life" follows the usual order of papers of its kind, first dealing with bird life as checks on injurious insects and animals, and spending a whole chapter on the importance of insect pests on account of their enormous reproductive power, their remarkable food requirement, and the great economic losses caused by their depredations. The chapter on "Decimation of Bird Life and Its Consequences" places before the reader the stock examples of the increase of insect pests concomitant with a wholesale destruction of their bird enemies. A few local notes regarding the food habits of certain common birds of the state emphasizes the limitations of the paper and brings to the mind of the reviewer the importance of intensive study of the food habits of birds under local conditions; for the well known variation of the kind of food according to the available supply demands this. The evidence furnished by the writer appears to be almost too overwhelmingly in favor of the birds. An impartial presentation of facts, furnishing the reader with the bad points as well as the good, often gains the confidence of a man who otherwise might be antagonized by the one-sided view.

Although the paper in hand cannot be considered a valuable contribution to scientific literature, yet it doubtless fills a popular need and so proves its worth. And even though it

looks very diminutive and unimportant beside the elaborate work issued by the State of Massachusetts, Forbush's "Useful Birds and Their Protection", yet other states can well profit by the spirit of "The Economic Value of Bird Life", and by issuing even such an unassuming publication, fill an important need. —H. C. BRYANT.

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

SOUTHERN DIVISION

FEBRUARY.—The February meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held on Thursday evening, February 29, 1912, in the office of H. J. Lande, 246 Wilcox Bldg., Los Angeles, with President Morcom in the chair and the following members present: Appleton, Chambers, John Lewis Childs, Dawson, Daggett, Gray, Hanna, Hubbs, Howard, Howell, Huey, Antonin Jay, Lamb, Miller, Robertson, Rich, Tracy, Willett, and Law.

The minutes of the Southern Division for January were read and approved and the minutes of the Northern Division for February were read.

On motion by Mr. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Willett, and duly carried, the Secretary was instructed to cast the unanimous ballot of those present electing to active membership, Messrs. Chester Stock, Harry S. Hathaway, and Clarence H. Kennedy, nominated at previous meeting.

Applications were presented as follows: Wm. R. Flint, Throop Polytechnic Inst., Pasadena, Cal., proposed by A. B. Howell; Anna Head, 2730 Belrose Ave., Berkeley, Cal., proposed by J. Grinnell; Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers, 306 Ave. 66, Los Angeles, Cal., proposed by W. L. Dawson; Geo. E. Stone, Vet. Sci. Bldg., U. of C., Berkeley, Cal., proposed by W. P. Taylor; Margaret W. Wythe, 4231 Terrace St., Oakland, Cal., proposed by H. C. Bryant.

On motion by Mr. Willett, seconded by Mr. Howard, and duly carried, the Secretary was instructed to cast the unanimous ballot of those present confirming nominations made by the officers of both Divisions, for Editor, J. Grinnell, for Business Managers, J. Eugene Law and W. Lee Chambers.

On motion by Mr. Robertson, seconded by Dr. Rich, and duly carried, the Southern Division approved the plan of the Business Managers to construct a small building at a minimum cost of approximately \$30.00 on the rear of the property of W. Lee Chambers, for storage of the large accumulation of back