

skinned today measured $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and looked more.

Talking of big things, as the right of a Californian, the frogs here are certainly in that category. When talking with the manager of the company in Lima, he told me that they were as big as my head. His secretary later told me that they stretched three feet or so from tip to tip; then a conductor on the road had measured one that went twenty-six inches from one toe-tip to another, but when I saw my first one in the lake I believed them all. It came to the surface, stuck up a head like a turtle's, took a breath the same way, and slowly swam downward as we rowed over the spot. Had I had a boat hook I verily believe that it could have been hauled to the surface, as many a turtle has been, with the hook caught under the chin.

Land birds are few. One yellow finch with a pleasant voice wakes us every morning, singing close by the window. It seems somewhat strange to find a species of woodpecker common up here in the treeless and shrubless hilltops, but one is often seen, calling from some rocky point or flying off over the hillsides.

We expect soon to get back to sea level, where shearwaters, petrels and boobies will take the place of flamingos, ibises and mudhens.

Sincerely,

R. H. BECK.

Lake Jurin, Peru, April 17, 1913.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

A "CHECK LIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARKS."—A briefly annotated list with the above title appears in a 24-page circular of "General Information Regarding Sequoia and General Grant National Parks," issued from the Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior. This list has been printed, in almost identical form save for typographical errors, in the circular for at least the past two seasons, to the reviewer's knowledge, 1912 and 1913, pages 7 to 15 in the former, 10 to 17 in the latter.

The list is notable for its length, 184 species being enumerated. The annotations are limited to one- to six-word comments upon seasonal status and relative abundance. The contribution is further striking in the large proportion of improbable occurrences, this furnishing the stimulus for the present critical review.

A provoking thing about the list is its presentation in a government publication, showing unmistakable evidences of having passed the official scrutiny of ornithological authorities at Washington. And yet it has

failed of that censorship which must ever be exercised in regard to the output of amateur observers, if our literature is to be kept up to scientific standard.

We note a number of generic names as well as subspecific combinations, which give no hint of derivation from the standard A. O. U. *Check-List*. The tell-tale *Tyto* (for the Barn Owl) with little doubt in our minds emanates from a certain Washington office. Other significant evidence is afforded by *Balanosphyra*, *Accipiter velox pacificus*, *Horizopus*, and *Sayornis nigricans semiater*. In fact the guilt for allowing such a questionable lot of records to slip into print would seem not difficult to fix!

The two parks named are in the Sierra Nevada of Tulare and Fresno counties, California. The more dubious of the records are as follows: *Florida caerulea*, "rare winter visitant" (no previous record for California!); *Zamelodia ludoviciana*, "very rare"; *Sialia mexicana anabelae*, "very rare summer resident"; *Dendroica occidentalis*, "winter migrant"; *Chaetura vauxi*, "summer resident"; *Pipicola enucleator californica*, "common resident"; *Junco oreganus shufeldti*, "winter migrant" (no satisfactory record for the State!); *Bombycilla cedrorum*, "common summer resident"; *Pipilo maculatus montanus*, "winter visitant"; *Aimophila ruficeps ruficeps*, "winter visitant".

The list is stated to have been "compiled and identified by Walter Fry, ranger in charge." The reviewer has corresponded with Mr. Fry at some length in an effort to secure scientifically acceptable verifications of some of the more important identifications. The information was elicited that either the "species in the list were determined by sight identification at very close range," or that specimens were shot but in no case saved—an extremely unfortunate circumstance, especially as regards the "Little Blue Heron."

It should here be stated that the author of the list is well known to be an efficient officer, and a man or more than ordinary acumen as an observer; but even so, who of us would trust himself to put upon record such extraordinary things unless backed up by specimens preserved?

Is it not incumbent upon naturalists in authority, especially those in connection with the governmental departments, to properly edit, or otherwise render innocuous, the contributions from enthusiastic amateurs? The latter are increasing in numbers—a very desirable thing—but our science will suffer just in proportion as their questionable observations are allowed to assume apparently authentic position in our literature.—J. GRINNELL.