

requested to send their names and addresses to the Biological Survey, Washington, D. C. Full directions for making the census and blank forms for the report will be forwarded in time to permit well considered plans to be formulated before the time for actual field work. As the Bureau has no funds available for the purpose, it must depend on the services of voluntary observers.

Very truly yours,

E. W. NELSON,

Assistant Chief, Biological Survey.

Washington, D. C., February 16, 1915.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

HANDBOOK OF BIRDS | OF THE | WESTERN UNITED STATES | including the Great Plains, Great Basin, Pacific Slope, and | Lower Rio Grande Valley | by | FLORENCE MERRIAM BAILEY | with thirty-three full-page plates by | Louis Agassiz Fuertes, and over six | hundred cuts in the text | Fourth edition, revised | [design] | Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin Company | The Riverside Press Cambridge | 1914. Pp. li+570, pls. I-XXXVI, 2 diagrams and 601 figs. in text. (Our copy received December 12, 1914.)

The appearance of the fourth edition, revised, of Mrs. Bailey's *Handbook* is a sufficient attest to its popularity and usefulness. To the average student of birds in the western United States this is the only satisfactory handbook available, and teachers in schools and colleges give it wide use in the classroom and laboratory.

Revision in the present edition consists in the elimination of all the local lists (pages xliii-lxxxii of the original edition, 40 in all) of the original text, the succeeding parts of the introduction being brought forward and repaged to fill the gap, and in the addition of fifty-nine pages (485-544) of new material. This new matter covers the following subjects: "Changes in nomenclature made by the nomenclature committee of the American Ornithologists' Union, 1902-1913" (2 pages), "Species to be added" (3½ pages, with a brief description of each added form), "Species to be eliminated" (½ page), "Birds of the western United States in the nomenclature of the 1910 check-list" (45½ pages, giving the A. O. U. number, the scientific and vernacular names and the range condensed by the extensive use of abbreviations), and "Books of reference" (62/3 pages, supplemental to the original list printed on pp. xlii-xlix of the amended introduction). Thus from the standpoint of nomenclature and distribution the revised edition reflects much more of our present knowledge, while the technical descriptions and the miscellaneous notes by Mr. and Mrs. Bailey and others remain unchanged.

In view of the extensive popular use of the book it is to be regretted that the publishers could not concede to Mrs. Bailey a

complete revision of the book, such as she desired. Certain shortcomings, which could not be foreseen when the work was first published, make parts of the original text difficult for the average student to use. However, a thorough revision is to be expected within the next few years, and until then the present edition, as with previous ones, will very effectively fill the need for authoritative information concerning bird life in western North America.—TRACY I. STORER.

ALASKAN BIRD-LIFE | as | Depicted by Many Writers | Edited by | ERNEST INGERSOLL | — | Seven Plates in Colors and Other Illustrations. | — | Published by the | National Association of Audubon Societies | New York, 1914 [our copy received November 27, 1914]; 72 pp., 7 col. pls., 5 hfft., 1 map. (To be purchased for \$1.00 at the Office of the Audubon Societies, New York City.)

A splendid idea has here been put into execution—that of making available throughout the schools of a given district a popular account of its birds. No less than 8000 copies of this little book are to be distributed to the school children of Alaska. This benefaction, as we are told in February, 1915, number of *Bird-Lore*, is made possible through private gift for the purpose.

The text consists chiefly of quotations and direct contributions from several leading students of Alaskan bird-life, and insofar as these contributed accounts are rendered verbatim, no criticism can be offered. By far the more important of these contributions come from the pen of our foremost Alaskan authority, E. W. Nelson. His new writings here published are no less virile than those of his Alaskan "Report" of thirty years ago. The colored plates, chiefly by Brooks, are further features of great merit. Let it be understood that, even with the unfavorable comments to follow, the object and, in the main, the execution of this booklet deserve the warmest commendation. It is all the more a pity that a high standard could not have been secured on all of its pages.

Although we are told in the Introduction that "the greatest care has been taken as to accuracy", no less than thirty more or less serious mistakes offend the eye of the reader on the first twenty-five pages. It is only fair to the various contributors to state that these twenty-five pages of matter are chiefly the compilation of the editor of "Alaskan Bird-Life", who thus shows scientific unfitness for the service rendered.

As illustrative of the kinds of errors in evidence, we may point out the following (italics ours): "Among those [of the auk family] breeding in crowded colonies south of the Aleutian islands are the ... crested auklets, marbled, ancient, and Kittlitz's murrelets, ... and the black guillemots"—