

Referring to the Mockingbird, we see a great deal written concerning that bird's "powers of mimicry." We just wonder if there be in that species, or any other bird, the exercise of any real process of imitation. In this connection, see the thoughtful article of J. Paul Visscher, in the *Wilson Bulletin*, vol. 40, December, 1928, pp. 209-216.

Dr. Alden H. Miller has undertaken a systematic revision of the Juncos and invites assistance in the way of loans of specimens of critical importance or of information in any way bearing on this problem. His revision of the North American Shrikes is now completed and the manuscript is in press. Dr. Miller may be addressed at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley.

An excellent handbook of "The Birds of Golden Gate Park, San Francisco" has just appeared (November 22, 1930) under the authorship of Mr. Joseph Mailliard and under the auspices of the California Academy of Sciences. It is of 84 pages, of crown octavo size, with flexible board covers, and sells for 75 cents. There are 94 simple but quite satisfactory line drawings of as many kinds of birds, and each of these is accompanied by a brief description and a paragraph on the opposite page drawn up to aid identification in the field. The combination of concise description, effective illustration and convenient size for pocket use, would appear to insure wide use of this booklet on the part of the amateur nature-seeking public. And the extensive Golden Gate Park, with its abundant bird-life, located within a large city, provides just such a public in increasingly large measure.—J.G.

Western ornithologists should be interested in a study that has been inaugurated covering the Gambel Quail from about the same standpoint as Stoddard's investigations on the southeastern Bob-white. In response to the convincing arguments of Mr. Aldo Leopold (a Cooper Club member), the "Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers Institute" has established four "Game Bird Fellowships," awarded, respectively, to the universities of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Arizona. Birds that are being studied are the Ring-necked Pheasant, Hungarian Partridge, Ruffed Grouse and Gambel

Quail. The "Institute" supplies the financial backing, the several universities exercise general supervision over their parts of the undertaking, and the United States Bureau of Biological Survey cooperates in an advisory capacity, and in other helpful ways. On July 1, 1930, the Gambel Quail investigation was put in charge of Mr. David M. Gorsuch, who in years past has acted as field assistant in Biological Survey investigations and for the California Academy of Sciences. Headquarters are established near Tucson, Arizona, at the Florida Ranger Station, on the western slope of the Santa Rita Mountains, where the extensive Santa Rita Range Reserve offers various advantageous features for such a study. The Gambel Quail is abundant there, and under relatively primitive conditions, while the Scaled Quail and Mearns Quail also occur, at the margins of their habitats, and formerly the Masked Bob-white was found in the same region. The hope of the sponsors of these fellowships is, of course, for better shooting as a result; but even though we may not all sympathize with this objective the studies are not to be decry on that account. In fact, if wild birds are to be shot for sport at all it would seem not only justifiable but the obvious thing to do, to subject each game species to such an investigation as would tell us exactly what we were doing in our shooting.—H.S.S.

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

A CENSUS OF BRITISH HERONRIES.—What gains can be made for ornithology by the distillation of "common knowledge?" We might divide scholars into two classes, the Classical or Faustian, delving into secrets that no man knows, and a more modern type who is expert to extract the knowledge of the inarticulate herd. For the first his secluded tower and the sign of the macrocosm, if he can find it. For the second the statistical laboratory, the questionnaire, and the return post-card. How much safer the latter's work would be if we all leaned more to the side of ignorance and less toward "knowing so many things that ain't so"!

<sup>1</sup>"Report on the 'British Birds' Census of Heronries, 1928." By E. M. Nicholson. London, H. F. and G. Witherby. Reprinted from "British Birds", xxii, 11, April 1, 1929, pp. 270-372. Post 8vo. Paper.

At any rate, a better application of the statistical method will be far to seek. *Ardea cinerea cinerea* has been sought out and counted in England and Scotland, and to some extent in Ireland, by nearly 500 observers, so thoroughly that a concrete total, viz., 3744 to 3843 pairs, may be considered reliable for England, and equally definite figures for Scotland may be hoped for soon.

The launching of the work is another good thing which we owe to H. F. Witherby of "British Birds" and bird "ringing" fame, who acted on the suggestion of E. M. Nicholson. The latter dealt single-handed with the great body of returns. A great number of lieutenants took charge of their separate counties, and the Misses L. J. Rintoul and E. V. Baxter still carry on in Scotland.

Some 7 introductory pages deal with the history of earlier counts and the methods of the present one. Follows 16 pages of tabular analysis (alphabetically under counties), of existing heronries, with the year's count, information on previous years, foundation (date or "immemorial"), and authorities; 19 pages of similar analysis of extinct heronries, 3 pages of summaries, and a 6 page "Index to Information" including a list of the 255 English and Welsh heronries in order of size. In the third section, of 36 pages, Mr. Nicholson condenses a surprisingly complete discussion of the material under such headings as relations with man; relations with other species (predatory, parasitic, social, and competitive), and such aspects of the vital statistics as fertility, mortality, distribution, changes and ages of sites, foraging ranges, etc. The paper ends with a reference bibliography of 74 titles.

The most notable conclusions are that no serious *general* decrease is in progress, though *local* situations are often serious, and a much greater population would follow reduced human persecution, the worst of which may be laid at the door of the fisherman. Recommendations, in brief, are (1) that if this census is to have real value another should follow about 1940; (2) that scientific economic investigation is acutely needed; and (3) that further protective measures should await its results. These sections have a strangely familiar ring.

It is a pleasant surprise to find a textual section of such interest and charm in such

a paper. Part of this is due to the rare quality of Mr. Nicholson's thought and style, part, especially to us, in the pleasant flavor of the mixture of ornithology, history, and romance—the study of a bird whose preservation was a virtue of feudalism and perhaps depended on the sport of falconry, and which to the present moment owes its abundance to the great landowners. Mediaevalism is omnipresent. The reviewer, for example, during some years of interest in conservation, has had occasion to foam at the mouth over many excuses for the destruction of birds, but never yet because they "disturbed the meditations of a religious house, into whose hands the property had passed!"

England, and Mr. Witherby in particular, have a sad habit of getting ahead of us in these matters. There are many birds, and many unit areas upon which we, here in America, greatly need similar work.—T. T. McCABE.

PHILLIPS AND LINCOLN ON THE CONSERVATION OF WATERFOWL.\*—This book is addressed primarily to gunners, yet we have read it through with increasing conviction that it embodies fact and interpretation that make it a classic in the general literature of conservation. Indeed, so many widely bearing questions are given sound discussion that we venture to declare that no one henceforth can talk intelligently about any phase of vertebrate conservation until he has read and studied Phillips and Lincoln on the subject.

The present combination of authorship, with the background of each author, explains in part the superior results of their work as set forth in this volume. Phillips has behind him the wide experience of a true sportsman plus the technical knowledge and analytical capacity demonstrated in his monographic "Ducks of the World", while Lincoln brings knowledge gathered during his years of work in field and laboratory and also the results of access to the masses of information gathered under the auspices of the

\*American Waterfowl | Their Present Situation and the Outlook | for their future | by | John C. Phillips | and | Frederick C. Lincoln | with illustrations by | Allan Brooks and A. L. Ripley | [design] | Boston and New York | Houghton Mifflin Company | The Riverside Press Cambridge | 1930 [our copy received December 4]. Octavo (160 x 240 mm.), pp. xvi + 312, frontispiece, 7 unnumbered plates, 5 maps, 11 headpieces to chapters.