

NOTES AND NEWS

The National Science Foundation will award grants to defray partial travel expenses for a limited number of American scientists who wish to participate in the XIIth International Ornithological Congress which is scheduled to meet in Helsinki, Finland, June 5 to 12, 1958.

Application blanks may be obtained from the National Science Foundation, Washington 25, D.C. Completed application forms must be submitted to the Foundation by January 20, 1958.

The Division of Biological and Medical Sciences of the National Science Foundation announces that the next closing date for receipt of basic research proposals in the life sciences is January 15, 1958. Proposals received prior to that date will be reviewed at the winter meetings of the Foundation's advisory panels and disposition will be made approximately four months following the closing date. Proposals received after the January 15, 1958, closing date will be reviewed following the spring closing date of May 15, 1958.

Inquiries should be addressed to National Science Foundation, Washington 25, D.C.

The annual index for *The Condor* for 1957 was prepared by Mrs. Sylvia L. Thomssen, to whom members are much indebted for this valuable aid.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

AUDUBON WESTERN BIRD GUIDE. By Richard H. Pough. Doubleday and Company, Garden City, New York, xxxvi+316 pp. June, 1957. \$4.95.

To design and prepare a bird guide that is at once useful and authoritative is a difficult task. The requirement of compactness competes with adequate coverage of fauna and natural history. The writing must also reflect not merely sound compilation but intimate acquaintance with species. It was the latter attribute that made the earlier Hoffmann manual so extremely valuable. The new Pough guide, within the limits set for it, is well executed, both in writing and illustration. Where it falls far short of adequacy is in plan, for in effect the book is the tag-end of a series of manuals and in no sense provides a complete coverage of the western species. This is evident from the following considerations. Only those species are treated fully that were not represented in the Audubon Water Bird Guide or in the Audubon Bird Guide, which latter dealt with small land birds of central and eastern North

America. The author states that there are 614 species of western North American birds, but of these only 203 are given coverage on the subjects of identification, habits, voice, and nesting. Thus a student of western birds will not be served properly unless he has all three guides at hand and is prepared to jump back and forth between them, using the cross references in the western unit. The 411 species that are not covered fully are merely entered with a condensed statement of range, although quite a few of them are represented by additional illustrations in the Western Guide. Incongruous situations thus arise such as limited treatment of the characteristically western Verdin, Sooty Shearwater, and Bewick Wren whereas there are full accounts of such inconsequential vagrants as the Wryneck, Black-tailed Gull, and Mountain Accentor.

There are 340 illustrations in color by Don R. Eckelberry. This skilled artist has done his usual fine work, although hampered by the requirement of severely crowding all of these on to 32 color plates grouped in the center of the book. The 138 black and white illustrations by Terry M. Shortt are chiefly of birds in flight and are arranged conveniently in the text. Most of these are good; only occasionally do they seem to fall short of reality, and all are helpful.

Pough sought aid in writing from Howard C. Cogswell, Joe T. Marshall, Jr., Robert W. Storer, and Allan R. Phillips. These authors, whose species accounts are initialed, cover approximately a third of the 203 forms given detailed treatment, the greatest number being contributed by the first two persons. All their statements reflect intimate acquaintance with the species they report on and their own special interests in phases of the birds' natural history.

The guide benefits from having available the scientific and vernacular nomenclature of the new 5th edition of the A.O.U. Check-list. It wisely deals with species almost solely, and only rarely, and usually justifiably, refers to a few well-marked races.

In summary, we state our regret that the plan of the Audubon guides, rigidly pursued, has led to this third volume on western birds which is far from ideal in its conception and coverage. Indeed the book will prove rather exasperating, for one must use it in part for its values of written statement and illustration and yet can not really employ it or recommend it as an effective western guide.—ALDEN H. MILLER.