

FLICKER INVESTIGATION.

I take pleasure in announcing through the BULLETIN to the sixty ornithologists who have assisted me in the preparation of the Flicker Report, and to others who may be interested, that a definite time has been decided upon for its completion and publication. It will contain notes on the Scientific and Vernacular Synonyms, Geographical Distribution, Relative Abundance, Plumage, Hybridism, Albinism, Vernal Migration, Flight, Roosting, Song, Mating, Location, Position, Excavation, Composition and Dimension of Nest, Deposition, Measurements, Color and Shape of Eggs, Number of Eggs in Set, Season's Quota, Dates for Complete Sets, Incubation, Young in and out of Nest, Moulting, Food, Autumnal Migration, Destructive Agencies and Conclusions. It will be ready for the printer sometime in December of the present year. In the meantime I need migration notes for '95-'99, measurements of eggs with complete data, notes on incubation, young, and moulting.

I would be pleased to hear from and correspond with all who are willing to help me in this or anything else relating to the Flicker. Do not delay but write before it passes out of your mind.

FRANK L. BURNS, *Berwyn, Pa.*

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT OF WORK FOR THE COMMITTEE ON VARIATION.

Now that winter is here and field work demands little attention, some time can be very profitably spent in getting acquainted with the material in our collections, which is generally apt to lie idle.

We have our specimens labelled and classified, but what does it all mean? Why have birds been grouped as they are and why is it that we are able to classify birds in such orderly fashion? The earlier ornithologists recognized in the resemblances and differences in the birds they found a natural arrangement in groups, but this work was simply to start out and make pigeon holes for the different forms; and most of us in our systematic work are simply finding these pigeon holes for our specimens.

With the development of the great theory of evolution the secrets back of all these conditions began to come forth. Species were now seen to have come from common ancestors and it was realized that they