

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Birds of Springfield and Vicinity.—By Robert O. Morris. The town of Springfield lies on the Connecticut river but a few miles north of the dividing line between Massachusetts and Connecticut. In the preparation of the work the author passes over well beaten ground. From this very place the Rev. Wm. B. O. Peabody, Dr. J. A. Allen, F. H. Keys and W. W. Colburn, have enriched our ornithological literature; while Messrs. Emmons, Clark, Waters, Hoffman, and Drs. Merriam, Wood, and Faxon, have also done more or less work within the territory covered by the present volume. It has all appearance of having been done in a most thorough manner. The style is easy, direct and pleasing; many very valuable facts are related in an unassuming manner, and the description of the surrounding country is particularly fine and easily comprehended. 254 species and sub-species are recorded, all of which, with the exception of less than a fifth part, have come under the writer's personal observation. To the above he adds 4 species of probable occurrence but excluded from insufficient evidence; 5 introduced species, but one surviving—the ubiquitous and ever increasing European House Sparrow; and finally 2 extirpated species—the Heath Hen and Wild Turkey.

A work of this kind bespeaks long experience, and Mr. Morris is to be congratulated upon the fact that the elegance of his diction is further embellished by the work of the publisher.

[F. L. B.]

A Quantitative Study of Variation in the Smaller North-America Shrikes.—This quantitative study of variation to determine the status of a sub-species of birds, by our President, R. M. Strong is a pioneer in the application of an exact criterion for the determination of species and sub-species. There is no little objection to this quantitative method of study from one quarter and another, for no very good reason we can see. Manifestly no other kind of study can bring us exact results. A quantitative study is possible only when a large amount of material is available from many different regions, and this is

another argument in favor of employing such a method, for it is only by means of a large number of specimens that exact results can be arrived at.

The paper is based upon the study of 294 skins from all parts of the country, the extreme north being, apparently, not so well represented as the middle portions of the east and west, while the south Atlantic states furnish a large proportion. While a larger amount of material would have been desirable, it is doubtful whether the results would have been perceptibly different.

Under the caption 'Methods,' the author says 'No attention has been given to the subspecific distinctions appearing on the labels of skins, for I have considered it important to avoid all possibility of bias of opinion which attention to previous classification might give.' It is interesting to notice, in this connection, that the variations which this exact method of study brings out correspond with the life zones, so that the author is led to the conclusion that Mr. Palmer's subspecies, *migrans*, which is the north-eastern form, is as worthy of recognition as the California form, leaving to the reader the right to pass judgment whether or not the variation shown is sufficient to warrant the creation of these two forms. Since there has been no effort to establish a percentage of variation which shall mark the bounds of sub-specific distinctness in the direction of mere geographical forms or minor races, all power remains vested in the A. O. U. committee on the revision of the nomenclature. While we have no reason to doubt their fairness and ability, the adoption of some precise criterion of sub-species would materially aid them in this work.

The paper is intended simply as a description of work begun in the fall of 1898, carried on at Harvard University and and completed during the winter of 1899-1900. It is necessarily technical in nature and presentation, and it shows a great amount of painstaking investigation. [L. J.]

Abstract of the Proceeding of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club of Philadelphia. This flourishing society has successfully passed through the most critical period of its existence

and entered upon its second decade of usefulness. Such well known ornithologists as Witmer Stone, Samuel N. Rhoads, Thomas H. Montgomery, Jr., Charles J. Pennock, George Spencer Morris, William E. Hughes, and others, are numbered in active membership; and like the esteemed A. O. U. is well balanced by a long list of associates. The Club is doing good work in keeping alive the interest in local ornithology and preserving many of the most important Pennsylvania and New Jersey record. No. III contains a summary of the proceedings for the years 1898 and 1899. This pamphlet of 28 pages is brimful of interesting notes and records. Many of the members have had more than local experience as collectors, which together with the local news and observations, and the almost inexhaustible collections of the Academy to draw upon; serve to make the meetings a great source of pleasure and profit to those of regular attendance. To hear the personal experiences of ornithologists but recently returned from Yucatan, Greenland, Alaska, and other remote places, adds the larger measure of reality so often lacking in a printed page. Edward A. McIlhenny's account of the nesting of the Snowy Owl at Point Barrow, Northern Alaska (as many as sixty nests being found in one day) is of peculiar interest. The following papers have been revised and published in full: "Birds of the Blizzard of February 1899." "Migration Data on City Hall Tower." "Summer Birds of the Higher Parts of Sullivan and Wyoming Counties, Pa." No. IV is for the year 1900. We note among the dates and localities of the more important records, the addition of the Chestnut-sided Warbler, *Dendroica pensylvanica*, to the list of breeders in Chester County, Penna., by the well known oologist, Samuel B. Lodd. The following papers are given intact: "Some Observations on the Habits of Crossbills (*Loxia C. minor*) Observed at Hanover, N. J., May 4-6, 1900." "Recent Capture of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers (*Campophilus principalis*) in Florida." "Bird Language an Index of Family Relationship." Outside of the peculiar medley produced by the careless use and disuse of capitals in the common names of birds, in one of the articles; this pamphlet is equal to its predecessor in neatness.

[F. L. B.]