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MYRON H. SWENK,
Secretary-Treasurer N. O. U.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

REICHENOW'S VOGEL, VOL. II.
(A Review.)

Having reviewed the first volume of this work in the pages of the Bulletin some time ago the reviewer had hoped to finish his task soon after that, but the second volume was held back in Liverpool, England, for more than a year, evidently as contraband or for fear it might contain a bomb or picric acid, or what not. But at last it has arrived and we are now able to finish the review. Since the essential points of Reichenow's classification have been disposed of in the previous review, there is no need to go over them again. The second volume begins with the second half of the fifth row *Fibulatores*, the *Musophagidæ*, Cuckoos, Woodpeckers, etc., and then takes up the last row the *Arboricolæ*, running from the *Bucerotidæ* to the *Nightingale*. Some of the families seem a little out of place in this system as it stands, for instance the *Pycnonotidæ* should certainly have been placed nearer to the *Turdidæ* than they are placed in the work.

The work at large fills a great want and has many points to commend it. The reviewer has tried to do justice to it in every way, although personally we prefer a phylogenetic system, and if there is anything better than that which Ridgway has produced we have failed to see it. And even then one is sometimes inclined to wonder whether some time in the future, as Dr. Gill suggested in the *Osprey* some years since, there will not be a system that will take a still different viewpoint and arrive at still different conclusions. For instance the *Fringillidæ* and *Tanagridæ*, both nine primaryed conirostral birds are separated really only by relative points of difference—as are the *Corvidæ* and *Paridæ*,—while the *Ploceidæ* are certainly conirostral, as anyone may see who will place specimens of *Pyrenestes albifrons* and *Hesperiphona vespertina* side by side, but have 10 primaries, and again the *Icteridæ* are nineprimaryed conirostral birds, which in

turn seem to be connected with the 10 primaried *Sturnidæ* through the nineprimaried form *Paramythia montium* from New Guinea. One feels like creating a Superfamily of all the conirostral Oscines, separating them into nineprimaried and tenprimaried subfamilies, taking into consideration and emphasizing the points they have in common more than the points of differentiation. We remember that in our boyhood days in our parochial school in Missouri we were taught out of some ancient German Natural History that the Songbirds were divided into 6 families: denti-rostral, conirostral, fissirostral, pegbilled, thinbilled birds and the *Corvidæ*, and are we after all so very far removed from these viewpoints in these days of modern classification? However, it behooves us to strive for the truth and for accuracy in science to the best of *our* ability and *our* understanding and we do *well* if we do *this*, no matter what our name may be.

As far as the treatment of North and Middle American birds is concerned we understand Dr. Reichenow when he says it would be impossible to treat all the forms, still some omissions and errors could have been avoided. The placing of *Myiadestes* and *Bombycilla* among the *Muscicapidæ* might be forgiven, but not the placing of certain Tanagerforms among the *Mniotiltidæ* and to put *Vireosylva* in the same family is nonsense! Among the *Tyrannidæ* the Genus *Empidonax* should have come in for at least 10 to 20 lines and similar remarks hold true in other cases, as for instance, the *Troglodytinæ*. The whole *Sylviidæ* group of Dr. Reichenow is rather an unfortunate one anyhow. The description of *Oporornis formosa* is wrong and could only apply to the female of the Wilson's Warbler. The name of the Chat must read *Icteria virens* and so we might go on and find more errors. But all these minor errors will not detract from the value of the work, which certainly is what it set out to be a "Handbook" a handy manual. That we find such errors and misstatements in regard to North American birds is due to the fact that in the Berlin Museum and practically all the German Museums our birds are but poorly represented and I can show the proof for this statement in writing from the hands of the Dir, of the Royal Zoölogical Museum. Hence we must bear with them in a spirit of kindness and hope that these conditions will improve so that in the future we Americans can receive our just dues.

W. F. H.

THE WINTER BIRD LIFE OF MINNESOTA. By Thomas S. Roberts. Fins-Feathers and Fur. Official Bulletin of the Minnesota Game and Fish Department. No. 4. December, 1915.

This is the title of a very complete list of the birds which have

been authentically recorded as winter birds within the state. The list includes 85 species and 5 subspecies, and they are listed in four groups, as follows:

Permanent Residents—32 species, 3 subspecies.

Winter Visitants—16 species, 1 subspecies.

“Half Hardy”—10 species, 1 subspecies.

Accidental—27 species.

Forty-one are marked as common in the vicinity of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Copious annotations accompany each species referring to their differential characters, status, etc. Notwithstanding the rather long list, it seems to be very conservatively compiled; in all unusual records data as to time and place are offered, and in most cases the observer is also named. The list will be of value to students in the adjacent states as well.—T. C. Stephens.

The Status of Harris's Sparrow in Wisconsin and Neighboring States. By Alvin R. Cahn. From Bulletin of the Wisconsin Natural History Society, Vol. XIII (New Series), No. 2. Pp. 102-108.

The summary which the author makes of the published occurrences of this large and handsome sparrow in the regions in which it is uncommon—from eastern Iowa eastward—is a valuable piece of work. Sixteen new records are here published. No attempt is made to give specific references in the regions where the species is common, or of regular occurrence. We miss the following references from the list given by Mr. Cahn: Ekblau, Geo., at Rantoul, Ill. March 15, 1914. “An even dozen.” *Bird-Lore*, Vol. XV. Schafer, J. J., Port Byron, Ill. March 15, 1914. One bird. *Ibid.* Vol. XVI, p. 190. Simpson, Mrs. Mark, Milwaukee, Wis. May 12, 1914. One. *Ibid.* Vol. XVI, p. 282. Schafer, J. J. Port Byron, Ill. April 26, one; May 3, two; May 5 and 7, one. 1914. *Ibid.* Vol. XVI, p. 283. Saunders, W. E. London, Ont. March 18, 1907, one. *Auk*. Vol. XXX, p. 114. L. J.

Birds of Porto Rico, by Alex. Wetmore, Assistant Biologist. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bulletin No. 326. March 24, 1916. 140 pages.

There is a colored frontispiece of the Porto Rican Tody by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, a map of the island of Porto Rico and adjacent islands which were visited, and eight black and white full-page pictures of birds and stomach contents. The scope of this paper is given in the Introduction: “The following report on the Birds of Porto Rico is the result of investigations made by the Biolog-

ical Survey in coöperation with the government of the island. Because of the damage to crops by insect pests and the resulting pecuniary loss, the Board of Commissioners of Agriculture of the island in 1911 requested the aid of the United States Department of Agriculture in an effort to determine the relations of the island birds to the insect fauna." "Investigations were begun in December, 1911, and continuous field work was carried on until September, 1912, permitting nine months of consecutive observation. All the principal regions of Porto Rico were visited, short trips were made to adjacent islands of Vieques and Culebra, and four days were spent on Desecheo Island in Mona Passage."

In addition to extended treatment of each of the 162 species found on the islands the report is divided into the following parts: "Birds found in cane fields." "Birds found in coffee plantations." "Birds frequenting citrus groves." "Bird enemies of the mole cricket." "Bird enemies of the sugar-cane root-borer." "Bird enemies of the may beetle." Under the heading, "Economic considerations," the statement is made that none of the species can be considered wholly pernicious. It was found that many of the insect eating birds consumed considerable quantities of vegetable matter.

This paper is valuable both from the standpoint of a local list and for its contribution to the literature of economic ornithology.

L. J.

The Domestic Cat. By Edward Howe Forbush, State Ornithologist.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, State Board of Agriculture, Economic Biology, Bulletin No. 2. 1916.

This paper is an able presentation of the cat problem. It gives convincing proof that the common house cat is a real menace to the wild bird life of the more settled districts, and that the compensations resulting from the destruction of rats and mice by cats come far short of balancing the account. A further indictment of the cat is the proven fact that cats may carry such infections as small-pox and scarlet fever. Since the house cat is an introduced animal it is altogether likely that restrictive legislation not less severe than that for dogs will have to be resorted to in order to keep the numbers within reasonable bounds.

L. J.

Proceedings of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union. Vol. VI, Parts 2 and 3. February 27 and July 10, 1915. Pages 25 to 68.

Part 2 is concerned with "The Eskimo Curlew and its Disappearance," by Myron H. Swenk, and "Some bird notes from Lincoln and vicinity," by R. W. Dawson, and "Three records from the Ne-

braska Experimental (sub-station at North Platte," by Wilson Tout. A review of the occurrences of the Eskimo Curlew is followed by the cheering statement that "Although the Eskimo Curlew is reduced to the point of extinction, it is probably not yet absolutely extinct." This species and the Trumpeter Swan seem to be the species which are doomed to extinction even before some others which it was thought would disappear before them. L. J.

The Birds of Green Lake County, Wisconsin. By John N. Lowe. From the Bulletin of the Wisconsin Natural History Society, Vol. XXXI (New Series), No. 2. June, 1915.
This is a briefly annotated list of 211 species.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Suggestions for Ornithological Work in Canada. By P. A. Taverner. Reprinted from The Ottawa Naturalist, Vol. XXIX, April, May, 1915. Pp. 14-28.

The Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax Auritus*) and its Relation to the Salmon Industries on the Gulf of St. Lawrence. By P. A. Taverner. Geological Survey, Canada, Department of Mines, Museum Bulletin No. 13. April 30, 1915. Pp. 1-24.

Mortality Among Waterfowl Around Great Salt Lake, Utah. Bulletin No. 217, U. S. Dep't Agriculture. May 26, 1915. (Preliminary Report.) By Alex. Wetmore. Pp. 1-10.

The National Zoölogical Park and Its Inhabitants. By Dr. Frank Baker, Superintendent of National Zoölogical Park. From the Smithsonian Report for 1914, pages 445-478 (with 41 plates).

The Starling. By Edward Howe Forbush. Revised and enlarged from the fifty-eighth annual report of the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture. Circular No. 45, May, 1915. Pp. 1-23.

Seventh Annual Report of the State Ornithologist. For the Year 1914. January 13, 1915. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, State Board of Agriculture. Edward Howe Forbush. Pp. 1-31.

Bird Houses and Nesting Boxes. By Edward Howe Forbush. Circular No. 47, April, 1915. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, State Board of Agriculture. Pp. 1-24.

Eleven Important Wild Duck Foods. By W. L. McAtee, Assistant Biologist. Bulletin No. 205, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Professional Paper. September 27, 1915. Pp. 1-23.

Our Shorebirds and Their Future. By Wells W. Cooke, Assistant Biologist, Bureau of Biological Survey. From Yearbook of Department of Agriculture for 1914. Pp. 273-294.

Distribution and Migration of North American Gulls and Their