

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN CUCKOOS, GOATSUCKERS, HUMMINGBIRDS AND THEIR ALLIES. ORDERS PSITTACIFORMES, CUCULIFORMES, TROGONIFORMES, CORACIIFORMES, CAPRIMULGIFORMES AND MICROPODIIFORMES. By Arthur Cleveland Bent. United States National Museum Bulletin 176, 1940. viii + 506 pp. 73 plates. \$ .75. Supt. of Documents, Washington, D. C.

This is the thirteenth of Mr. Bent's valuable volumes on life histories of North American birds and a very fine volume it is. The six orders included offer such a variety in their habits that the volume makes fascinating reading. Notable chapters have been contributed by Messrs. E. C. Stuart Baker, Alexander Skutch, George Sutton, and others. Very interesting is the account of the Khasia Hills Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus bakeri*): the sexes are "promiscuous in their sexual relations"; the female sometimes adopts a territory from which she excludes all other females "parasitic on the same foster parent," but not females "parasitic on a different species"; eggs were collected from one cuckoo for 11 years; incubation usually takes 12 or 13 days. "The period the nestling remains in the nest is 4 to 6 weeks, but in many cases the nest is far too small to retain the young cuckoo until it is full grown," and this is often disastrous to the bird. Unlike our Cowbird, "The young Khasia Hills cuckoo ejects the fosterer's eggs or young from the nest in the same way as its English cousin does, possessing the same interscapular pit to assist it in doing so. This structural aid to ejection is found in all such genera as *Cuculus*, *Cacomantis*, *Penthoceryx*, and others that eject their foster brothers and sisters, but not in the young of *Clamator*, *Eudynamis*, and those cuckoos that do not commit such murders. In the cuckoos that possess it, the pit soon fills and young cuckoos lose the impulse to eject after a very short time, sometimes within 4 days and almost invariably within a week of being hatched."

Ringed Kingfisher (*Megaceryle t. torquata*) parents take turns of 24 hours each when incubating the eggs, each bird taking a single recess in the afternoon. The young stay in the nest about 35 days, some 10 days longer than young Belted Kingfishers. Dr. Gross gives a long account of nesting of the Eastern Nighthawk on the roof of a building, Dr. Sutton a lively chapter on the Roadrunner.

A charming life history is given by Mr. Skutch of the White-eared Hummingbird (*Hylocharis l. leucotis*), "one of the most abundant and familiar hummingbirds" of the Guatemalan highlands. After the rainy season from May to October, in "November and December, the first months of clear sunny weather, there is a greater profusion of bright, conspicuous blossoms than at any other period of the year. Hummingbirds of all kinds nest during this flowery season, despite frequent cold, biting winds, and the frosts that from November to the end of March form almost nightly on open fields above 7,500 feet." All the other birds wait till spring to nest. Male White-ears congregate into "singing assemblies," each bird perched from 60 to 100 feet from his neighbor; some of these groups gave a "clear, silvery tinkle," others a "chirping note." "The territorial rights of each white-ear were respected by the others, and as a rule each sounded his little tinkle without much interference from his neighbors." "The female white-ear built her nest alone, without the assistance or even the encouragement of one of the males that sang so tirelessly beyond sight and hearing." "If ever nestlings seem to need the ministrations of a father, to help feed them and to warm them while the mother takes her recesses and seeks her food, it is these little hummingbirds; yet no male ever appears to aid in their care, for this is not the custom among hummingbirds." One mother still fed her 40 day old son of the first brood, although she was now incubating her second set of eggs. The chapter should be read and enjoyed in toto.

It would sometimes be better if Mr. Bent did not quote quite so widely, or if he quoted more reliable authorities. For instance, the account of Bralliar of the mother Belted Kingfisher teaching her young to catch fish until "she was convinced of the skill of each of her brood" is a bit too plausible to be convincing. It is too bad to cite erroneous statements as to the length of the incubation period of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (14 and 11 days) and omit two of the reliable observations that show it to be at least 16 days, or to repeat the wild statement that the young of this species may stay in the nest only 6 days when they really stay some  $3\frac{1}{2}$  weeks.

The index and full bibliography are of great value, while the hundred and forty odd photographs deserve the highest praise. Mr. Bent is to be heartily congratulated upon his thirteenth volume.—M. M. Nice.

BIRDS OF LUCAS COUNTY [Ohio]. By Louis W. Campbell, *Bulletin Toledo Zoological Society*, 1, No. 1, October 1, 1940: 6 x 9 in., 1-225, folding map. \$.50.

This report of the birds found in a county in northwestern Ohio concerns an area of approximately 342 square miles of land and 275 square miles of water. The field work covered a period of 13 years, from January 1, 1926 to December 31, 1939. There is an introduction containing brief accounts of the physical geography of the county, various bird habitats, migration lanes, effects of weather on birds, and a history of bird life in former years. Following that is an annotated list of the recorded 285 species and 13 additional subspecies of birds, plus 3 hybrids (2 warblers and a junco); a hypothetical list of 5 species, and a list of 16 birds of possible occurrence. There are 5 appendices, in tabular form, which include important data on extreme and average dates of arrival and departure of transient and summer resident forms. An index of the scientific and common names of birds completes the report. Typographical errors are few and the format is pleasing. Unfortunately there are 2 shades of paper, divided into 4 sections, which detract from the otherwise pleasing appearance of the book. Despite this, the Toledo Zoological Society has produced, in this new series, a nicely printed publication.

Mr. Campbell states that the purpose of the report is (1) to acquaint the people of northwestern Ohio with the bird life of the area, and (2) to include sufficient scientific data to make it of value to ornithologists. To do this it was necessary to combine popular appeal with scientific accuracy, a difficult "carrying of water on two shoulders" which has been creditably accomplished. The writing is at all times clear, although occasionally one wishes an account had been more detailed. Although credit is given to many individuals and several organizations the majority of the field work obviously has been done by Mr. Campbell. Most of the unusual bird records made by him are validated by preserved specimens that are deposited in museums, and one finds little to criticise and much to commend in his personal observations. However, at times he appears to have placed too much faith in the observations of others, by accepting sight records as positive which should be questioned (see Eastern Blue Grosbeak, p. 163).

The author is fortunate in living in Lucas County. This county, with its great diversity of habitats, is situated at the western end of Lake Erie, at the junction of at least two important migration routes, and it therefore unquestionably contains one of the richest avifaunas of any Ohio county. This region has been sadly neglected in the past, which aids in making Campbell's contribution of more than usual importance to ornithologists. It is a source of satisfaction, in this day of paid fellowships, grants, and other subsidies, to find a naturalist enthusiastic enough to expend freely so much of his own time and effort in the production of a thorough report like this one. Mr. Campbell is to be congratulated.—Milton B. Trautman.

THE ECOLOGY AND ECONOMICS OF THE BIRDS ALONG THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF NEW YORK STATE. By A. Sydney Hyde. Roosevelt Wildlife Bulletin, 7, No. 2:62-215, figs. 26-57, map. Oct., 1939 (Copy received May, 1940).

This paper deals with the birds inhabiting a narrow, 500-mile strip of territory along the south shore of Lake Ontario from Point Breeze to a point on the New York-Quebec boundary northeast of Chateaugay. The field work was done during June, July, August, and early September in 1935 and 1936.

The title is woefully misleading. Three fourths of the pages are devoted to an annotated list of 176 species plus a hypothetical list of 17 species of the summer, spring, and fall birds. The remaining pages are concerned with general descriptions of the area and its bird life; of these pages, *three* deal directly with ecology and *two* with economics. What therefore appears to be a fresh approach to the study of the birds of an extensive, rich area is actually an old-style annotated list!

The text is decidedly popular. For example, the Catbird (p. 167) is spoken of as a "slender slaty slinker." Original observations are numerous and commendable but all too often they are buried amid a jumble of remarks that have no specific application to the birds of the area in question. The information presented under each species follows no plan: the status may be mentioned under one but not the next; descriptions of coloration, plumage, song, and behavior are given under some species but not all of them.

The purpose of this paper is undoubtedly a guide to the birds of the region but it is shadowed by an inappropriate title and poor organization. The paper is profusely illustrated with many excellent photographs.—O. S. Pettin-gill, Jr.

#### SHORT PAPERS

- AUSTIN, OLIVER L. Some Aspects of Individual Distribution in the Cape Cod Tern Colonies. *Bird-Banding*, 11, No. 4, Oct., 1940:155-69, map.
- BAKER, BERNARD W. Notes on Sandhill and Little Brown Cranes in Texas. *Jack-pine Warbler*, 18, No. 3, July, 1940:74-7, figs. 1-2.
- BARTLETT, HARLEY H. The Reports of the Wilkes Expedition, and the Work of the Specialists in Science. *Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc.*, 82, No. 5, June, 1940:601-705. (Includes sections on the ornithological work of Peale and of Cassin. The new birds in Peale's extremely rare volume are listed, together with Cassin's disposition of each in his revised "edition" ten years later).
- BIRD, C. G., and E. G. BIRD. Some Remarks on Non-breeding in the Arctic, especially in North-east Greenland. *Ibis*, 1940, Oct.:671-8.
- BLAKEMORE, LEM A. Barred Owl Food Habits in Glenwood Park, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *Flicker*, 12, No. 3, Oct., 1940:21-3.
- BOND, RICHARD M. Birds of Anaho Island, Pyramid Lake, Nevada. *Condor*, 42, No. 5, Sept., 1940:246-50, figs. 70-3.
- BRAUND, F. W. Lincoln's Sparrow Breeding on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. *Jack-pine Warbler*, 18, No. 3, July, 1940: 67-8, fig. 1.
- BRODKORB, PIERCE. New Birds from Southern Mexico. *Auk*, 57, No. 4, Oct., 1940: 542-9. (New subspecies of *Sterna albifrons*, *Tapera naevia*, *Chordeiles acutipennis*, *Chloroceryle amazona* and *americana*, *Aulacorhynchus prasinus*, *Cissilopha yucatanica*, *Heleodytes zonatus*, *Dendroica graciae*, *Agelaius phoeniceus*, *Saltator atriceps*, and *Aimophila rufescens*).
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- BROWN, FRANK A. JR., and MARIE ROLLO. Light and Molt in Weaver Finches. *Auk*, 57, No. 4, Oct., 1940:485-98.

- CHAPMAN, FRANK M. Señor Sparrow. *Nat. Hist.*, 46, No. 4, Nov., 1940:200-4, illus. (An excellent popular account of the author's geographical study of *Zonotrichia capensis*).
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- CRILE, GEORGE, and DANIEL P. QUIRING. A Record of the Body Weight and Certain Organ and Gland Weights of 3690 Animals. *Ohio Jour. Sci.*, 40, No. 5, Sept., 1940:219-59. (Many diverse species of birds are included).
- DAVIS, DAVID E. Social Nesting Habits of *Guira guira*. *Auk*, 57, No. 4, Oct., 1940: 472-84.
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- DEAR, L. S. Breeding Birds of the Region of Thunder Bay, Lake Superior, Ontario. *Trans. Royal Canadian Inst.*, 23, Pt. 1, Oct., 1940:119-43. (Address: 198 College St., Toronto, Ont.).
- DEUSING, MURL. Bald Eagle Range and Population Study. *Passenger Pigeon*, 2, No. 9, Sept., 1940:103-6, photo, map. (In Wisconsin).
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- ENGSTROM, HUGH R. 1940 Minnesota Nesting Records. *Flicker*, 12, No. 4, Dec., 1940:46-52.
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- GANIER, ALBERT F., and ALFRED CLEBSCH. Summer Birds of Fall Creek State Park. *Migrant*, 11, No. 3, Sept., 1940:53-9. (In Van Buren and Bledsoe counties, Tenn.).
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