

## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

**ORNITHOLOGY LABORATORY NOTEBOOK.** By Arthur A. Allen. Comstock Publishing Company, Inc., Ithaca, New York, fifth edition, 1947: 8 × 10½ in., vi + 256 pp., 301 figs., 131 maps. \$4.00.

The fifth edition of Allen's well-known Ornithology Laboratory Notebook differs little from the previous edition reviewed by Frederick H. Test (1941, *Wilson Bulletin*, 53:135-136). Test's thoughtful and adequate description of the book can be consulted by readers desiring more information than is given here.

The more important changes in this new edition are: first, the inclusion of a three-page list of "Reference Works to Consult in Completing the Life History and Identification Charts"; second, the transfer of 104 outline drawings of birds (from an appendix of 188 such drawings in the fourth edition) to the life-history charts, one species per chart—as they were arranged in the earliest edition. To the synopsis of "Summer and Winter Ranges of North American Birds [that occur in central New York]" have been added the Mute Swan, Long-tailed Jaeger, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Audubon's Warbler, European Goldfinch, Hoary Redpoll, and Greater Redpoll, because of recent occurrences in the Ithaca region. Also, the "races" of the Black Duck have been dropped, and, in general, changes recommended by the Supplements to the A.O.U. Check-List appear to have been adopted insofar as they are pertinent to this synopsis. The frontispiece, Merriam's life-zone map of North America, is reproduced as a half-tone rather than in color; as a result, it loses both in forcefulness and usefulness.

The preface to this edition is the same as that to the fourth except for minor details and three new paragraphs in which the author excuses the absence, in his version of an ornithological notebook, of detailed material on anatomy, classification, speciation, and ecology, on the grounds that it would "tend to confuse the beginner who is interested primarily in learning how to recognize the local birds and to interpret their behavior." Also, the author states that he "clings to the life zone theory of C. Hart Merriam, not in the belief that it explains everything, but because it is the most convenient, the most orderly, and the most compact method of expressing the irregularities of occurrence of our nesting bird populations." These excerpts speak for themselves. The various editions of this notebook have hardly kept up with advances in knowledge, teaching, and viewpoints in modern ornithology. The fact is that the main laboratory work of the student using this edition in 1947 is, as it was in the 1920's, compiling detailed life-history material for as many as 130 species. I do not doubt that this will keep a student busy for a semester, but what progress will he make in understanding fundamental biological problems as they relate to birds?—Frank A. Pitelka.

**FLASHING WINGS.** By Richard M. Saunders. Illustrations by Terence M. Shortt. McClelland and Stewart Limited, Toronto, 1947: 6 × 9 in., xii + 388 pp., one insert table, two end-paper maps, colored frontispiece, and 36 line drawings. \$4.50.

This book is composed mainly of selections from the journal of an enthusiastic bird watcher at Toronto, Ontario (not the late W. E. Saunders of London). The journal covers the period 1935 to 1946, but the entries have been grouped in twelve chapters, one for each month of the year, rather than in the sequence of the years. This arrangement has been used in order that the book may serve "as a guide to the birds that one may expect to see in this region at any time of the year." The value of the book as a local report on the birds of Toronto is enhanced by two appendices containing tables summarizing migration records extending over 27 years, Christmas bird counts for the years 1925 to 1945, and an index.

Saunders writes with clarity and vigor. His attitude toward bird study is typical of that of the large group of people to whom bird watching is a field sport. He describes effectively the serene enjoyment of the solitary walk and the high spirits of the hike with congenial companions. To him and to his associates there is adventure in discovering a rare bird, in identifying an unfamiliar song, in counting the species during a wave of migrants, or in observing an interesting bit of behavior. All of this activity is carried on with no immediate aim other than recreation; that is, there is little suggestion of scientific study in any phase of ornithology. Nevertheless, Saunders contributes some original observations of bird behavior which are of interest, for example: the attack on a Bald Eagle by a Herring Gull (pp. 35-36); Black Terns scooping up polliwogs (p. 175); Pigeon Hawk eating a sparrow (p. 265); and tree drilling by the Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker (p. 323).

The book is attractively printed and bound, and Shortt's illustrations are excellent.—Harold Mayfield.

**CANADIAN SPRING.** By Florence Page Jaques. Illustrations by Francis Lee Jaques.

Harper & Brothers, New York, 1947: 6 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., xii + 216 pp. \$2.50.

Those readers who have perused "Canoe Country," "The Geese Fly High," "Birds Across the Sky," or "Snowshoe Country," earlier productions of the Jaques couple, will welcome this latest of the series, a report of a trip they made together through Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Canadian Rockies during the stirring weeks of a Canadian spring. The collaboration is practically perfect. The illustrations are decorative and, of course, scientifically accurate. Aside from the little sketches that serve as embellishments for chapter headings, there are about sixty drawings, large and small, that are scattered very much apropos through the pages of the book, aiding the reader to visualize the entrancing scene that the author is describing in adjacent paragraphs. Florence Page Jaques is an engaging writer, and she had an attractive subject in "Canadian Spring." Those of us who never have been in that territory in the spring season—or perhaps any other season—must envy travelers who had the thrill of seeing the teeming wildlife of the prairie provinces of Canada, with some of the fauna, flora, and scenery of the Canadian Rockies thrown in for good measure. We read about—and see drawings of—Wilson's Phalaropes, Marbled Godwits, Water Ouzels, Harlequin Ducks, Avocets, Curlews, Richardson's ground squirrels, pikas, Whistling Swans, Pintails, Gadwalls, grebes—the list is overwhelming. In fact, the list is so imposing that an index should have been included in the volume. There are also some passages in which scientific names and exact dates would be comforting to readers deeply interested in the subject matter. But these are small drawbacks in a book that is beautifully written and illustrated and that contains, in addition to a colorful and often poetic presentation of "the rites of spring" in western Canada, a considerable amount of intimate observation of wildlife, particularly of water birds and their breeding behavior, that will be of interest to serious students of natural history.—John Kieran.

**WILD WINGS.** By Joseph James Murray. John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1947: 6 × 9 $\frac{3}{8}$  in., 123 pp., 15 photographic plates (unnumbered, except for a double-page frontispiece which serves also as title page). \$2.50.

This is a collection of forty brief sketches which, with one exception, appeared originally in *Onward*, the young people's paper of the Presbyterian Church. The typical sketch, two or three pages in length, offers general information and a bit of personal observation about the several species of birds seen by Murray at a given time or place. The first nineteen sketches pertain to Murray's home locality, western Virginia; the next eighteen tell of excursions in other southeastern states

and six countries of Europe; the last three touch on the life of Audubon and on Biblical references to birds.

Murray is a competent and interested observer, who writes about nature in a spirit of calm appreciation. However, although these sketches have been "somewhat revised" since their original publication as separate articles intended for an audience of young people, the critical reader of the book may feel that the comments are often rather fragmentary and that sometimes, when a bird is mentioned in more than one chapter, the statements are so much alike as to seem repetitious (for example, the remarks about the Carolina Wren, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Duck Hawk). In the main, the facts about birds are given accurately, but there are a few minor statements which might be questioned by an ornithologist, for example: a mention of wood warblers "weighing a bare ounce or two" (page 27); the assertion that ducks are the "favorite food" of the Duck Hawk "where he can get them" (page 52); and the explanation that most migrants are driven south by "lack of insect food" (page 54).

The binding and typography of the book are exceptionally attractive, and the plates—eleven of the fifteen are from photographs by Allan Cruickshank—are printed artistically in a shade of greenish-black.

The book is entirely unrelated to "Wild Wings" by Herbert Keightley Job (Houghton, Mifflin and Co., Boston, 1905), describing Mr. Job's adventures in bird photography.—Harold Mayfield.

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SEE *Distribution and Taxonomy*: Larrison; *Population*: Brown, Werth.

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