

RECENT LITERATURE

Allen's laboratory notebook.¹—This is the fifth edition of this useful notebook which is undoubtedly familiar to many persons through its former editions. It is not a manual, although it contains some textual matter, but is designed to give the student a place to record the results of his studies and observations made in the field and laboratory and in conjunction with other works of reference. It has been brought up to date with regard to the scientific nomenclature adopted in certain places in the keys, check list, and tables. The keys to the orders and families have been expanded to include all North American groups, not only those of the East as formerly. Likewise, some of the outline drawings have been generalized to make them serviceable for either western or eastern species as may be needed, and blank spaces have been left in the field lists where names may be added that are not on the printed roster. The book is thus adaptable to a wider service than the previous editions.—JOHN T. ZIMMER.

West Indian birds.²—Mr. Bond has rewritten his earlier 'Birds of the West Indies' (1936) to make it more compact as is desirable in a work intended as a field guide. In any case, the original book is out of print and there was new matter to be included on the basis of the author's investigations and discoveries in the intervening years.

The descriptions of the species are shortened and the citations of the various subspecies found on the different islands are omitted. The general discussions of families and genera are also deleted, but most of the species are given a paragraph or more of individual remarks on local distribution, habitat, behavior, song, nidification, or other details—all very helpful in a field guide.

Migrants and residents are combined in a single series, which the reviewer finds an improvement over the segregation of the earlier book. The indexes are of the same sort—to local vernacular and to standard common names. A similar index to the scientific names might have been helpful on occasion to an informed reader to whom the technical name might be more familiar than the common one, but its lack is not a serious handicap. The illustrations are those of the earlier book with some interesting additions. The cuts with the darker shading have not all come out so well on the new paper as on the coated stock used in the original book, but most of them have lost little essential detail and their general excellence makes them very helpful in pointing out the features needed for field identification.

The book, like its predecessor, can be thoroughly recommended to anyone visiting the West Indies who wishes to become acquainted with the birds he may meet on his travels, and to local residents with the same desire.—JOHN T. ZIMMER.

British sea birds.³—Mr. Gibson-Hill has condensed into the pages of this book a great deal of information about the birds that are quite obviously his favorites and has illustrated his account with a series of fine photographs, also his work. Twenty-four species that breed regularly in the British Isles are treated in detail, with accounts of their appearance in various stages and plumages, their behavior and distribution, and the etymology of their various common names. Some of them, like the

¹ ALLEN, ARTHUR A. 'Ornithology Laboratory Notebook.' 4to, 4 pr. ll., pp. 1-256, frontisp. (map), 331 figs., August 4, 1947. Comstock Publishing Co., Inc., Ithaca, N. Y. Price, \$4.00.

² BOND, JAMES. 'Field Guide to Birds of the West Indies.' 16mo., pp. 1-257, 2 pls. (1 col.), figs. 1-211, end-papers (map), 1947. Macmillan Company, New York. Price, \$3.75.

³ GIBSON-HILL, C. A. 'British Sea Birds.' 4to, pp. 1-(144), frontisp. (col.), 48 pls., 42 figs., end-papers, Sept. 25, 1947. H. F. & G. Witherby, Ltd., London. Price, 18 s.

Common Cormorant and the Shag, are discussed more or less together so far as cormorant behavior in general is common to both of them, but their separate peculiarities are none the less pointed out.

A chapter at the close gives the field characters of the species treated in the preceding sections and as many more related or extralimital forms as well. Maps are presented for seventeen of the species giving a generalized picture of their breeding ranges in the British Isles. Twelve British species of lesser importance are listed without full discussions.

Mr. Gibson-Hill has written a very interesting account of these attractive birds, and his excellent illustrations, supplemented by a number of line-cuts, alone would make the volume worth having.—JOHN T. ZIMMER.

Canadian spring.¹—Wherever Florence and Lee Jaques choose to let their wandering feet (or other means of transportation) take them afield, they are sure to return with a collection of interesting observations and pictures. This time they chose to drive from Lake Manitoba to the Rockies, starting in April and returning in June, and watching the awakening spring as it reached that northern region. Although they were too late to catch the early arrivals of the waterfowl, they were in time to watch the courting behavior of some of these and find the downy young of others that had started nesting earlier.

Their westward route lay across the prairies and sagebrush plains to the mountain passes where snow still covered the roadway, but everywhere there were birds and other wild creatures, spring flowers, interesting landscapes, or experiences amusing or annoying. They are described in a breezy style that does not conceal the keen observations underlying them.

Those familiar with the artistic productions of Mr. Jaques will not need to be told that the illustrations he has supplied of the countryside and its wild life are as full of the spirit of outdoors as the text by Mrs. Jaques. Nature lovers will find enjoyment in both words and pictures.—JOHN T. ZIMMER.

Wild Wings.²—Dr. Murray has collected in book form a series of informal sketches previously published from time to time in a young people's paper and (one) in Audubon Magazine. These sketches are versatile and contain the results of some of Dr. Murray's personal observations in a variety of places, reported in an easy style, and interlarded with many historical and literary allusions and comments.

The first section contains a group of observations made around the year near home, and from them the young reader can get a glimpse of the variety of things to be seen and learned at different seasons. The next section carries the reader farther afield—to the Dismal Swamp, the Great Smokies, the Florida Keys, and such interesting places. The third part recounts observations made in a number of European countries, and the last deals with Audubon and with birds of the Old and New Testaments.

Dr. Murray has been a lifelong student of birds and their ways, and he has put into these sketches his sympathetic understanding of nature at home and abroad.—JOHN T. ZIMMER.

Afield with the birds.³—In this book, Dr. Saunders has given us an unusually interesting and comprehensive record of his activities and observations in the neighborhood of southern Ontario. Made up of extracts from his journals, it is filled with

¹ JACQUES, FLORENCE PAGE, AND JACQUES, FRANCIS LEE. 'Canadian Spring.' 8vo, pp. XII + 216, 79 figs., end-paper maps, October 1, 1947. Harper and Brothers, New York. Price, \$3.50.

² MURRAY, JOSEPH JAMES. 'Wild Wings.' 8vo, pp. 1-123, 15 pls., 1947. John Knox Press Richmond, Va. Price, \$2.50.

³ SAUNDERS, RICHARD MERRILL. 'Flashing Wings.' 8vo, pp. X + 388 + 1 leaf (fold.), frontisp. (col.), 36 figs., end-papers, 1947. McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto. Price, \$4.50.

a wealth of critical notes on the occurrence and behavior of the birds of the region, made at all seasons for a period of a dozen years or more. One wonders how the writer found time to make his commentaries so complete in view of the time that he undoubtedly spent afield making the observations that are here recorded!

On each excursion, there appeared to be something worthy of note. It may have been a species rare in the locality or a commoner one doing something unusual—like an Alder Flycatcher eating a cherry. Perhaps it was an unusual bird call that eluded identification, or it may have been nothing that could not have been seen on any other day. Whatever it was, the impressions of the moment were put down, and as told they make interesting reading.

An unusual plan is followed in arranging the notes. They are assembled by month and day regardless of the year except when the dates are otherwise duplicated. Thus, the first note in the book is for January 1, 1944; the second, for January 1, 1945; the third, for January 19, 1941. Since they are not concerned with the continuous life history of individual birds, the result has much in its favor, permitting a long-term study of the local bird life by seasons. For example, we learn that January 1, 1944 was snowless and that sixteen birds were seen; that day a year later was marked by a snowstorm, but twenty-nine species were found. It permits a reader who wishes to know what birds he might be likely to find on certain dates to consult the entries for various years and study the chances. Appended tables of spring and fall migration and a reprint of the Brodie Club's Christmas Census record from 1925 to 1945 are a further help in this particular.

The author remarks that his book is one for browsing rather than for consecutive reading, but it is enjoyable either way. Much of its information will be found useful beyond the geographical bounds of southern Ontario. Once read, it may profitably be kept at hand for future consultation. The fine illustrations by Terence M. Shortt and the amusing end-papers by Barbara Worth add greatly to the attractiveness of this excellent book.—JOHN T. ZIMMER.

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NOTES AND NEWS

NUMEROUS requests for ornithological reprints and bird books have recently come to this country from European ornithologists who have lost their entire libraries in consequence of the war. The desire for ornithological literature among these colleagues (bird lovers as well as professional ornithologists) seems to be as great as that for food and clothing. Perhaps you have a dozen or two extra reprints of some of your papers which you could spare. Papers dealing with any aspect of the general biology of birds, particularly life-history studies, are especially welcome. It would be much appreciated if you would mail such reprints to Ernst Mayr, The American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York 24, New York, or to Frank A. Pitelka, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley 4, California. Please mark packages "A. O. U. Relief Material." All reprints so received will be distributed at once among active European bird students.

Word has come of the death of George K. Cherrie, Member, at Newfane, Vermont, on January 20, 1948; of Dr. Leon J. Cole, Member, at Madison, Wisconsin, on February 17, 1948; of Francis Beach White, Member, at Brattleboro, Vermont, on January 16, 1948; of Courtenay Brandreth, Associate, at Ossining, New York, on November 3, 1947; and of R. Bruce Horsfall, Associate, at Long Branch, New Jersey, on March 24, 1948.