

**Spiders.**—By T. B. Kurata, *Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, Handbook No. 6, Toronto, Ontario, 1949.*

A number of years ago, the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology inaugurated a series of handbooks designed to afford the general public a variety of information on various subjects of Natural History. This present work is the latest addition to this series. It contains 33 pages consisting of an account of the salient facts concerning the habits and classification of our native spiders. It is written in a popular style with an obvious attempt to avoid technical phraseology, which is often confusing to the non-professional reader. Nevertheless, it contains a scientifically accurate account of this most interesting animal group. The work is copiously illustrated by line drawings which depict the various types of spiders and their webs. A simple key is included for the identification of the common families, followed by descriptions of the habits of the members of the various families, with frequent reference to species most commonly encountered. The bulletin concludes with a brief account of methods employed in collecting and preserving spiders. This should be of special interest to field naturalists.—T. N. FREEMAN.

**Birds of Arctic Alaska.** — By Alfred M. Bailey. *Popular Series No. 8, Colorado Museum of Natural History, pp. 1-317, 1948.*

This is the long awaited account of the results of Bailey's work on birds of northern Alaska. The area covered, the coastal strip from the Yukon boundary to Cape Prince of Wales on Bering Strait is of particular interest to bird students. Point Barrow is well known ornithologically for the long series of unusual records made by Charles Brower, whose photograph appears as the frontispiece of this volume. It is here at Barrow that such unusual records for the Arctic as western and scarlet tanagers have been made. The list of Old World species which are known in America from the western part of Alaska is surprisingly long. Bailey lists 22 species of rare occurrence including such things as red-throated pipit, wryneck and Siberian cuckoo. In addition there are Old World species with a firm foothold in Alaska, such as Kennicott's willow warbler and the yellow

wagtail. The continents are only 50 miles apart at Cape Prince of Wales, and possibly there were habitat differences in glacial times which contributed to the overlapping of the faunas.

The migration in the Bering Strait area is fascinating. Three distinct migration routes cross in the Wales region; some New World species which cross to the Old World side and fly up and down Siberian coast; some Old World birds which come up the Siberian coast and then touch at the Wales area; and the water birds which move north through the straits. Many small birds may not reach the Arctic coast by way of the strait, but cross through low passes in the Endicott Mountains. Shore birds do not arrive in flocks, but appear overnight, apparently already mated.

The account is based on Bailey's work in 1921-22 for the Colorado Museum of Natural History, but all the records from the literature and others from various museum collections have been added. There is a pleasing account of the winter Bailey spent on the coast; and an account of the vegetation, written by Joseph Ewan. The main part of the book (pp. 132-304) is the list of birds, with their occurrence, status and the field observations. The conclusions of a field observer carry weight in taxonomic problems; the Pacific loon and the green-throated loon are kept as separate species, because they both breed in the Wales area; the Canada goose group is considered as forming a single species; several of the many brants seen are considered as *B. b. hrota*, but not typical, being intergrades toward the black brant, *B. b. nigricans*.

The notes on the habits of many species seldom watched by a student on their nesting grounds include such species as the yellow-billed loon, whistling swan, emperor goose and ptarmigan.

Naturally a reviewer is never satisfied; one would have wished for a better map, and fuller discussion of the fauna from general biological and distributional viewpoints. But Bailey is to be congratulated on a volume which is indispensable to anyone working on the birds of northwestern North America.—A. L. RAND.





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