

BOOK REVIEW

THE AUK—JULY

THE POLYNESIAN FRUIT PIGEON, *Globicera pacifica*, ITS FOOD AND DIGESTIVE APPARATUS. By Casey Wood, pp. 433-438, 1 figure.

An anatomical description of the stomach of the "Nutmeg Pigeon". The stomach is not strongly muscular and in place of the usual hard grinding plates that most birds use to reduce hard seeds to pulp, on the inner lining are several rows of horny cone-like processes. It is explained that it is not the nutmeg seed itself that is digested but the softer outer pulp that surrounds the fruit.

IS PHOTOPERIODISM A FACTOR IN THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS? By G. Eifrig, pp. 439-444.

Citing cases where experiment has shown that prolonged illumination has brought plants into bloom long before their season. Mr. Eifrig suggests that the varying length of day may be the direct factor that starts birds migrating. It is not an altogether new thought. Birds do migrate more or less by the calendar. Though bad weather may delay their movements their arrivals and departures are far more constant than seasonal conditions. There must be something to keep the migrating instincts in tune with the seasons. That length of daylight, the proportion of active feeding hours to those of sleep or rest, may be a factor in this is quite probable. However it does not explain all, for one thing, birds wintering near the equator where day and night are equal throughout the year. There is an investigation being carried out in Canada now along these lines and it would be rash to develop or criticise the theory until the results are reported.

THE SONG OF THE SONG SPARROW (A SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF ITS CONSTRUCTION). By Wm. C. Wheeler and John T. Nichols.

An interesting paper wherein is also presented another method of graphically representing and recording songs that has promise for the musically untrained.

Under *General Notes*, Page 470, A. L. Gormley reports the capture of a Fulmar near Arnprior, Ontario, May 3, 1924. Not only is this the first record for Ontario but it seems to be the first noted occurrence of the species anywhere away from the immediate vicinity of the sea.

Mary Sayle, p. 474-475, fed apple, grape, strawberry and cherry seeds to pigeons and found that none passed the alimentary tract in condition to germinate.

O. J. Murie, p. 481, reports Clarke's Nutcracker in the Kuskokwim River and the Fairbanks regions,

Alaska, thus extending its known range considerably.

On P. 501 is noted—*With Canoe and Camera on Some Alberta Lakes*, by D. A. Henderson, Oologist, XLI, February, 1924.

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FURTHER NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIRDS OF HATLEY, STANSTEAD COUNTY, QUEBEC. By Henry Mousley, pp. 572-589.

This consists of seasonal and specific notes on this locality that Mr. Mousley has studied so intensively. He adds twelve species to his previous lists.

NINTH ANNUAL LIST OF PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE A.O.U. CHECK-LIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS. By Harry C. Oberholser, pp. 590-595.

These lists of proposed alterations are of great value to all interested in systematic ornithology as proposals from widely scattered sources many of them unavailable to most readers are here brought together.

NOTES ON THE PURPLE FINCH. By M. J. Magee, pp. 606-610.

Some valuable results of banding these birds at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, during the years 1922-1924, with special relation to the changes of plumage with age. He shows no grounds for the more or less generally accepted theory that males revert from the adult crimson plumage into a yellow or olive one. He believes that it takes at least four years for the highest crimson plumage to be assumed. He seems to have special opportunity for banding Purple Finches and gets numerous annual returns. It will be interesting to see what definite facts the next few years will produce. The puzzling plumages of the Crossbills could well be untangled by this method.

Henry Howitt, pp. 614, announced a sight record of the Golden-winged Warbler at Guelph, Ontario, May 31, 1924. The species is not uncommon in the southern part of the province along Lake Erie, and there is nothing improbable in its occurrence at Guelph.

Harrison F. Lewis, p. 617, takes exception to the statement that "Omshel" is the only commonly used vernacular synonym for Robin, as held by a recent writer, stating that to more than 2,450,000 French Canadians the name "Merle" is in common usage.

W.L.M. (c Atee) reviews the subject of the relation between birds and the spread of Foot and Mouth disease and cites Stockman, S., and Mar-

jory Barnett, Bird Migration and the Introduction of Foot and Mouth Disease, Journ. Ministry Agr. (London), 30, No. 8, 1923, pp. 681-695 and a critique of the same by A. Landsborough Thompson, Bird Migration in Relation of Foot and Mouth Disease. The latter author does not think that the conclusions of the former that birds are an important factor in the spread of this disease are justified by the evidence presented. W.L.M. quite agrees with him and cites examples of hysteria on this continent and states that of some 35,556 infected herds, birds were suspected of being carriers in but 18 cases. He admits the possibility, even the probability of birds spreading the disease in some cases, but the ordinary observational evidence is very unreliable and adequate investigation is needed to determine how serious a factor they are.

The same reviewer quotes, p. 630, A. B. Baird, Proc. Acad. Ent. Soc., 8, p. 162, 1923, who credits birds with consuming about 10 per cent of the Larch Sawfly in New Brunswick.

Pp. 639-641, under *Correspondence*, is a letter from A. Landsborough Thompson commenting on Mr. Eifrig's *Is Protophagism a Factor in Bird-migration?* before referred to in these pages. He is generally favorable to that article but urges caution in reasoning by analogy from plants to birds and raises some objections.

Pp. 643-644 contain an obituary to Montague Chamberlain whose death was noted in a previous number of *The Naturalist*.

On P. 648 occurs an editorial on the DuPont de Nemours Powder Companies campaign against the Crow. The condemnatory attitude is strong. Generalizations are made that may have local point but certainly do not apply to very large areas of this country. For instance, it is stated that "Crows are not so numerous now as formerly nor are they doing so much harm . . ." We have correspondence showing that in the prairie Provinces, from thirty to fifty years ago, the Crow was practically unknown, or at least so few in numbers that they made no impression on the perceptions or memories of ordinary observers. To-day they occur in black hordes and certainly this newly arrived superabundance does constitute a serious menace to game birds. If the Crow averages, as a species, over the whole of its range, agriculturally neutral, which is the strongest argument that is advanced in its favor, its status now and in this section is well on the unfavorable side. As to the feared *extermination* of the species—that is too improbable for consideration. That the

campaign against the Crow does sell some ammunition for the powder company is no logical argument against the effort if the results are otherwise good. We personally think the Crow is a geographical problem and that those critics who fail to recognize that fact are as much at fault as the DuPont people, who fall into the same error. No better method of discrediting scientific authority can be conceived than for it to make broad generalizations that are false within the experience of a large number of lay observers. It is the old dispute of the description of the two sides of the shield but the scientific mind should be the first to investigate the other side before dogmatizing.

It must be noted that the above remarks apply only to the Crow, not to any allied campaign against other species like hawks, herons, etc. These latter may also have varying geographical status, but lie in an entirely different category. We think conservationists weaken the case for conservation when they concentrate their heavy guns in defence of so questionable an object as the Crow.—P. A. T.

SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Birds and Wild Animals.—List of publications relating to the above subjects for sale by Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. Price list 29—11th edition. A handy compendium of papers in print on the above subjects embodying the economic investigations of the United States Government. The prices range from 5 cents to \$1.50 and are little more than nominal.

In *The Oologists' Record*, London, V, March, 1925, pp. 16-17, is a letter from T. E. Randall, Castor, Alta., recounting two peculiar nesting sites. In one case a nest in North-east Kent, England, was used for two clutches of Magpie eggs, two of Kestrel and finally one of Stock Dove, all in the same season. The other is that of a House Wren building in the pocket of a coat hanging on the wall of a boat house at Gull Lake, Alta.

In *Natural History*, XXV, 1925, pp. 54-57, appears *A Trickster Outwitted*, by Chas. Macnamara. Describing how the Yellow Warbler outwitted the Cowbird by building the changeling egg into the foundation of its nest and raising its own brood in a new cup above. It is written in Mr. Macnamara's usual charming manner. The only thing that we object to is the statement that the Cowbird never lays more than one egg in the same nest. Many of us can recall numerous cases where they have exceeded this limit.—P. A. T.





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