*No. 4, pp. 32-44; September, 1949 - March, 1951. Bird Research Station, Glanton, Northumberland, England.*

Students of bird song will find this little publication of interest and perhaps will receive from it inspiration to conduct similar studies in their own areas. There is, for example, an account of the dawn chorus, based on observations made from about 550 different points in the British Isles on June 5, 1949. The Song Thrush, *Turdus ericetorum,* is used as the basis of this study. The directional and temporal passage of first dawn songs are described; weather and light conditions are summarized; and the results are compared with a similar study made on June 4, 1933. A study of the dusk chorus is handled similarly. Other articles deal with the length of the singing day; the frequency of bird song and its relationship to gonad size; counts of the total number of songs given by individual birds during a day (a Whitethroat, *Sylvia communis* sang 3,251 times); and several other aspects of bird song are discussed.—W. EARL GODFREY.

**Migration of birds.** *By Frederick C. Lincoln. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Circular 16, Washington, D.C., 1950; 102 pp. 23 figs. Price 30 cents (U.S.A.).*

This little book is crammed with information on one of the most fascinating of natural phenomena, the migration of birds. It is a very readable summary, written simply and concisely by an eminent authority, of our present knowledge of the subject. A number of quaint old theories propounded to account for several aspects of bird migration go back to the time of Aristotle and some of these are listed. The salient modern theories are presented in more detail and their respective probabilities weighed. In connection with when, how, and where birds migrate are discussed such aspects as seasonal, diurnal and nocturnal migration, movements of species and groups; speed of flight and speed of migration, flight altitude, orientation, segregation during migration; and migration routes (including an account of the main North American flyways). Other phases of the subject treated include the advantages of migration, the evolution of routes, vertical and vagrant movements, the perils of migration, and meteorological influences. The important part bird banding has played in solving many of the mysteries of migration is rightly stressed throughout. Twenty-three drawings by Bob Hines elucidate and decorate the text. There is a useful bibliography. — W. EARL GODFREY.

**Dragons in Amber. Further Adventures of a Romantic Naturalist.** *By Willy Ley. The Viking Press, New York, 1951; 328 pp., 33 figs.*

Few professional men of science can present their subject in a manner that will interest, much less fascinate, the general reading public. In contrast, the writer who undertakes to "popularize" science usually irritates the scientist with his inaccuracies. Willy Ley is one of the few who can dramatize science without taking liberties with the facts. That he accomplishes this by the simple trick of using narrative form is not to his discredit. He has written books and articles on a variety of scientific subjects, but his favourite field appears to be those phases of biology in which the data are derived partly from the fossil record, partly from studies on present-day life.

The book under review is divided into three parts, the first of which is almost pure palaeontology, the second a mingling of the past and the present, and the third a series of essays on dispersals and immigrations of living organisms. Outstanding are the two first chapters, which recount the history of amber mining. Ley's background fits him to deal with this subject, and his account, fascinating as it is, will also serve as a good general reference. Other chapters discuss the mysterious *Chirotherium* tracks, the beautifully preserved ichthyosaur skeletons in the Jurassic of Holzmaden, and the frozen mammoths of Siberia. "Living fossils" in the plant world are described: the ginkgo, the sequoias, and the cycads. There are the stories of Pere David's deer, the giant panda, and the recently rediscovered takahe *(Notornis)* of New Zealand. The wanderings of eels, camels, various insects, crustaceans, and mollusks, are described. The book closes with an excellent account of Krakatoa and the way in which animal life has reinvaded the remnant of the island since the stupendous explosion of 1883.

Ley's book can be recommended to the amateur naturalist as a source of solid fact delightfully presented, and to the professional biologist or palaeontologist as a relaxing bit of reading from which he is nevertheless sure to learn something he did not know before. — LORIS S. RUSSELL.