

Chen is not considered separable from *Anser*, nor *Olor* from *Cygnus*. Our Redhead, moreover, is regarded as a subspecies of *Nyroca ferina*, and our Green-winged Teal a subspecies of *Nettion crecca*. While we personally approve some of the generic reductions we do not think that the facts warrant these subspecific references. The reference of all the forms of Green Heron as subspecies of the South American *Butorides striatus* also seems unwarranted. Under this species we notice two new forms: *B. s. degans* (p. 1251), Seychelles; and *B. s. moluccarum* (p. 1251), Moluccas.

Increased cost of printing necessitates an increase in the price of the work of eight marks per part.—W. S.

Chapman's 'What Bird is That?'¹—In these days when almost every other person one meets is a bird student, there is a constant demand for bird books especially those that present the subject in a novel manner. Such a work is the latest of Dr. Chapman's ornithological textbooks entitled 'What Bird is That?' which answers the question presented in its title in a most satisfactory manner.

Instead of the usual analytical key we find at the beginning of the volume little colored pictures of all the land birds of the Eastern United States. They are represented on stands and branches as mounted museum specimens, arranged on the shelves of a case, or series of cases, and are grouped according to season, so that in cases 1 and 2 we find all of the winter birds of the region, in cases 5 and 6 the early spring migrants and so on. Having found our bird among the colored figures we turn to the main text which covers the 300 species of the Eastern States and find a short description with dates of occurrence at several localities, taken from the author's well-known 'Handbook,' and a paragraph covering the more striking habits of the species, and its nesting.

The book is an elaboration of the plan, first adopted, we believe, by Dr. Chapman, in the American Museum of Natural History, of exhibiting in one case the birds present about the immediate neighborhood and changing the specimens from month to month as the winter birds depart and the migrants arrive from the south. This narrows down the task of identification to the species most likely to be seen at the time and eliminates many confusing possibilities.

The artist Mr. E. J. Sawyer is to be congratulated upon the accuracy of his figures for in spite of their small size—there are sometimes over 40 on a page—he has presented characteristic poses for the most part, while no important detail of color seems to have been overlooked.

¹What Bird Is That? A Pocket Museum of the Land Birds of the Eastern United States arranged according to Season. By Frank M. Chapman. Curator of Birds in the American Museum of Natural History and Editor of 'Bird-Lore.' With 301 Birds in Color, by Edmund J. Sawyer. D. Appleton and Company, New York and London, 1920. 12mo., pp. i-xxvi, 1-144, 8 color plates. Price \$1.25 net.

Dr. Chapman's text is admirable and the whole conception of the work is another illustration of his ability to feel the pulse, as it were, of the bird loving public and provide what they need. The several line cuts which are scattered through the text might well have been omitted as they have not come out very satisfactorily on the rough surfaced paper, that of the Red-shouldered Hawk intended to illustrate the barred tail showing this appendage solid black.

The scientific nomenclature wisely follows that of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' and does not, like certain recent publications—even some issued by the Biological Survey, attempt to be up to date by using names not yet considered by the A. O. U. Committee and which the popular reader cannot find in the books with which he is familiar. If we do not follow a standard nomenclature in works intended for the general public we had better omit scientific names entirely.

In his English names Dr. Chapman also follows the 'Check-List' with two notable exceptions. Water-Thrush appears with the prefix "Northern" and Crossbill with that of "American." The abbreviated names have never met with favor and are ambiguous as there is another Water-Thrush and two other Crossbills. While we heartily endorse "Northern Water-Thrush" we prefer "Red Crossbill" which has been suggested by several writers, and trust that the Committee may adopt these changes in the next edition of the 'Check-List.'

We heartily recommend Dr. Chapman's little book to those desiring to name the birds they see, as probably the best pocket guide that has yet appeared.—W. S.

Horsfall on the Habits of the Sage Grouse.¹—In 'The Auk' for 1900, Mr. Frank Bond has an article and an original drawing illustrating the nuptial performance of the Sage Cock. He corrects Dr. Newberry's statement that the bird drags its wings Turkey-like and describes in detail a process of bending over and pushing the distended breast sacks over the ground, thus producing the wearing away of the feathers on these parts, something that was not previously explained.

Those who attended the A. O. U. meeting in New York in November, 1919, and saw Mr. W. L. Finley's motion pictures of these birds in action were surprised to see that Mr. Bond's account is apparently as much in need of correction as was Dr. Newberry's and that the bird's breast is held high and never touches the ground at all, the edges of the wings being rubbed over it when the sacks are distended. Mr. Horsfall who accompanied Mr. Finley now describes the activities of the mating birds and presents several sketches and a color plate to illustrate the successive stages of the performance. His account of the wearing away of the breast feathers is however by no means as clear and explicit as might be desired.—W. S.

¹ Zoologica. Scientific Publication of the N. Y. Zool. Soc.



Chapman, Frank M. and Sawyer, Edmund J. 1920. "Chapman's 'What Bird Is That?'" *The Auk* 37, 473–474. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4073309>.

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