

## Reviews

**Notes on the Order Procellariiformes.**—As the authors indicate in their introduction, the recent work of the above title, by Gregory M. Mathews and E. J. L. Hallstrom, Canberra, 1943, brings together random notes on the Procellariiformes and is, in effect, a supplement to the senior author's Checklist in *Novitates Zoologicae*, vol. 39, pp. 151-207, December 7, 1934. In it are all the new names and name changes proposed since that date, and there are short summaries of many of the published reviews by other authors which have appeared in the last few years.

In addition to compilation there are a number of new subgenera proposed, as well as several subspecies. In justification of the latter Mr. Mathews has remained true to his long-established practice of providing a new subspecific name for stray individuals found beyond the known range of the species. More cautious systematists will regard such novelties as *Cymochorea leucorhoa muriwai* as somewhat insecurely founded. The authors are frank in admitting that for them criteria of geographical distribution alone are sufficient to require a free use of subspecific names. In the section 'Should Polynomial Nomenclature be Used?' they remark: "Do we say—*Paranectris griseus* breeding on the Falkland Islands and flying the Atlantic Ocean to England, or simply *Paranectris griseus gama*? This is a question of simplicity." They cite as a parallel case the latest review of *Oceanites oceanicus*, but the divisions proposed by Roberts are based on sound systematic work which has not yet been undertaken with a comprehensive series of *Paranectris griseus*.

The major changes of nomenclature are discussed, but in a review required at short notice it is not possible to comment critically on all the points raised in this section. The book requires careful reading as its arrangement is somewhat rambling and there is no index: matter under one heading is not always in one place, as in the case of a section on 'Prions' on pages 22-36 and a stray proposal of a new subgenus in that group on page 30.

There are one or two startling assertions, such as (p. 1): "In the case of the Kerguelen Island Albatross, apparently the young are white and resemble the adults after the first moult." Other published material on this point, however, surely indicates that the juvenal Wandering Albatross at Kerguelen has the same brown phase as elsewhere.

It may be said that the authors have justified their claim to having avoided being controversial, and it would be ungrateful of a reviewer who is a student of petrels to be so. If many of the points raised are provocative, they are none the less stimulating and every serious student of this group of oceanic birds will gain by a critical study of this result of bibliographical knowledge and tireless research.

A dichotomous antithesis key to all genera rounds off the complete work.—R.A.F.

**Bird Behaviour.**—Mrs. Margaret Morse Nice has now published the second part of her monumental study of the Life History of the Song Sparrow ('The Behaviour of the Song Sparrow and Other Passerines,' pp. viii + 329; illus.) as volume VI of the *Transactions of the Linnean Society of New York*, September, 1943. The first part, 'A Population Study of the Song Sparrow,' dealing with the vital statistics, was reviewed in *The Emu*, vol. xxxvii, 1937, p. 165.

This second book will be received by ornithologists with as much enthusiasm as the earlier one, to which it is complementary. As before, the study was only made possible by the use of the banding technique, using coloured celluloid rings as well as numbered aluminium bands, by which means detailed histories of known indivi-

duals are revealed with a degree of intimacy undreamt of by the earlier bird observers. The second volume differs somewhat from its predecessor in its wider scope. Though based essentially on the Song Sparrow, the work is not confined to that bird, but comparisons are freely made with other species and the literature of the world is combed for materials. Thus much important foreign work, hitherto inaccessible to the ordinary bird watcher, is conveniently made available.

The author obviously likes her birds and succeeds in conveying the pleasures of her investigations to the reader: for a scientific book it is unusually readable. Her technique is quoted as follows: "A necessary condition for success is a continuous sympathetic observation of an animal under as natural conditions as possible. To some degree one must transfer oneself into the animal's situation and inwardly take part in its behaviour. A useful standard for determining how far one has succeeded in this is given by the certainty with which the behaviour in any concrete situation can be inwardly anticipated." The book is at once a mine of information on the subject and a manual of instruction for those who would work on similar lines. For these Mrs. Nice offers the following precept of overwhelming importance: "It is all-important to *see* and *record exactly* what a bird does. Instead of saying one bird 'threatens' another, we should describe precisely the notes and gestures. We need to know a bird's equipment of instinctive actions before we can judge as to what is innate and what is learned."

A summary of the contents is impossible in a brief review, but an outline of the ground covered may be gained from some of the chapter headings: Development of the young Song Sparrow; discussion of the activities of the young bird; innate and learned behaviour in the young bird; the course of development in passerine birds; the young bird after independence; development, inheritance and function of song; the male and his territory; the function of territory; relation of the pair to each other and their neighbours; the problem of pair formation; the nest; the eggs; care of the young; enemy recognition, and innate and learned behaviour in the adult. It is in this last chapter that the author reserves all her comparisons between human and bird behaviour. She finds that birds are nearer to human beings emotionally than intellectually and the reader will be interested to be reminded how much of his own behaviour is fundamentally akin to that of the bird's. Mrs. Nice concludes with Lorenz's words: "The study of animal behaviour is the only and ultimate source of understanding ourselves."

This is another of the several outstanding recent books which must be in every progressive bird watcher's library, for continual reference and inspiration. The price is \$2.75, or \$2.00 if ordered direct from the Linnean Society of New York, care of the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West, New York City.—D.L.S.

**South Australian Ornithology.**—J. Neil McGilp is the chief contributor to the *South Australian Ornithologist*, vol. xvii, pt. 1, Mch. 1944, his 'Bird Life west of Oodnadatta, South Australia,' being an account of a trip in the Everard Ranges country, and 'A Rare Combination of Cuckoo Eggs' recording a nest of *Sericornis maculata* with two eggs of that species and one each of *Owenavis osculans* and of *Chalcites basalis*.

Erhard F. Boehm, referring to the recently-published List of the Birds of South Australia, comments on the question of admissibility of certain records—*Acanthiza pusilla whitlocki*, *Ninox ocellata*, *Astur novæ-hollandiæ* and *Kakatoë tenuirostris*. Sight records of *Procellaria parkinsoni* and *Phæbetria palpebrata* are referred to.—C.E.B.