

Reviews

[*The Birds of Nippon*. By Prince Taka-Tsukasa. Vol. I, Pt. 4, pp. 169-238 + lvii-lx. H. F. & G. Witherby, London; Yokendo, Tokyo.]

Part 4 of this work covers five species representing four genera, with the same attention to completeness in summarizing and arranging details of the forms dealt with as has been noted here as to previous parts. Whereas those parts have contained introductory remarks on the history of Japanese ornithology and notes concerned with its progress and descriptions of the geographical and ornithological boundaries of the present work, the one under notice, consisting of seventy pages, deals entirely with quail-like birds of the following genera: *Bambusicola*, *Arborophila*, *Excalfactoria*, and *Coturnix*.

The Formosan Bamboo Partridge (*Bambusicola sonori-vor*) and the Chinese Bamboo Partridge (*B. thoracica*) are highly valued as cage and table birds by the natives, and the former is protected from March 1 to October 31 each year. The author states that, despite protection, increase is not large, as wildcats, civets and martens make them their staple food. Both of these birds have the characteristic of roosting in trees at night. *B. thoracica*, a mixed feeder, sometimes pilfers farm produce, including watermelons, which it attacks by pecking a hole and inserting the head. It then eats the interior of the melons. Farmers wrap melons in grass and straw to prevent such depredations.

The Formosan Tree Partridge (*Arborophila crudigularis*) is a bird of deep mountain forests similarly noted for its delicious flesh and is protected during the same period as the Bamboo Partridge. The Painted or Blue-breasted Quail (*Excalfactoria chinensis chinensis*) is dealt with in the space of four pages, which suggests that it may not be very common, for the author offers no first-hand field notes on its habits. On the other hand thirty-five pages are devoted completely to the common Japanese Quail (*Coturnix vulgaris*). It is stated of this Quail that: "The plumage is very rich in variation, and it is not exaggerating to say that almost each specimen has a different plumage." There follows a list of ten features with the combinations of variations which have been recorded to each. There has been considerable difference of opinion between ornithologists as to whether the Japanese Quail is distinct from the common European Quail. The author quotes Dr. Kuroda, who, after examining a great amount of material, came to the conclusion that the Japanese Quail is distinct from the European race. This Quail has been a very favourite cage-bird in Japan from ancient times and the main object of keeping it is to hear its calls. Consequently Quail breeding is carried out scientifically and there is an extensive section dealing

with all aspects of Quail in captivity, in which occurs a reference to the fact that a good song-bird was worth, during a Quail-keeping vogue, more than £100.

One coloured plate and a number of photographs illustrating the localities favoured by the respective species are included.—J.M.G.

[*The Birds of the Philippine Islands*.—Part III. By the Marquess Hachisuka, F.Z.S., F.R.G.S., M.B.O.U., etc. Pp. 1-256, 41 plates, and many text figures. London: H. F. & G. Witherby, Nov., 1934.]

The third part of this work commences with the Accipitiformes and concludes with the Coraciiformes, thus completing the non-Passerine birds.

A number of new subspecies and a new genus are proposed, but the need for some of these is not apparent from the descriptions given, and in view of the uncertain status of many trinomials, it seems inadvisable to make what appear to be unsatisfactory additions. The listing of allied forms and their range under each species appears, at first glance, a thoughtful and useful innovation; a more critical examination, however, reveals mistakes which make for regret that the space so employed was not used to better advantage.

Much painstaking work by the author is nevertheless apparent throughout the volume, and although we have remarked on the tendency to split, in some cases the opportunity is taken to unite under one name birds previously referred to separate species. For instance, among the Cuckoos of the genus *Cacomantis*, *merulinus* and *variolosus* are brought together and the reasons for so doing are stated, and agreement with other recent authors is shown by the inclusion under *Chalcites* of all Bronze-Cuckoos.

There are 41 plates, most of them in colour, and a good many text figures, and these are both attractive and useful. The coloured plates are by various authors and all are not of equal merit, but the illustrative work on the whole impresses favourably.

Parts 1 and 2, respectively, of this publication were noticed in *The Emu*, Vol. xxxi, pp. 78-9, and Vol. xxxii, p. 325.—G.M.

Library Notes

The following additions to the Library are acknowledged:
Bulletin of the Arctic Institute, Nos. 6-7, 8-9, 10, 11-12.

Annals of the Transvaal Museum, Vol. xvi, parts i-iv.
Part I contains "Scientific Results of the Vernay-Lang Kalahari Expedition, Mch. to Sept., 1930—Birds," by Austin Roberts.

The Victorian Naturalist, Vol. lii, Nos. 1 and 2.