

Bird News and Notes, Vol. xvi, Nos. 1-8. From F.L. Berney.

The Birds of Nevada, by Jean M. Linsdale. Publication of the Cooper Ornithological Club—Pacific Coast Avifauna, No. 23.

The Hawks of North America, by Dr. John B. May. From Ralph Ellis. Reviewed in this part.

The Birds of the Philippine Islands, etc., Vol. ii, Part 4. By Marquess Hachisuka. Reviewed in this part.

In the Library Notes in *The Emu*, vol. xxxv, p. 110, "Mammals, etc., of North-eastern Canada," should read "Mammals, etc., of North-eastern Nevada."

Reviews

[*The Hawks of North America; Their Field Identification and Feeding Habits*. By John B. May. Published by The National Association of Audubon Societies, New York. 140 + xxii.]

With relation to the preservation of Hawks the Association has adopted a policy that opposes needless destruction, that condemns bounties and "shoots," and that aims to create popular appreciation of the economic value of raptorial birds and to combat the constant propaganda which encourages their destruction. The objects enumerated should be of universal application, and other countries might well benefit from the contents of this volume. Destruction of some species appears to have been carried, in America, to extremes that make one ponder on the mentality of individuals and even State Conservation Department officials who conduct campaigns against, and offer bounties for, the unfortunate birds. Decrease in numbers has been considerable in some species and in one case at least an American Hawk has become extirpated in recent years. In his introduction the author refers to the axiomatic idea of liberty-loving peoples to consider persons on trial innocent until proved guilty. Such a principle is not, however, carried into consideration with regard to birds of prey.

An appendix shows the Hawks protected in the 48 American States. The words "None protected" appear far too often and there is a wide divergence appertaining in the case of contiguous States. Three species figure prominently as birds enjoying no protection, and Dr. May points out that those, and two others, constitute only 8.7% of the Hawk population of a particular State being dealt with. The percentage for the whole country would be about the same. The other 91.3% is made up of Hawks recognized by scientists (but, unfortunately, not by omniscient laymen) as beneficial. A consensus of data covering all kinds of Hawks in Ohio shows the food proportions as mice and the like 35.7% poultry and game birds 4.8%, other birds 16.9%, other vertebrates 7.4%, insects 30.3%, and miscellaneous 4%.

With poultry and game birds forming less than 5% of their food why condemn all Hawks as "vermin"?

Every species included—about 40 in all—is figured in colour by Allan Brooks. Several plates by R. T. Peterson indicate the appearance of the birds in flight. The content of the volume is principally made up of means of identification and notes on the birds' food habits. Most interesting, albeit regrettable, are the "extensive diminutions" in the breeding range of some species, the Swallow-tailed Kite (an absolutely beneficial species), for example, being reduced, from a large, triangular-shaped domain, with its apex at the Canadian boundary and extending to the northern and western shores of the Gulf of Mexico, to a few small areas in Florida and Mexico. Maps serve to make these changes painfully apparent.

Tables of stomach contents are included and interesting facts are to be garnered therefrom. Leaving those where no or little poultry appears on the menu and turning to species generally denounced as harmful, it is interesting to note that in the case of the notorious Sharp-shinned Hawk more than 1,030 stomachs examined produced poultry or game in only 16. In Cooper's Hawk the figures are 146 out of 422, whilst the Goshawk examinations resulted in 447 out of 881 containing signs of poultry or game meals. A table that separated poultry from game would probably decrease the percentages very considerably, and as game, such as Quail and Ducks, should surely not be considered as man's special preserves, the separation mentioned would be entirely justified. Cooper's Hawk is considered an extremely destructive species because they "probably harvest a crop of Quail . . . during the course of their 365 day open season comparable with that taken by sportsmen in their much shorter time afield." When it is considered that practically no sportsman shoots because he actually needs Quail or other game birds for food, the incidents of the above comparison are entirely in favour of the bird.—C.E.B.

[*The Birds of the Philippine Islands, with Notes on the Mammal Fauna.* By the Marquess Hachisuka, F.Z.S., F.R.G.S., M.B.O.U., etc. Vol. ii, pt. 4, pp. 257-469 + v-xxxi; 21 pls., 11 text figs. London: H. F. and G. Witherby, July, 1935.]

The first of the Passerine birds is dealt with in this part, which covers the Philippine representatives of the following families: Pittidae, Hirundinidae, Muscicapidae, Percroctidae, Pycnonotidae, and part of the Timaliidae. As previously, much space is given up to lists of allied extralimital forms and their range. Three sub-species are described as new, and two new genera are proposed, but none of these is convincing. Apparently the Philippines are no exception to the need for sound field work and collecting.

The standard of the illustrations is maintained with 21 plates, mostly in colour, and 11 text figures.—G.M.