

With reference to the Antarctic Tern (*Sterna vittata*)—the only breeding tern of the South Orkneys, since *Sterna hirundinacea* is confined to South American littoral waters—it seems that the author has used the subspecific name *georgiae* somewhat rashly. He states that only one specimen was collected; no measurements are given, and there is no indication that a comparison has been made with South Georgian examples, which are at least likely to prove to be endemic at that single island.

The final life history gives us the first definite and objective description of courtship, or connubial behavior, of the Sheathbill. Ardley's observations lead, also, to the conclusion that the rather extensive migrations of this curious bird are made without any ingestion of food during its flights from land to land.

This contribution, added to Matthews's account of the birds of South Georgia, Hamilton's study of the sub-antarctic Skuas, etc., gives ornithology a high place in the notable 'Discovery Reports,' which have now reached 13 volumes.—ROBERT CUSHMAN MURPHY, *American Museum of Natural History*.

Sutton's 'Birds in the Wilderness.'—Those who have read Dr. Sutton's 'Eskimo Year' are aware of his ability to write entertainingly of his experiences and they will find a wealth of good reading and personal anecdotes as well as much ornithology in the interesting book¹ that he now offers to the public. He begins with a brief account of his own early life—in Nebraska, Minnesota, Oregon, Illinois, Texas and West Virginia, and the circumstances which led his ornithological career. Then follows a delightful chapter on Louis Agassiz Fuertes who gave him instruction and inspiration in his bird painting—a field in which the student has certainly realized the hopes of his teacher! Other chapters describe the author's many trips in search of bird lore to James Bay, Labrador, British Columbia, Churchill, Oklahoma, southern Florida and interior Louisiana, with sketches of the habits and personalities of familiar birds nearer home. The Turkey Vulture, Blue Goose, Roadrunner, Chimney Swallow are among the numerous species of which the author writes sympathetically, while he also tells us of many bird pets, notably Owls and Ravens. Poe, he considers, was no ornithologist and *his* Raven was "a monster, a fiend, and a hybrid creature of blasted soul."

Dr. Sutton tells us that "ornithologists are not good conversationalists. They do not care to talk about anything but birds; and when they talk they must needs continually toss off such formidable terms as 'pileated,' 'semipalmated,' 'flamulated,' etc.," but in his little book he proves the error of his statement, for one finds much of interest in 'Birds in the Wilderness' that is not ornithology and the ornithology is presented in a way that everyone can understand and enjoy. There are twelve illustrations by the author, of which several are in color, while several others illustrate juvenal plumages in depicting which Dr. Sutton excels. We heartily recommend 'Birds in the Wilderness' to all who love wild life and experiences afield.—W. S.

Peattie's 'Green Laurels.'—When one looks over the "Contents" of this notable book² he infers that it is a series of biographies of naturalists but he soon finds that it is far more than that. As the author himself says: "I am telling about the great naturalists not simply from a biographical point of view; these men are the

¹ Birds in the Wilderness | Adventures of an Ornithologist | By George Miksch Sutton Illustrated | by the author, with pencil drawings | and field-sketches in color made | from living or freshly killed birds | . New York | The Macmillan Company | 1936. Pp. 1-xiv + 1-200. Price \$3.50.

² Green Laurels | The Lives and Achievements | of the | Great Naturalists | Donald Culross Peattie | Author of "Singing in the Wilderness" | and "An Almanac for Moderns" | Simon and Schuster, 386 Fourth Ave., New York 1936. Pp. i-xxiii + 1-368. Price \$3.75.

windows, so to speak, through which I want to reveal the great scene that occupied them all—nature itself. The real hero of the book is man's mind as it is concerned with nature." Furthermore we at once realize that this book is literature, and literature of a high order, for Mr. Peattie's gifted pen has the ability to tell us just what he has in mind in a style that holds our interest to the very end. There have been masters of literature who have written of nature and naturalists but all too often their own natural history has been at fault, but Mr. Peattie has been a naturalist before he became an author while one of his earliest works was a technical one: 'Flora of the Indiana Sand Dunes.' He possesses also a good knowledge of American ornithology. The fifteen chapters of 'Green Laurels' treat of the "Schoolmen" and "Herbalists"; of Buffon and Reaumur; of Linnaeus; Cuvier and Lamarck; Bartram and Michaux, Wilson and Audubon; Say and Rafinesque; Goethe, Darwin and Wallace, and Fabre.

We have space to consider but one chapter, the "Wilderness Birdsmen: Wilson and Audubon." This to our mind is the best estimate of the relative standing and personal characteristics of the two men that we have ever read. Our author admits that he once gave himself license to admire and love Audubon boundlessly "but I am come this time," he writes, "to give the older man, the less lucky pioneer of American ornithology, his due." He shows us that when we look upon bird life through Wilson's eyes we look with the eyes of the poet while through Audubon's we look with the eyes of the artist. It is ridiculous to consider the two as rivals and, in many ways, impossible to compare them, as the work of one was finished ere that of the other had really begun. As we have always contended there is no question as to which was the pioneer and, as Mr. Peattie truly says, Wilson "left very few birds in all of eastern North America for any newcomer to discover" and furthermore as he tells us the European scientists had the skins and bones from which to draw up descriptions but they knew nothing of the glory of New World bird life which Wilson's "gift of the fresh eye, the poet's quickness of ear" were destined to furnish. "The early European naturalists were necessarily deprived of the very spirit of the whole subject and what we lacked before Wilson's day was some Gilbert White, some patient adoring amateur who would think nothing too small to set down. Indeed ornithology cannot for a moment dispense with a whole chain of Gilbert Whites." As our author puts it, "ornithology is an amateur's science" and he lets "museum men roll their eyes and groan" the while! We do not groan, however, and we agree that "bird study in the field" is largely an amateur study and that ornithology in many of its branches is dependent upon just such study but there would seem to be another side to ornithology which is just as much professional science as others that are mentioned in 'Green Laurels.' Mr. Peattie very properly eliminates poor Wilson from the controversy between Ord, Waterton and Audubon, which occurred long after his death, and also very properly characterizes it as disgraceful.

"The Wilderness Birdsmen" is but one chapter in this fascinating Book and there is much side light upon ornithology in several of the others while ornithologists, and others as well, will wish to read the whole work through and will then appreciate the author's idea in writing it. There are many excellent photogravure illustrations and a good bibliography of "sources and reference material."—W. S.

Clarke on 'Fluctuations in Numbers of Ruffed Grouse.'¹—In an excellently written and handsomely printed brochure¹ Mr. Clarke has presented the results of

¹ *Fluctuations in Numbers of Ruffed Grouse, Bonasa umbellus (Linne), with special reference to Ontario.* By C. H. Douglas Clarke. University of Toronto Studies. Biological Series, No. 41, 1936. Pp. 1-118, Price \$1.00.

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back-- Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth that ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you c