WAIFS ON SHIP-BOARD AT SEA

While coming down the Labrador coast, about one hundred and fifty miles to sea, specifically Lat. 57°N., Long. 57°W., on the morning of August 31st, 1929, a Wood Pewee was found in the last stage of exhaustion clinging to a cargo boom on the ship. It expired shortly after. On making the unfortunate into a specimen it was found that its tissues were so dry and lacking in moisture that the skin stuck to the body and could be removed only with some difficulty. It was evident that the bird had perished primarily through lack of water rather than from over-exertion, stress of weather or hunger.

Stray birds, lost at sea, are continually taking refuge on passing shipping as described by Mr. Merriman above. That a few waifs successfully cross the ocean in this way is to be expected and is demontrated by the number of American casuals that appear on the English bird list, but according to observation most of these stowaways fail of that goal by a more or less narrow margin. It can be suggested that lack of fresh water may be the determining factor in such survival. The difference in passage time of ships going east and west across the Atlantic may explain the preponderance of occurrence of American birds in England over that of English species in America. Birds can stand inclement weather in many sheltered nooks on ship-board and can go without food for a comparatively considerable period, but without fresh water, which can normally be found on board ship, only at the leak of some steam valve or other accidental supply, a very definitely limited term is placed upon their survival. Even such littoral sea birds as gulls that regularly follow ships far from shore and meet them well out to sea may be prevented from making the complete crossing by dependence upon a base of fresh water supply ashore.

It is probable that if trans-atlantic travel is ultimately speeded up so that the time of crossing is less than the limits of fresh water requirements of general bird life, many more trans-atlantic casuals will be noted and perhaps some of them will make permanent settlement. Whether this is a desirable eventuality is a moot question. Certainly our experience with artificial introductions does not reassure us as to its benefits.—P. A. TAVENER, National Museum of Canada.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE EXPLORATION OF SOUTHAMPTON ISLAND, HUDSON BAY, *by George Miksch Sutton, sponsored by Mr. John Bonner Semple, 1929-1930. Memoirs of the Carnegie Museum; Vol. XII, Part I; Section I, Prefatory; Section 2, Introductory; Section 3, Bibliography of part i and part ii, section 2, pp. 1.-75, pl.5, March 28, 1932. Part II, Section 2, The Birds of Southampton Island, pp. 1-267, pl. 10-26, three in colour. May 31, 1932 Folio. Published by authortty of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.*

DURING the activity of arctic exploration when the search for Franklin and the Northwest Passage was at its height, great advances were made in the knowledge of the biology of the high north. In fact at one time we probably knew more of the biota of the great arctic wastes than we did of many more accessible lands farther south. Then the tide of northern investigation stood still and for years comparatively little systematic work was done there. With the advance of general ornithological knowledge and the resultant requirement of greater refinement in methods, it has become increasingly evident that attention should be redirected northward; but difficulty of access to the field and the expense of elaborate expeditions has prevented all but casual natural history survey of the higher regions. The northwestern mainland has been systematically worked as far eastwards as Coronation Gulf by the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918. The great region of the Boothia Peninsula and adjoining areas is still, unfortunately, a terra incognita but Preble has published on the west coast of Hudson Bay, and Todd is preparing an account of the east coast. Northern Labrador has been critically studied by Hantzsch and both Hantzsch and Soper have given us detailed reports on southern Baffin Island. An analysis of these results and others supplementary to them has accentuated the desirability of a re-investigation of the arctic regions.

The establishment of Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachments north to 78° and the numerous fur-trading posts along the southern fringe of islands have opened up prospects of more careful and detailed work than has ever before been possible in the Arctic Archipelago. Even yet, however, the difficulties of the work are great. No ship can get in or out of the grounds until late in summer and a comparatively barren winter must be spent in storm-bound quarters before really profitable work can be undertaken and the results brought out. Undoubtedly air-planes eventually will be developed that can deposit an observer at critical points profitably early in the season and bring him out before that season closes but as yet biological investigation of the arctic by air-plane is too hazardous to be practicable. However, given a competent naturalist willing to sacrifice a whole year for the sake of a short season of hectic work and with stamina and enthusiasm to endure the discomforts and ennui of the long arctic winter, there are several promising points of attack on the secrets of the forbidding north. Of these Southampton Island has long been in view as easiest of access, a key point, and a logical beginning for more extensive arctic survey. In fact an expedition to this very locality was under consideration by the National Museum of Canada when it was learned that Mr. Sutton had decided upon the trip.

He spent the autumn of 1929, the winter, and the spring and summer of 1930 at Coral Harbour, the Hudson Bay Company trading post on the southern side of the island. Part I of this report presents a history of the island, its physiographic features, the writer's itinerary and methods of work, and a general discussion of conditions. Part II, as far as published, contains the ornithological results and is the writer's thesis for his doctor's degree. Other parts, devoted to mammals, insects, etc., are promised to follow. These results fully justify the work undertaken and prove Mr. Sutton's ability, with pen or pencil, in field or study, to perform it adequately. Part I demonstrates the great amount of reading and research he has given to the geographical and zoological history of the island that he might fully grasp its biological problems. Part II consists of an elaborately annotated list of birds observed, defining their status and giving valuable life history. His work corrects many common errors and has added much new information. In connection with other investigations already reported on, or in course of preparation, it rounds out our knowledge of the birds of Hudson Bay and gives a firm base line from which to project further work.

An important outcome is the light thrown on the remarkable number of surprising records attributed by the British Museum Catalogue of Birds to Repulse Bay. It is brought out clearly that many of these must have been taken by Rae's expedition en route and much farther south on the Bay than the exact statement of their data indicates. These will, in future, have to be disregarded in our distributions or treated with great circumspection. Perhaps the most popular interest lies in the establishment of the nesting of the Blue Goose on the island, extending its breeding range considerably eastward of Soper's original discovery of its nesting on southwestern Baffin Island in the previous year.

The plates are mostly half-tone photographs arranged four on a sheet and illustrate characteristic conditions and plants, people and bird life. The three plates in colour are reproduced from originals from the brush of the author and illustrate four spectacular species of birds and a full page of details of thirteen species of downy young, many of which have never been so presented before. The originals are undoubtedly up to the standard of this talented artist-naturalist but for these days of fine process work the reproductions leave a little something to be desired. The downy young form a valuable plate but some cautionary note should have been appended calling attention to the fact that they are field sketches showing details, and not completed drawings. Bodies are often drawn without being fully rendered and are to be taken as authority for the colours of the soft parts and facial characters only.

The whole makes a most impressive volume, folio size, and a credit to all concerned. The paper is white and well surfaced, the print is good, margins spacious and the proof-reading seems excellently done. The only criticism this reviewer would make is regarding its size. A large volume like this is awkward to handle or use for common reference. After being once skimmed, it is likely to be prized as a fine volume but allowed to gather dust

on the shelf, unread. There is necessity for folios when large plates are essential to the subject but otherwise they seem to be made more for the gratification of governing boards and influential patrons than for actual scientific use.—P.A.T.

EXCURSION TO LONG LAKE, QUEBEC

"In the old days of the Ottawa Field Club it was customary to publish in *The Ottawa Naturalist* a short account of each Field Excursion with some particulars of the more interesting specimens of plants or animals, etc., met with. This practice was discontiuued when the excursions each year were over the same ground in the vicinity of Ottawa, ranging from Rockcliffe to Britannia. Now that the practice of going further afield has been resumed it might be advisable to have a short write-up of each excursion as likely to be of general interest. In any case I am enclosing a short botanical account of the visit to Long Lake."

The above is a letter from a member and is so apt to the present excursion situation that it is given here without comment except that perhaps other members would note and follow such a good example. Long Lake is 12 miles N. E. of Buckingham, and easily accessible from Ottawa by road (about 30 miles). It is typical of many Laurentian Lakes in that the water is cold and deep, the banks are steep, and the bush comes down to the water line leaving no shore or beach. Long Lake has no river or creek inlet or outlet, supply being maintained by springs and surface drainage. Seepage through the drift at the south end is most probably the cause of the constant level of the lake. Map: Dept. of Interior, Bucking- (Quebec-Ontario). —Convener's Note.—F. J. F.

PLANTS OBSERVED AT LONG LAKE, QUEBEC, ON 16 SEPTEMBER, 1933.

Owing to the lateness of the season, and the short time available for collecting, compa atively few plants were found. The rocky heights bordering the west side of the lake were covered with forest, red oak, white birch, large-toothed aspen, basswood, sugar maple red maple with leaves already assuming a scarlet hue, and striped maple. Some evergreen species were also noted, such as white pine, balsam, and hemlock.

Owing to the dryness of the season fleshy fungi were extremely scarce but some good specimens of *Polyporus betulinus* were found on a dead trunk of white birch.

Ferns were represented by the Bracken, Polypody, and Marginate Shield-fern. But the most interesting species found during the visit was the Leathery Grape-ferm (*Botrychium silaifolium*) which occurred on ground that had been cleared.

Partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*) and Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*) were plentiful, while a few plants of Prince's Pine (*Chimaphila umbellata*) were also observed. But the only plants found in flower were two species of Aster, namely, *Aster acuminatus* and *A. macrophyllus*, and four species of Golden Rod including *Solidago canadensis*, *S. caesia*. *S. graminifolia* and *S. squarrosa*.—J. ADAMS.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

TAPEWORM IN RABBITS.—Four rabbits, taken in the vicinity of Sioux Lookout, Ontario, were examined and all were found to be infested with the larval form of tapeworm (*Cysticercus pisiformis*). Two of these rabbits were very seriously infested, the cysts being attached to the intestines in sufficient numbers to bring about a well defined peritonitis.

It is reasonable to believe that the presence of these larval forms of tape worms would ultimately lead to the death of the animal and that parasitic infestation is responsible to some extent and may explain the fluctuation in numbers in our wild life from year to year.

There is evidence from examinations made this year that rabbits are reaching a high peak of parasitism.—R. G. LAW.

BRÜNNICH'S MURRE (*Uria lomvia lomvia*) in NORTH FRONTENAC COUNTY, ONTARIO.—On December 15, 1932, the writer was fortunate enough to secure a living Brünnich's Murre. The bird had been picked up immediately south of the village of Henderson, seven miles north of Arden, North Frontenac County, Ontario, on that day by a Mr. Loyst who had found it in a sitting posture in the centre of a country road. Mr. Loyst being impressed with its unusual appearance fully intended to have the specimen mounted, but after considerable persuasion the writer was able to obtain the bird and forward it to the Royal Ontario Museum at Toronto. The bird died two days after its capture and when the specimen was prepared it was found to be in a very emaciated condition. The