

more than single individuals or even pairs, nor is one only of each stage sufficient. Any single individual may be and usually is abnormal in some particular. It is only by a series of several that the average can be established. Freaks, albinos, melanos and other abnormal occurrences are of little general scientific interest, the normal is a much more desirable subject of study.

In gathering up information of specific occurrences the local taxidermist is a man to cultivate, not only to secure specimens but to learn and see what passes through his hands. It is well also to keep in touch with the shooting and sporting fraternity, for they often obtain material of great interest.

The desirable form in which to keep such collections is undoubtedly as dry skins and not stuffed and mounted specimens. The taste for the latter is waning for one thing, and they are otherwise too bulky to house and keep in any number. As the object is the indefinite preservation, the skin is much to be preferred, for the action of dust and light, to say nothing of insect ravages upon mounted specimens, is highly destructive and their life is limited. Besides this, a mounted specimen is not available for the handling necessary for close examination. One hesitates to maltreat a nicely mounted bird to get at hidden characters, that are easily seen in properly made skins.

A word here may be included as to the much vexed question of subspecies and how far it is desirable to recognize and study them. Originally, when the conception ruled that living forms were the result of special creation, a species was considered a fixed quantity, whose limits could be definitely placed. The acceptance of the evolutionary theory of the growth of species from others pre-existing necessitated a rearrangement of our ideas and it was found that what were regarded as permanent types were more or less unstable and that geographic variations occurred, extremes of which when compared without considering intermediate stages, exhibited differences of almost specific value. As all stages of differentiation between these extremes were to be found, it became evident that they must be regarded as evolutionary departures from the specific type and be, in fact, "species in the making," before the connecting sequence between them and the parent stock has been disrupted or broken down to form isolated species.

Our modern system of nomenclature gives each species a binomial name, one term representing the genus to which it belongs and the other the species. As it seemed desirable to apply definite cognomens to geographical variants from the typical form in order to facilitate referring to them, "give them a handle," as it were, a third name was added, making our system