

HORNED LARKS AT AWEME, MANITOBA.

BY STUART AND NORMAN CRIDDLE.

There are few small birds better known than the Horned Larks when considered collectively, that is to say, when we merely recognize them as a species without attempting to divide and distinguish them as they have been separated by systematists. We are, for instance, all familiar with the Prairie Horned Lark, or think we are, until its close allies are placed alongside, when few indeed will be able to tell one from another. The fact that these birds have been divided into so many geographical races which are so alike in general appearance, makes them of particular interest to students of geographical distribution. The systematists have divided them and given them names. It remains for the workers in ecology to confirm or reject this classification by showing that there is, or is not, a difference in life habits. We doubt very much, whether two distinct races will ever possess identical habits and we hold that if these habits differ ever so little, then there is every reason to believe that the animals possessing them are distinct. A difference of a few days in the average date of arrival, the selection of a different situation or kind of locality for breeding purposes should be alone sufficient to demonstrate that there are two races involved. We have a case in point in the local Lapland Longspur migrations. With these birds there are two very marked differences, both as to time of arrival and departure. We have never actually demonstrated by collecting specimens, that there are two races involved, yet there can be little doubt that such is the case. Turning to our Manitoba Horned Larks, we have long realized that there were three or four races present, though it is only within recent times that the senior writer has actually shown this to be so by the collecting of examples. These specimens have been determined through the courtesy of Dr. Henshaw, by Mr. Oberholser of the U. S. Biological Survey, to both of whom the writers are under many obligations.

We have, so far, been able to recognize four horned larks in the vicinity of Aweme, Manitoba, namely: the Prairie Horned Lark, *Otocoris alpestris praticola*; Oberholser's Horned Lark, *O. a. enthymia*, the Pallid Horned Lark, *O. a. arctica*, and the Hoyt Horned Lark, *O. a. hoyti*. Of these the first two are summer residents in the neighbourhood, while the latter have only been noted as migrants.

PRAIRIE HORNED LARK.

This is the dominant race around the farm yard and seems to take more kindly to the haunts of man than do its allies. In nature it is found breeding in the vicinity of semi-wooded areas; uplands where the grass is sparse and the soil sandy seem to suit it best. It is far less of a true prairie bird than *enthymia* and while it invariably selects