

## Book Review

***Birder Extraordinaire: The Life and Legacy of James L. Baillie (1904-1970)***. 1992. By Lise Anglin. Toronto Ornithological Club and Long Point Bird Observatory, Toronto. (softcover) 143 pp. \$12 (plus \$2.60 postage and handling). Available from the Toronto Ornithological Club, 560 Blythwood Rd., Toronto, Ontario M4N 1B5.

This extremely interesting biography documents the life and times of one of Ontario's most influential professional ornithologists and birders. The book was jointly published by the Toronto Ornithological Club and Long Point Bird Observatory. These organizations are to be commended for supporting this important project to provide a lasting tribute to Jim Baillie.

Author Lise Anglin's personal knowledge of her subject through family connections, her background as a professional researcher, and (very importantly) her own active participation in birding have combined to make this a very well documented and insightful book. I really found it difficult to put the book down once I got into the story! Anglin based the book on extensive interviews with many of Jim's friends and colleagues, plus a thorough examination and synopsis of the incredibly detailed and complete Baillie journals and correspondence housed in the Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library at the University of Toronto.

The book covers family history and formative years, Jim's start in birding in 1920, his 48 years in the ornithology department of the Royal Ontario Museum, personal life, 39

years of writing a weekly bird column in the *Toronto Evening Telegram*, club affiliations and awards, research writings and field work, and contributions and achievements (including his successful acquisition of a Labrador Duck and Great Auk for the Museum's collection). I found it to be an objective and scholarly analysis of all aspects of Jim's life, fully documenting his many strengths and his foibles. The author's description of Baillie's unhappiness and frustrations during his last years is particularly compelling reading.

Jim Baillie's contributions and essence are extremely well summarized in the final chapter, entitled "Influence, Popularity and Greatness". I personally experienced Jim's inspiration during the 1960's, as an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, and an aspiring author doing research at the Royal Ontario Museum on a regional bird book. I felt the warmth and genuine interest of this man toward everyone who appreciated birds — a trait so well described in Anglin's portrayal.

I would strongly recommend this book to everyone interested in birds, but particularly to the legion of "post-Baillie" birders that have come

along in Ontario. It vividly presents aspects of the earlier history of birding in this province, while

thoroughly introducing one of Ontario ornithology's most important mentors.

Ron Tozer, R.R. 1, Dwight, Ontario P0A 1H0

## Photo Quiz

by  
Doug McRae

Answer to Photo Quiz in *Ontario Birds* 10 (3): **Brown-headed Cowbird.**

This quiz bird, a juvenile Brown-headed Cowbird, was perhaps a bit unfair. On the colour print we used, kindly submitted by avid *Ontario Birds* reader Molly Sorlie of Barrie, it is much easier to tell the species, however it becomes more difficult when converted to black-and-white. Also, it would have been a snap if we had used the other shot that Molly sent — the one showing a Song Sparrow shovelling food into this fledgling! While adult cowbirds usually don't present an identification problem, many birders seeing their first juveniles, like this one, can be quite confused.

To start with, we can establish that this bird is a juvenile by several features. The most obvious indicator of age is the bill. The soft, protruding gape edge — diagnostic of young birds — is quite visible on this photo. Another feature that suggests a young bird is the "texture" of the feathers. If you look carefully you will notice

that the feathers have a dull, flat, almost fuzzy look to them, unlike the glossy finish that most adult birds show. This is particularly noticeable on the feathers of the crown and flanks. A final feature that suggests this bird is a young bird is the stubby-looking tail.

In all honesty I don't know if you can distinguish this bird as a Brown-headed Cowbird, based on a black-and-white photograph, but there are several features that are helpful. The most obvious feature visible is the light scaling on the outer edges of most coverts and contour feathers. This pattern, which would be even more pronounced in a bird another week or two older, usually comes as a shock to observers unfamiliar with this age class as it is totally unlike any adult plumage. In fact, most observers seeing their first cowbird of this age are unable to come up with an identification until the adult of the host species shows up, providing a substantial clue!

Structurally speaking, especially because of the bill, this bird most