

cut by some insect. Closer inspection revealed the former presence of Carpenter Ants throughout many of the boards. The species of birds involved could not positively be ascertained.

It would appear that in both of these cases, the birds were using the buildings as food sources, although the method of feeding was substantially different, due primarily to the habits of the two prey species.

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Book Review

Birds of North America, Eastern Region. 1985. By John Bull, Edith Bull, Gerald Gold & Pieter D. Prall. Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York. 156 pp.

As I thumbed through this slender volume for the first time, I groaned inwardly. "Not another pretender to the Peterson throne". I flipped and browsed, and wondered what could be different. So I sat down and read it.

On the assumption that most O.F.O. members are reasonably competent at field identification, this book is more likely to be recommended and given by members than bought for their own use. *Birds of North America* is aimed at novice birders, it is not a pretentious book, indeed it asks to be kept at the kitchen window or in the car's glove box. It makes no claim to be thorough or exhaustive, dealing with only 253 eastern species and therefore, clearly, there are large gaps.

The book, after a concise introduction to the very basics of bird watching, gets on with its task. There is no phylogenetic order or scientific names here (other than in the Appendix). The birds are

organized into groups of birds having broadly similar characteristics. Plate 1 on "Blue birds" illustrates Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Eastern Bluebird, Blue Jay and Belted Kingfisher. Plates 2 & 3 are "Red Birds", Plates 4 & 5 "Black birds", and so on. There are "tree clingers", "small grayish birds" and "large grayish birds". I'm not entirely comfortable with the selected groupings, but I'm hard-put to think of better.

The illustrations are painted, not photographs, thank goodness! They are sometimes a little stiff, almost Audubonesque, but they do illustrate field marks well, though often at the expense of strict accuracy. Nevertheless, the authors are to be commended for sticking to their task of meeting the needs of new birders.

The omissions must have caused some soul-searching. They will likely cause some lifelong confusions unless further references are consulted. The

thrushes are limited to the Hermit and Wood Thrushes, no Veery, Gray-cheeked or Swainson's. Among *Empidonax* flycatchers, the Yellow-breasted, Acadian, Alder and Willow are omitted; perhaps confusion on these is the preserve of more experienced birders anyway. Adult male warblers are well represented, and, surprisingly, all three scoters.

Text, opposite the illustrations, is brief and is handled under the headings of Field Marks, Habitat, Season, Range, and sometimes Comments. An interesting

appendix reviews the plates, sometimes in groups, and expands on the information. It contrasts species and offers comments on migration, relative abundance and other general points of interest. These notes should not have been relegated to an appendix but perhaps given a part of the relevant pages. How to do so was obviously the difficulty.

It is too easy to pick holes in this book, but one has to bear in mind it's target market. It should find ready acceptance provided the marketeers can beat the established acceptability of Peterson's classic.

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OFO Announcements

Field Trip and Observational Study – Essex County Crow Roost, 8-10 November 1985. The Essex County Crow Roost, located within the City Limits of Essex, Ontario, is the largest known crow roost in Ontario and perhaps in Canada. Observing several thousand crows returning to and dispersing from their evening roost is a totally exhilarating experience. Participants should plan to arrive in the Essex area Friday evening. Early Saturday we will travel to the roost to observe crows undergoing morning dispersal. Participants will be given maps and asked to follow flocks of crows to see where and how far the crows travel from

the roost. We will rendezvous for breakfast and discussions. The rest of the day will be spent birding the Essex-Pelee area. In the late afternoon we will position ourselves in various directions from the roost and observe and follow the crows back to the roost. Other participants will census the crows as they return to the roost. Plans for Sunday will depend on how many people can stay over. If you are interested in this different kind of field trip contact Chip Weseloh (416- 485-1464) before 5 November for details on where and when to meet. Accommodation for up to 18 persons has been arranged.