

4. Flight paths between feeding and roosting locations.
5. Behavior when preparing to leave feeding or roosting places.
6. Any flocks not engaging in foraging or nocturnal roosting.

Please send your information to

Fred Atwood  
29 Stratford Street  
West Roxbury, MA 02132.

Please include your name, address, phone number and the basis for your identification.

#### Literature Cited

1. Bailey, W. 1955. Birds in Massachusetts, When and Where to Find Them. The College Press, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.
2. Griscom, L., and D. E. Snyder. 1955. The Birds of Massachusetts: An Annotated and Revised Check List. Peabody Museum, Salem.

#### BOOK REVIEW

A Field Guide to Birds' Nests, Hall H. Harrison, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1975. xxviii + 257 pages. \$8.95.

The Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas Project has captured the imagination of hundreds of people and has challenged their knowledge of bird behavior, nesting habitats, and juvenile plumages. Breeding can be confirmed by any of the 10 criteria established by the Massachusetts Audubon Society; I suspect, however, that "UN = used nest found" is one of the least frequently employed, especially since the worker is advised to apply this designation with caution. Nests of many species are very similar in appearance, not all members of a species construct "typical" nests, and geographical variations occur according to the availability of building materials.

Though excellent descriptions of bird nests are available in the literature, it is often difficult to visualize their appearance from such accounts. But when written characterizations are studied simultaneously with a photograph, the individuality of a nest becomes evident quickly.

The latest addition to the well-known Peterson series neatly fills a long-standing gap in the birding literature. The heart of Hal H. Harrison's A Field Guide to Birds' Nests is his collection of color photographs, showing the nests of 222 species that breed east of the Mississippi River. Usually, in a three-by-four-inch reproduction, the nest with its clutch of eggs is shown from above together with typical vegetation. This uniformity of presentation is especially valuable for comparing the nests of different species. The remainder of the page contains a summary of each species' breeding range and habitat, description and dimensions of the nest and eggs, and miscellaneous notes. For an additional 63 species, only a verbal account is given.

This volume differs from other Peterson bird guides in several respects. As mentioned, the principal illustrations are photographs rather than the customary drawings. However, for each species whose nest is pictured, there is a fine sketch of the bird by Ned Smith. Also, there is no systematic comparison of one nest with others. Herein lies my only major criticism of the book---the lack of a key to diagnostic features of a particular nest and a comparison with other nests with which it might be confused. Such a key was organized successfully by Richard Headstrom in Whose Nest Is That?, published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Rather than being outmoded by the new Peterson guide, Headstrom's booklet provides essential collateral reading for Massachusetts birders engaged in practical nest identification.

Because of the on-species-per-page format in A Field Guide to Birds' Nests, Harrison's writing is telegraphic, often utilizing sentence fragments. This style is annoying, especially when one feels that the author had much more to say but ran out of space. Nevertheless, the job is business-like. On the end papers Harrison illustrates egg

shapes and marking patterns, and in the text he qualifies his ground rules for descriptions of color and the like. Egg dimensions are always in the metric system; for all other measurements, U.S. units are given with their metric equivalents.

This book is up-to-date, using the latest nomenclature adopted by the American Ornithologists' Union. You will not, however, find nesting information on Manx Shearwater (first U.S. breeding record, Massachusetts, 1973), for the author believes that its regular breeding status, as well as that of several other species, has not yet been established. Perhaps for the same reasons our Quabbin colony of Common Turkeys was also omitted.

The notes often contain information that might lead some birders to worthwhile projects. For example, the incubation periods are unknown or uncertain for Magnificent Frigatebird (first U.S. breeding record, Florida, 1969), Reddish Egret, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Limpkin, Yellow Rail, Black Rail, among others. Also, the entire nesting cycle of the Mangrove Cuckoo is little known, as is the number of broods raised annually by the White-crowned Pigeon. Why does the Red-cockaded Woodpecker drill supernumerary holes above and below its nesting cavity; and why is there little, if any, overlap in the breeding ranges of the Carolina Chickadee and the Black-capped, while the latter and the Boreal Chickadee overlap widely?

In all, *A Field Guide to Birds' Nests* is a good book, sometimes provocative, sometimes frustrating. It's on my shelf and it should be on yours, if your interest in birds goes deeper than a check mark on a field card.

Leif J. Robinson, Wellesley

#### WORD BIRDS -- A QUIZ

Arthur and Margaret Argue, Boston

What Bird?	Clue	Your Answers
1. Man's name	Too easy, no problem	1. Bobwhite
2. College man	Not so easy--college <u>not co-ed</u>	2.
3. Precursory to pet funeral	An oceanic bird	3.
4. Tribal matriarch	A duck	4.
5. To find a salamander	Shorebird	5.
6. Donkey game	A duck	6.
7. Shoot from ambush	Shorebird family	7.
8. Gravedigger	A duck	8.
9. Psychoanalyst	A Rocky Mountain bird	9.
10. An invoice for silverware	A Florida bird	10.
11. Omnipotent humor	Shorebird	11.
12. Royal tantrum	See Gruiformes	12.
13. Sailors know them	Shorebirds	13.
14. A widow's lament	See Caprimulgiformes	14.
15. Commode	See Caprimulgiformes (Europe)	15.
16. Crowned Prince	See Passeriformes	16.
17. Capon	See Passeriformes	17.
18. Hunter's ambition	Shorebird	18.
19. Decoy	A duck (??grammatically)	19.
20. A tousled crank	See Galliformes	20.
21. A grassland prank	See Passeriformes	21.
22. One can't	Central and South America	22.
23. Roving stool pigeon	Shorebird (West Coast)	23.
24. Brother	A finch	24.
25. Circus performers wear them	Shorebirds	25.
26. Girl's name	Easy, no problem	26.
27. Tribal bird	California	27.
28. Lame relative	Florida	28.
29. Block printing tool	Europe--Africa	29.
30. Soviet pre-school	A warbler; similar program in United States	30.
31. Venus's Fly-trap	A good bird for your list	31.
32. 16th Century collar	Shorebird	32.
33. Construction machine	You should get a lift out of this	33.