

BOOK REVIEW

The Complete Outfitting and Source Book for Bird Watching, Michael Schofield. 1978. Marshall, California, Great Outdoors Trading Company, 192 pages, \$12.95 hard cover, \$6.95 paperback.

This book, which describes itself as the basic access tool for the more than 8,000,000 birders in North America, is divided into nine sections: an introduction; a history of bird watching from 10,000 B.C. to the American Birding Association; a section on basic equipment; a section with reviews of publications available, such as American Cage Bird Magazine; a chapter on clubs and organizations listed by state or country; eighteen pages of birding sites by state; nineteen pages of tours and expeditions; listings of zoos, museums, rare bird alerts, and official state birds; and a glossary for birdwatchers.

In the introduction, we are told that birds resemble people--we both can sing. If you intend to be an expert, you must "dress in colors that harmonize with nature--no blacks and whites, no fluorescent knits," and don't forget to "fill one of your pockets with raisins."

In the historical section, we learn of Roger Tory Peterson's "fluctuating home life," and that Arnold Small, the former infantryman, has tallied 4,410+ species and photographed 100 percent of these.

The basic equipment section does not give a clue about the cost of binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras, tape recorders and microphones depicted because the prices "are subject to frequent changes." Yet the chapter on tours and expeditions cites specific prices!

The prices are omitted again in the publication section, and several major works are not mentioned. Birds of North America by Chandler Robbins, et al., is listed as "no publication date given." There is no attempt to identify the best publications available; for example, Edwards' Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico is included, but Peterson's Mexican guide is not even mentioned.

In the section on clubs and organizations, under Massachusetts we find the Michigan Audubon Society but not the Brookline Bird Club.

The Massachusetts "Best Bet Birding Sites" are poorly described, to say the least. Listed are: Great Meadows, where you look for "Hooded Merganser, Osprey, Goshawk, and Herring Gull"; Monomoy, where you find "Great Black-backed Gull, Wilson's Phalarope, and Cape May Warbler"; and Parker River, where the specialties are "Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Myrtle Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Hooded Merganser, and Hudsonian Godwit."

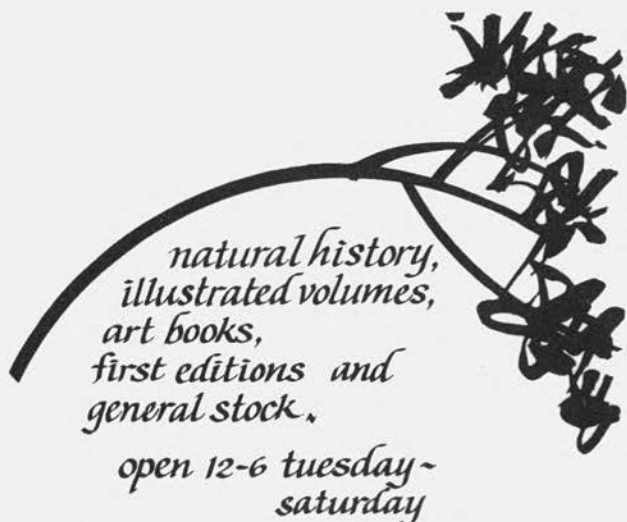
In the appendix, we find: "how to ask birds to your home and how to suggest they leave"; that the state bird of Massachusetts is the Veery (our poor little chickadee); and a list of 718 species of North American birds listed alphabetically by name "according to the Linnean system of taxonomy."

The final chapter is a glossary where we learn that a birder is: "One who seeks out uncaged birds to watch or listen to. A birder's skill lies primarily in identification. He or she often keeps a list of the birds

identified." On the other hand, a bird watcher is: "Same as BIRDER except implies less aggression. A bird-watcher may watch (or listen to) birds in his or her garden; no birder ever would."

This is a great book to take on a long drive; it provides lots of laughs with fellow birders, but really, what a tragic waste of trees.

Robert H. Stymeist



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books*

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