

BOOK REVIEWS

Fundamentals of Ornithology by Josselyn Van Tyne and Andrew J. Berger, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York. 624 pages, price \$11.75. There is a student edition.

This book was written to give a background to students intending to do graduate work in ornithology. A statement of this sort should not scare the serious bird bander or deter him from using the book. There is much useful and enjoyable material in the book for banders. Background never hurt anyone.

The bander will probably start reading Chapter 3, Plumage and Molts, as banders are much concerned with age determination using sequence of plumage as a yardstick. "The Horned Lark acquires the fully adult plumage at the time of the post juvenal molt - in late summer or early fall - at about three months." "Most passerine birds acquire the adult plumage by the first post nuptial molt - 14 months."

Chapter 9, Food and Feeding Habits, records data of interest to all. "Adult seed eating birds eat about 10 per cent of their weight and insectivorous birds eat an amount equivalent to 40 per cent of their weight daily." "A House Sparrow will starve in about 67 hours if deprived of food at 84° F. under experimental conditions." "Nuthatches, House Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, Cardinals, etc., regularly go without eating for 15 hour periods during the winter months in such northern states as Michigan."

Chapter 13, The Classification of World Birds by Families, is not without interest. Ornithological sources listing the so-called best; consumes 6 pages. Last and not least is the fine Glossary, pp. 559-586. For those of us who aren't on speaking terms with ornithological jargon, this will act as a "trot" in reading and enjoying the book.

I think it is unfortunate that Dr. Berger's book, Bird Study, (reviewed below -Ed.) didn't precede Fundamentals in publication. I like the style of writing in both books and use both frequently, especially Fundamentals.

Eleanor E. Dater

Bird Study by Andrew J. Berger, 389 pages, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York. June 22, 1961, price \$9.00. Also available in textbook edition.

Bird Study will be placed next to Peterson and Pough on many a bird watcher's night table or desk.

For the bander, the section on sexual, seasonal and age differences in plumage coloration will be of particular interest. Without detailing every feather the plumage sequence of such dimorphic species as the Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, and Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, are well defined.

Ninety-five pages are devoted to courtship, nest-building, eggs and young. Included under eggs is a discussion of X and Y chromosomes. "The sperm cells of most animals contain either an X or a Y chromosome ... Fertilization by a Y-bearing sperm produces a male." "The situation is different in birds ... in birds all sperm cells contain an X chromosome." "Chromosomes in birds are sometimes referred to as Z and W rather than X and Y."

"The House Wren and Bluejay probably cause more destruction of eggs and young than do most of the hawks." The topic of breeding parasitism brings us up to date on the research on that subject.

At the conclusion of the 95 pages perhaps the best in the book is the topic "Problems for Study". "The life history of no North American bird is so well known that further study is not needed." Here Dr. Berger contends that "a carefully written 'general note' often represents more work and has more significance than a 'major' paper".

The last chapter, common and scientific names of birds, could have been improved by giving the pronunciation of the scientific names as is done in the A.O.U. Checklist. This would have been of great help to the "learner", and would no doubt encourage the use of scientific names in conversation, as is done in foreign countries. There is a delightful statement in reference to taxonomy: "...the beginning student should not allow himself to be overwhelmed by taxonomic papers. Perhaps he will be encouraged if we express the opinion that it is doubtful that over a third of the avian taxonomic papers published during the past 60 years are worth the paper they are written on." (P. 337)

The line drawing illustrations far excel the numerous photographs with one exception. That is a picture of a blacksnake eating a nestling Rufous-sided Towhee. The author has succeeded in an unusual accomplishment, giving the reader a taste of his personality in a text book.

Eleanor E. Dater

BE CAREFUL! (From The Bat Banding News - Fall, 1960). No one should handle bats without gloves. The rabies problem is real. Rubber gloves are satisfactory for handling small bats. A glove can be placed on one hand with the other free for handling the band. Rubber gloves are rather fragile and don't last very long, particularly in cave banding. A tight-fitting leather dress glove may be useful.