

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

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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.