



A New Year should start out not only with good resolutions, but with a completion of unfinished business. The book corner of this issue, therefore, will concern itself with both.

The good resolution for all readers should be to try to assist your humble sub-editor. She appreciates kind words, but she yodels bird songs when printed material arrives. Fortunately for those who may have been within earshot, her 1964 singing has been confined to a minimum. Let very honorable mention be made of Mary A. Heimerdinger of the Pittsburgh Carnegie Museum who offered tangible assistance via the written word, and also of Prexy John Given, who wrote and submitted the review which immediately follows. May he be an example to all of you.

###

When we band or observe an unusual bird the first thing we want to know is how rare is it, what is the status and occurrence in our area, and what are the extreme dates. My "Birds Around New York City" by Cruickshank published in 1942 is as earmarked as my Peterson.

But this type of information is rapidly outdated as bird life is constantly changing and accurate observations are constantly increasing with the numbers of banders and bird watchers. The revision of Cruickshank's book has been underway for almost ten years.

John Bull's "Birds of the New York Area" published last month has been worth waiting for. It contains current data on the distribution and migration of all local birds. Although the area covers essentially northern Jersey, Long Island, and lower New York and Connecticut, the information should apply to most adjacent regions.

The forward by Roger Tory Peterson states "John Bull surveys the habitats still hospitable to birds, and lists the outstanding breeding sites and places from which fall and spring migration can best be viewed. He provides annotated reports on more than 400 species with information on ecology, breeding, migration, and distribution trends - in short, all the vital facts about each bird in this region."

In his chapter on changes in bird life since 1942 he notes increases and decreases. He finds the Prothonotary and Cerulean Warblers increasing as breeders and the Yellow-throated Warbler increasing as a

non-breeder. The Kentucky, Parula and Pine Warblers are reported decreasing as breeding birds. He speculates on some of the reasons for these changes.

John Bull, a research assistant of the American Museum of Natural History, former president of the Linnaean Society, and an active member of EBBA who instructed in last year's Workshop, has lived in New York his entire life and is an outstanding field ornithologist. His bibliography includes material by eighteen EBBA members, referred to in the species accounts. Special acknowledgement is made to Joe Jehl and Gil Raynor.

I'm sure any bander who lives in the vicinity of this area will find this book indispensable.

###

There's an advantage in having control of this corner: I can have the last word. In spite of the fact that I have never banded and probably never shall band within the area covered by Bull's book, I found it of great interest. Furthermore, anyone is apt to land in New York City at some time or other, with possibly a spare hour or two for bird watching. For the visiting watcher, the chapter on Birding Areas would be helpful.

There is also material of general interest, not affected by geographical limits. In the chapter Population Dynamic a glossary of terms is suggested as a guide in listing species observed on special "counts." For instance, "very abundant" should indicate over 1000 individuals per day per locality, with ten further categories in a diminishing scale, through "abundant," "common," "rare," etc.

We've considered the new. Now for unfinished business, or the old. Mary Heimerdinger writes that the final volume in the Bent series covering the Fringillida is being edited by Dr. Oliver Austin, and will run to two volumes. "The first volume of the finches is in press and should be out very soon (much to everyone's relief) and the manuscript for the second is almost complete."

She goes on to mention books on ecology: "Basic Ecology by Ralph and Mildred Buchsbaum (1957, Boxwood Press, Pittsburgh 13, Pa.) and The Web of Life by John Storer (hardcover edition 1953 by Devin Adair and several editions of the paperback, 1956-on, Signet-Key books, which I see still on newsstands from time to time.) There are many, many others, some which deal with ecology-conservation, some straight text books, and various others of more limited interest."

Now that both Heimerdinger and Swinebroad had recommended The Web of Life I went after it. I am an inveterate book browser, and whenever I have a few minutes to wait for a train, I browse in the bookstore off

the station waiting room. Not seeing Storer's book among the accessible paperbacks, I asked for it. The salesman then climbed a ladder to a high shelf where the Signet paperbacks were lurking in obscurity. No wonder I had missed them. It hadn't occurred to me I needed binoculars in a bookstore.

Immediately I went haywire and came home not only with The Web but with half a dozen small volumes. At sixty cents per volume this is a tremendous bargain.

The Web is exactly what the doctor ordered. You can read it through in an hour. It even has photographic illustrations. There's nothing textbookish about it. You'll be entertained and painlessly informed.

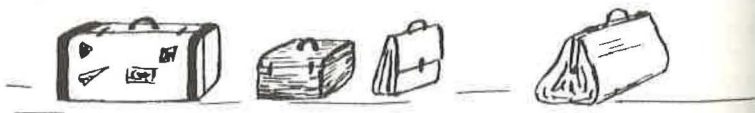
Other titles included in my haul are The Dawn of Life by J. H. Rush, How Life Began by Irving Adler, and The Genetic Code by Isaac Asimov. The latter deals with the discovery of DNA. The author has the gift of making complex chemical procedures sound simple to the uninitiated. He is a prolific author, always readable, and has other Signet books available. Stop, look and listen whenever you encounter him.

Finally, don't miss a Signet: The Nature of Living Things by C. Brooke Worth and Robert K. Enders. Brooke is one of us, a life member of EBBA and a frequent contributor to these pages. The authors say: "This book has been written because of our conviction that although biology is a joyous study, it is usually out of the reach of untrained people since the vocabulary of this science repels many of them the moment they open a book. Furthermore, we find, in most presentations of the subject, a tendency to overlook its joyous aspects." Take out another hour by the fireside for this introduction to natural biology, and ENJOY, ENJOY!

P. S. Dover paperbacks has issued more of the Bent Life Histories. Watch for the ones dealing with the species which you encounter in your banding...

Send to the New American Library of World Literature, Inc., P. O. Box 2310, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N. Y., on a postcard requesting free catalog of Signet and Mentor books.

313 Sharp Avenue, Glenolden, Pennsylvania



Be sure to get your bags packed and ready for your trip to the meeting!