



## Books For Banders

"SOMETHING OLD AND SOMETHING NEW"

Edited By Mabel Gillespie



Perhaps I should take a course in mystery story writing, so that I will not anticipate an event prematurely. In the last issue of EBBA News I announced that this number would deal with a certain aspect of bird study. But there is on my waiting list an offering from a publisher which rates prior attention. So the promised subject must wait until 1966.

How bird books are coming of the presses! There are books with world-wide coverage; books for continents and oceans; books covering countries, states, counties - You know, most any bander could write a book on the bird life of his own small acreage or even smaller back yard.

It is a slim little book that we are now to consider, rather a pleasant contrast to the ponderous tomes that have been threatening to overwhelm us. It is entitled "Pennsylvania Birds" and is written and illustrated by Earl L. Poole. It is published for the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club (D. V. O. C.), and distributed by Livingston Publishing Company, Narberth, Pennsylvania, and retails for \$4.00.

It might be mentioned at this point that the same company has recently published "The Birds of Colombia," by R. Meyer de Schauensee, curator of birds at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. This book is illustrated both with color plates and black and white drawings by Dr. Poole. This is a stunning book for the collector, and a must for the ornithological traveller. Dr. Poole also contributed line drawings for "Birds of the West Indies" by James Bond. (007)

The book of Poole's which we are about to consider is not the first survey of Pennsylvania birds. Back in 1889 an act of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania authorized the publication of a "Report on the Birds of Pennsylvania" by the ornithologist of the State Board of Agriculture. This work was authored by B. H. Warren, M.D., and published in 1890. It is a second edition of an earlier work, also by Warren. It is a semi-ponderous tome, illustrated by one hundred plates "copied from the small edition of Audubon's 'Birds of America.'" and bound in half morocco. Good old days! when state legislatures realized the importance of state ornithologists and state bird books.

It is my good fortune to possess a copy of this originally nicely bound volume which now shows the ravages of time. On the fly leaf is inscribed in ink: "John Gillespie Esq. with the compliments of Boies Penrose." This "Esquire" was the grandfather of my late husband, John A. Gillespie. The name of Boies Penrose will be familiar to any student of political history during the early decades of the past century.

There is a qualifying sub-title to Warren's book: "with Special Reference to the Food-Habits, based on over Four Thousand Stomach Examinations." Those were also the days when birds were expendable. The last remnants of the passenger pigeon hordes were then alive, and it is fascinating to read about them, and to get the viewpoint of that day about birds in general throughout the four hundred odd pages.

The fly-leaf of Poole's recent book states that since the publication of Warren's Report in 1890, only regional lists have been published. There is, however, "An Introduction to the Birds of Pennsylvania" by George Miksch Sutton, published in 1928. He was state ornithologist at the time, but the slim little volume was his private enterprise. He notes that a volume on Western Pennsylvania Birds by W. E. Clyde Todd, and one on Eastern Pennsylvania Birds by Witmer Stone were then in the making, but "since it may be years before these volumes are ready for distribution some sort of reference book is needed." Sutton not only compiled the text but included his own illustrations, a frontispiece in color, and pen and ink drawings for each species. Sutton is one of the best illustrators of bird life. In EBBA News, Vol. 28, No. 3, Albert Schnitzer mentions the book "Iceland Summer," which narrates Sutton's "adventures while finding and painting birds in Iceland." In his "Introduction to Pennsylvania Birds" Sutton states that this is intended as a book for the beginner and is not intended to be a complete reference book. Naturally, then, it can't compete with the old-time book by Warren or the current book by Poole.

It happens that I have had occasional associations with Dr. Poole during a long period of years. In the dim past I helped my husband compile lists of migration dates for the D. V. O. C., and Poole's name was constantly popping up. He reported birds from Ontelaunee, Moselem Springs, and other places with enticing names. Eventually I visited these places in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, and occasionally encountered Dr. Poole at the lookout on Hawk Mountain. One time we went with him to the Reading Museum where we saw some of his magnificent paintings of birds.

The publisher's cover blurb for Poole's book states that "the present volume treats of 361 species for which records have been authenticated, and 47 additional species whose status is hypothetical or questionable."

"'Pennsylvania Birds' is not a field guide or identification book: it is an annotated list indispensable to every student of Pennsylvania birds. An extensive introduction treats of the aunal zones and physiography of the State, with a discussion of bird associations and the rise and fall of individual species.

"The book contains many of Dr. Poole's drawings, and a special series of 32 maps showing nesting and distributional data." Other maps appear on the end papers: one showing life zones, the other, physiographic divisions.

In the past the D. V. O. C. has published two ornithological works by the late Witmer Stone: "The Birds of Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey" (1894) and "Bird Studies at Old Cape May" (1937); and "Birds of the Pocono Mountains" by Phillips B. Street (1956). "Bird Studies at Old Cape May" was illustrated by numerous photographs and black and white drawings by several artists including Dr. Poole. There are a few full page illustrations in color in the two large volumes comprising this work. Especially delightful are the two frontispieces, full page and in color, both by Dr. Poole. In Volume One appears an osprey perched on a high limb, and in Volume Two a pair of laughing gulls on the shore.

I am hoping the current publication of Poole's is only a forerunner of a contemplated publication in one or more volumes on the scale of some of the recent state books, such as "Louisiana Birds" by George H. Lowery, Jr. Also, that such an adequate work be lavishly illustrated with the colored paintings from the palette of Earl Poole. Whereas the text might have less value to bird students outside the state, the color prints would possess international value.

At present this modest volume, "Pennsylvania Birds," should be an indispensable aid to banders in the state, and a helpful guide to bird-watching visitors and vacationists. Furthermore, resident banders would do well to look carefully through the annotated list to see if he can make additions or corrections. Dr. Poole has depended on published accounts and claims for his material. Banders have a wealth of unpublished material in their files which should be brought out and aired at intervals. How can a man be expected to compile a definitive list of birds of any region if all possible information is not made available to him? It is characteristic of the fast-moving age in which we live that scientific books are often out of date by the time they are available to the public. It may seem as if we are being smothered by bird books, and yet any one of us has probably noted bird habits that have not yet been described on the printed page.

The cry of the age is: "Publish!" Any college professor who looks for advancement must publish frequently, though you might suppose his prime requisite should be the ability to put his subject across. The

bird bander, however, has no alibi for not making his data available. If, as I hope, the D. V. O. C. eventually brings out a more detailed work on the birds of Pennsylvania, then we who band in the state should start making available the information buried in our files. Some of it may prove to have prime scientific value.

313 Sharp Avenue, Glenolden, Pennsylvania



### COWBIRDS WITH YOUNG

By J. C. Finlay

A friend of mine, Mrs. Irene Calcutt, was out at Vancouver the past summer on a holiday. During late July, while staying in a motel, she and her husband were looking out the window and saw a male and female Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) feeding two young. This lady and her husband are both top notch photographers but realized that there was insufficient light to get a picture. They watched the two adults and 2 young for over half an hour. The young sat on a low bush with both the parents bringing food to them.

Both the observers were positive of the identification, as they had watched many a cowbird around here sneaking in and laying eggs in other birds' nests. I'd be interested if any of your readers had ever seen anything like this.

Site 9, R. R. 7, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada



### FELLOWSHIP OFFERED

The American Museum of Natural History, with support from the National Science Foundation, will once again consider applications from college undergraduate science majors for appointments as student participants in a summer program of ornithological research at the Kalbfleisch Field Research Station in Huntington, Long Island. Applicants must be proficient in the field identification of land birds of New York. The research program provides training in censusing breeding birds, mist netting, banding, aging and sexing birds through surgery, sound recording and playback techniques, preparation of museum specimens, etc. Students are in residence for ten or more weeks and receive their room and board plus a stipend of \$600. Applications must be filed not later than March 1, 1966. Write to Dr. Wesley E. Lanyon, Dept. of Ornithology, The American Museum of Natural History, New York, New York 10024.