

BIRDS OF NEW YORK STATE

By: John Bull

Doubleday/Natural History Press, Garden City, N.Y., 1974.

Pp. 655. \$29.95

New Yorkers have been patiently awaiting this updated comprehensive treatise of Ornithology in New York State. Since E.H. Eaton's massive Birds of New York (1910, Part I; 1914, Part II) much has happened, not only to the birds in the Empire State, but to people who watch them. Birders have become more numerous and undoubtedly more talented through fierce (but friendly) competition with their peers. During the past 60 years, something new has been added: bird banding. John Bull has made liberal use of banding records and this reviewer feels that many records would have gone unheeded if it wasn't for the dozens of dedicated banders in New York State.

John Bull, author of Birds of the New York Area (1964) has completed a monumental task. Birds of New York State is a prime example of years of dedication and hard work on his part.

Over sixty habitat photos grace this volume, the inclusion of which make the breeding records more meaningful. 164 Maps of breeding and banding recoveries further enhance this work and have provided the reader or researcher, a comprehensive picture of all significant banding records contributing to the scope of the book. Many of these records have never before appeared together. If all banders could be persuaded to have their long-distance recoveries charted on a state-wide basis, Ornithologists in other states would be greatly assisted in writing similar state-wide volumes.

The first few chapters (Introduction) analyse the history, environment and general conditions of birdlife in New York State. A review of major plantlife associated with birding areas, is most interesting and augmented by numerous habitat photos, put subsequent bird records in perspective. Another section entitled Analysis of the Avifauna lists breeders vs. nonbreeders and those of restricted breeding range.

The Family and Species Account section treats general occurrence per family, followed by a detailed account of each species that occurs in New York State. Each account covers range, status (nonbreeding and breeding), change in breeding status and banding (where applicable).

The author has proven reliable and careful in not accepting certain banding records of birds that should have been collected; on the other hand, more photographic records (of banded and other birds) have been accepted than at any time in the past. Further, he has personally conducted field studies during the breeding

season in areas less frequented by others, namely the Adirondacks, St. Lawrence valley, islands in eastern Lake Ontario, Tug Hill plateau, the Catskills, and the "Southern Tier" area along the Pennsylvania state line. He's examined specimens in many leading museums, here and abroad.

Many artists have contributed to this work. A painting by Neil Ward deserves much praise (frontispiece). Color plates by Roger Tory Peterson, Don Eckelberry, Arthur Singer, Al Gilbert, Walter Ferguson, Guy Tudor, Don Malick, John Yrizarry, and Chris Pineo, are a fine example of New York State art. All artists were one-time State residents. The plates by Singer and Tudor are outstanding in overall composition.

Birds of New York State not only deserves to be on the bookshelf of every Ornithologist, bander and serious birder, but it belongs there, as a daily reference guide. Considering the size, plates and content of this work, the price tag is not excessive. I hope the latter will not prevent you from considering this work as a permanent addition to your library.

--Reviewed by Frederick S. Schaeffer



BANDERS' SHOPTALK

According to Wood (A Bird-bander's Guide to Determination of Age and Sex of Selected Species, p.65, 1969), the Tufted Titmouse can be aged by the color of the roof of the mouth. The adult (AHY) can be aged between January and November by its black mouth, and the hatching-year bird can be aged by its gray mouth. However, during the fall of 1973 at McKee-Besher Wildlife Management Area in the Maryland Piedmont, I recorded mouth color on all titmice captured and found three definite AHY birds with pale gray mouth linings.

The first bird was banded on May 24, 1971 as an AHY male and was recaptured on October 27, 1972 (ATY) with a medium gray mouth lining. The second was banded on April 28, 1972 as an AHY (sex unknown) and was recaptured on October 27, 1972 with a "white" mouth and on September 8, 1973 (ASY) with a gray mouth lining. The third was banded on October 25, 1972 as a HY (skulled) female and was recaptured on October 10, 1973 and November 12, 1973 (SY) with a gray mouth noted on both occasions.

--Joan Woodward, 2433 Southgate Square, Reston, Va. 22091