

Reviews

Report of the Pan-American Society for the Protection of Birds. P.A.S.P.B. Committee on the Killing of Wild Birds for Scientific and Educational Purposes (David Stirling, Chairman). 1976. 14 pp., mimeo. Available for \$1.00 from Carroll E. Pinckard, 6601 Walther Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21206.

The scientific collecting of birds - especially of extralimital vagrants (birds outside their normal range) - has long been a major issue of contention between amateur and professional ornithologists. This report, which outlines the opinions of a bird-protection group toward current bird-collecting laws and practices, reviews and criticizes an earlier report of an American Ornithologists' Union committee (Auk 92 (3) Suppl.: 1A-27A, 1975), and then gives its own recommendations. Despite its authorship, the P.A.S.P.B. report is conciliatory and constructive in tone, and praises parts of the A.O.U. report, especially the A.O.U.'s proposed "Code of Ethics" for collectors.

The P.A.S.P.B. report outlines both the scientific and ethical considerations involved in killing birds, and then goes on to recommend tighter restrictions on collecting of birds, and representation of laymen as well as scientists in the process of deciding whether or not to issue a collecting permit. It notes that in 1972, only 31 permits to collect birds were issued in Britain compared to 2849 in the United States, and that attitudes of even the professionals to collecting in Britain are quite different from those in the U.S. (perhaps a sign of things to come here?). It advocates the establishment of nationwide Records Committees in the U.S. and Canada (like the one existing in Britain) to review sight records of extralimital birds, which might eliminate much of the supposed need to collect "first records" for particular states and provinces.

This report ought to be required reading for anyone interested in the collecting of wild birds.--Wayne C. Weber, Box Z, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

Collected Papers in Avian Paleontology Honoring the 90th Birthday of Alexander Wetmore. Edited by Storrs L. Olson. Smithsonian Contributions to Paleobiology No. 27, 1976: xxvi + 211 pp., 91 figures, 38 tables. No price stated.

This volume was published as a tribute to Alexander Wetmore, one of North America's best-known ornithologists, and for many years one of the world's leading experts on fossil birds. Wetmore is perhaps best known to amateur ornithologists as author of the "Wetmore sequence", the familiar system of classifying North American birds which places loons at the beginning of the list and sparrows at the end. However, Wetmore's most outstanding work has probably been in paleontology, in which he has published over 150 papers since his first in 1917. Although retired since 1952, Wetmore is still quite active, and his monumental four-volume series

on the birds of Panama is now nearing completion.

This publication contains, as well as a list of Wetmore's papers on fossil birds and an appraisal by Storrs Olson of his contributions to their study, 18 papers on a wide variety of subjects. These range in time from Archaeopteryx, the oldest known fossil bird (from the Jurassic period, about 130 million years ago) to birds that coexisted with man. Most of the papers will be of little interest to amateur ornithologists, as they consist mainly of detailed anatomical descriptions, with endless photographs of fossil bones. However, startling discoveries are described in two papers about Pleistocene fossil birds (less than 1 million years old). One paper, by Oscar Arredondo, describes 5 fossil species of giant birds of prey recently found in Cuban caves: an enormous, flightless owl nearly 4 feet tall, 2 species of giant barn owls, an eagle larger than any living species, and a vulture the size of an Andean Condor (10-foot wingspread). Just as remarkable is an account by Victor Morejohn of a flightless species of diving duck whose remains were found in California Indian middens less than 4000 years old, and which was probably hunted to extinction by Indians. Certainly, there is still plenty of room for new discoveries in avian paleontology!--Wayne C. Weber, Box Z, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762

Waterfowl in North America. By Paul A. Johnsgard, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1975: 575 pp., several black-and-white and color photographs, drawings and maps. \$25.00.

This large volume summarizes much of what is known concerning the ecology of the ducks, geese, and swans of North America. It is well-organized and written in a lucid style. For each species Johnsgard includes a brief summary of colloquial names, range, subspecies, measurements, and weights; these are followed by descriptive accounts telling how to identify the species in the hand and in the field, how to age and sex the birds, where and when to find them, and what is known of their general ecology. This book is very useful and should be in public libraries and in the library of anyone interested in waterfowl. Other reviewers have also given the book high marks. However, in spite of its usefulness, there are some faults. Productions of this nature often are tied up with a printer for long periods and this may have happened with Waterfowl of North America since there are only 3-4 literature citations more recent than 1972. The 25 page bibliography of earlier references should be very useful to students of waterfowl. Faults more serious than the lack of review of recent literature are several errors with regard to species which occur in Mississippi. For example, the Shoveller, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, and others are much more widespread in Mississippi in winter than indicated by Johnsgard. Similarly, the Hooded Merganser nests in many areas of the state (e.g., at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge and along the Tombigbee River in the east) other than the narrow area along

the Mississippi River indicated in this book. Oldsquaws are well known from coastal Mississippi and have been shot by hunters in the central part of the state, yet Johnsgard shows them wintering no closer than coastal North Carolina. Examination of any of several state bird books or recent issues of American Birds for southeastern states would have provided the data necessary to more accurately depict the true ranges of these species. Hopefully, these deficiencies will be corrected in a revision.--Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds. By J. Fred Denton, W. Wilson Baker, Leslie B. Davenport, Jr., Milton N. Hopkins, Jr., and Chandler S. Robbins; Georgia Ornithological Society, Occasional Publication No. 6: 60 pp. Available from Georgia Ornithological Society, 755 Ellsworth Drive, N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30318. \$2.00 (papercover).

This small book includes 351 species of birds which have been found in Georgia. For each species there is a one or two sentence statement identifying the status and dates of occurrence of the species in the state. Only printed pages are numbered, but each page is printed on only one side. Thus there is ample room for the observer to further annotate his copy. The book is pocket size and should be of great use to Georgia birders. It would be nice if other states had this type of checklist available.--Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

The Audubon Society Book of Wild Birds. By Les Line and Franklin Russell, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1976: 292 pp., over 200 color photographs. \$35.00.

Here is a "coffee table" book of an unusual nature. It includes over 200 outstanding color photographs of birds from all over the world, is printed on very heavy paper, and has a text printed in large type. If you didn't recognize the name, Les Line is editor of Audubon magazine - this book shares the quality we all appreciate in Audubon. Each of the fifteen chapters briefly discusses the strategies used by a group of birds in coping with their environment. This is not an ornithology text book, but there is a lot to be learned about birds in the essays presented here. The photographs by 66 of the world's best known wildlife photographers make the book a delight to thumb through. The text provides interesting reading for 10 minutes or as long as you want. My only reservation is the price - ouch! --Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

The Bird-Watchers' Book. Edited by John Gooders, David & Charles, North Pomfret, Vermont, 1975: 173 pp., numerous black-and-white photographs. \$8.95 (cloth bound).

The Second Bird-Watchers' Book. Edited by John Gooders, David & Charles, North Pomfret, Vermont, 1976: 159 pp., numerous black-and-white photographs. \$9.95 (cloth bound).

The Third Bird-Watchers' Book. Edited by John Gooders, David & Charles, North Pomfret, Vermont, 1976: 160 pp., numerous black-and-white photographs. \$9.95 (cloth bound).

These books each contain a series of chapters written by prominent bird watchers. Most of the birdwatchers are from England, or are at least British in origin and there are few references to North American birds. However, the essays are generally well written and the American reader will readily recognize many of the birds - or at least will know their American counterparts. The Bird-Watchers' Book includes, among 14 chapters, the adventures of an expedition to Spitzbergen to study Barnacle Geese, an account of attempts to see how many birds can be identified in Britain in one day, detailed observations of the European Goldfinch, articles on bird conservation, and suggestions of things that an amateur can do to further the study of ornithology.

The Second Bird-Watchers' Book includes more articles on bird protection, seeking out rare birds, bird-banding, the story of bird migration across the Sahara, studies of Gannets and boobies, and an essay on the relationship between hawks and man. There are 11 chapters in this volume.

The Third Bird-Watchers' Book includes 13 chapters dealing with such subjects as the English names of birds, the problem of dealing with birds affected by oil spills, the flyway concept, the birds of the swamplands of Uruguay, and titmice in the garden.

All of the chapters are written for the enjoyment of the amateur. They are not technical treatises. The photographs are generally well done and complement the chapters. I think this is a fine series, but would like to see chapters by some North American birders.--Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

Birds of the Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic. By George E. Watson, American Geophysical Union, Washington, D.C., 1975: 350 pp., many black-and-white line drawings, 11 color plates, maps. \$15.00 (cloth bound)

If you're heading south for the winter - way south - here's the field guide you'll need. This guide presents identification and distributional information for all of the birds known from the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic. Most of the birds found in this region are seabirds, and the guide is intended to help passengers on ships identify the birds they observe. In

addition to being a fieldguide, this book summarizes much of what we know about South Polar birds. It's an interesting book to thumb through and would be a good reference to have in larger libraries. In addition to the ornithological information, there is a good deal of description of the islands found in the region and a useful 23 page bibliography.--Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

Finding Birds in Mexico. By Ernest P. Edwards. Ernest P. Edwards, Sweet Briar, Virginia, 1968: 282 pp., maps, black-and-white plates, and 4 color plates. (hardback)

1976 Supplement to Finding Birds in Mexico. By Ernest P. Edwards. Ernest P. Edwards, Sweet Briar, Virginia, 1976: 135 pp., maps. (paperback)
\$8.00 for both books (not sold separately). Order from Ernest P. Edwards, Box AQ, Sweet Briar, Va. 24595.

These bird-finding guides are for Mexico what Pettingill's guides are for the United States. They tell you where to go in Mexico to find particular species and they tell you what species you will find in specific areas. In short, they are indispensable aids for the neophyte bird-watcher in Mexico. Finding Birds in Mexico begins with a description of Mexico, the habitats and bird associations found there, and the roads that will get you where you want to go. Beyond the introductory chapters is an alphabetically arranged gazeteer of bird-finding localities. Each locality description includes comments on climate, habitats, and bird species to be found. The accounts are easy to read and often include very specific directions to good birding spots. For example, the following passage from page 47 for Acapulco will give you the tone and usefulness of the book:

"To find one of the most favorable areas ... mark your mileage at the statue of Diana which is at the junction of the Mexico City highway with the Costero Miguel Aleman, then proceed long the Costero away from downtown Acapulco. Go 2.9 miles, passing the Naval Base and climbing part way up a long hill, and watch for a not-very-noticeable road which branches off to the right at an easy angle and descends somewhat. This is before the main road reaches the Hotel Las Brisas. Follow the narrow branch road (watch out for wash-outs) for 0.7 of a mile to a place where you can park and proceed on foot."

Edwards then lists the species most likely to be seen - including such things as Orange-fronted Parakeets, White-fronted Parrots, Squirrel Cuckoos, Citreoline Trogons, and others that will make you want to start planning your trip to Mexico!

The plates in Finding Birds in Mexico will be helpful, but you'll probably also want to take two or more of the Mexican field guides with you.

The 1976 Supplement to Finding Birds in Mexico brings the earlier book up-to-date by including bird name changes that have taken place and by noting the changes that have taken place in the Mexican landscape. A useful aspect of this supplement is a comparison of the common names of birds that are used in the Peterson-Chalif and Edwards field guides. Unlike North American Birds, many different common names have been used for some species and this has led to confusion for the uninitiated.

In summary, if you are planning a trip to Mexico, I would highly recommend getting these guides to help you with your plans and to use as guide books once you get south of the border.--Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

Birds and Their Ways. By Alexander Dawes Du Bois with Charlotte A. Du Bois. T. S. Denison & Company, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1976: 184 pp., numerous black-and-white photographs. \$8.95 (hardback)

Birds and Their Ways is a book that was apparently written by piecing together excerpts from a naturalists' journal. It reads somewhat like the writings of John Burroughs and other early naturalists. Part 1 describes the sequential events of the breeding season and the strategies different kinds of birds use in finding a mate, building a nest, and raising their young. Part 2 includes a series of essays, each of which deals with a single species. The birds included in these essays are the Eastern Bluebird, Spotted Sandpiper, Downy Woodpecker, Purple Finch, Common Loon, Whip-poor-will, Horned Lark, Long-billed Curlew, Horned Grebe, Short-eared Owl, Chestnut-collared Longspur, and McCown's Longspur. I mention these birds because, while not written in a scientific style, the author's original observations have not all been published in scientific journals and they might be of interest and use to students working on these species today. The usefulness of the book would have been greatly enhanced if it had been indexed. As it is, Birds and Their Ways is the sort of book one would like to get comfortable in front of a fireplace with.--Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762

Bird Taxidermy. By James N. Harrison. David & Charles, North Pomfret, Vermont, 1977: 67 pp., line drawings and photographs. \$6.95 (hardback).

Here is an inexpensive and well illustrated handbook for the aspiring bird taxidermist. It includes details of how to prepare a scientific study skin as well as how to prepare a life-like mount. The author is British and the English used is British - some of the supplies listed may

confuse American readers: for example, for wood-wool read wood shavings; for cotton-wool read cotton. I don't recommend the use of arsenic compounds as a preservative for scientific specimens - they're too dangerous to work with and not needed if the specimens are kept in a modern bug-proof specimen case that is regularly fumigated. The use of bleaches to clean skins is also frowned upon today because of the effect these can have on the subtle coloring of birds.--Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.

Vertebrates of Florida. By Henry M. Stevenson. University Presses of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 1976: 607 pp., line drawings, black-and-white photographs, maps, keys. \$35.00 (hardback).

The compilation of distributional and taxonomic information for the birds of a state is an enormous task that can be accomplished only over a period of years. That one man could assemble this type of information for not only birds, but for all of the vertebrates of a state is truly impressive. Vertebrates of Florida includes keys, distributional information, and descriptions of all vertebrates known from Florida. This is not a field guide; very few species are illustrated in any way. The value of this book will be its usefulness as a reference - as such, it should prove most valuable for the vertebrates other than birds since the bird species in Florida are generally well known and documented in other books.

In addition to the keys and descriptions, Stevenson includes a chapter on the preparation of scientific specimens of vertebrates. This should be useful to students. There is also a brief glossary and a bibliography of literature on Florida vertebrates. The bibliography does not include much old literature, but concentrates primarily on references published since 1954. A useful feature of the book is the thorough index. Even the bibliography is indexed!

While this book is about Florida vertebrates, many of the same species occur in Mississippi and other southeastern states. Stevenson's maps include the entire ranges of species, not just their ranges in Florida. Thus the book should prove useful to vertebrate biologists throughout the southeast.--Jerome A. Jackson, Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762.