

CORRESPONDENCE

'HABITS' AND 'BEHAVIOR'

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—

In the literature pertaining to life history studies of birds and other organisms there is frequent use of the term, 'habit.' As thus used, the habits of birds include all observable types of behavior in the field. There is much to be said in defense of the use of this term, particularly in regard to its propriety according to prolonged usage.

But the present trend in ornithology toward detailed studies on bird behavior, with the employment of modern psychological terms such as 'stimulus,' 'reflex,' 'releaser,' etc., makes it seem worth while to reëxamine our usage of the term 'habit.' In the restricted modern sense, psychologists define 'habit' as an 'acquired motor pattern.' Such behavior in birds is difficult to observe and describe in the field. It is advisable, therefore, that we substitute the term 'behavior' for 'habit' wherever it appears without specific qualification in ornithological manuscripts.

While considering this point, one may well ask whether 'habitat' is also an inaccurate term. According to Webster's Dictionary, however, this word has a different derivation from 'habit.' Thus 'habit' comes from Old English *habit*, *abit*, from Latin *habitus* state, appearance, dress, from *habere* to have, be in a condition; probably akin to English *have*. But 'habitat' comes from Latin, it dwells, from *habitare*. Thus there is no overlapping in the roots of the two terms, and we may quite properly study the behavior of birds in their habitats.

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'DUCK HAWK IN OHIO'

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—

In the General Notes section of 'The Auk' for April, 1942, page 306-7 is an item titled 'Duck Hawk in Ohio' by Hubert Bezdek, Ohio Division of Conservation and Natural Resources, Batavia, Ohio. The purpose of the note as stated by its author is: "Records of the Duck Hawk in Ohio are sporadic and scattered and it is therefore the intent of this paper to combine as many of these as possible besides the addition of new records." After an account of a specimen taken Oct. 4, 1940, in Clermont County, Ohio, he writes: "The following are *most* of the Ohio Duck Hawk Records:" (*italics inserted*). He then concludes with a table of occurrences.

Of the dates of occurrence, those on July 31, 1930; Jan. 19, 1932; May 30, 1937; Oct. 9, 1939; and Oct. 24, 1939, are taken from 'The Birds of Lucas County' [Ohio] (L. W. Campbell, 1940, p. 59). In treating the Duck Hawk in this work, I made the following statement: "Since 1927, notes from local observers give the total occurrences of this uncommon transient as twelve times in spring and about forty times in fall.—These data also include birds in the Erie Marsh, Michigan." (The Erie Marsh borders the state line.) Following this I mentioned several dates specifically to indicate wintering individuals, summer individuals, a banded individual, etc. It is these dates only which Mr. Bezdek has listed.

Furthermore, in Appendix "B," I have shown the earliest date of arrival and the latest date of departure for this species for both spring and autumn and the averages for these extremes. These data are based on six years in spring and nine in autumn.

In reporting only a portion of my material on the Duck Hawk, Mr. Bezdek has created a completely erroneous impression of the status of this species in Lucas County.

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**Long-billed Curlew on the Atlantic coast; a correction.**—In the last number of 'The Auk' (July, 1942, Vol. 59), in our "Bird records from Virginia," we recorded a Long-billed Curlew on Rogue Island and said that this was the first record for the bird on the Atlantic Coast since 1923. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., and Francis H. Allen have called to our attention, however, that this is incorrect. There have been many published records of Long-billed Curlews since 1923. Mr. Sprunt tells us that they are not at all uncommon on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.—WILLIAM MONTAGNA and WILLIAM A. WIMSATT, *Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.*