

BOOK REVIEW

The Ethology of Predation. E. Curio. 1976. Springer Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York. 250 pages. 70 figures. \$29.60.

Ornithologists and falconers have always found the subject of predation a fascinating one. Despite the popularity of books depicting predators in action, little has been written on the mechanics of predation. Dr. Curio has done much to redress the balance. This book is one of a series of volumes dealing with zoophysiology and ecology. It is aimed at the serious student who wishes to delve deeper into the way predators behave. The main text is divided into five chapters: Internal Factors, Searching for Prey, Prey Recognition, Prey Selection, and Hunting Prey. Fishes, birds, and mammals are all dealt with under the same heading, which does not make for easy reading. A paragraph on the behavior of the Lanner Falcon may be followed by one on piranha fish.

Dr. Curio relies on examples—and many are given—to make his point. Little space is devoted to discussion. It is interesting to observe that similar characteristics are found in a wide diversity of species. Surprise is probably the hunter's most effective weapon. Stealth, stamina, speed, and even deceit are all valuable attributes.

Hunger is not the sole motivation for hunting although an important factor. The sick, the aged, and the aberrant are always at more risk than the healthy. Often their disabilities are not discernible to the human eye. Selection is what predation is about.

Perhaps the book's greatest virtue is the 24-page list of references to articles and papers which would prove invaluable to anyone doing research work. The price of the book is excessive by any standards, but the wealth of information contained is undeniable.

R. B. Treleven

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Owls by Day and Night. H. A. Tyler and D. Phillips. 1978. Naturegraph. 208 pp., tables, maps, 16 color plates, numerous black and whites. Buteo Books, Vermillion, SD 57069; paper \$4.95; cloth \$7.95.

One is inclined to groan at the mention of yet another book on North American owls, but this one, though semipopular, is a pleasant surprise. Mr. Tyler as a boy accompanied his father and Arthur Cleveland Bent as they collected material for the latter's classic *Life Histories*. Tyler has done his homework diligently. For example, for such a little known bird as the Great Gray Owl one would expect a short, perfunctory account; instead, the periodical literature has been combed for the few published encounters with this owl in Yosemite and Montana, and then Robert Nero of Canada was persuaded to submit some of his as yet unpublished findings. Tyler writes with style and verve.

Don Phillips, the second author, is actually the artist, though some of his observations are included. His paintings and drawings, though a bit stylized, are dramatic and adequate. About a third of the text discusses the general characteristics of owls; the remainder comprises species accounts. Recommended!

Dean Amadon