

## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

**BIRDS OF THE BLACK HILLS.** By Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. and Nathaniel R. Whitney, Jr. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York, Special Publication Number 1, 1965: viii + 139 pp., 9 figs., 5 line drawings, map. \$2.50.

This is a detailed account of the birds in "an island of mountains in a vast expanse of prairie" known as the Black Hills, covering about 4,500 square miles. Two-thirds of the area lies in southwestern South Dakota and one-third in northeastern Wyoming. Included are all known records of substance, a large share of the observations being supplied by the authors. Contributors other than the authors are specially acknowledged. For the more regular species, information is presented on occurrence and local status, distribution, habitats, nesting, and migration. In many instances useful data are given on behavior or "special habits." Subspecific determinations of specimens were made by John P. Hubbard and are carefully summarized, hence this publication will have special interest to taxonomists.

Listed in all are 226 species, of which eight are considered hypothetical and 87 are reported as rare, casual, or irregular. The remaining 131 species occur regularly from year to year. Helpful lists of permanent residents, summer residents, transients, and winter residents are given under "seasonal distribution." Terms expressing relative abundance have been defined, thus making comparisons with other areas feasible. Each species account includes substantial information on nesting, vocalizations, etc.; it is generally succinct and appears to have been carefully edited. Brief but informative descriptions of the geography, topography, drainage, climate, vegetation, and "man's impress on the environment" provide instructive background to the ensuing discussions of "ecological distribution" and "origin and peculiarities" of the birdlife of the Black Hills. Eight photographs, which suffer slightly from reproduction on nonglossy paper, show major aspects of the Black Hills, and will be of interest to those who may not have seen this area, or who may know the Black Hills chiefly as the site of the Rushmore National Memorial. A map of the Black Hills area, complete with highways, is reproduced on the inside front cover and repeated, without change, at the end of the species accounts where there is an extensive and useful gazetteer. Inclusion of a scale on the map would have been helpful. This book, which measures 6 by 9 inches, is made especially attractive by the cover design—a White-winged Junco drawn by George Miksch Sutton—and by five line drawings within the book by William C. Dilger. The typography is clean and open, making for pleasant and easy reading.

Preservation of natural areas depends to an increasing extent upon the provision of interpretative information for the public. Regional lists of this sort are valuable to that end. All those who contributed to the "Birds of the Black Hills," and the authors in particular, deserve credit for making this information available. Those persons who attended the annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society in the Black Hills (17-20 June 1965) will recall that this publication was first made available on that occasion. Anyone planning a visit to the Black Hills will certainly want to have at hand a copy of the *Birds of the Black Hills* as a guide to the natural history and particularly the ornithology of the region.—ROBERT W. NERO.

**THE BIRD WATCHER'S AMERICA.** Edited by Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1965: 6 × 8½ in., 441 pp., many drawings by John Henry Dick. \$7.50.

In the early 1950's Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. published a new type of bird guide—

"A Guide to Bird Finding East of the Mississippi" and "A Guide to Bird Finding West of the Mississippi." These "Baedekers" to bird-watching were immediately popular, and countless people have used them in visiting unfamiliar parts of the country. Many enthusiasts have even planned their vacation trips to include as many sites listed in the Guides as possible. With the passage of time the detailed instructions for reaching the various sites have become more and more obsolete, as new roads were built and the ever increasing urbanization took over. The army of increasingly peripatetic bird students have also turned up many interesting sites not discussed in the originals. Clearly the time had come for a revision of these useful guides.

Rather than carry out a routine revision, Pettingill has chosen a far different course, one which, while it serves almost as usefully, will resist the passage to obsolescence more readily. He chose this time to let a galaxy of regional authorities write accounts of the birding adventures to be found in their particular areas. Pettingill selected approximately 50 places which he thought worthy of inclusion, and then invited suitable persons to write accounts of these areas. Some of the original places were dropped for lack of an author, but the final result presents accounts of 46 areas written by 44 persons. The authors wrote freely on their own areas but were limited to about 2,500 words, and the editor placed the accounts in a uniform style.

The result is most satisfactory. Editor Pettingill has done a fine job of smoothing out each account so that most of the pitfalls of the modern "authorship by committee" have been avoided. The chapters are not strictly "guides" and only a few authors give anything like detailed instructions for reaching some of the places mentioned. We have, instead, 46 interesting descriptions of some of the finest birding spots in the country.

The authors range from Roger Peterson, George Sutton, and Allan Cruickshank, names which are household words among the ornithological fraternity, through such outstanding, but not so well known, biologists as Luther Goldman, William B. Robertson, Jr., and Howard Cogswell, and a few professional writers such as Herbert Krause and Fred Bodsworth to dedicated amateurs (both as writers and biologists) such as Doris B. Gates, R. Dudley Ross, and Edgar Kincaid. For each author Editor Pettingill has supplied a short biographical account, and these make fine reading for the person who is interested in ornithologists as well as ornithology. Prominent in each account is a mention of how the person first became interested in birds, a subject that I submit is worthy of deeper exploration at some time and somewhere.

The 46 accounts are divided into the following geographical, ecological, or topical groups: Atlantic Coast and Coastal Islands; Eastern Mountains and Foothills; Pacific Coast, Western Mountains, and Foothills; Alaskan Islands; The North Country; The Wetlands; Prairies, Deserts, Desert Mountains, and Canyons; The Lower Rio Grande Valley; Migration Spectacles; and Some Avian Specialties. The regions covered vary widely in size from some of the large National Parks—Glacier, Olympic, and Great Smokies, to some very small but vitally interesting areas such as Block Island, Rhode Island, the Kirtland's Warbler country of Michigan, and the hawk-watching stations at Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, and Duluth, Minnesota. About half of the areas represent classical bird-watching spots known to all birders (at least by reputation) while the rest offer descriptions of some refreshingly new spots. At least four of the areas covered (The Aleutians, The Pribilofs, Arctic Alaska, and Churchill on Hudson Bay) will hardly qualify for the average birder's vacation routes.

While the choice of areas was clearly the prerogative of the Editor, and no valid criticism can be made of his choices, I do want to offer some personal prejudice in this matter. The geographical distribution of the areas discussed is very uneven. The southeast is represented by only two areas (two others included are of a highly specialized

nature) and the wide expanse of the Midwest from the Appalachians to the Rockies by only about five (again ruling out certain specialized areas). Even more disturbing to this reviewer was the fact that the great deciduous forest of eastern United States is represented by only one area (the Great Smokies). The several other areas included in this region are either outliers of the boreal forest or are the scenes of specialized activities such as the observation of hawk migration. The result seems to be that while the Easterner can profit by learning of the exciting birding grounds of the West, the visitor from the West can learn very little about some of the interesting and exciting (to him) spots in the deciduous forest region.

Besides the above invalid, and almost irrelevant, criticism my only complaint can be that the pleasure to be derived from reading the book doesn't last long enough, and I could only wish it were twice as long. The would-be traveler can profit immensely, and the armchair traveler can obtain several evenings of vicarious pleasures in good company. I cannot imagine anyone interested in birds who will not enjoy (and profit by) this book.—GEORGE A. HALL.

**BIRDS OVER AMERICA.** By Roger Tory Peterson. New and revised edition. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1964: 7 × 10 in., xvi + 342 pp., 105 photos by the author. \$7.50.

Soon after Roger Peterson's "Birds Over America" was first published in 1948, Harold Mayfield reviewed it in *The Wilson Bulletin* (1949. 61:54-55). What he wrote is still applicable and I therefore quote it in part:

"Better than any other book I know, this one conveys the spirit of the enthusiasm in the sport of bird study. Its pages are filled with the 'shop talk' of the field ornithologist—query, speculation, anecdote of the kind we hear wherever members of the clan gather: Where is the Bachman's Warbler? How many birds are there in America? What bird is the most common? What are the prospects for survival of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker? Why is the Peregrine the favorite bird of so many people? What happens to birds in a hurricane? Where are the best places to see birds? What are the attractions (ornithological) of Maine, Cape May, Santee delta, Everglades, Tortugas, Louisiana swamp, Texas coastal plain, Arizona desert, California waters, Utah marshes?

"These and scores of other questions received thoughtful comment in the twenty-five chapters of this book. Through them we gain a new appreciation of the years of vigorous field work, the keen eye, and the precise mind which made possible the famous 'Field Guides'."

From the day of publication, *Birds Over America* enjoyed a wide response and was eventually the basis on which Dr. Peterson received the John Burroughs Award "for the excellence in nature writing." To students and other persons wanting to know "what bird watching is all about" beyond identifying and listing species, I always recommended this book because it explained by indirection while suggesting ideas and objectives that were both stirring and challenging. But in due course it became dated—though never in spirit—and went out of print.

In this welcome revision, Dr. Peterson has rewritten certain passages, sometimes changing the tense from present to past, and substituted new paragraphs that bring the text up to the minute. Pagination and type style are the same and so are the photographs. The latter, however, have lost in reprinting their freshness and sparkle that so beautifully enhanced the first edition.—OLIN SEWALL PETTINGILL, JR.