

BOOK REVIEW

Occasionally, there is offered a book, which by good assembly arouses thinking and coordinates ideas beyond the local level and expands them to the universal.

Of such a nature is Jean Dorst's book "The Migration of Birds", a translation from the French, published in America by Houghton Mifflin Co.—The Riverside Press of Cambridge, Mass.

Dr. Dorst interestingly traces the theories of migration of birds by citing passages from the writings of Biblical authors, ancient naturalists and philosophers as Homer, Aristotle and Pliny and bridges the gaps over the superstitious and absurd aspects which were accepted during the Middle Ages by the ideas of such writers as Emperor Frederick II, Johann Wonnecke von Caub, Jean Baptiste Dutertre and others. These ideas held over even into the start of the nineteenth century. These men with some variation, all expressed much the same ideas, that birds did not all migrate but some hid in the water, the marshes, etc. and thus accounted for the sudden disappearance and reappearance of birds at the fall and spring seasons.

In his treatise (*Ornithology*) on migration, Pierre Belon (1517), mentioned that European storks congregated on the Egyptian Plains in large numbers during September and October and also stated that quail alighted on ships in the Mediterranean Sea. Some of these were captured and when prepared for eating, had crops full of wheat, indicating unbroken flight from the mainland of Europe. He also noted that doves and swallows moved to Africa for the winter away from the cold and lack of food to an area that supplied both, and that birds confined in an aviary did not hide.

In America, Oviedo in his writings (1526-1536) recounts that flights of infinite numbers of many sorts of birds passed over the tip of Cuba and the islands and continue southward across the gulf and also great land flights over Darien, Panama, etc.

J. J. Audubon in the early nineteenth century was among the then more enlightened people who at that time accepted migration and started theories for the explanation of that phenomenon.

With this background, Dr. Dorst devotes the balance of his book to giving the opinions and methods of study used by the present ornithologists, whether they be observation in the field, bird banding or work on the experimental devices used to study the psychology, physiology or orientation of birds. Chapters are devoted to all the known methods now used by present day ornithologists in the aural, optical and radar fields.

In other parts of the book excellent maps show the paths of the European and Asiatic routes which different types of birds follow during their seasonal flights.

Work on the local movement of European birds is well illustrated by charts showing dispersal routes by the analysis of points of release and later recovery.

There are comparisons of America with Europe, and analogies of conditions in S. America, Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

The movements of sea birds also have a place in the book.

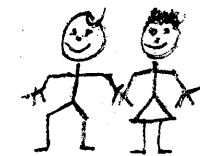
All known data that pertains to avian migration, whether geographical or meteorological, physical or mechanical experimentation have been put between the covers of 'The Migration of Birds' by Jean Dorst.

This book in a nontechnical way has a wealth of facts and offers much valuable information on that most fascinating phenomenon, the universal, biannual movement of birds. Both amateur and professional ornithologists will find this a most valuable reference book.

Alice E. Ulrich—Ed.



A G'beak



G'becks

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376 Seneca Road
Hornell, New York

Dear Editor:

In the current issue (July) of The KINGBIRD we noted two apparent variants recorded which do not correspond to the AOU checklist. On page 164, BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS, line 9 and line 13 of the same paragraph you will find the "Rose-breasted Grosbeck" and the "Evening Grosbeck" listed. Actually although I am a leucocephalic Grosbeck (formerly erythrocephalic) we can appreciate the confusing nomenclature and have devised a sure fire method of differentiation in the field — A G'beak flies while a G'beck can only walk.

Sincerely,
W. M. GROESBECK

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