

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Naming the Birds at a Glance. By Lou Blachly & Randolph Jenks. Alfred A. Knopf, New York: 7½ x 4½ in., xvii + 331 pp., three identical color pattern guides. \$3.95.

In the book "Naming the Birds at a Glance", a new guide to the Eastern Land Birds of North America, the authors have presented a different approach to bird field identification. They have not used the regular order of the A.O.U. checklist but have placed the birds according to the features that are most noticeable in the field.

For size comparison, they use the House Sparrow, Robin and the Common Crow. At the illustration of each species, sizes are represented by three horizontal bars with a vertical crossbar, to give the relative length of the described specimen.

Another feature which sets this book apart from previous field guides, is the grouping together of birds which have specific color marks on identical places on the body.

The book is of pocket size and is divided into six sections, each of which has its own particular advantage for quickly placing an identification mark on the bird.

The first section covers the perching and other related birds and groups them, regardless of genus, according to common conspicuous color patterns. For quick reference the color pattern guide is placed in the front, the center and the rear of the book. An illustration of this method is shown in the solid chestnut or brown underparts of the Bay-breasted Warbler, Orchard Oriole and the Eastern Bluebird or the orange color on the Golden-crowned Kinglet, Amer. Redstart and Prothonotary Warbler.

The second section places identification marks on the woodpeckers, with size as the chief criteria, beginning with the Downy and ending with the Pileated.

In sections three and four, the soaring and skimming insect hunters are given in characteristic flight pictures, again with size as the guide, as are also the ground dwelling, chicken-like birds.

Owls have their place in the series, with or lack of ear tufts, as the identification mark.

Section six portrays excellently the marks of identification for crows, ravens and hawks. These are well shown with illustrations of both perched birds and the underwing and body patterns of flying birds.

At the end of the book, the authors have set aside two and one half pages in which the birds described are classified and arranged according to the 1957 edition of the A.O.U. checklist.

So far in this report on "Naming the Birds at a Glance", it has been highly recommended as a field guide for the novice and occasional bird

observer but this writer believes the experienced observer will find in this book many new and helpful suggestions in bird identification. — Alice E. Ulrich.

The Royal Birds. By Lillian Grace Paca. St. Martin's Press, New York. 6½ x 9½ in., xi + 164 pp., 90 line drawings by the author. \$7.50.

Ornithological authors have neglected the genus *Cygnus* and as a result much of the life history of the swan has remained unstudied and unwritten.

In telling the story of the swan, from the fossil remains in the chalky soil of the lower Cretaceous System up the present time, the author in her book, "The Royal Birds", names and describes in one volume the ten species of swans of the world, nine true wild birds and the semitame mute which is the familiar park swan the world over. This book was not written as a scientific textbook but was written with the purpose of giving good, reliable authoritative information about these interesting and romantic birds.

The book gives the information, that, out of the six continents, Africa only has no native swans. South America has two, The Black-necked Swan and the Cascoroba or goose-swan; North America has three, two of which the Whistling and the Trumpeter are native, and, one the introduced Mute of Europe; Australia has the Black Swan.

Aside from the semitame Mute Swan, Europe has the large Whooper, the smaller Bewick's and the Immutable which is restricted to the Baltic Coast; while Asia claims the Jankowski as its single swan.

In the book are narratives about each of the ten afore mentioned species, which include status as wild birds, characteristics, habitat, homelife, voice and range. These verbal descriptions are supplemented by penline drawings, very well done.

One chapter is devoted to tales of swan in legend, mythology, folklore and history, while another deals with the care and keeping of swans.

More than just furnishing authentic information about swans to the ornithologists, this book will be just as attractive to the booklover for its beauty in the exquisite drawings in which the author-artist has expressed every mood and pose of these Royal Birds. Every book collector will also want his copy.

Alice E. Ulrich.

