

BOOK REVIEWS

A New Dictionary of Birds. Edited by A. Landsborough Thomson. McGraw-Hill. 928 pp. Illus. \$17.50.

The factual excellence of A New Dictionary of Birds has been testified to in the reviews of professionals, such as the review by Roland C. Clement in the May-June *Audubon Magazine*. As a birder, not a professional ornithologist, I find that the volume is a useful addition to my very small library.

In normal dictionary fashion, it includes definitions of terms. For the amateur, the meaning of many of these special terms is not easily found elsewhere. In addition, there are many articles summarizing knowledge in special aspects of ornithology. One can browse among articles on flight and the modifications of structure developed in birds for efficient flight; on the physiology of birds, such as descriptions of the nervous system, respiratory system, hearing, sight; on evolution and classification; on studies of bird behavior, such as learning, courtship, aggression; on conservation and control; even on birds in literature and music. Or one can study various aspects of one subject, with the help of cross-references in the articles and the two lists of major articles at the front of the book, one of general subjects and one of bird groups. Descriptions of families and world distribution would be of special interest to the bird watcher who likes foreign travel. Each major article is followed by a brief bibliography listing some of the most important reference works for that subject.

For the bird watcher interested in broadening his understanding of what he sees and increasing his knowledge of the problems that ornithologists are studying, A New Dictionary of Birds would be an excellent volume to own, especially if he cannot afford to purchase many books or does not have access to a large reference library. Dorothy McIlroy.

Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region: An Annotated Check-list. By Clark S. Beardslee and Harold D. Mitchell. Bulletin of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, Vol. 22, Buffalo, N.Y., 1965. xix + 478 pp. Illus. Hard cover \$10. Soft cover \$9.

The up-dating of information on occurrence and breeding of birds in New York State, recently started with John Bull's *Birds of the New York Area*, is ably continued with *Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region* by Clark S. Beardslee and Harold D. Mitchell. Although this is called an annotated check-list, it gives much more information than is usually included in such a list.

Early observers and previous ornithological works dealing with birds of the region are mentioned in a brief historical section. A short discussion

of the life zones found there is followed by an interesting description of good birding areas, with mention of some typical and unusual birds to be found in each. These areas are keyed by number to a map and illustrated by photographs of some of the habitats. Many more places are mentioned than appear in either Pettingill's *A Guide to Bird Finding East of the Mississippi* or in *Enjoying Birds in Upstate New York* by Pettingill and Hoyt. Two lists of birds, one classified by seasonal status (permanent resident, summer visitant, etc.) and the other by monthly occurrence, should be helpful to birders planning trips to the region to see particular species.

The annotated list, comprising the major part of the book, includes all pertinent data on present frequency of occurrence, breeding, first and last dates and period of maximum occurrence. A short discussion of each species gives such information as type of habitat where the species may be found, unusual sightings, interesting historical notes including population changes. Complete details for records of rare birds are given. Black and white photographs of a few species are included, but there are no other pictures of the birds as this is not intended to be a guide to identification.

Bird watchers in the Niagara Frontier Region should own this book to supplement their identification guides. Birders in adjacent areas and in the rest of the state who may be driving through, birding on the way, or planning a trip to the region will find it invaluable for its specific information. The data published will be very important in the compilation of our projected new state bird book. It is to be hoped that other sections of the state will be able to find as capable authors to up-date previous publications or to compile a book like this if none has ever been published. Dorothy McIlroy