

BOOK REVIEWS

A Comparative Life-History Study of Four Species of Woodpeckers. Louise de Kiriline Lawrence. Ornithological Monographs No. 5, published by The American Ornithologists' Union 1967. 156 pp, line drawings, charts and graphs. \$3.75 (\$3.00 to A.O.U. members).

Living in an area in central Ontario, in the midst of a mature second-growth mixed forest, the author of this monograph had an excellent opportunity to carry on intensive studies of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers. Opportunity alone would not have been enough, and the results of this study show that it was patiently and capably handled by a competent scientist, with enough background in bird behavior to interpret what she saw, to add considerably to our understanding of this group of birds, and to correct some long standing errors of interpretation. Many life history studies of the past had scanty treatment of behavior. Some behavior studies of today concentrate on a very limited aspect of the entire life history picture. Mrs. Lawrence has thrown a new light on our past knowledge of these species, by her description and interpretation of behavior patterns throughout the annual cycle. A glance at the table of contents gives a hint of the exhaustive treatment. This publication has much of interest for anyone in New York State, where the same four species may be found (although the Sapsucker is a breeder only in the more northern parts or at higher elevations farther south). The literature cited includes over 80 publications, and will be useful to any student of woodpeckers.

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Attracting Birds: from the Prairies to the Atlantic. Verne E. Davison. Thomas Y. Crowell Co. New York, 1967. 252 pp. \$6.95.

This is an extremely useful reference book for all those interested in attracting birds to their yards or farms either by plantings or supplemental feeding.

Three short introductory sections discuss how bird food preferences have been determined, illustrate various types of feeders with accompanying lists of commercially available foods and birds of similar preferences, and describe, with specifications and sketches, bird houses and roosting boxes and their care and placement.

The major portion of the book consists of two lists — bird species and foods — both arranged alphabetically. Bird species are listed by the accepted A.O.U. common names, with alternate common names listed and cross-referenced to the name under which the information is given. Under each species are given: other common names, scientific name, seasonal occurrence, range, foods used (both animal and plant with the plant foods divided into "choice" and "fair"), nest placement, and ways of attracting when this is possible. For plants and other foods, under each species or general item, such as "bread, white", is a list of the bird species for which it is choice and fair food. Plant species are listed by common name, with other common names and scientific names included, and indication of the status, such as "Annual weed", "Introduced ornamental shrub." Other common names are listed and cross-referenced to the name under which the bird species that eat it are given.

There are also alphabetical indexes of the scientific names of birds and plants which give the common name under which the species appear in the main sections. There are several pages listing reference books on birds, both general references and books by states. With the alphabetical listing no general index is necessary. However, in the front in addition to the usual contents and listing of figures, there is a list of page references to the tables of birds of similar food preferences and birds that use similar nesting habitats.

It would appear that the answer to most questions one might have on what food to put out or what trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants to grow to attract birds could be found quickly in this book. DWM

The Psychology of Birds. Harold E. Burtt. Macmillan, New York 1967. 242 pp., illus. \$5.95.

The sub-title "An Interpretation of Bird Behavior" appears to me somewhat misleading. The book is less an interpretation than a collection of observations, collected from many sources, on the various aspects of bird behavior, without detailed discussion of any of them. The illustrations are eleven black and white drawings by Peter Parnall. It might serve as an introduction to bird behavior for a beginning birder. DWM

Birds of Europe. Illustrations by John Gould. Text by Abram Rutgers. Methuen & Company Ltd. London, 1966. Distributed in U.S. by Barnes & Noble, New York. 321 pp., illus. \$15.00.

Birds of Australia. Illustrations by John Gould. Text by Abram Rutgers. Methuen & Company Ltd. London, 1967. Distributed in U.S. by Barnes & Noble, New York. 321 pp., illus. \$15.00.

Each of these books consists of 160 color plates, those in the first reproduced from the lithographs in John Gould's "The Birds of Europe" and "The Birds of Great Britain", and in the second from his "The Birds of Australia." Neither includes information about John Gould (1804-1881) or his sketches and lithographs. The page opposite each picture is not the text from the original books, but has been newly written by the Dutch ornithologist Abram Rutgers. The plates make interesting browsing, the text covers very briefly range, habitat, some habits and field characters, food and nesting. Present common and scientific names are used throughout. DWM

Birds of Wyoming County, New York: A Contribution to the Ornithology of the Northern Allegheny Plateau. Richard C. Rosche. Bulletin of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, Vol. 23, Buffalo, N.Y., 1967. 77 pp. + maps and alphabetical list \$2.75 from the Buffalo Museum of Science, Humboldt Park, Buffalo, N.Y. 14211.

This is an excellent summary of what is known about the current geographical, ecological and seasonal distribution of birds in Wyoming County. Brief descriptions of a few localities and habitats of chief importance are followed by the species accounts. These give in compact form: abundance, frequency, seasonal occurrence, and where the species is most apt to be found; extreme dates of occurrence with number seen, locality and observer, peak dates of migration, nesting data; maximum one-day counts by a single observer; miscellaneous information of interest such as song period, changes in status.

A map indicates the location of places mentioned. As no roads are shown, a birdwatcher might need local assistance in finding some of these. Nine additional maps show the approximate summer distribution of one breeding species each.

Instead of an index, there is an alphabetical list of species which includes, on one line per species, the page reference, status, first and last dates and whether the species breeds.

Member clubs in sections which have no similar publication might look at this with a view to starting similar projects in their areas. Format is simple enough to be used by even a small group which could not consider a more ambitious project like Beardslee and Mitchell's "Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region" or John Bull's "Birds of the New York Area." Collecting all information they have in this form would show what additional information is needed and might spur some members to help fill in the gaps, thereby contributing information for the state bird book. DWM