

REVIEW BOOKS RECEIVED

The Dell Encyclopedia of Birds. By Bertel Brunn. Illustrated by Paul Singer. Delacorte Press, 1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, New York, New York 10017. 1974. 240 pages. Hardcover \$6.95; Paperback \$2.45.

The Seabirds of Britain and Ireland. By Stanley Crump, W.R.P. Bourne, David Saunders, Taplinger Publishing Company, Inc., 200 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10003. 1974. 287 pages with photographs and range maps. \$14.95

Swans of the World. By Sylvia Bruce Wilmore. Taplinger Publishing Company, Inc., 200 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10003. 1974. 229 pages with photographs and line drawings. \$9.95

BOOK REVIEW

The Sea Has Wings. By Franklin Russell. Illustrated by Les Line. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 201 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10003. 1973. 189 pages with photographs.

With strongly written books about pelagic birds like this, perhaps these animals will find as prominent a niche in people's wonder of the sea as whales and old clipper ships.

Russell's emphasis that the pelagic birds are "wary of land" is awesome to birders who look to terra firma for their security. "Between nesting seasons, the greater shearwaters spend about eight months at sea without sighting land. They crisscross the great ocean in flights that may total one hundred thousand miles or more a year..." These birds are commonly seen from fishing boats beginning about 20 miles in the Atlantic off Long Island.

The author often indulges in fancying the drama of the pelagic birds' sea-surface and sea-wind existence. Once in winter he could imagine them "flung across a revolutionary constellation of wind and rain and ice, of giant waves and clashing currents. Out there, buried hundreds, even thousands, of miles deep in the spume of the storm, millions of them were riding the wind, fighting for their lives. They are, I believe, the toughest forms of life on earth..."

The book focuses on the nesting seabirds of the northeastern Atlantic. Here Les Line, editor of Audubon Magazine, provides his photographic studies which are arranged categorically and intermittently through the volume under the headings, "The Gannetry," "The Puffinry," and "The Ternery." The pictures are remarkable for their journalism like the close-ups of paired Gannets passing algae back and forth and for their artistry like the flying Puffin shown against the full moon.

Russell balances his exuberance with the more troubling realities of nature. He includes as part of the Funk Island breeding scene off Newfoundland "the manifold smells of bird guano, rotting bodies, broken, addled eggs, stagnant, filth-filled waters, the whole assailing the senses simultaneously and leaving strong-stomached observers weak with the

shock of it all." This inclination toward reporting nature's expendability and even horror is characteristic of Russell's books as in "Watchers at the Pond."

The Sea Has Wings appears at a time of increasing interest in pelagic birding. New York State birders are taking trips out of New York City, Freeport, Captree and Montauk Point — a hundred miles offshore in the case of those heading out of the city to the Hudson Canyon area of the Atlantic. Many birders are going aboard regular party fishing boats — particularly those heading for Cox's Ledge, 40 miles off Montauk Point where they look for birds like gannets, jaegers and even fulmars while other passengers are dangling fishing lines in the sea below.

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