

REVIEW

Where to Find Birds in New York State: The Top 500 Sites. Susan Roney Drennan. 1981. Syracuse University Press. 672 pp., 106 maps. \$38.00 (Cloth), \$18.95 (Paper).

In the mid-1970s the Executive Committee of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs determined to undertake a guide to bird-finding localities in New York State, and invited Susan Roney Drennan to prepare it. The choice of this author was a fortunate one. At a time when bird-finding guides have become numerous, Susan Drennan has produced a book that sets a new standard for books of this kind, and one that both the author and the Federation can take great pride in.

In preparing this monumental work, the author seems to have thought of everything. *Where to Find Birds in New York State* is a comprehensive and detailed guide to more than 500 birding localities in the state. Descriptions of these top sites are arranged according to the ten regions currently recognized in the Regional Reports in *The Kingbird*. Preceding the guide to localities are a discussion of the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC), complete with instructions on how to report a rarity and a sample form; a section on Rare Bird Alerts in the state; a directory of research collections and ornithological libraries in New York State; and detailed physiographic and ecological descriptions of each of the ten regions. Following the site descriptions are specialized chapters on pelagic birding (covering the whole New York Bight), and on hawk migration sites, a useful bibliography, and an index to the localities covered in the guide.

It is the descriptions of birding localities that form the bulk of the book—some 454 pages and 106 maps, many of them drafted by the author herself—that merit the most attention here. The amount of information presented is almost overwhelming. Not only is each site discussed in terms of the birds to be found there—their abundance, seasons of occurrence, and status, notes on “special” species and hints on how to find them—but a wealth of supplementary ecological information is provided as well, information that will surely entice the most determined and hurried lister to slow down and take greater notice of the habitat and how the birds fit into it. Such detailed descriptions of the habitats, with lists of dominant trees and shrubs, greatly increase the usefulness of the book. Careful directions for lo-

cating each site are provided, and happily, these directions *work*, a feature that not every birding Baedeker can boast.

Each of the other sections of the book lives up to the high standard achieved by the author in her descriptions of the birding localities, but space limitations here prevent this reviewer from doing more than recommending them. The whole book is written in an engaging, conversational style that both reveals Susan Drennan's personal knowledge of most of the sites and subjects and makes it easy to absorb the great amount of information she has compiled. Although the major burden of preparing this splendid birding Baedeker has been borne by the author, she herself points out that the book would not have been possible without the help of scores of people from all parts of the state. *Where to Find Birds in New York State* is liberally sprinkled with expressions of gratitude to these numerous collaborators; this reviewer cannot recall a book in which the matter of acknowledgments has been attended to so thoroughly.

Where to Find Birds in New York State lives up to the highest expectations its announcement could have engendered, and fills a gap in the ornithological literature of our state that has long been felt. Congratulations are due to Susan Drennan, her many collaborators, the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, and Syracuse University Press on a job very well done.

— John Farrand, Jr.