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## The Nesting Season: the Bird Photographs of Frederick Kent Truslow

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## REVIEWS

**The nesting season: the bird photographs of Frederick Kent Truslow.**—Commentary by Helen G. Cruickshank. 1979. New York, Viking Press. 136 pp., 75 color and 29 black and white photos. \$25.00.—In 1956 at the age of 53, Frederick Kent Truslow retired from a demanding business career in New Jersey and headed south to Florida to revive a boyhood interest in birds. A fortunate stop at Rockledge, Florida, to see Alan and Helen Cruickshank and consult about the purchase of camera equipment in Miami, and a subsequent visit to photograph Roseate Spoonbills at Key Largo led to the founding of Truslow's second career as a wildlife photographer specializing in birds. Many of Truslow's outstanding photographs were taken in Florida, especially at Everglades National Park, and published in *National Geographic*, *Audubon*, and the *Living Bird*. This handsome book has 75 of Truslow's best color photographs of birds including 30 taken in southern Florida.

The book is well made, attractive, and thoughtfully designed. The striking photographs are reproduced well and those published 20 years earlier in *National Geographic* look better here. Helen Cruickshank's commentary on the stages of the nesting season carries the reader along with its many first-hand observations. The afterword by Mrs. Truslow is a sensitive portrait of her dynamic husband and also discusses his camera methods. A noteworthy and valuable table gives the locality, date, lens focal length and exposure for each color picture. There are two errors in the photograph captions: The nestling "Rough-legged Hawks" on pp. 118-119 are Ferruginous Hawks (this error is repeated from *National Geographic* 137: 674, 1970, where the scientific name is correct), and the "Sooty Terns" on p. 29 are Noddy Terns.

I believe a sincere effort was made to present the photographs in a different yet meaningful way by organizing the sequence around the events of the nesting season. This effort failed for me because Cruickshank's commentary was not integrated with the photographs, stage-for-stage. As it is the book seems strangely disjointed with the photographs separated from the commentary, and I wonder how many people will bother to read it. I object to books with large pictures of birds spread across the gutter so that the center of the picture is obscured (i.e. Mourning Dove pp. 110-111, Woodcock pp. 88-89, Bald Eagle pp. 76-77). There are other, more successful ways of presenting large pictures such as that of the Osprey on page 91. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., in his foreword, mentions the importance of Truslow's meticulous field notes to ornithology, and Helen Cruickshank used them for the photograph captions, yet nothing is mentioned in this book of their whereabouts. As "an everlasting memorial . . . to Frederick Kent Truslow" this book would have benefited by the inclusion of: at least one photograph of Truslow in the field, preferably the famous 1958 one of a Purple Gallinule perched on Truslow's camera and removing a peanut from between Truslow's teeth; a list of articles written and/or illustrated by Truslow; and a reprint of Truslow's zestful autobiographical sketch "Businessman in the bush", which appeared in *National Geographic* 137: 634-674, May 1970.

Anyone interested in birds would be pleased to own this book for its many memorable images, both pictorial and verbal. I have enjoyed browsing through it for several months now. However, Truslow fans will probably continue to do as I do and collect back issues of *National Geographic* and *Audubon* containing Truslow photographs.—FRED E. LOHRER.