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Books

North American Bird Bander

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Recent Literature

Confirmed nesting of Mourning Warbler in Washington County. J.C. Olyphant. 1980. *Loon* 52:39-40. (Mist netting and banding were used to confirm the southernmost nesting record of this species in MN.) NC

Migration incidence and sequence of age and sex classes of the Sharp-shinned Hawk. R.N. Rosenfield and D.L. Evans. 1980. *Loon* 52:66-69. (From 1973 through 1978, 11,515 Sharp-shins were caught at Hawk Ridge, Duluth, MN, using mist nets, bow nets, and dho-ghazas.) NC

Great Horned Owl recovered in Illinois. R.T. Bohm. 1980. *Loon* 52:114. (An owlet banded 29 April 1978 in Benton County, MN was recovered on 18 Jan. 1980 in Harrison Township, IL, 350 miles from the banding site.) NC

A preliminary report on the breeding behavior of the Blue Jay in Anoka County, Minnesota. B. Hilton, Jr., and J.M. Vesall. 1980. *Loon* 52:146-149. (363 jays were banded and marked with colored plastic leg bands.) NC

Acquisition of plumage polymorphism in White-throated Sparrows. C.T. Atkinson and C.J. Ralph. 1980. *Auk* 97:245-252. (Migrants were mist netted during fall and aged by skull ossification. Each sex class is distinct-

ly polymorphic in breeding plumage. During winter, each sex fails to segregate into 2 distinct color morphs.) NC

1980 Calgary area bluebird trail results. D. Stiles. 1981. *Pica* 2:13-17. (Two Mountain Bluebirds nested in the same boxes as the previous year, as did one Tree Swallow. Another swallow was recovered 2½ miles away from the banding site of 1979, whereas a 1977-banded swallow was recovered 3 miles away. Another banded as a nestling in 1976 was recaptured 12 miles away in 1978 and 3 miles from the 1978 site in 1980.) MM

Foreign banding results

Behavior of the Grey-capped Social Weaver (*Pseudonigrita arnaudi*) in Kenya. N.E. Collias and E.C. Collias. 1980. *Auk* 97:213-226. (Mist nets and a drop trap were used to capture birds for color marking.) NC

Note: The following journals are now searched regularly in addition to those listed in the previous compilation: *Ecol. Monographs*, *Science*, *Wildlife Monographs*, and *Wildlife Soc. Bull.*

NC = Noel Cutright

MM = Martin K. McNicholl

Books

Nature Saskatoon. An account of the Saskatoon Natural History Society 1955-1980. C. Stuart Houston. 1980. Saskatoon Natural History Society, Saskatoon. i + 46 pp. \$2.50 (+0.50 postage) Canadian.

This history of the first 25 years of the Saskatoon Natural History Society is written by one of the society's founders, who also happens to be among the most prominent banders in western Canada. Although little in the publication is about banding specifically, readers will be interested to learn that the program for the society's first indoor meeting on 14 October 1955 was a talk by Houston entitled, "Rambles of a bird bander."

The book consists of a brief introduction and acknowledgements, a dedication to the late Jim Hogg, a brief history of precursor societies in Saskatoon, and several chapters on the current society. The latter include the history of its organization, summaries of meetings and outings, contributions to knowledge (studies) and to the

community (conservation and education endeavors), youth activities, relationships with other organizations, and biographies of several late society members and earlier prominent naturalists in the area. Appendices list all indoor meeting programs and all officers over the 25 years. The society has been a busy and active one, evidently not cursed by adopting its constitution on Friday the 13th!

This booklet is written well, and contains only a few minor printing or spelling errors. Although its subject matter will be of interest primarily to prairie naturalists and historians of natural history, it serves as a good example of how a club history can and should be placed on record. It may be purchased from the Blue Jay Bookshop, Box 1121, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3B4 Canada.

Martin K. McNicholl

Birds of Prey of the World. Friedhelm Weick. 1980. Verlag Paul Parey, Hamburg and Berlin. 159 pp. \$48.00.

Peter Scott's famous color key to waterfowl of the world inspired this book, in which all species of diurnal birds of prey (Falconiformes) and most of their currently recognized races are portrayed in color. Owls are not included, as might be suggested by the broad nature of the title.

After a foreword by the late Leslie H. Brown and a preface by the author, the book is divided into three main parts: a "key" for identifying diurnal raptors, a "compendium" of the order, and a series of color plates. The text is followed by indices of Scientific (i.e. Latin), German, and English names, and an "annotated" bibliography.

The "key" includes an illustrated topography of terms and a page illustrating measurements and symbols used. There is no real key, but rather a list of species which possess particular characters, such as yellow cere, red legs, white eye, etc. Most of these are straightforward and appear to be complete. I was finally able to track down a photograph of a Yellow-billed Kite, which I took a few years ago at a falconry centre in England, to a race of the Black Kite. However, the first group of characters refer to size, always a dubious identification feature. How is one to decide whether a hawk is "very large," "large," or "rather large?" And "medium-sized" is defined merely as including "all remaining birds of prey!" A delightful feature accompanying this key and the compendium, and also illustrating other spots in the book is the series of line drawings, said by the publisher to total 160.

The "compendium" consists of a paragraph on characters of each genus, arranged under higher categories of sub-order, family, etc. This compendium should serve as an excellent reference source to raptor taxonomists, but here the intermingling of German and English paragraphs makes for clumsy reading.

The main part of the book consists of 40 color plates said by the publisher to include 1140 illustrations. These plates are very crowded, but so far as I can judge the illustrations are accurate. Brown points out that Weick has paid careful attention to details of color of cere, bill, feet, eye, etc., and this makes these plates especially valuable. Almost all races are illustrated with at least one painting, those missing apparently rare, little-known forms. All plumages could not, of



course, be illustrated but some highly variable species, such as Swainson's Hawk, receive considerable coverage (5 illustrations of Swainson's). The only major omission to my North American-biased eyes was the distinctly-colored immature Marsh Hawk or Northern Harrier (here treated as a race of Hen Harrier). Each plate is accompanied by a table of text, outlining nomenclature, major identification features, and distribution, and listing a series of measurements. In order to crowd both languages into the table, the printing is very small and requires strong light for reading without eye-strain. Most of the text in these tables is written well, but there are occasional typographical errors (e.g. tailpots, p. 142), lapses in translation (peculiar use of exclamation points in many places; concerning the Bat Falcon, ("Though his small size, often confused with *F. deiroleucos* in field"), or unhelpful statements (e.g. concerning Harlan's Hawk, "for field identification look at tailcolouring," illustrated as white, but which may show varying amounts of red).

The indices refer to plates only; not the key or compendium. The "annotated" bibliography is a list of references to raptors and major avifaunal works, and is neither annotated nor a true bibliography. This book forms a useful summary of the races and species in this order and should be available to all raptor and general bird taxonomists. Museum workers and banders might find it useful at times in sorting out races. The price will set it far beyond the means of most ornithologists and the jumbled intermixture of languages and crowded presentation detract seriously from the book. I hope that the author will correct his few minor errors in the English text and that the publisher will bring out separate English and German editions at an affordable price in paperback.

In the meantime, most readers will find better value for their money by investing in good local field guides of the places they work or visit and one of the many recent works on the biology of diurnal birds of prey.

Martin K. McNicholl

Beyond the Bird Feeder. John V. Dennis. 1981. Alfred A. Knopf, NY. \$13.95. 201 pp.

John Dennis shares a lifetime of bird-watching experience, exploring beyond the activity at the bird feeder. This book was written for people who feed birds, but much information is provided from banding records.

Writing in an easily readable form, Mr. Dennis shares his observations and personal communications from all around the world on many aspects of bird behavior. For example, on a visit to Costa Rica he observed that Tennessee Warblers were the most common bird at feeders which contained only bananas and plantain. He describes other incidents in Cuba and Jamaica in which Black-throated Blue Warblers shared the dinner table with him — eating from the sugar bowl.

I was especially impressed with Chapters 7 and 9: Habitat and Food Plants, and Houses and Their Attraction to Birds. In these 2 chapters, Mr. Dennis explores many avenues which challenge the mind and make one realize that placing a band on a bird or just observing what goes on at the feeder is merely the proverbial "drop in the bucket" in the overall life of the bird. Houses and Their Attraction to Birds is not what one might think; the houses to which Mr. Dennis refers are people-houses.

The book is well illustrated with 65 drawings by Matthew Kalmenoff. Each beautifully done drawing refers to some aspect of behavior covered in the text. There is a very comprehensive index in the back of the book.

Once I started to read this book (written by the author of the lead article in this issue of NABB), I found it difficult to put down. It is a book worth any bander's reading, for it provides a look at the habits at the other end of the spectrum — i.e., summer residents on their wintering grounds and wintering birds on their nesting grounds.

Many easily obtainable references are given throughout the book, in particular The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds, also published by Alfred A. Knopf.

Mickie Mutchler

Man and Nature Series. Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Mass 01773. The 1980 volume called "A Life Outdoors" is a monthly report of observations of nature by Wayne Hanley. The sub-title is "A Curmud-

geon Looks at the Natural World". By dictionary definition a curmudgeon is a bad-tempered person.

Mr. Hanley passes on to the reader the knowledge he has gained through his keen ability to observe and understand what he sees. The book is written in such a fascinating, easy-to-read manner that one learns from his writings without any effort. His keen observations of the Great Horned Owl, the "Timberdoodle", Bobolinks to ferns, trees, and the Fastest Gun in the East (Skunks) make it difficult to put the book down.

The book was designed by David Ford and published by The Stephen Green Press, Fessenden Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Birdlife at Chincoteague and the Virginia Barrier Islands, by Brooke Meanley. 1981. Cornell Maritime Press, Inc., Centreville, MD 21617. 117 pp. \$7.50.

The 70-mile chain of largely uninhabited sea islands along the Eastern shore of Virginia boasts the richest assortment of birdlife in the Middle Atlantic states. Brooke Meanley's *Birdlife at Chincoteague and the Virginia Barrier Islands*, new from Tidewater Publishers, is an investigation of the nearly 200 species of shorebirds, seabirds, and marshbirds that nest of winter in the islands and bordering marshlands.

Ornithologist Brooke Meanley describes terns, skimmers, Laughing Gulls, herons, egrets, Clapper Rails, and Snow Geese in a lively text, with maps, charts, drawings, and photographs. Appendices and a bibliography provide species counts and scientific names as well as a variety of sources for further study.

This book should prove an invaluable guide to bird-watchers and conservationists and will delight all those who treasure the natural resources of a national landmark.

As a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mr. Meanley spent nearly 30 years in the Chesapeake Bay country. He is the author of two other books on this wildfowl habitat: *Birds and Marshes of the Chesapeake Bay Country* and *Blackwater*. He is a long-time member of EBBA.

Of particular interest to bird banders are sections on banding Royal Terns and on Operation Recovery. Raptor banders will be interested in the section on the Peregrine Falcon.

Mickie Mutchler

Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Arizona, 2nd Edition, by Gale Monson and Alan R. Phillips. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1981. \$5.95 + .75 postage.

This catalog of the status of approximately 475 species of birds found in Arizona will be valuable to banders there and in surrounding states as well as to visitors. The discussion of each species is comprehensive including breeding, winter and migration status, habitats, specimens and observation records, and sub-species found in the state. The data is complete through 1980 (the previous edition went to 1960), and several more species were added based on 1981 data.

Much of the introduction will be of special interest to banders, including a discussion of the need for careful identification, and preservation, of evidence from unusual birds. A logical presentation of the necessity of collecting, especially of stragglers and difficult-to-identify birds, is also valuable.

Undoubtedly the most controversial aspect of the book is Phillips' taxonomy. His revisions in family orders and scientific names will make the book more difficult to use by those accustomed to the standard AOU order. Many of his lumpings will probably show up eventually in the AOU checklist, i.e.: Brown-throated and House Wrens, Mallard and Mexican Duck, the rosy finches, Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks, Indigo and Lazuli Buntings, and Gray-headed and Dark-eyed Juncos. I await with interest Phillips' reasons for not lumping Black Ducks and for splitting Screech Owls.

Conservation in taxonomic changes is certainly to be preferred since the results affect all workers in the field. If one specializes in one species, problems are few, but most banders handle many species and keeping up with taxonomic changes is an added burden. Obviously, many lumpings and splittings result from new knowledge and are inevitable, but name changes complicate literature searching as one needs not only to be aware of the change, but when it occurred, to avoid missing references.

Robert C. Tweit



Bird Capture and Ringing

Vogelfang und Vogelberingung (Vol. I thru IV) by Hans Bub (1967-1969);

Vogelfang und Vogelberingung zur Brutzeit by Hans Bub (1974); and

Markierungsmethoden Fuer Voegel by Hans Bub and Hans Oelke (1980)

(A. Ziemsen Verlag, Wittenberg Lutherstadt, DDR)

(Cost in U.S. Dollars, and bookstores which might be able to order these books, are unknown.)

This is a general review covering "Bird Capture and Ringing" (Vol. I thru IV), "Bird Capture and Ringing during the Breeding Season", and "Marking Methods for Birds", recently released. All are written in German and there is a great need to have them translated into English.

These books are not reviewed separately here since they are all part of the same subject and treatment. They form the best treatment on the subject of banding techniques I have ever encountered. Many American banders have been quoted in the text of these volumes.

Mr. Bub, of Wilhelmshaven, (North) Germany, is employed at the offices of the "Vogelwarte Helgoland" (Sanctuary of Helgoland). He is a thorough and meticulous researcher and has spent the last 15 years of his life documenting his work.

Bird Capture and Ringing Volume One

The first volume opens with a lengthy chapter on lures and accessories. For example, in the Rheinland (part of Germany), a 'lure tower' is used, set about 7 meters above the ground on a metal framework, with mist nets (also raised) next to the tower. Cages containing finches are attached to the tower, side by side, four deep. (The use of live birds as lures is prohibited in U.S.A., unless birds are released within 24 hours after capture.)

Discussions of accessories, such as roost boxes, jesses, stuffed lures that move (with counter weights), wooden and silhouette lures, sound equipment, etc., round out the chapter. There is also an interesting and informative section on the use and deployment of tree- and pole-climbing gear and techniques. There is a section reviewing favorite bird food for each of many species,

correlation between banding and weather, cleaning and reconstruction of equipment, holding of birds, and bird topography. The volume ends with a chapter on traps. Every conceivable type of trap is described, with copious illustrations or photos, from the simple drop trap to the intricate design.

Volume Two

This book begins with a review of large-volume traps, such as Helgoland traps, Amager traps, Ottenby traps, and so-called 'capture gardens', where huge metal traps are so cunningly hidden amid natural vegetation that birds do not realize that they are trapped. Methods and techniques as well as accessories for these large installations are discussed. There is a discussion of triple-mesh nets, which are strung on a horizontal line hung between two poles or trees. They slide open as a curtain. Unlike mist nets, they have no horizontal tram-mels, but each of three net panels adjacent to each other have diamond shaped thick string shapes with finer netting in-between. I have used one of these for some time but found them hard to handle, and birds became very entangled in them.

There is an excellent section on sky-rigs, mist nets on swing-away pivots (for application over water), and nets for just about any topographical situation. There is, also, a section on traps of the less ornate variety, such as Potter-type traps, Chardonette or top-opening traps, automatic traps in which doors are on a pivot and — while one side swings closed after the bird (with a counterweight) — the other side opens up to admit another bird. Finally, there is a good section on noose traps such as the Bal-Chatratri trap.

Volume Three

This is a volume on trapping devices, European in origin and general use. For instance, clap-nets are described — often semicircular frames, attached to each other by a leather or metal hinge and a stout spring with netting extended between the frames. There are many varieties. The type mentioned is used in USA for capture of raptors, but the larger rectangular types up to 8 by 4 meters, are used predominantly in Europe. There are also models which are triggered electrically with some type of electro-magnetic device.

A short chapter is devoted to capturing birds by hand or with hand-held nets. This is followed by an in-depth treatment of nest-box traps.

Volume Four

This section deals with the larger types of clap-nets, with or without lures. Blinds or hide-aways for banders are also covered. There is much detail on measurements and on construction techniques. Cannon nets are adequately treated; they are explained and their firing mechanisms are shown in photographs, drawings, and an electronic diagram. The final section deals with banding centers, forms, planning and mapping, findings, skinning and mounting, and a short (in my opinion, too brief) section on ossification, brood patches, cloacal protuberance, and other forms of sexing.

Bird Capture and Ringing during the Breeding Season

This book reviews traps used in the breeding season. Some of the metal traps are discussed in the previous works, but other designs are also included. Although I have had no criticisms thus far, I do believe that this book should have had more examples of banding as it is applicable to breeding studies.

Marking Methods for Birds

The newest book in the series was written with the collaboration of Hans Oelke. This book is specific in nature. It covers bands, auxiliary marking methods and techniques more thoroughly than any of the previous works by Bub, which delve too deeply into the history of banding. This book presents a pictorial review of band types and, worldwide, there are a great many. There are some notes on band wear relative to the different types of metals or plastics. The authors treat color-band combinations and related marking methods for different species. Of equal interest is a 9-page table of chemical and/or product composition of color-marking methods for different species with citations giving sources of further information. This is followed by a section on special metal, fabric, or other markers such as nasal discs, wing markers, flipper markers, and the like, with tools applicable for each. Feather transplants, radio-telemetry and accessories (not ground-based radio equipment) are also discussed. This is a lengthy section and although much of it applies to waterfowl, information can be found for the smaller species as well.

There is an urgent need for an English translation, and I request anyone who has fluency in German and the time to do a good translation to contact me for Mr. Bub's address.

F.S. Schaeffer