

1988

## Books

North American Bird Bander

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### Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (1988) "Books," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 13 : Iss. 3 , Article 5.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol13/iss3/5>

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**Eider Ducks in Canada.** Edited by Austin Reed. 1986. Canadian Wildlife Service Report Series Number 47. Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, 177 pp. \$19.50 Can. + \$3.90 Can. outside Canada.

The latest in the exceptional series of technical reports from the Canadian Wildlife Service, this soft-covered book contains 18 previously unpublished papers by 26 researchers from the Canadian Wildlife Service, other federal departments, and Université Laval. The fieldwork which formed the basis for these papers was conducted between 1972 and 1983, and is thus fairly current. Twelve of the papers are written in English, five in French, and one in both English and French. All are preceded by English and French abstracts. A unique feature of this work, and one which the reviewer would hope to see incorporated into more studies dealing with the biology of northern wildlife, is the substantial contribution made by representatives of the Inuit community. Particularly noteworthy is the article by Nakashima describing the Inuit knowledge of the ecology of the Common Eider in northern Quebec.

Its title notwithstanding, this book deals almost exclusively with the eastern races of the Common Eider. One paper does, however, review the known status of western populations of King and (Pacific) Common Eiders. The 18 papers are grouped under the six headings of Distribution and Abundance (8), Races of the Common Eider (2), Distribution in Winter (1), Ecology (4), Use by People (2), and Conclusions (1). This is not an exhaustive compendium of the current knowledge of eiders in Canada; as suggested by the previous headings, the main themes of this report are population estimates and geographical distribution. One finds little information on the general biology of these sea-ducks.

Despite the obvious difficulties involved in creating a cohesive and balanced publication from a series of individual papers by different contributors, a very complete picture of the size, status and distribution of Canada's eider populations does emerge from this work. The technical quality of the information presented has benefited from the peer review to which all papers have been subjected, and the series of literature cited provides a valuable source of additional reading. The concluding paper contains a preliminary population model; this model is tested against estimates derived from field surveys and band recoveries. Other papers which should be of particular interest to banders include those dealing with sub-specific distribution and movements, and one by Mendall on the identification of the eastern races of the Common Eider based on bill measurements.

In his excellent forward to this work, Hugh Boyd states: "One function of this report is to provide, implicitly rather than explicitly, an account of the success of nearly 70 years of special protection." Long exploited for their meat, eggs, feathers and nest down, the eider populations of eastern Canada have been of particular concern to wildlife managers and conservationists since the end of the last century. Six of the first ten migratory bird sanctuaries to be established along the North Shore of the St. Lawrence in 1925 were selected predominantly for their nesting eider ducks. As a consequence of this interest, the Common Eider constitutes one of our most thoroughly studied waterfowl species. In spite of this, one is struck in reading this collection how little is known of the actual impact of man's activities on eider populations.

This book is a must for readers interested in waterfowl conservation and is recommended to serious students of bird distribution in North America.

Richard Yank

## **Reed Ferris' 1930-1943 Bird Banding Records and Bird Observations for Tillamook County, Oregon.**

Range D. Bayer and Reed W. Ferris. 1987. Studies in Oregon Ornithology No. 3, Gahmken Press, Box 1467, Newport, Oregon 97365. ix + \$7.75 postpaid.

When Range Bayer wrote the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum in March 1986 concerning biographical information on Reed Ferris, known as an active gull bander in the 1930s, Bayer found himself enmeshed in a new project. Not only was Ferris still very much alive at age 85, but also he had a gold mine of mostly unpublished banding and observational data on Oregon birds. Correspondence soon led to a collaboration wherein Ferris transcribed his notes, while Bayer organized them into 11 chapters, 42 tables and 3 appendices, placed them in context with the published literature, and provided further access to them through a detailed six-page index plus detailed tables of contents at the beginning of each of the longer chapters. Thirteen photographic plates and three figures illustrate the text.

The first four chapters introduce the plan of the book, the study area and terminology, and especially provide a brief biography of Reed Ferris, with emphasis on his banding and other ornithological activities, most of which took place in his "spare" time when work at his seven-day/week duties as a cheesemaker ended early enough on a given day to permit banding or excursions. The book is dedicated to fellow cheesemaker, Alex Walker, who frequently accompanied Ferris and taught him how to prepare bird skins. Ferris left Oregon for work in Utah in 1944, remaining there until 1967, when at age 66 he became a quality supervisor for two years at milk and cheese plants in South Vietnam. He then retired to Salt Lake City, but in 1974 he moved to California, where he still resides. In addition to his gull banding data and a waterthrush observation published in the *Condor* in the 1930's and 1940's, Ferris' observations and photographs were previously used in "The Birds of Oregon," published in 1940.

Chapters 5 and 6, forming the bulk of the book (pp. 11-72,) are devoted entirely to banding, chapter 5 covering "seabirds," and chapter 6 banding at the town of Beaver. Some additional data on banding are found among more general observations at Beaver in chapter 7 (mostly nestlings and species totals), while chapter 10 on observations in other counties includes a section on gull banding on the Nestucca River. Although Ferris' banding encompassed only 13 years, nearly 33% of birds banded along the Oregon coast that have been subsequently recovered (as

of October 1985) were banded by him, and for 18 species, he banded at least 90% of the birds recovered to date. His bandings included 8000 seabirds and 3042 "terrestrial" birds (mostly passerines, but also including Killdeer, doves and woodpeckers). Chapter 5 covers seabird banding in general, band loss, banding induced mortality, and considerable detail on recoveries and dispersal of Common Murres. All recoveries of cormorants and murres are listed, while those previously published on gulls are summarized. Chapter 6 covers methods of record keeping, methods of capture, data taken and not taken, problems in age/sex determination, comparable trapping efficiencies, and several other topics of general concern to banders, many summarized in tables. These sections are followed by details of banding and recoveries of each species banded at Beaver, including specific details of each recovery. Recoveries of Varied Thrush, Rufous-sided Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco, and Brewer's Blackbird each required more than a full page to list, the junco occupying 12 pages. While some readers will find these lists tedious, they provide data not otherwise accessible, as only 267 of the 1252 recoveries and returns listed here are in the files of the banding laboratory in Patuxent, and several of the junco recoveries were incorrectly listed at the lab as the Slate-colored race.

The final chapters cover a number of general bird observations at Beaver, pelagic and beached birds, birds along the Oregon shore and birds in several nearby counties, followed by miscellaneous notes on history, cheese-making, and other details from Ferris' diaries. The observations at Beaver include dates of occurrence, nesting, parasites, banding and other details listed by species. Appendices list common and scientific names of birds mentioned in the text, contents of notebooks donated to archives, and bird egg data.

The book's print face has the appearance of a computer read-out, an impression compounded by a rather crowded lay-out, and exacerbated in places by table headings on the page preceeding the table. Table placement within chapters is inconsistent - all at the end of some chapters, but interspersed throughout others. The reference by Mathewson 1986 on p. 104 is not listed in the references, and there are a few other minor proof-reading lapses. Apart from these trivial complaints, the book has been prepared thoroughly and carefully. Ferris has done the ornithological community in general and the banding community in particular an important service in making his data available, and Bayer deserves applause for taking time away from other projects to ensure that these data are accessible, and for placing them in context with other

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works. I hope other ornithologists and publishers will follow the example set by Bayer and Gahmken Press in ensuring that unpublished work of this importance sees the printed page before disappearing into oblivion.

Martin K. McNicholl

**The Bird Feeder Book. An Easy Guide to Attracting, Identifying, and Understanding Your Feeder Birds.** Donald and Lillian Stokes. 1987. Little, Brown and Co., Boston - Toronto. 90 pp. \$8.95.

On the way back from our rural mailbox (a mile from the house) I ripped open the wrappings of *The Bird Feeder Book*, by Donald and Lillian Stokes, and though our shelves bulge with bird books, I was promptly inspired to tell the Stokes that this was *exactly right*. For anyone interested in birds, and certainly for banders striving to attract a wide variety of species, this book has much to offer.

The colored illustrations are stunning; the selected species include an excellent variety and are familiar across country; the text is chosen well for a wide audience both urban and rural, young and older, knowledgeable and novice. In spite of the endless numbers of bird books for both technical information and general interest, the Stokes have succeeded in condensing, in novel and readable form, the basics about attracting and identifying birds, plus a remarkable fund of information about the characteristics that make each bird distinctive in appearance, voice, behavior, and popular appeal.

The objectives of the book are stated clearly—how to attract more birds, how to identify those that come, and how to enjoy fascinating details about each one. Range maps clearly depict winter and summer ranges. The table of contents includes what every bird lover wants and needs to know about Attracting Birds, Bird Behavior, and (in alphabetical order) a lavish and informative chapter about each of several dozen common North American birds that are readily attracted to homes.

If this colorful and easy style appears too amateur an approach for an old pro, give it a second look. I've been at this banding game over 50 years, and have learned a bit at first glance. My only criticism is that it is too good a package to be encased in paperback. Cheaper, but too vulnerable for such enduring contents.

A. Marguerite Baumgartner

**WANTED:** Two experienced raptor banders to band owls during the 1989 spring migration at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory near Paradise at the north-eastern tip of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In 1988 over 250 owls of six species were banded, including 163 Boreal Owls (follow-up of the 1987 fall irruption). Some hawk banding. Other staff census spectacular spring flights of 10-20,000 hawks and 5-7,000 loons. Six positions available: Director, 2 Banders, Hawk counter, Loon Counter, Assistant Counter. Salaries: \$600 to \$700 per month, housing provided, car required. For information: Dr. Charles T. Black, 4714 Van Atta Road, Okemos, MI 48864. Application deadline: January 15, 1989.