

Literature Cited

Kilham, L. 1985a. Territorial behavior of American Crows. *Wilson Bulletin* 97:389-390.

Kilham, L. 1985b. Behavior of American Crows in the early part of the breeding cycle. *Florida Field Naturalist* 13:25-31.

Ron Pittaway, Box 619, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0

Book Reviews

Ornithology in Laboratory and Field (5th edition). 1985. By Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. Academic Press, Orlando, Florida. xi + 403 pp., illus. \$32.40 (U.S.).

This volume, which is intended primarily as both a laboratory manual and a textbook for a college course in ornithology, has had a long and distinguished history from its first published version in 1939. The fourth edition, published in 1970, was widely adopted by universities and colleges throughout North America; however, it was starting to become dated. Fortunately, this new and thoroughly updated edition is now available, and Pettingill's book seems destined to maintain its unique place in the ornithological literature.

The basic outline of the book has changed little from the fourth edition, except for the inclusion of a brief chapter entitled "Flight." There are 22 chapters covering topics ranging from anatomy and physiology through behaviour, ecology, and identification in the laboratory and field. The book is generally strong in its coverage of anatomy, especially external characteristics used in classifying birds, and weak in its coverage of ecology. This is a deliberate plan, understandable in view of the book's main intended audience, and Pettingill makes no

pretence that it is a complete textbook of ornithology. However, every chapter concludes with a detailed and well-chosen list of references, and one of the book's strongest points is its value as an introduction to ornithological literature for the beginning student. Several chapters include specific suggestions for student projects, and every effort is made to encourage the reader to undertake independent studies on birds.

The thoroughness and authority which characterize all of Pettingill's books are once again apparent here. Sidney Gauthreaux, Jr., who wrote the chapter on migration, and Jack Hailman, who wrote the chapter on behaviour, are acknowledged by Pettingill, as are several others who reviewed or contributed to specific chapters. However, Pettingill himself deserves most of the credit for the success which *Ornithology in Laboratory and Field* has enjoyed and should continue to enjoy.

One major disappointment in this new edition is the elimination of several of the extremely useful appendices found in the fourth edi-

tion — a change perhaps dictated by the book's new publisher, Academic Press. While the valuable appendices on "Ornithological Field Methods", "Preparation of a Paper", "Current Ornithological Journals", and "Books for General Information" are still present, the "Bibliography of Life History Studies", "Selected Bibliography of Regional Works", and "Clutch Sizes, Incubation Periods and Ages at Fledging" are gone, detracting considerably from the book's status as a one-volume gold mine of source

material for the budding ornithologist. Despite this, the lists of references in the individual chapters still provide an excellent introduction to the scientific literature on birds.

Although the book is aimed mainly at college students, any amateur ornithologist with an interest in birds that goes beyond merely listing will find much useful and interesting material here. I would strongly urge any member of OFO who does not already have a copy of *Ornithology in Laboratory and Field* to purchase one right away!

Wayne C. Weber, 303-9153 Saturna Drive, Burnaby, British Columbia V3J 7K1

Blackbirds of the Americas. 1985. By *Gordon H. Orians.* University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington. 164 pp. \$24.95 (hardcover).

This is an informative and refreshingly readable book about blackbirds that are black, and blackbirds that aren't. With varying degrees of detail, 93 species of oropendolas, caciques, orioles, blackbirds, meadowlarks, marshbirds, grackles, cowbirds and bobolinks are discussed.

The book is divided into a series of chapters based on biological aspects of blackbirds as a whole, with appropriate examples drawn from within the group.

The first chapter explains how blackbirds differ from "black birds." There is a cursory discussion on historical and present day climate, and its effect on the group. The habit of "gaping" is thoroughly dealt with in the second chapter. This habit of using the beak to pry open objects to find food, although

not restricted to the blackbirds, is exploited by most of their members. Orians claims that this single act may be responsible for the diversity, adaptability and the success of the blackbirds. Many species, in fact, have skeletal adaptations to meet this end.

The third chapter deals with food location, preference and choice behaviour. The next chapter expands on this matter, explaining how geographic distribution may be influenced by food availability.

Blackbirds are generally a flocking species, and the advantages of this behaviour are outlined in Chapter Five. Chapter Six addresses the subject of nests and nest sites.

Parasitism among blackbirds is a complex issue, poorly understood

by most researchers. Mechanisms of evolution, host species (including several species of blackbirds) and the impacts of five species of parasitic cowbirds are discussed.

Interestingly, there is one species of cowbird, the Screaming Cowbird, which only parasitizes the Bay-winged Cowbird. Thoughts on the evolution of this behaviour and the identity crises faced by young cowbirds are enlightening.

Chapter Eight discusses the roles of the sexes, while Chapter Nine deals with communication. Some intriguing theories on the importance of colour to the species are dealt with in Chapter Ten. The location of the colour patches offer some truly fascinating insights.

The last two chapters deal with the role of blackbird vocalizations and a philosophical study of blackbird biology, including interactions with man.

Two Appendices complete the book. The first is simply a list of species broken down by subgenus, while the second presents a good summary of habitat, diet, plumage and social status of all species.

For the most part, this book is well written, information, thorough and readable. With very few exceptions, Orians has expressed his keen understanding and exceptional knowledge of the blackbirds.

However, a few minor flaws should be noted. Why, for example, are "Baltimore" and "Bullock's" Orioles given full species status

throughout the book? The author spends considerable time discussing projects worked on in the western United States, but has little to say about eastern populations. Perhaps a better compromise between his personal studies and those of others would give a broader picture of the species involved. A more thorough discussion on the trend of blackbirds (particularly Red-winged Blackbirds) to adopt new habitats for breeding would have been enlightening and may be necessary for a better understanding of the complexities of the entire group, as it once again demonstrates their adaptability. A brief discussion on the use of non-native materials for nest construction, although interesting, is abbreviated and poorly dealt with.

For the reader who wants to know more about birds, answers to some intriguing questions are provided. For example: why do some orioles build their nests on the west side of trees? Why do feeding blackbirds "roll" across a field? What species will use barbed wire to build its nest? Why do white birds sleep in the open? Why do understory birds sing with a low-pitched song? How do botflies and wasps affect cowbird success? Has a cowbird host ever rejected a young cowbird in the nest?

This book is recommended for anyone who wants to know more about blackbirds and, by inference, a wide range of other species.

Geoffrey Carpentier, 964 Weller St., Peterborough, Ontario K9J 4Y2

The Mountain and the Migration: A Guide to Hawk Mountain. 1986. By James J. Brett. Kutztown Publishing Company, Kutztown, Pennsylvania. 111 pp. Illustrated by Frederick W. Wetzel and Frank Fretz. Available from Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, Kempton, Pennsylvania.

Why review a book about Hawk Mountain for *Ontario Birds*? Because behind this somewhat deceptive title is the best-to-date guide to the identification of eastern hawks. Following four chapters about the mountain, its history and ecology, are 17 black and white plates illustrating all of the migrant species seen at the Sanctuary — and they are excellent. Fred Wetzel, the artist, is to be congratulated for producing these detailed flight shots, posed at all angles to an observer. Together, they make up the best guide on the market for a hawkwatcher in the northeastern part of the continent, at least until Bill Clark's guide to North American raptors is published sometime this year.

The first chapter of this book covers the human history of Hawk Mountain, from early farmers and charcoal makers to the sandstone quarriers and, later, hawk-shooters. Then came a succession of now-famous conservationists. First were Richard Pough and Henry Collins in 1933, who witnessed the fall hawk slaughter and reported it to the iron-willed Rosalie Edge. She ended it by buying the mountain! It was, however, her choice of Maurice Broun as custodian and guardian that made the mountain a true sanctuary and started the slow change of perspective from hawks

as vermin to integral parts of the natural world with a value of their own, independent of our own too self-centred ideas.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the geology and natural history of the area. Then, like a north-west breeze in late August, comes Chapter 4, "Out of the North", a good, if brief, discussion of hawk migration, weather and topography. Unfortunately, the map here mixes Ontario's spring and fall flights in a rather unusual way and leaves out our Lake Ontario/Lake Erie fall passage altogether. There is a nice time-and-abundance chart on page 62 which is interesting to compare to southern Ontario's fall passage. Hawk Mountain's Sharp-shinned Hawk, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon flights are later than ours, while the other species pass through during similar periods. Perhaps Hawk Mountain, being an inland location, brings more late-flying adult birds. Two fine drawings on page 64 show the parts of hawks in flight and perched.

Page 65, like a September front, brings the real flight in "Hawks Aloft", *the* chapter of this book. Eighteen species are shown from above and below, head on, sideways, tucked in a glide and fanned in a soaring position. Direct comparisons with two to four other species are illustrated and in some

poses, both adults and immatures (where different) are shown. The number of illustrations per page varies from seven to 16.

Jim Brett's comments are quite detailed and helpful. I picked up a number of pointers on body shapes and flight styles of buteos and wing shapes of accipiters. The "tipped-up tail" of Sharp-shins is mentioned and illustrated, a flight characteristic I first heard of from Cape May Bird Observatory but haven't yet noticed. All these notes are placed on the page opposite the illustration (the *only* sensible place) and are organized as "Overall Impression", "In Flight", "Position Views", "Confusing Species" and "Lookout Tips." On occasion, I felt that some tips for separating similar species were missing, but after reading the second or third species concerned, found most of the omitted points.

The treatment is thorough, including Gyrfalcon, Swainson's Hawk and Black Vulture and does not suffer at all, in my opinion, from being only in black and white. As is true of all field guides, there are deficiencies, ones which in this case are, I think, the result of poor editing. Some incorrect labels have slipped by (on Plate XIV, the Golden Eagle is actually a Rough-legged Hawk and on Plate V, the Cooper's and Red-tail labels are reversed) in spite of an "Errata" slip in the back correcting two other instances. Unfortunately, Plate X on kestrels states that immatures of

both sexes are like adult females — a real gaffe for such a good book. There are a couple of lesser mistakes that will not help separate Northern Goshawks and Cooper's Hawks or describe the colour phases of Rough-legged Hawks, but, in spite of these, the identification section, especially because of the pictures, is superb.

I do wish that Brett and Wetzel had included drawings of the immature light and adult intermediate phases of Swainson's Hawk to display some of the variability mentioned, but they chose not to.

They do warn all tyros that "Beginners ought not expect to identify each passing hawk. This guide will enable one to narrow the field of choice, but remember that it takes many seasons of observation to become an expert. Even then, many birds are recorded as 'unidents'." How true. *The Mountain and the Migration* is a giant step towards expertise, however, for anyone who puts it in a pocket on the way to a favourite hawk lookout. It's a bargain.

Bruce W. Duncan, 10 Chateau Court, Hamilton, Ontario L9C 5P2