

BOOK VIEWS

by Brian E. Cassie, Millis

BIRD BEHAVIOR by Robert Burton. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1985. 224 pages; color photographs. \$18.95.

One cannot help being struck immediately by the great array of color photographs displayed in this work - an alligator lunging at an immature egret, a Northern Shrike pulling apart an impaled mouse, even a notable series of shots of the ubiquitous starling. These and almost six hundred other quality photographs highlight many behavioral aspects of birds' lives and complement the text admirably. In ten chapters, Robert Burton surveys, in a generally clear and enjoyable style, the broad range of behaviors that constitute a bird's existence: flight, communication, mating, food gathering, migration, and others. Designed for a nonacademic audience, this book fulfills its stated purpose of bringing together ". . . information and ideas about bird behavior in an easily accessible form." Where it suffers, however, is in its failure to provide the reader with additional sources of reference. There is no bibliography, no reading list, and, most startling, no acknowledgment of "the many authors whose work provided the substance of this book," to cite the author's own words from the introduction. Certainly, a book intended for the general public need not have an overwhelming number of references to the scientific literature; yet to produce a work of this nature with no bibliography is inexcusable.

ORNITHOLOGY IN LABORATORY AND FIELD BY Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. Fifth edition. Academic Press, Orlando, 1985. xi + 403 pages; black-and-white illustrations. \$32.40.

First published in 1937, Pettingill's standard, classic introduction to ornithology has been thoroughly updated four times in the last half century. The latest edition features taxonomy and nomenclature based on the 1983 A.O.U. Checklist. In twenty-two chapters and four appendices, the author delivers the equivalent of a full year's college course on birds, complete with lectures on physiology, distribution, field identification, behavior, migration, song, nest-building, parental care, populations, and evolution, as well as practical tips on banding, photography, and even preparation of a paper. Pettingill is one author who knows the importance of supplying his readers (students) with additional references; by my count, there are over 155 references cited. I highly recommend *ORNITHOLOGY IN LABORATORY AND FIELD* to any serious bird enthusiast.

TUNNICLIFFE'S BIRDLIFE by Noel Cusa. Clive Holloway Books, London (distributed by Merrimack), 1985. 150 pages; folio; 120 paintings in color. \$34.95.

"The verdict of posterity in time to come is likely, I believe, to rate Charles Tunnicliffe the greatest wildlife artist of the

20th century." So wrote Sir Peter Scott in the foreword, and on the basis of sheer volume of outstanding work, Scott is certainly right. Tunnickliffe's brilliant paintings have illustrated eighty-seven books. His extraordinary likenesses resulted in large measure from his devoted study of birds, both in the hand and even more so in the field, where he sketched at every opportunity. Charles Tunnickliffe is probably best known on this side of the Atlantic for the various editions of his sketchbooks that have been published in the last several years. The present volume differs from previous works on the artist in reproducing his large oils and watercolors, many of which are privately owned and published here for the first time. The publisher has done a good job with the color reproduction, and very few will be disappointed with the artwork. On the other hand, with the exception of an insightful final chapter titled "Bird Painting," Cusa's commentary is unenlightening, and his lengthy captions to the color plates are merely tedious descriptions. For example, "A Buzzard is perched on a shattered and rotting tree stump. Grasses grow on the broken upper ends where leaf mold has accumulated. The fruiting bodies of honey fungus are growing lower down. It rains." And so on and so on. In sum, although the writing is ineffectual, the wonderful bird portraits are more than enough in themselves to make the book a worthwhile acquisition.

GARDEN BIRDS: How to Attract Birds to Your Garden by Noble S. Proctor. Rodale Press, Emmaus, 1986. 160 pages; color and black-and-white illustrations. \$17.95.

This book was originally produced in Great Britain; for my money (and yours), it should have remained there. Dr. Proctor is an exceptionally gifted field ornithologist and a fine writer, but I think his talents have been wasted on this mixed-up book. The first forty-two pages are devoted to bird gardening, and while the general information on garden planning, bird feeders, etc., is sound, the whole has a British slant, both in the plants mentioned and especially in the birds depicted (almost all are European). Since the book is directed at an American audience, this introductory material will probably confuse rather than help the backyard birdwatcher and wildlife gardener. The "Directory of 100 Garden Birds" comprises the remainder of the book. For each species, there is a "Facts and Features" block, which includes a range map and brief notes on plumage, habitat, food, and nest. Additionally, there are four or five short paragraphs on the bird and its habits, and a large color portrait. The information on birds is graphically well presented, and I support the author's choice of species in most cases (although Red-tailed Hawk and Orange-crowned Warbler seem a bit out-of-place). I must take exception to the specially commissioned bird illustrations, however. The artist, presumably British, undoubtedly has had little or no experience with American birds, and his portrayals, so highly touted in the book's advertisements, are uniformly poor. If you are keen on planting for the birds, there are a number of American publications that will serve you much better.