

BANDERS SHOULD SPECIALIZE

summer work begins, I know that I shall end up with not less than 17 returns. My fall to spring banding is purely hit and miss, for I operate a station and band whatever birds happen to be caught always hoping that some of last years winter residents will be retaken.

I think I am correct when I say that every bander has 2 great hopes as he releases a banded bird. He hopes to retrap it or learn of its recovery elsewhere. Aside from giving the widest publicity to bird banding in order that the public may know what to do regarding dead banded birds, there is little we can do to achieve the second hope.

Concerning the first, however, we ourselves are almost the only factor in determining how many returns we will secure. I say almost the only factor because a neighbor could conceivably capture or find dead one of our birds, which, provided a migration had taken place would constitute a return for all practical purposes. The more we channel our interests and energies toward a few selected species the more rewarding and the more meaningful will our bird banding become.

- BOOK REVIEW -

How to Know the Birds -- A Simple Aid to Bird Identification by Roger Tory Peterson. The New American Library of World Literature, Inc. 245 Fifth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. A MENTOR BOOK. Copyright 1949 144 pages, 400 drawings. 35¢

Roger Tory Peterson probably has interested more people in birds than any other living ornithologist. That he will continue to interest an increasing number is assured through the publication on March 4 of his new book, How to Know the Birds, which will receive wide distribution because of its low cost.

Similar in appearance and size to other familiar pocket-sized books, How to Know the Birds was written mostly for those who never had a bird guide before, but who are becoming aware of the multitude of birds with which we live." As such, it serves its purpose admirably. First, Mr. Peterson introduces the birds, then tells by word and picture what to look for, followed by an introduction to the families of birds and their more well-marked species. Next the author discusses habitats and then ends the book with a series of plates "Silhouettes of Common Birds." These are similar to the 3 plates appearing in his newly revised Field Guide to the Birds, but more extensive. These will be of much value even to the experienced bird watcher, who will find the whole book a sort of refresher course.

Though a few reproduce too black, the scratchboard illustrations on the whole are excellent. All possess the beautiful composition and strong draughtsmanship so characteristic of Mr. Peterson's work. And the text bubbles over with enthusiasm for birds.

If you know of any friend or relative, young or old, who is developing an interest in birds, by all means present him or her with a copy of this inexpensive book and buy one for yourself. For to this reviewer's mind, it is the best general introduction to birds ever written.

.....R. L. Smith