



## Books For Banders

Edited By Mabel Gillespie



In the last issue of EBBA News our new editor ably seconded the plea of the book review editor for more audience participation. Any bander is intelligent enough to tell others why he has liked a book or what he found useful in an article. As Fred Schaeffer noted, the need is not for critical reviews. Dozens of other periodicals are printing them, particularly Bird Banding. (This does not mean however, that EBBA News will not accept critical reviews when they are offered to us. Editor) Their reviewers must be able to criticize knowledgeably. What we have been trying to do in this publication is to acquaint banders with pertinent literature that is available and not too technical.

In general we have concentrated on birds in relation to banding techniques and problems. Books like those written by Robert Ardry and Konrad Lorenz which are not exclusively or fundamentally about birds were included because the description of avian behavior they contained. As already noted, this year we've reviewed books dealing with man's place in nature's scheme. This is the most important problem facing the human race, but to what extent it should be included in a publication devoted to banding remains to be seen (While there are so many excellent publications available to the conservationist, we feel that EBBA News should concentrate on ornithological literature. If we should participate in reviewing environmental conservation books, popular ornithological literature will take a second place to the former- this must not happen in EBBA News. Editor).

There is a further problem confronting your book review editor. During the years I lived near Philadelphia, I was able to use the excellent facilities of the Academy of Natural Sciences. I am now living on an island (Martha's Vineyard Island) with a small permanent population. The local libraries are remarkably good, but hardly adequate for our specialized subject. It has not seemed wise to get on a publisher's mailing list (individual books are requested from time to time. Editor) and be bombarded with publications that have little pertinence. Occasionally cooperative banders have loaned books they thought worthwhile. Another solution would be, if you would give titles, author, date of publication and publishers, so that a copy can be requested. Best of all would be guest reviews! PLEASE!

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In 1969, Rolf Edberg's Notes in a Travel Book, published in Sweden, was cleverly translated into english by Sven Ahman and published by the University of Alabama under the title: On the Shred of a Cloud.

James Russell Wiggins, formerly U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations has written of this book: "It is at once a paean of praise for the natural wonders of our planet and a lament for our exploitive desecration of it. No one can put it down without agreeing that mankind is toying with collective suicide. He rightly sees that the real problem of population control is not merely the feeding of a potential 50 billion persons but the preservation of the amenities of life on an over-crowded planet... This book had already had a remarkable influence on the course of human affairs, having inspired U.N. Ambassador Sverker Astrom of Sweden to put forward his government's proposals for a Conference on Human Environment (to be held) in 1972...It raises in all its stark reality the great question of our time: Can man survive his own fecundity and folly?"

Don't read a chapter at bedtime. Or maybe you should...sleepless nights might awake you to the frightening situation that confronts us. Urey was scared "when he realized what his isotope could be used for." "A single superbomb, such as that fifty-seven megaton monster which was detonated over Arctic areas on one memorable day, corresponded to three thousand Hiroshima bombs.

This book should be required reading for everyone, especially by captains of industry and elected representatives of the people, and particularly by the parents of youth. Our young people know these facts and are worried and frustrated. A book like this offers a bridge across the generation gap.

"It was a mistake for us to believe that we could control nature. We can only change it - and, almost without exceptions, the changes we have wrought have been for the worse. On nearly every page of the book of nature we have printed a cave hominen - Beware of Man! Our interference with nature has lead to a disrupted natural balance, to devastated lands, to poisoned waters, to air with less oxigen content, to incessant deterioration of our environment all the way to a global cancer, which now forces us to begin to discover that our own existence as a species is finally threatened."

Even if these pages carried no dire warnings, they should be recommended for the sheer beauty of their creative writing. Their prose approaches poetry. The narrative is direct without bluntness; imaginative even while frightening. The following paragraph is but one of many that sing their way. "Since the entire universe is built from the same basic elements, since hydrogen and oxygen, carbon, and calcium are building-blocks of the galaxies and the interstellar dust clouds as well as of the thin film of life on our own globe, man himself if made of the raw material of the stars. Nature produces its enormous variety by combining just a few elementary particles in many different ways. They take shape in mountains and waters, in creeping heather and birds of paradise

in suns and men. My brain, which on this star-lit mountain night tries to capture some of the drama, albeit imperfectly and piecemeal, was formed out of the same elementary particles as the brilliant dust cloud in Orion. My eyes, registering the celestial spectacle, was formed out of the same elements as the red eye of Taurus, the enormous Aldebaran. We are made of such stuff as stars are made of."

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The Urner Field Observer, published by the Urner Ornithological Club of Newark, N.J., includes in the April 1970 issue an article entitled Notes on the Abundance of the Barn Owl in New Jersey in 1947, by Edwin I. Stearns. Of interest are observations about nest locations. These owls prefer height, seclusion from humans, a walled enclosure for the eggs, and freedom from great horned owls. Darkness does not seem to be necessary.

Proffer of cigars is suggested as a preliminary to a request to search a church of barn. Audubon literature about the value of barn owls should be presented to the wife who will persuade her husband that barn owls are valuable. Lollypops will elicit from children information about the habits of owls.

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In the previous issue of the News, we reported to you of a new type of band opening pliers being investigated. Meanwhile we have located the distributor for these and have sold some to various active banders who've all, without exception, found these pliers superior to any other models in use.

The pliers in question, known as "Bow openers" (a jewelry tool), are similar in quality and weight to McDonald's banding pliers for the smaller sized bands. Normally, conventional pliers close when the handles are pressed together; these however, open when this function is performed. They come with a fairly sharp point (tapered), thin enough to open 1B bands; when ground down further, however, they can be made to fit size 0 bands, easily. All sizes can be opened with these, up to and including size 6. They may be obtained from HUB Material Company, 387 Washington St., Boston, Mass. 02108 for the cost of \$4.85 each plus 35¢ postage per item. In ordering, please refer to stock number 37-002. It will be well spent money. Your editor has been using them for six years of banding. They are still my favorite band openers!

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