



BOOKS FOR BANDERS

Edited by: MABEL GILLESPIE



Dr. Kenneth W. Prescott, Director of the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton, New Jersey contributed all the reviews published in this issue. We are grateful for his efforts to bring some of the more recent literature to our attention.

GARDEN BIRDS OF SOUTH AMERICA - Kenneth Newman.
American Elsevier Publishing Co., New York, N.Y. \$12.75

This householder's guide to the common birds of the urban areas is well written and beautifully illustrated by the author. The thirty-two color plates, excellently reproduced, make the book exceptionally attractive. In addition, basic information is given for each of the more commonly seen species, as distribution, description, habits, nesting, voice and food. There are also short sections on plumage, display, migration, and fourteen other general topics of interest.

GAME BIRDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA - P.A. Clancy.
American Elsevier Publishing Co., New York, N.Y. \$15.75

P.A. Clancy has written and illustrated another excellent bird book (12 color plates, 35 line-drawings). A larger (224 pp.) more ambitious book than the Newman, it deals with South African species of Ducks, Francolins, Quail, Guinea, Fowl, Sand Grouse, Hemipodes, Bustards, Painted Snipe, Sandpipers, Pigeons and Doves. The plates are so beautiful, the birds so appealing that one forgets (and regrets) that they are considered game. The detailed information on each species as to nesting, description, etc., is very well done.

Both volumes provide colorful and accurate references for the bird enthusiast planning a brief trip to South Africa.

FEATHERS PLAIN AND FANCY - Hilda Simon
Viking Press, New York, N.Y. \$4.93

Miss Simon has clearly written and superbly illustrated a little (126 pp) book about feathers that is a real gem. In her acknowledgement, she credits the work of zoological and ornithological scholars from whose work she has drawn the factual information upon which she has based this book. Her particular acknowledgement of the generous help of Princetonian Charles Rogers, dean of New Jersey ornithologists, insures that the book is accurate.

The first chapter, "What is a feather", is an easily understood chapter on some of the current theories on the evolution of the bird with, of course, special emphasis on the feather. Bird watchers who have shied away from heavier volumes on vertebrate evolution will enjoy this condensed and well written summary. Other chapters on feathers are: "Growth and Structure", "Form and Function", "Colors and Patterns, and "Unusual Feathers and Plumes".

Her diagrams and illustrations (approximately 100) are well chosen and carefully executed. Miss Simon is a sensitive and talented illustrator and unusually good as a bird artist. Her feathers really look like feathers and her colorful birds are accurately and beautifully painted. Only the detailed index lacks illustrations, so that wherever one opens the book the eye delights in an illustrated bird or feather.

While bird watchers enjoy this book, it will be especially valuable in school libraries where students and teachers, with little or no background in the origin of birds or of their feathers, will profit greatly from the author's easily understood style of writing and her beautiful illustrations.

BIRD SONG: ACOUSTICS AND PHYSIOLOGY - Crawford Greenewalt
Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. \$12.50

A scholarly book that is a classic in the vast literature dealing with bird song, this is a valuable source for the serious student. This thorough study is a well documented, precisely illustrated volume with 120 half-tones and 56 line drawings which should be a valuable addition to the science library of secondary schools and colleges everywhere. Those familiar with the author's earlier work, "Hummingbirds", will know his high standards of excellence.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE PURPLE MARTIN - J. L. Wade
Published by the author.

The author tells the story of a small Illinois town that went for the martins in a big way. Its 120 martin houses are occupied from March until fall. Based on a conservative estimate of 2,000 flying insects per day per martin, Griggsville has become virtually free of mosquitoes. If you are interested in a martin house, this folksy book is for you. If you need a service club project for your community, the author will sell you on "purple martin day" as he has communities across the nation.

CHARLES DARWIN AND THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES - Walter Karp
and Horizon Magazine Editors. \$4.95

As ship naturalist Darwin sailed around the world for four years and nine months with many collecting trips inland, where he found living species

new to science and extinct fossil forms as well. "To Darwin it seemed extremely curious that God, the Creator of species, should have placed...two ancient species by...modern ones that slightly resembled them. Was this the will of God and not to be questioned?" Evidence of species change, extinct forms, geographic barriers, glaciations, floods, and other natural catastrophes all combined in the mind of this questioning scientist.

In pondering on the potential increase of life on earth, he calculated that the female elephant lives 100 years and normally gives birth to six offspring in that time. If each of these gave birth to six, etc., etc., in 750 years one elephant pair could produce nineteen million descendants. Potentially, he reasoned, every living thing has this "power to clog the world in a very short time. Could it be that favorable variations would tend to be preserved and unfavorable ones to be destroyed?" Were the survivors those best adapted to the environment?

There is not a shortage of books about Charles Darwin. His autobiography and other important works are available in paperback. What is there about this edited work of the well known and respected publishing firm (American Heritage) that especially commends it? Through quotations from biographies and correspondents, Darwin becomes understandable to the reader as a human being, curiously studying plants and animals around him in the garden and greenhouse, in South America and elsewhere in the world.

The warmly personal portrait of Darwin is enriched by 154 well chosen illustrations, many in color, which give an enjoyable buoyancy to the text. The combined efforts of editors, author, and consultant have produced an attractive book, primarily intended for "young readers" which will be read and enjoyed with enthusiasm by their parents. It would be a valuable reference in the library of primary and secondary schools for interested students, but particularly as a readily understandable and accurate source for the teachers who may be called upon to include something on evolution in a lesson but have little or no academic training in evolutionary theories.

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