

Reviews

Birds and How They Function. By Philip S. Callahan. Holiday House, New York, 1979: 156 pp., black-and-white photographs, glossary. \$8.95.

Mr. Callahan opens this book with mention of his American Indian ancestry and the close association and appreciation of American Indians for the natural environment. He follows this theme through his book and also draws on his interest in the birds of prey. "Birds and How They Function" is a general book about bird biology that emphasizes something close to "environmental physiology" of birds, but ends up a little weak on the physiological end. The book is written for a nonprofessional audience but it is also rather detailed and technical in places. I would not recommend it for any but the best upper level high school students but it would be suitable reading for anyone interested in birds beyond that level. The information presented is generally accurate and up to date. For example, the author follows the presently popular notion that birds are direct descendants of dinosaurs. The illustrations in the book add to it but are of only good to poor quality. Many of them are of captive birds of prey.--J.A. Jackson, Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Granivorous Birds in Ecosystems. J. Pinowski and S.C. Kendeigh, eds. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1978: 431 pp., 60 figures, 76 tables. \$47.50.

This book is volume 12 in the International Biological Program series. Its content is further suggested by the subtitle "Their evolution, populations, energetics, adaptations, impact and control," but the scope and significance of the book is only hinted at. With increasing human populations, those animals that are thought to compete with man for crop resources are coming under increasing scrutiny and many are quick to suggest "control" measures for these "competitors." Granivorous birds are among the foremost vertebrates to compete for man's grain crops. This volume is a very integrated investigation of the role of granivorous birds in ecosystems. It includes chapters by several investigators. Charles Kendeigh and Jan Pinowski set the stage by identifying the major granivorous species and their ranges. Not surprisingly the House Sparrow and other members of the genus Passer figure significantly in most chapters. Various species of North American blackbirds are also frequently discussed. Chapter topics include: the evolution of the House Sparrow (R.F. Johnston and W.J. Klitz); population dynamics in the genus Passer and in the family Icteridae (M.I. Dyer, J. Pinowski, and B. Pinowska); biomass and production rates (J. Pinowski and A. Myrcha); avian energetics (S.C. Kendeigh, V.R. Dol'nik, and V.M. Gavrilov); assessment of the impact of

granivorous birds (J.A. Wiens and M.I. Dyer); management of pest situations (M.I. Dyer and P. Ward); and the adaptive correlates of granivory in birds (J.A. Wiens and R.F. Johnston). While each chapter includes considerable review material, much new information is included. Happily, it is recognized that of the many granivorous bird species in the world, few have become truly pests. Many that are sometimes considered pests really have a net positive impact on agriculture as a result of their dependence on weed seeds and insects at various times of the year. This volume should be required reading for any about to set out on a "pest bird eradication" program. It is a fine contribution to the International Biological Program series. Unfortunately, the cost of the book will likely limit its distribution.

Birds of Man's World. By Derek Goodwin. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1978: 183 pp., numerous line-drawings and black-and-white photographs. \$10.95.

This small book is about those species of wild birds that have a close association with man. It is informative and quite enjoyable reading, discussing how man has influenced bird behavior and how birds have influenced man. Among the many topics discussed are the relationships of birds to our highways, the affinities of some birds for the salt we put along icy roads and walks, why titmice recognize suet as food, and the problems that man thinks he has with birds that "compete" for human food resources. "Birds of Man's World" is world-wide in scope, though it does have a definite European slant. The drawings and photographs add to the book as does the species index at the end. My only regret is a professional one; I would like to see a bibliography at the end that would allow me to read further on the subject.--J.A. Jackson, Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Wild Geese. By M.A. Ogilvie. Buteo Books, Vermillion, South Dakota, 1978: 350 pp., numerous maps, line drawings, and 16 color plates. \$25.00.

A number of books on the waterfowl of large geographic areas have appeared in recent years; I would rate "Wild Geese" among the better ones. All of the world's species of geese except the Hawaiian Goose are discussed in detail and illustrated in both line drawings and colored plates. Text material discusses the plumages and plumage variants of each species and population, voice, breeding biology, migration, and population dynamics. A chapter on "Counting, ringing and population dynamics" will be of particular interest to banders. Ogilvie draws not only on his own extensive experience with geese, but on the copious literature of the group to make a very readable book. The color plates by Carol Ogilvie add substantially to the book's attractiveness and usefulness, though many of the birds are a bit stylized and "angular" in appearance. Plates illustrate not only the standing and flying adults of each form and age group, but also the downy young and aging and sexing characteristics. The latter should be of particular use to goose banders. Not included in the book is mention of the introduced populations of the Giant Canada Goose that have become established as non-migratory, breeding, wild flocks in different areas of the southeastern U.S. --J.A. Jackson, Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Handbook of Ethological Methods. By Philip N. Lehner. Garland STPM Press, New York, 1979: 403 pp., numerous black-and-white photographs, drawings, and charts. \$24.50.

For the person interested in the field study of animal behavior and wondering how to get started, what to measure, how to measure, or what to use in the way of equipment, this volume is a goldmine. If you are already on your way and are familiar with literature associated with the group of animals you are working with, then much of this book will be too basic. The "Handbook" includes descriptions of the features and use of a wide range of equipment that has been used in behavioral studies: binoculars to spotting scopes, cameras to transmitters. In addition to reviewing basic equipment, Lehner discusses preparation of data forms and various statistical techniques that are applicable to behavioral studies. Much of the book deals with animals other than birds, though most of it would be of use in the study of bird behavior. A 23 page bibliography, an appendix of statistical tables, and a special appendix on the study of social organization (by Glen McBride) all add to the quality of this volume. In general this should be a very useful volume.--J.A. Jackson, Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

The Birds of John Burroughs. Edited by Jack Kligerman. Hawthorne Books, Inc., New York, New York, 1976. 240 pp., drawings by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. (softcover).

This book, a series of essays by John Burroughs, offers insights into the life and thoughts of this great naturalist of long ago. Before any of us lifted binoculars and struggled through field guides, John Burroughs, (1837-1921) had mastered the art of watching nature without recourse to sophisticated gadgets and capsulized reams of research by all who had gone before. John Burroughs was a pioneer naturalist; keen observations and insatiable curiosity about the interrelations of living things led him to ponder many mysteries, pose many questions, and, until his death, to seek answers. Through this well selected group of essays, the reader is drawn into the mind of a man who knew how to watch what we so often ignore. The nine essays in this book serve as an enticement to read more of Burroughs. The introduction by Jack Kligerman is like a crash course into Burroughs' background, and should be read. The Birds of John Burroughs is easy, pleasant reading which should leave the peruser with the feeling that we do not watch nearly as well as the "Sage of Slabsides." --J.A. Toups, 4 Hartford Place, Gulfport, Mississippi 39501.