

TAXONOMIC STATUS OF TUNDRA INHABITING PEREGRINES

Discussions of an undescribed race of Peregrine Falcon go back over 50 years and have interested falconers as well as taxonomists. Clayton M. White has examined this problem and describes Falco peregrinus tundrius (Auk, 85:175-191, 1968).

White has examined over 1100 North American Peregrine specimens and has applied the new name to the highly migratory, small, pale population of the arctic and subarctic tundra. He follows the usual procedure of using anatum for the continental populations and pealei for those of the humid Pacific coast and Aleutians. The name nigriceps is a synonym of anatum, and naevis is unidentifiable to subspecies. A specimen attributed to an Asiatic subspecies called harterti is considered more likely to be of the new race. There is considerable detail in the paper, and it seems to represent a good and thorough evaluation of the situation. (BEH)

BOOK REVIEW

Flashing Wings, by John K. Terres, 177 pp., Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1968.

The technology as well as the aesthetics of bird flight is dealt with in a most readable and engaging way. Mr. Terres skillfully builds discussions of how birds fly around his experiences with a trained Peregrine. In doing so he answers, incidentally, some of the questions falconers ask themselves as to why the depth of their involvement and love for their birds.

This book is much more than this, however. It is an excellent up-to-date treatise of the problems of air locomotion and how the various birds solve them. Combining aerodynamic experiences of man in powered aircraft and sailplanes with knowledge gained from a lifetime of interested observation of birds in flight and an understanding of avian physiology the author has succeeded, without loss of accuracy, in putting into layman's language a surprisingly comprehensive picture of the wonders of bird adaptation for mastery of the air. The story of the different types of flight, from the high energy consuming flight of the humming bird to the energy conserving flight of the Wandering Albatross is so interestingly told that I could not put the book down.

Flashing Wings is a real contribution and deserves a place in the library of every bird lover and a must for those who have flown vicariously with them.

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