

Recent and forthcoming books

A Field Guide to Australian Birds, Vol. II. Passerines. — Peter Slater. Rigby, Ltd., Sydney. Dist. in U.S. by Harrowood Books, Box 397, Valley Forge, Pa., 1974. vx + 309 pp. 39 color plates, drawings, maps. \$12.50. The second volume of the first modern Australian field guide treats approximately 350 species of passerines to the same competent standard set in the first. Expected field guide information is presented: description, voice, habitat and range, with map. Plates are carefully color-matched for accuracy, and contradict the artist's modesty; they are both attractive and explicitly useful. If you plan a trip to the land of Whypbird and Weebill, you must have both volumes of Slater. (Harrowood has both — \$25). — R.A.

A Field Guide to the Nests, Eggs and Nestlings of British and European Birds. — Colin Harrison. Quadrangle Field Guide Series. New York, 1976. 432 pp. 64 color plates, 16 of 145 nestlings, 48 of 730 eggs. \$12.50. A most commendable field guide, which just might inspire an author to similar attention to our continent. For most species the treatment includes a description of nesting site, nest, breeding season, eggs, incubation, nestling, and nesting period. There is a useful key to the identification of nests. The chicks were painted by Philip Burton, the nests drawn by Andrew Burton. The author expresses the hope that egg-collecting, once so popular in Britain and Europe, will be henceforth limited to scientific studies. "there is no longer any justification for the random, unofficial collecting of birds' eggs by amateurs." — R.A.


A Guide to the Birds of Panama. — Robert S. Ridgely. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1976. xv + 394. Line drawings and 32 plates by John A. Gwynne, Jr. \$15. This is the third field guide to this area we know of. The first, the primitive Sturgis guide of 1928 has long been out of print, the second, a looseleaf of crude crayon drawings done from Ridgway's detailed descriptions, is somewhere in this reviewer's basement; the third is, finally, what the birds of Panama deserve. Although hardly pocket size, this is a true field guide to the 833 species thus far recorded in the Republic or the Canal Zone. Each species write-up is condensed under the headings Description, Status and distribution, Habits, Range, and where required, Similar Species. The color plates, of 650 species, are beautifully painted and printed, facing page captions helpfully highlight salient features. Introductory chapters are standard and useful. An appendix lists additional species from nearby countries, and another provides a good bird finding guide. A truly fine effort, that will be welcomed by every birder planning to visit Panama or adjacent countries. — R.A.

Alabama Birds, Second Edition. — Thomas A. Imhof. University of Alabama Press, University, Ala., 1976. xvi + 541 pp. Color plates, photos, maps, charts. \$22.50. In his preface, the author states that this completely revised edition is for all practical purposes entirely new. The text has been either rewritten or substantially updated since the 1962 publication of the first edition, particularly in the important categories of distribution and occurrence in Alabama. Thirty species have been added to the Alabama list since 1961. In almost

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every respect this is an exemplary state book: an unbelievable "spare-time" achievement by Alabama's most enthusiastic and tireless ornithologist. If only the color plates, well drawn by Richard A. Parks, had been better reproduced. — R.A.

A Season of Birds. — Dion Henderson. Ill. by Chuck Ripper. Tamarack Press, Madison, Wisc., 1976. 87 pp. \$5.95. A handsome little volume of commentary, graced by the words of Dion Henderson and the pen drawings of the gifted Chuck Ripper. A little masterpiece in a minor key; recommended. — R.A.

Bird Sounds. — Gerhard A. Thielcke. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1976. 190 pp. Clothbound \$6.95, Paperbound \$2.95. An extremely thorough and succinct treatment of the relationship between bioacoustics and avian physiology, communication, reproductive development, and evolution; emphasizing the weighty influence various branches of comparative behavioral research have exerted on sound study. The book's first section contains one of the most lucid and valuable explanations of the underlying principles of sound spectrograms and the biology of vocalizations to appear in today's lay ornitholiterature. — S.R.D.

British Birds of Prey, A Study of Britain's 24 diurnal raptors. — Leslie Brown. New Naturalist Series, Taplinger Publishing Co., New York, 1976. xiii + 400 pp. 40 photographs. \$17.50. A wholly admirable book by an authority on birds of prey. Species treatments (each a chapter) embody much of interest to the American or Canadian reader: eight of the 24 species herein are of holarctic distribution. Other chapters include discussions of field identification and classification, food habits, breeding behavior, population control, conservation issues, and pesticides. There are numerous maps. A very readable mine of information. — R.A.

Checklist of the World's Birds. — Edwin S. Gruson, with Richard A. Forster. Quadrangle/The N.Y. Times Book Co., New York, 1976. xii + 212 pp. Endpaper map. \$10.95. "A complete list of the species, with names, authorities, and areas of distribution." We counted 8726 species listed herein, somewhat fewer than other recent checklists. A very well-organized and annotated list, perhaps the most useful yet to appear. For each family are given scientific names, alternate names, and number of species included. For each species, the scientific name, vernacular name, sources used, and a region code are listed. A list of sources, a bibliography, an index of genera, and of vernacular names follow. There are now four or five similar lists in print: none will please every taxonomist; this may be the best. — R.A.

Handbook of North American Birds, Volumes 2 & 3, Waterfowl. — Editor, Ralph S. Palmer. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976. Volume 2 viii + 521 pp. Whistling Ducks, Swans, Geese, Shelducks, Dabbling Ducks (35 species). 4 color plates, many drawings and maps. \$30. Volume 3 vii + 560 pp. Eiders, Wood Ducks, Diving Ducks, Mergansers, Stiff Tails (29 species). Four color plates, many maps and drawings, bibliography \$30. Fourteen years in preparation, these two fact-packed volumes represent the bird book publishing event of the year. Thirty-two authorities on various species or aspects of waterfowl or their biology have contributed words or illustrations to these two volumes; the editor himself seems to have written a large share. As in Volume 1, the organization and style are compressed, almost telegraphic; once accustomed to this unlovely shorthand the reader can progress impeded only by the never-ending rush of fact. It is probably safe to say that not very much of import that is known about the 64 species treated here is omitted. Obviously, the three volumes (Volume 1 is now reprinted, at \$30) belong in the library of every serious (and affluent) ornithologist. The question would seem to be whether or not any single editor, even one as hardworking and devoted as Palmer, can hope to complete this massive task in one lifetime. Cannot the A.O.U. somehow organize a system that will speed the work? At this rate most of us won't be around to see the later volumes. — R.A.

Penguins, Past and Present, Here and There — George Gaylord Simpson. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976. xii + 150 pp. Maps, photos, six in color. \$10. This study of the family Spheniscidae cloaks high scholarship in any easy reading, delightfully written presentation. Penguins past from Cretaceous to Recent. Penguins present 18 species are recognized, and their appearance, habits, distribution, and life styles are discussed. Worth reading even if you know as much about penguins as the author, which is doubtful. — R.A.

Roger Tory Peterson's Dozen Birding Hot Spots. — George H. Harrison. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1976. 172 pp. Color and B/W photographs. \$9.95. The personal tale of a 32,700 mile, one-calendar-year, birding odyssey to "do" the continental favorites of the High Priest of the birding cult; with maps and a visitor information section written by Kit Harrison. A breezy, pleasant, anecdotal telling of what seems to have been a thoroughgoing lark. — S.R.D.

Supplement to Birds of New York State. — John Bull. Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, 533 Chestnut St., West Hempstead, New York 11552. 1976. 52 pp. \$2.50 + .50 handling. This supplement brings up to date (to July 1, 1975), Bull's *Birds of New York State* (1974). There is an updated species accounts, references and corrigenda listings. Two new species have been recorded in the state and another, elevated from 'hypothetical' to occurrence status, brings the state list to 413 species. An addition of three new breeding species brings that total to 231. It is intended that annual supplements will appear in "The Kingbird," the quarterly publication of the F N Y.S.B.C. — S.R.D.

The Adventure of Birds. — Charlton Ogburn. Morrow, New York, 1976. 381 pp. Illus. by Matthew Kalmenoff. \$10.95. Ogburn brings a heightened sensitivity and singular astuteness to his stirring new volume, which is in fact, a lovely and artistic answer to the often-asked question "Why birds?" He fills the richly informative text with an elucidation of the multitude of ways in which birds have thoroughly captured the imagination and heart of man. An engaging book and much recommended. — S.R.D.

The Audubon Society Book of Wild Birds. — Les Line and Franklin Russell. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1976. 292 pp. \$35. Yes Virginia there is a Santa Claus! Tipping the scales at 5 pounds 12 ounces and measuring a mere 1¾ inches in total thickness; another veritable *magnum opus* has been effected by the editor of *Audubon* magazine. Containing a wealth of superb illustrations assembled from the collections of 67 internationally prestigious photographers to complement his own and Franklin Russell's simple, deft essays; he has scored a *coup* for the already impressive collection of Abrams Artbooks. — S.R.D.

The Bird Finder's 3-Year Notebook. — Paul S. Eriksson. Paul S. Eriksson, New York, 1976. 382 pp \$7.95. A convenient, page-per-day spiral-bound bird diary, arranged so that each date can serve for three successive years. There is also an alphabetical index of scientific and vernacular names including 700+ species on the North American list. Most date-pages have pertinent quotations at the foot. Pages do not have room for complete daily lists, but can easily be used for year lists, state lists, county lists, yard lists, white fencepost lists, life lists or observational notes. This may be the diary you have been searching for. — R.A.

The Birds of John Burroughs. — Edited by Jack Kligerman. Drawings by Louis Agassiz Fuertes.

Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, 1976. xiv + 240 pp. Hardbound \$6.95, Paperbound \$3.95 A meticulously selected collection of thirteen of Burroughs previously published natural history/"ornithocentric" essays accompanied by fourteen antique line drawings of Fuertes, originally executed for **The Writings of John Burroughs**. Professor Kligerman has ferreted from the author's copious works accounts that illustrate the undying curiosity, keen perception, conscientious attention to detail, and power of expression that makes Burroughs' work a lasting and valuable contribution to the natural history essay as a literary form in America. — S.R.D.

The Bluebird. — Lawrence Zeleny. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1976. xix + 170 pp. \$7.95. An account of the zealous and effective manner in which the author has, since 1919, furthered his cause: halting the bluebird population decline through establishing conscientiously monitored bluebird trails. Pragmatically, it serves as an excellent "how-to" manual replete with detailed instructions sufficient for maintaining one's own bluebird routes, accompanied by abundant nesting box constructions plans. — S.R.D

The Web of Adaptation, Bird Studies in the American Tropics. — David W. Snow. Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co., New York, 1976. 176 pp. \$8.95. Evolution and resultant specialization in several tropical fruit-eating bird species is the focus of this book. Written in an engaging, non-technical, literary style; it will appeal to an audience generally interested in the complexities of natural selection and adaptation. Dr. Snow has rather good naturedly sprinkled some of his own tantalizing theories and hypotheses among his observations; many of the most thought-provoking of which involve the marvelous and sometimes bizarre courtship displays of divers manakin species of Trinidad and Tobago. A thoroughly noteworthy volume that's destined to enjoy a healthy readership. —S.R.D.

Where to watch birds in Europe. (revised) — John Gooders. Andre Deutsch, 105 Great Rusell Street, London, WC1, or Taplinger Publishing Co., New York, 1974. 299 pp. !3.75. This is a far more useful book than the recent Guide to Bird-watching in Europe by Ferguson-Lees, because it gives exact locations of best birding areas in each of the 26 countries treated. Location descriptions vary in length, but all follow a similar pattern: general description of area and birdlife, specific locations, outstanding birds by season, access, accommodations. Well illustrated with maps and photographs. Recommended for any birder planning a European trip. — R.A.