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**The Marsh Hen: A Natural History of the Clapper Rail of the Atlantic Coast Salt Marsh**

Brooke Meanley. Tidewater Publications, Centreville, MD 21617. 1985. 123 pp., drawings by John W. Taylor, many photographs. Paperbound \$8.95.

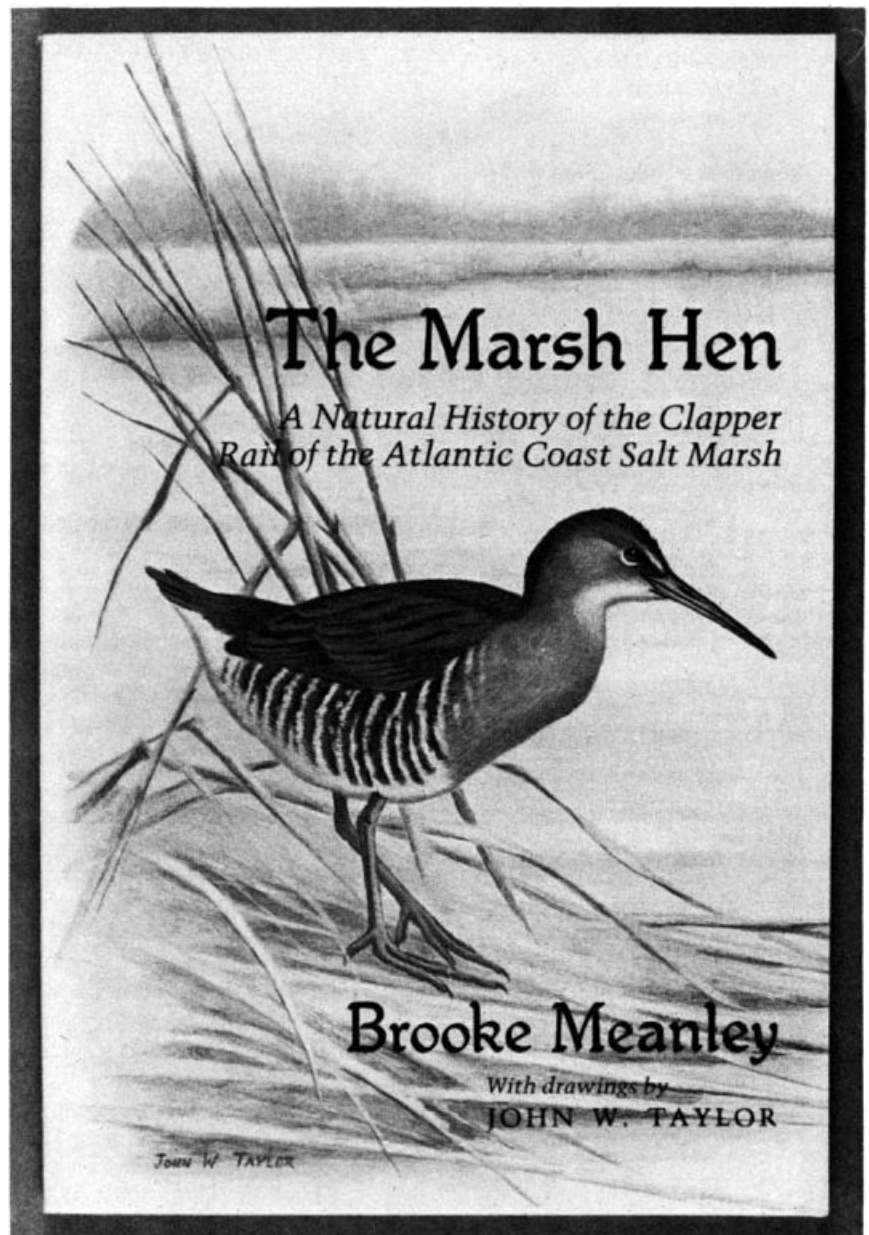
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HERE IS ANOTHER FINE BOOK FROM Brooke Meanley, who has written seven previous books on subjects concerning the marshes and swamps of the east and southern United States. This is his third life history monograph; the other two are: *Life History of the King Rail* (1969. North America Fauna No. 67) and *Life History of the Swainson's Warbler* (1971. North America Fauna No. 69). The Clapper Rail is a wetlands species that is frequently heard but not always seen, except for an occasional view along some tidal creek at low tide and near dusk. Observing rails takes not just time but plenty of patience. The author has spent over one-half a century watching birds, much of that time in marshes and swamps.

His very readable style presents a fascinating view into the daily life of the Clapper Rail and its neighbors. Major topics covered include taxonomy, habitat, feeding behavior and foods, courtship and nesting, the summer season, molt, post-breeding season, migration, hunting, winter, and threats from natural catastrophe, pollution, and predation. Appendices on geographic variation, ageing and sexing, capturing, and censusing are included along with an excellent bibliography. The many fine photographs and drawings greatly enhance the book.

Everything you ever wanted to know about the Clapper Rail (at least on the Atlantic coast), but were afraid to ask, is presented. Minute details and summaries of larger sets of observations are given. One cannot begin to present in this review the many fascinating details that the author has compiled. Some examples: female fiddler crabs do not receive the same treatment by the rails as male crabs, the latter has its single large claw removed before being swallowed whole; a single hurricane may cause 15,000–20,000 rail deaths, but the population recovers within a few years.

This book is well written (and edited—I could find no typographical er-



rors), for both amateur naturalists and professional biologists. All will find it easy to read and locate information. It is very worthy of adding to a home or office library.—J.M.S.

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We thank the following book reviewers for their careful reading and comments. The initials at the end of each review correspond to these names: Franklin C. Haas, Douglas P. Kibbe, Hugh E. Kingery, Jay M. Sheppard, and Frances Williams.

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#### CORRIGENDA

In Volume 40, Number 1, we included the book "Where to find birds in Nova Scotia," in our Canadian Directory. This title is out-of-print and has been replaced with "Birding Nova Scotia" (1984). The book retails for \$5.00 and is available from The Nova Scotia Bird Society, attention: J. Shirley Cohrs, 8 Rosemont Avenue, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3N 1X8.

The book "A Bird-Finding Guide to Canada," J. C. Finlay (ed.) 1984, was also included in the Canadian Directory. It is not available in the U.S. through the Canadian publisher, Hurtig. The book can be purchased in the U.S. from the Independent Publishers Group, 1 Pleasant Avenue, Port Washington, N.Y. 11050, (516) 944-9325. It is available in both hardcover (\$27.95 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling) and paperback (\$18.95 plus \$2.00 postage and handling), though paperback stock is low.