

BOOK REVIEWS

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF MEXICO. — Ernest P. Edwards. Published by the author, Sweet Briar, Virginia, 1972. 300 p. Illus., 2 maps, 24 color plates. 5 3/4 x 9 inches. Heavy paper, \$7.50.

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA. — L. Irby Davis. University of Texas Press, Austin, 1972. 282 p. Illus., 48 color plates. 5 3/4 x 8 5/8 inches. Hard cloth, \$10.00; flexible binding, \$6.50.

Inevitably the two guides listed above will be compared with each other and with *Birds of Mexico* by Emmet R. Blake (University of Chicago Press, 1953). Absence of colored plates makes Blake's book somewhat unappealing to bird watchers long accustomed to the excellent illustrations in the Peterson and Robbins guides. Both new books on the birds of Mexico have colored plates, but neither volume appears to be the perfect solution to the immense problem of providing a first-class guide to the large number of species of birds found in that country. Although I am certainly not qualified to judge these books critically, I believe Edwards' text is superior to that provided by Davis. The illustrations by F.P. Bennett Jr., however, would be worth the cost of Davis' book to the bird student traveling in Mexico. Fortunately, Bennett's plates are printed consecutively in the center of the book where they can be located quickly for comparison with Edwards' text. This may be a rather awkward arrangement, but it is probably the best one can do until Peterson's long-awaited volume on the birds of Mexico becomes available. — EFP

BIRD WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE. — Virginia C. Holmgren. The Seabury Press, New York, 1972. 216 p. Hard cover, \$6.95.

No bird watcher can read the Bible without being impressed by the frequent references to birds. Virginia Holmgren's book is an adequate and thoughtfully organized treatment of the subject, but it offers nothing of importance that is not available in several earlier works from other publishing houses. My personal preference leans toward Alice Parmelee's *All the Birds of the Bible* (Harper & Brothers, 1959), which has a large number of black-and-white illustrations and an index in addition to a carefully prepared text. However, Bible scholars may prefer Holmgren's emphasis on the Hebrew designations for birds, and those not familiar with Eurasian birds may appreciate her descriptions of those species in relationship to similar ones found in North America. Certainly the clergyman or layman who would like to improve his understanding of the natural history of Bible lands couldn't go wrong by adding one or both of these books to his library. — EFP

WORDS FOR BIRDS: A Lexicon of North American Birds with Biographical Notes. — Edward S. Gruson. Quadrangle Books, Inc., New York, 1972. 305 p. Indexed. Illus. Hard cover, \$8.95.

Which bird's name is an allusion to St. Peter's walking on the water? Which bird is named for someone who falsely represented himself as having been a captain in the United States Navy? Which one is named for a man who really was a general in the Confederate Army? We've heard of Lucy's Warbler, but who was Lucy's father and which birds bear his name? Was Franklin's Gull named for Benjamin Franklin or some other Franklin?

If you have ever wondered how birds acquired their common and scientific names, you will thoroughly enjoy this book. Indexed by common, generic, and scientific names of birds as well as by the people for whom the birds are named, the book is a handy reference; but the biographical sketches are so well written that it is almost impossible to read one of them without at least scanning the book from cover to cover. — EFP