

BOOK REVIEWS

VIRGINIA'S BIRDLIFE: AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST

YuLee R. Lerner, checklist committee chairman. Virginia Avifauna Number 2, Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc. May 1979. 118 p. Index. 6 x 9 inches. Paperback. \$4.50 postpaid. Available from VSO Treasurer, 520 Rainbow Forest Drive, Lynchburg, Va. 24502.

Essentially a revision of J.J. Murray's *Check-list of the Birds of Virginia*, which was published in 1952, *Virginia's Birdlife* summarizes the state's published records through May 1978 and includes many unpublished records through December 1978. The new list is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Murray and John H. Grey Jr., whose early work on the revision was ended by his death on 9 September 1971. Dr. Grey, as many CBC members no doubt recall, was the first editor of *Chat*.

This attractive and carefully prepared checklist is an appropriate celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of VSO. An outline map of the state is conveniently located inside the front cover. The introduction is clear and concise. The large type, boldface subheadings, and straightforward text make this publication easily understood even by those unfamiliar with Virginia's geography.

Of the 400 species listed, 380 are fully documented and 20 hypothetical. For each documented species, the account gives the common name, scientific name, and breeding status on the first line. Following this in most cases are three boldface subheadings for the geographic regions: Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountains and Valleys. The status is given in telegraphic style for each region. Information includes relative abundance by seasons, normal arrival and departure dates for species that are not permanent residents, nesting data for breeders, and peak counts. If there is no record for a region, there is a statement to that effect. The committee wisely avoided the confusing symbols and abbreviations dear to the hearts of many checklist compilers. Even the device of placing the common names of hypothetical species in parentheses is clarified by the use of the boldface subheading Hypothetical in place of the geographic region. Individual records are given for hypothetical species, but literature references are not cited. The subheading Accidental precedes the list of records for some species that are documented but do not occur frequently enough to warrant treatment by regions. The subheading Extinct is used where appropriate.

The weak spot in *Virginia's Birdlife* lies in the selection of terms for relative abundance. The committee chose to use only five: accidental, rare, uncommon, common, and abundant. When only one term must cover the broad range between uncommon and abundant, obviously some common species will be much more numerous than others. Use of uncommon to common and common to abundant can be misleading if the species is never truly uncommon or abundant. Therefore, I think future editions of the Virginia checklist would benefit from the introduction of the terms very common and fairly common to describe species at the upper and lower ends of the common range. This would permit reservation of the term abundant for those species seen by the thousands and the term uncommon for those that occur regularly but in very small numbers.

Virginia's Birdlife is a valuable publication that should be welcomed by everyone who is interested in the birds of eastern North America. Carolina bird students can study it to learn which species are extending their ranges southward and may soon appear in our region. The many records from Kerr Reservoir represent birds that possibly visited North Carolina as well as Virginia. Indeed, the birdlife throughout our northern tier of counties closely resembles that of southern Virginia because of our shared river systems.

Congratulations to the VSO checklist committee for a job well done. Publication of *Virginia's Birdlife* should insure a great beginning for the society's second 50 years.—EFP

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP: MANAGEMENT OF SOUTHERN FORESTS FOR NONGAME BIRDS (Held 24-26 January 1978, Atlanta, Georgia)

R.M. DeGraaf, technical coordinator. Forest Service General Technical Report SE-14. This publication may be obtained free of charge by writing Publications and Information

Services, USDA Forest Service, Southeastern Forest Experiment Station, P.O. Box 2570, Asheville, N.C. 28802.

The published report of this workshop includes a set of 14 papers. Two papers present general views that appear to be administrative positions. One of these is the keynote address by Michael D. Zagata, Management of Nongame Wildlife—A Need Whose Time Has Come. The other comes under the heading of Research Plans. There are three sketches that deal with specialized bird groups—raptors, cavity nesters, and wading birds. A single paper is devoted to census techniques. The eight remaining papers recount various aspects of avian community ecology. Three deal with the structural and/or organizational levels of avian communities, and five are mostly accounts of the birdlife in the major forest types in the Southeast with emphasis on the types of management presently used.

The workshop was organized around four main topics. Forest Ecosystem Structure and Functions and the Effects on Birdlife contains an odd assortment of papers, none of which address the topic. The keynote address, which introduces and otherwise brings together the general concepts of the workshop, is placed here. In a paper by Sidney Gauthreaux on the organization and structure of bird communities in forests, there is a modicum of energy dynamics, but his comments are directed at the community level rather than the ecosystem. Nevertheless, this paper provides an excellent review of the entitled subject matter. The ideas are thoughtfully and adequately developed. They are presented in a most logical and understandable manner. However, for the casual reader this paper may be too literature oriented.

Effects of Management on Nongame Birds consists of a set of papers that are at least consistent with the announced topic. All except one by B.R. Noon and K.P. Able are review papers. The Noon and Able paper compares the structure of an avian community from two distant areas, the northern and southern Appalachian Mountains. It is one of the refreshing spots in this set of papers if only because it is an original piece of work. The thesis is well designed and thoroughly developed; however, for a general audience it is perhaps a little rigorous as to theory and mathematical application. The remaining papers contain mostly descriptions of the birdlife of the major kinds of forest. The accounts of timber management as practiced in these southeastern forests are understandable and well discussed. The implications of this management on nongame "bird communities" are also discussed. Nevertheless, one would have hoped for a more enlightened and authoritative position than was presented in most of these papers.

The third topic deals with management of birds in specialized habitats. Included here is a very fine paper by Chandler S. Robbins dealing with census techniques for forest birds. It is well organized, thorough, and instructive. Bird students should find much useful information here! The papers on specialized bird habitats were generally a disappointment. In the descriptive narrative the story is at least presented, but the supportive material is deficient.

Research Topics contains a single paper, which in a descriptive and general manner offers a summation of the workshop.

Although most of this workshop was devoted to discussions of descriptive community ecology, there appears to be some latitude in what constitutes an avian community. For example, K.E. Evans apparently considers the kinds of birds inhabiting a particular plant association as constituting that community of birds (see p. 76-86), whereas H.H. Shugart et al. appear to regard the taxonomic groups of birds as communities—the "entire woodpecker community" (see p. 11). Still another view is that the avian community consists of the seasonally resident birds in a particular plant association (see p. 55-59 in J.M. Meyers and A.S. Johnson).

An impression that emerges from reading the Proceedings is that nongame bird management is essentially tied to maintenance of suitable habitats. It seems generally agreed that forest management practices exert a profound effect on the avian communities through the manipulation of habitats (see p. 40-47 in G.W. Wood and L. Niles). However, Gauthreaux (p. 29-30) indicates that many of the criteria that have been used to delineate avian communities are not entirely adequate or necessarily sufficient. He further notes that many more factors should be considered, especially behavioral and climatic ones. Shugart et al. (p. 14-15) also rightly conclude that in addition to habitat requirements, niche relationships

might be used as focal points in further studies. Here we see something that is perhaps a basic flaw in the workshop: There has been an overemphasis on habitat-community relationships with very little attention paid to the role or importance of birds. Such considerations might conceivably reveal that birds instead of being a custodial commodity or liability to which we have fallen heir might actually be a generally untapped resource.

Unfortunately, a number of mistakes and shortcomings were uncovered. Titles of three of the papers do not entirely agree with the table of contents (see p. 17, 40, and 90). There is no caption or designation for a set of data on page 32. There is no indication of what the solid circles mean in Figures 3 and 4 on page 56. There is a typographical error in Tables 1 and 2 on page 91; the common name of yellow poplar should not be hyphenated. In Table 2 on page 25, a footnoted reference to Leith and Whittaker 1975 does not appear in the Literature Cited (p. 30-37).

In addition to the relatively minor flaws such as those mentioned above, a variety of deficiencies, omissions, and errors of a more substantive nature were found in some of the supportive elements. This has the unfortunate effect of weakening and/or altering the statement as well as of causing a loss of confidence in the narrative. The differences in the bird list in Table 3 on page 79 rather than reflecting the "edge effect" on breeding populations of birds could as easily be explained from the differences in geography. This is also a possible interpretation of data in Table 6 on page 84 of over-wintering birds in a given forest type but in different geographic regions. In an item that aims to discriminate among a number of species of warblers, there is confusion under the heading of feeding sites because the list includes a mixture of feeding niches, habitats, and nesting sites (see p. 83).

In Table 1 on page 77, data are included ostensibly to show the effects of closure of the crown on understory plants. Only 5 of the 25 items clearly show this influence. Any differences in the remaining items could as easily be shown to be the result of differences in habitat. Furthermore, nine of the listed entries are arborescent species.

Two species of birds, the Anhinga and Double-crested Cormorant, are included in Table 1 on page 137 with wading birds. These birds may nest with herons and egrets, but they are not wading birds. The list of Common Southeastern Raptors (p. 133) contains a bothersome amount of inconsistency. If Arctic Peregrine Falcon, Barn Owl, Burrowing Owl, Everglade Kite, Golden Eagle, Mississippi Kite, Pigeon Hawk, Short-eared Owl, and Southern Bald Eagle can be considered common and Southeastern, then why were Caracara, Goshawk, Long-eared Owl, Rough-legged Hawk, Saw-whet Owl, and Short-tailed Hawk not included? Likewise, if it is necessary to include some of the subspecies of raptors occurring in this region, why not include all of them?

A list of 17 species of birds that use cavities in dead trees in the longleaf-slash pine forest is given in Table 1 on page 47. The White-breasted Nuthatch is a rare visitor in the longleaf-slash pine forests of the North Carolina "Sand Hills," but it is more numerous in the deciduous forests. The American Kestrel and Red-breasted Nuthatch are only winter visitors. Inclusion of the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher is erroneous as it is not a cavity nester and does not breed or winter in the Southeast. However, three species were inadvertently omitted. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is a regular winter resident. The Red-headed Woodpecker and—unfortunately—the Starling are nesting species.

In the rather busy table on page 6, there is some lack of form, clarity, and precision. The following axiomatic statements do not hold true for at least parts of the coastal plain of North Carolina: Typical overwintering species are nonwoodland birds. . . . Between seasons both the density and diversity of woodland birds is highest during migration, next highest during the breeding season, and lowest during the winter. . . . The annual species composition of dominant species is constant from year to year.

The concept of this workshop is an interesting one, and the published report contains much useful information. Because the time has not only come but well nigh passed for a number of nongame birds, one should expect a tad more care in the preparation of the papers. I hope this publication is but a preliminary report rather than the textbook on nongame bird management in Southeastern forests.—PHILIP J. CRUTCHFIELD