



Roundtable

... with Louis C. Fink

Food Storing by Red-breasted Nuthatches

On 5 October 1980, my pine woods were "invaded" by Red-breasted Nuthatches. For the first 2 weeks, they stayed in the woods, associating with chickadees and titmice. Then, unfortunately for my budget, they discovered the half-coconut that dispenses sunflower seeds. For 3 or 4 days, I was convinced that I had at least six birds coming to the feeder. It became apparent that they were taking seeds and storing them. I never saw them hack open a seed, and they made many more trips than the chickadees and titmice. They are pugnacious and tame, waiting at arm's length while I fill the feeder. I shall be interested to hear of other observations of this habit of storing seeds.—ADAIR M. TEDARDS, Box 157, Route 4, Easley, S.C. 29640.

Song and Garden Birds of North America (National Geographic Society, 1964) calls nuthatches "great rainy-day birds. They spend long hours taking provender from bird feeders and wedging it in walls, under shingles, or behind loose bark, despite the fact that the food supply is constantly replenished."

In *A Complete Guide to Bird Feeding* (Knopf, 1980), John V. Dennis describes the food-storing behavior of the White-breasted Nuthatch and then comments on the Red-breasted: "Hanging and tree-trunk feeders are to its liking, and it has the same habit as its larger relative of carrying off large quantities of food. An observer in Illinois reported seeing this nuthatch press seeds into the ground in much the same manner that squirrels use in disposing of food. Most of the food carried away by this nuthatch is stored in crevices in trees."

Mill Grove

John James Audubon was a superb painter but not much of a husband or provider. His only real home still standing in America is Mill Grove, not far from Valley Forge, where he developed his love for birds and also for Lucy Bakewell, who became his wife.

I visited the estate on a clear September morning and hiked some of the six miles of trails on the 130 acres. The mansion house is also open to the public; it was built in 1762, preserved since 1951 by the Montgomery County Commissioners. The interior walls contain murals by George M. Harding, which tell the story of Audubon's life. The attic is a work-room very much like the space Audubon used.

Mill Grove boasts a list of 175 species of birds. Of special interest are the activities of the Valley Forge Audubon Society, which publishes a list of more than 50 field trips, films, and meetings from September to January!

Clemmons State Forest

For a pleasant walk in the woods, this spot of 300 acres is recommended. There are two well-marked and well-maintained trails, one 0.6 of a mile, the other 2½ miles. There is a small pond fed by a stream, which one of the trails follows. For anyone interested in

nature, the exhibits are satisfying—and imaginative. Many trees have small boards that identify the trees after you have made your guess and turn the sign over. Seven trees have small boxes with buttons. Press the button and the tree speaks. "I am a red cedar, planted here in 1940, but now suffering from root rot. . . ." A host of other displays are scattered throughout, including one on the value of the Pileated Woodpecker, complete with a stuffed bird.

Bird life was not extravagant, but a visit to Clemmons State Forest will tell most of us something about trees and their relationship with other living things. The Forest is between Garner and Clayton on "old US 70." This is a two-lane road just east of US 70—and not too clear on some maps.

Symposium on Biology of the Seaside Sparrow

On 1 and 2 October 1981, the North Carolina Biological Survey, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Audubon Society will sponsor a symposium on the Biology of the Seaside Sparrow. About half of the invited speakers are already selected for a series of papers that will cover nearly all aspects of the Evolution, Distribution, Ecology, and Life History of the bird. Seaside Sparrows are a coastal species found from New York to Texas and live only in salt marshes. Much of the field work done on these sparrows has been conducted in North Carolina and Florida. Some of the speakers include Eugene Hester, Sandy Sprunt, Paul Sykes, Oliver Austin, Herbert Kale, John Hardy, John Funderburg, and Tom Quay. John Henry Dick has agreed to provide a painting showing all nine races of the species. The results of the sessions will be published by the North Carolina State Museum in a single volume. Additional information is available upon request from Thomas L. Quay, symposium editor, or David S. Lee, symposium coordinator, North Carolina State Museum, P.O. Box 27647, Raleigh, N.C. 27611 (919-733-7450).

Coastal Bird Conference

Southeastern Coastal and Estuarine Birds: A Conference-Workshop will be held 11-13 September 1981 near Georgetown, S.C., at the Field Laboratory of the Belle W. Baruch Institute for Marine Biology and Coastal Research, University of South Carolina. The meeting will focus on a total ecosystem approach and will assemble past and present federal, state, and academic researchers from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Interested people are invited to present the results of their research, in either a conventional or a poster format. Preliminary results and presentations by graduate students are especially welcome, as are papers on avian prey bases and avian competitors. We hope the conference will serve as an information exchange as well as a forum on current coastal and estuarine bird research. Questions concerning presentations and graduate student awards (room and registration fee waivers) should be directed to KEITH L. BILDSTEIN, program chairman, Department of Biology, Winthrop College, Rock Hill, S.C. 29733 (803-323-2111). Information on registration and housing will be mailed to A.O.U., C.O.S., and W.O.S. members in the Southeast. Others may obtain this mailing by writing BOBBIE CHRISTY, local chairman, Baruch Field Laboratory, P.O. Box 1630, Georgetown, S.C. 29440 (803-546-3623).

CBC Members in Print

Bird — Habitat Associations on Southeastern Forest Lands is a report written by HARRY E. LeGRAND JR. and PAUL B. HAMEL, of Clemson University, for the USDA Forest Service Southeastern Forest Experiment Station. The primary purpose

(Continued on Page 28)

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA

Graham Pizzey. 1980. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. 88 plates (mostly in color) by Roy Doyle. 460 p. Indexed by scientific and English names. Hardcover, \$27.50.

If you have ever dreamed of birding in Australia, this book will make you call your travel agent. Pizzey's guide treats 726 species, many of which have two or more well-marked races that can be recognized in the field. The 1300-plus bird illustrations are printed in a section near the middle of the book, and the range maps (breeding range only) are at the back. Endpapers offer a large map of Australia. Each species account is numbered to permit easy coordination of text with maps and bird illustrations. Numbers in the indexes refer not to pages but to species and plates. The text is well organized and generally easy to follow in spite of the telegraphic style and numerous abbreviations. Many of the birds are drawn in profile with only one leg visible, and several plates are crowded with up to 25 drawings per page. Some of the illustrations are far more appealing than others, giving the impression that the artist matured greatly while the work was in progress. However, all drawings appear to be adequate for their intended purpose. Among the 25 or so familiar species Carolinians may find in Australia are the Cattle Egret, Sanderling, Glossy Ibis, Barn Owl, and Barn Swallow. But who will look for them in the land of Emus, the Australian Cassowary, kookaburras, and bowerbirds?—EFP

CBC ROUNDTABLE

(Continued from Page 12)

of the work is to provide a data base to aid forest managers in assessing effects of land management decisions on birds. The range maps cover Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The text provides concise information on status, primary habitats, key habitat requirements, reproduction, and food habits for each of the 234 avian species included in the work.

"Decline and disappearance of the Dusky Seaside Sparrow from Merritt Island, Florida" by PAUL W. SYKES JR. (*American Birds* 34:728-737, September 1980) features Paul's remarkable color photo of an adult male singing on territory.

With Their Ears Pricked Forward—Tales of Mules I've Known by JOSHUA A. LEE was released in October 1980 (John F. Blair, Publisher, 1406 Plaza Drive S.W., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103. 138 p. \$8.95). What will this bird-watching plant geneticist do next?

Atlas of North American Freshwater Fishes, an 850-page looseleaf publication treating 777 recognized species, was released by the North Carolina State Museum of Natural History in October 1980. Coordinator of the project was DAVID S. LEE. Each species account includes an illustration of the fish, a range map, and text giving type locality, systematics, distribution and habitat, adult size, and biology. For further information write Fish Atlas, North Carolina State Museum, P.O. Box 27647, Raleigh, N.C. 27611. Lee is also author of "The Pocket Gopher Mound Project," which appeared in the June 1980 issue of *Natural History*.

The Age of Birds by ALAN FEDUCCIA, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, traces the evolution of birds from their emergence in the Age of Reptiles to the present. A review is planned for a future issue of *Chat*.