



# Roundtable

... with Louis C. Fink

## Bird Miscellany

The world of birds is filled with interesting tidbits of information. The infinite variety of the habits of birds—and the people who study them—can add to our enjoyment of the hobby. Maybe there will be no harm (only pleasure) in talking about a few.

Take a bird like the Dipper, or Water Ouzel. ("Ouzel" comes from the Old English *osle*, the European Blackbird.) The Dipper feeds by walking on the bottom of streams and builds its nest behind a waterfall. I watched this unbelievable performance in Yellowstone National Park in 1936; otherwise, I should not have believed. There is a delightful account of the Dipper in *Ford Times* for August 1981. Your local Ford dealer can put you on the mailing list for this fine magazine, which publishes several bird articles each year.

Terry Moore sends his regular report of the 600 Club from 3086 River Oaks Drive, Atlanta 30339. Far out in front is Thompson G. Marsh of Colorado with his unbelievable list of 756 species! It was sad to note that the list of deceased members is headed by Edward L. Chalif of Arizona, co-author with Roger Tory Peterson of the definitive book on Mexican birds. I spent two days in Tucson with Eddie Chalif and never met a more generous host. With his guidance, I added 37 species to my life list.

Interior Secretary James Watt found himself in trouble when rumors started that his department might give some Federal Wildlife Refuges back to the States. One such spot is the home of the 78 or so Whooping Cranes in Texas. It is easy to see these rare birds in the winter at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. There are observation towers on land and even easier views by boat for a small fee.

In Peabody, Massachusetts, somebody stole a 155-year-old leather-bound book of John J. Audubon's color lithographs. The book is valued at \$250,000.

In Cleveland, Ohio, a man objected to the name Bald Eagle. Turns out that the name has been in use since 1634, and that "bald" derives from a word that means "white" in several languages.—LCF

## More on the Music of Blue Jays

In the Summer issue of *Chat*, Joshua Lee mentions hearing the song of the Blue Jay and asks if others have heard this.

Even though the song of the Blue Jay is well described in Bent's *Life Histories of North American Jays, Crows and Titmice*, I was unaware of this until a trip to Pullen Park in Raleigh, N.C., on 7 February 1977. My notes from that day read (slightly altered): "At Pullen Park today (between 2:20 and 3:00 p.m.), I was startled to hear a symphony of unfamiliar notes coming from the direction of a Red Cedar. The

strains of notes were from 10 to 30 seconds long, sometimes as long as 1½ to 2 minutes. The notes were in the style of a Winter Wren, but contained none of that type of notes. In the song I heard the imitation of the Common Flicker's "yucker" notes several times, and other notes reminiscent perhaps of the Dark-eyed Junco, American Goldfinch, House Finch, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Blue Jay. I had thought the singer was a finch of some sort until I heard the flicker and Blue Jay notes mixed in. I looked upward into the cedar and saw only a Blue Jay. Sure enough, as the Blue Jay moved to higher branches (perhaps 35 feet above ground) so moved the notes of my mysterious singer. The jay flew to a Sugar Maple and began singing again after a period of silence. I circled slowly around the maple and saw that the Blue Jay was indeed the mysterious singer as it raised its open bill upwards and some sweeter-than-normal notes poured forth. This went on for several minutes until the jay gradually went into the more normal bell-like calls of the Blue Jay. The song was long, varied, rather high-pitched, and not very loud, often very soft."

I spent 11 years birding around Blue Jays in the East, and the only one I ever heard singing was on a clear and very cold February afternoon at Raleigh's Pullen Park. I imagine that it is very rare to hear this song.—KEVIN G. HINTSA, 2808 Ascot Drive, San Ramon, California 94583.

### Durham County Bird List

Jim McConnell has compiled an 18-page annotated list of the birds of Durham County, N.C. Copies are \$1 each from Jim at 2808 Butner Street, Durham, N.C. 27704.

