

BOOK REVIEWS

AMERICA'S ENDANGERED BIRDS

Robert M. McClung. 1979. William Morrow and Company, New York. Illus. by George Founds. 160 p. Price NA.

The Library of Congress classifies this as "juvenile literature," but adults will enjoy it. Professional ornithologists and conservationists will find nothing new in it, but for many other bird students, the book is a straightforward, unsentimental account of efforts to save Whooping Cranes, Bald Eagles, Brown Pelicans, California Condors, Kirtland's Warblers, and Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. Each bird gets a full chapter, with details of the various and oft-debated methods of rescue. A final chapter touches on many other endangered species, and it is encouraging to read of the efforts being made to save them. The book ends with this: "The death of a species is forever."—LCF

BEYOND THE BIRD FEEDER

John V. Dennis. 1981. Knopf, New York. Illus. by Mathew Kalmenoff. 201 p. Index. Hardcover, \$13.95.

There is no way I can give this book an impartial review. John Dennis and I have spent many hours discussing bird behavior and methods of pursuing this fascinating aspect of bird study. As he graciously acknowledges, I previewed part of the manuscript. And for nearly 20 years I have been touting the advantages of using the home as a bird blind. This close involvement makes me prone to praise the author when he expresses my sentiments exactly and to criticize him—perhaps unjustly—when he neglects a topic I deem important.

Beyond the Bird Feeder is a sequel to Dennis's very successful *Complete Guide to Bird Feeding*. Like the earlier work, this one is an intensely personal account written in the first person singular. The nine chapters treat migration and bird feeding, food, water, anting and related antics, eluding enemies, confrontations, habitat and food plants, reactions to inclement weather, and houses and their attractions to birds. Although there are frequent references to feeders, the book basically explains what backyard birds are likely to do when they are not eating at the feeders. There is an extensive discussion of grooming behaviors—water-bathing, anting, sunning, dusting, and preening. Unfortunately, several related topics (scratching, wing-stretching, bill-wiping, and molting) are omitted or mentioned only briefly. Frequent references to events related to courtship and nesting make me long for a chapter on the reproductive cycle. This would not have to be lengthy or technical—just the basic perspective needed for an intelligent reading of Bent's *Life Histories*.

Dennis refers in his preface to the contributions of amateurs to the study of bird behavior, and in the chapter on eluding enemies he mentions the importance of keeping careful notes on observations. As the editor of *Chat*, I wish the author had placed more emphasis on note taking and the importance of publishing accounts of unusual behavior in appropriate journals.

On the positive side, Dennis approaches bird behavior with great enthusiasm and leaves the reader prepared to watch for the unexpected. He emphasizes those aspects of bird study that are still poorly understood and invites readers to think seriously about the significance of the behavior they see in their own yards. Dennis gives his book wide appeal by including the experiences of bird students from all parts of the United States and from several foreign countries. Readers might get the impression, however, that he is partial to the Carolinas. Not only does Dennis refer to the writings of Arthur T.

Wayne, A.L. Pickens, John C. Watkins, Doris C. Hauser, and Eloise Potter but also he frequently mentions having lived in South Carolina, which he calls "one of the most beautiful and unspoiled of the southern states."

Anyone who is just beginning to develop an interest in bird behavior will find this book very helpful and enjoyable. More important than any scientific facts presented in *Beyond the Bird Feeder* is the author's point of view: The ability to recognize the birds attracted to your feeder combined with an informed curiosity about bird behavior enables you to study birds in depth from the comfort of your own home. And, of course, the keen awareness of behavior developed at the feeding station adds to the enjoyment of trips afield.—EFP

ANSWER TO PHOTO QUIZ

If you identified the owl on page 26 as a fledgling Screech Owl, you agree with the several experienced field observers who examined the photograph prior to publication. Note that the bird has not yet grown the ear tufts that are characteristic of adults and most juveniles of this species. The photograph was submitted by Henry Rankin Jr. of Fayetteville, N.C. Do you have bird pictures that illustrate identification problems? If so, please submit black-and-white prints to the Editor for use in future Photo Quizzes.