



Roundtable

... with Louis C. Fink

How to Keep Bees and Wasps Away from Hummingbird Feeders

According to an anonymous caller on a radio talk show, inserting short lengths of a plastic drinking straw in the openings of a hummingbird feeder will discourage bees and wasps. The sections of the straw should be long enough to make it impossible for these insects to drink the syrup, but short enough so hummingbirds will still be able to reach it.

Migration Study Published

Autumn Land-bird Migration on the Barrier Islands of Northeastern North Carolina, by Paul W. Sykes Jr., was published by the North Carolina Biological Survey and the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences in December 1986. The book was adapted from a thesis Sykes submitted as a requirement for receiving his M.S. degree from North Carolina State University. Although most of the field work was done in 1965, the discussion includes additional land-bird migrants found in the region by Sykes and others since that date. The study provides documentation for the first state records for three species: Swainson's Hawk, Sage Thrasher, and Western Meadowlark.

Land birds begin migrating southward along the North Carolina coast in mid-July, and the movement continues into mid-December. The major portion of the migration comes between the middle of August and the end of November. The biggest flights occur in the 1 to 2 days following passage of a cold front.

Sidney A. Gauthreaux Jr. and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. reviewed the manuscript and offered suggestions for improving the text. The heart of the 54-page book, however, is Table 3, which lists the dates of occurrence for 145 species on the basis of 109,192 individuals Sykes saw or heard from August through November 1965. Nomenclature and species order conform with the 1983 AOU *Check-list*.

"When I helped Paul with his bird-banding operation, I never dreamed I would—20 years later—edit his manuscript," said Eloise Potter, editor for the Occasional Papers of the N.C. Biological Survey. "Although many excellent migration studies have been published since 1966, Paul's work does not suffer in comparison. Anyone who enjoys looking for rare land birds along the coast will

want to own his book.” Copies are available from the N.C. State Museum of Natural Sciences, P.O. Box 27647, Raleigh, N.C. 27611. The price is \$5, postpaid; make checks payable to the NCDA Museum Extension Fund.

Question Box

How much do little hummingbirds weigh and how long do they live?

They usually live 4 or 5 years, but “X-18025” is a Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) that weighs one-seventh of an ounce and is 11 years old. It showed up in Gothic, Colorado. X-18025 has made ten migrations to Mexico. A female, she may be a great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother. Large birds usually live longer than small birds. The oldest known Canada Goose lived only 24 years.

BOOK REVIEWS

BIRD-BANDING: EXPERIENCING THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Bill Hilton Jr. 1987. Northwestern High School, Route 11, Box 3, Rock Hill, S.C. 29730. 24 p. Softcover, \$5.

This how-to manual was written for high-school biology teachers by a teacher who practices what he preaches. Working with students at Northwestern High School in Rock Hill, S.C., Bill Hilton Jr. uses ornithology to teach cognitive thinking skills and the basic principles of scientific research. Although the manual stresses the use of bird banding, Hilton provides practical guidelines for studies that employ other methods. The last page in the book is an evaluation sheet that Hilton uses to grade the research projects of his Biology One students at the end of the first semester. He looks at writing skills as well as the biological aspects of the project. Any student who passes Biology One at Northwestern should be able to prepare a manuscript acceptable to the editor of *The Chat*. Teachers who want to motivate their science students should read Hilton’s book very carefully.—EFP

WOOD WARBLER’S WORLD

Hal H. Harrison. 1984. Simon and Schuster, New York. Illus. 336 p. Softcover, \$19.95.

A major airline once ran an advertisement featuring row upon row of the same airplane drawing, each labeled with a different city of destination. I cut out the ad and sent it to a friend with the comment, “So you thought warblers were confusing.” I still find North American wood warblers confusing in appearance; but after reading Harrison’s *Wood Warbler’s World*, I find the 53 species seem more like individuals I would like to meet some day.

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