



BOOK REVIEWS

BIRDS OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG: A HISTORICAL PORTFOLIO

Alan Feduccia. 1989. Illustrations by H. Douglas Pratt. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA 21387. Hardback. 186 pp. \$29.95.

This is a big (11 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 12 $\frac{1}{4}$) beautiful book that appears to have been primarily designed to look attractive on a living room coffee table after you have returned from your last visit to colonial Williamsburg. Its secondary purpose is to tell you something about the birds of the eighteenth century of Virginia and the Carolinas based on the writings of John Lawson and Mark Catesby. Alan Feduccia, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is one of the most knowledgeable people on the ornithological writings of this colonial period as exemplified by his recently published Catesby's Birds of Colonial America. Illustrator H. Douglas Pratt, formerly of Charlotte, North Carolina is an accomplished artist with a list of outstanding contributions.

In its primary function, the book is an overwhelming success. The artwork is superb. The print is beautiful. The lay-out is exceptionally well-done. The cover and the binding are all first-rate. The book looks good! There is, unfortunately, one technical flaw in the artwork that I stumbled over. The flaw is almost certainly a function of missed communication between the author and the illustrator. On page 34, Feduccia notes correctly that the Downy Woodpecker can be differentiated from the Hairy Woodpecker by the former possessing "black markings on the outer white tail feathers" while the latter species has unmarked white outer tail feathers. There on the facing page is a very attractive Downy Woodpecker that lacks the dark markings on the outer white tail feathers. The illustration of the Hairy Woodpecker on the very next page also lacks markings on the outer tail feathers. I am confident that anyone who tries using this book to learn about woodpecker identification will become confused.

The book starts with a five page introduction to the history of ornithological studies in colonial Virginia and the Carolinas, with special emphasis on the works of Lawson and Catesby. Anyone who has tried watching birds in the eastern part of the Carolinas cannot fail to be impressed by how much these early naturalists accomplished with none of the advantages of modern transportation.

There then follows a series of commentaries on selected bird species in no perceivable ordered sequence. The organization of the book is a little strange to a professional ornithologist, but shouldn't cause undue problems to amateurs. Each commentary provides some explanation about the meaning of the species' name, a concise description of what the bird looks like, and some information about its habitat preferences, residence status and other interesting life-history tidbits.

As is probably inevitable, a few errors have crept into the commentaries that could have been avoided in a more careful review process. For example, *macroura* in the scientific name of the Mourning Dove does not mean "mourning" as stated, but rather refers to the "large tail" of the Mourning Dove relative to that of the more familiar Rock Dove (Common Pigeon). Similarly there are not just two species of cuckoo occurring in North America. Even if we ignore the two species of ani and the Greater Roadrunner on the grounds that they don't have cuckoo in their names, there is still the Mangrove Cuckoo of south Florida. A similar systematic misstatement is the suggestion (page 88) that the wood warblers are more closely allied with the vireos when the ornithological consensus is a closer alliance to the tanagers, sparrows and blackbirds. My eyebrows also went up on reading that Red-breasted Nuthatches had nested in bluebird boxes at Williamsburg, as this is far beyond the known breeding range of this species.

In summary, I recommend this book if you want to invest in a lovely addition to the top of your coffee table that will help to remind you of the beauty and charm of historic Williamsburg. At the same time I caution you that this is not a guide to bird identification and some of the information included may not be completely reliable.—
H. T. Hendrickson

Farm Wildlife

During early stages of agricultural development in America, many species of wildlife flourished as axes and plows created openings in the forest canopy of the prairie sod, resulting in subclimax plant communities interspersed through climax types and new sources of foods in the form of seed-bearing annuals and cultivated crops. But such gains were arrested and reversed when intensification of farming eliminated these favorable factors. Thus, today, much of our farm wildlife is in decline.

The wildlife manager is now being called upon to re-create essential elements of the habitats of those species highly valued by the public. The list of valued farm species is no longer only those of interest to the hunter; it now includes those sought by many other recreationists. To find the tools to do this job, the manager looks not only to his/her own agency, but also to publicly-financed programs in agriculture and forestry and the efforts of individuals, groups and corporations. The manager's task has become vastly more complex.

Issue No. 86 of the FWRS Newsletter identifies some of the research, surveys and management efforts undertaken to assist the manager in this endeavor. The reports represented are important, for they describe some of the measures and approaches applicable to this task.

For a copy of Newsletter No. 86, or more information about farm wildlife, call the Fish and Wildlife Reference Service at 1-800-582-3421.