

## BOOK REVIEWS

**BIRDS OF THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS: A Guide for the Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah National Park, and Neighboring Areas.**

Marcus B. Simpson, Jr., 1992. University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2288. Illus. Paperback. 354 pp including bibliographical references and index. \$14.95. (Also available in hardback.)

The only real "fault" of this excellent book might be its title; primarily, it is a bird-*finding* guide, not a field guide to Blue Ridge Mountain birds as it might suggest. However, those readers who are used to the Lane-type bird-finding guides and similar booklets will discover that Simpson's book is roughly three times the length and packed full of useful and interesting information.

Simpson begins with a discussion of the geography, climate, and vegetation that influence the bird life and birders in the region. This is followed by a section on bird-watching in the mountains. Taken together, these first 50 or so pages contain a wealth of information that will be useful to people who don't know everything about the Blue Ridge Mountains nor everything about finding birds in them.

One of the most useful features of this guide is that the specific directions to good birding locations given in the text are usually accompanied by clear and precise half-page or full-page maps that show not only roads but also foot trails. Readers who have attempted to find birding spots noted in some bird-finding guides are likely to have been frustrated by incomplete or difficult-to-understand directions. The maps and text certainly go a long way to reduce such confusion.

In developing his site descriptions, Simpson has included information that may be unique in guides of this type: access for handicapped and physically disadvantaged birders. In fact, he has included a five-page subsection specifically targeted to this audience.

This is an admirable focus, which will prove to be useful to birders who have limitations other than physical, as well. People who don't have the time, appropriate clothing, or interest for hiking could certainly use the information about birding the overlooks, parking lot margins, campground drives, and Forest Service roads that are highlighted.

The book lists about 300 detailed site accounts within 45 general areas in eight states. Over half of these (24) are in North Carolina, and almost one-third (14) are found in Virginia. One to three areas are noted for South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

While most the "hot spots" are along the 469-mile length of the Blue Ridge Parkway, several adjacent and nearby locations are also described, such as the southeastern Blue Ridge escarpment area and several other high-country spots in South Carolina.

Another feature of the book that will be of interest to listers and others interested in finding particular species is a 39-page annotated checklist and finding guide section. This is supported by an index to bird species (separate from

the general index), which lists most pages where each bird is mentioned. For instance, more than a dozen locations are cited for the Northern Saw-whet Owl, which is noted in 37 places in the text.

At one inch thick, this 6" x 9 1/4" book won't fit easily into a pocket, but it should be on the seat beside you the next time you take a drive in the Blue Ridge Mountains. In fact, the price is such a bargain that you may want a "car copy" for your margin notes and dog-earing, and a library copy for when you just want to do a little armchair traveling.—Dennis E. Burnette

### SAVING AMERICAN BIRDS: T. Gilbert Pearson and the Founding of the Audubon Movement

Oliver H. Orr, Jr. 1992. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 32611. Hardback, 296 pp with index and selected bibliography.

This book presents an intertwining of two tales: a biography of the boyhood and early career of T. Gilbert Pearson and the fledgling efforts of a group of conservationists to save American birds. Like many boys of his day, Pearson (1873-1943) was largely a self-taught oologist, collecting and trading bird eggs while developing an expansive knowledge of avian natural history. The youngest child of Quaker parents, Pearson fortuitously moved with his family to a small town in Florida when he was nine. Although the local public schooling proved inadequate, the surrounding country with its rookeries and large wintering bird populations provided Pearson with opportunities for field experience unmatched elsewhere. The wealth of birds in Florida drew well-known ornithologists south to study them. One of these was Frank M. Chapman. By chance Pearson met him, and Chapman's encouragement helped shape the young man's future career. Desirous of a college education which his family could not afford, Pearson traded his collection of eggs and skins for two years room, board and tuition at Guilford College, a Quaker institution near Greensboro. His education at Guilford remedied Pearson's lack of formal education, and saw the honing of his skills as a speaker and writer.

Interspersed between the accounts of Pearson's youth and subsequent academic career are chapters on the beginning of the conservation movement in the US. This movement had its roots in the Nuttall Ornithological Club from which the American Ornithologists' Union grew. Among its prominent members were Elliott Coues and William Brewster. The AOU members helped establish ornithology as an accepted field of study and also began the movement to protect non-game birds that were being slaughtered by the thousands for their feathers, which were in great demand by the women's fashion industry here and abroad. Chapman sponsored Pearson for associate membership, which provided him with needed contacts within the field.

The two interweaving narratives are maintained through the descriptions of the founding of state Audubon societies dedicated to the conservation of birds and Pearson's academic career. Following Guilford he studied and taught at Chapel Hill and then at the State Normal and Industrial College (now the University of North Carolina-Greensboro). It was here in 1902 that Pearson

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