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BOOK REVIEWS

A Field Guide to Hawks of North America, William S. Clark. Illustrations by Brian K. Wheeler. 1987. Number 35 in The Peterson Field Guide Series, edited by Roger Tory Peterson. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. xii + 198 pp., 24 color plates, 2 black-and-white plates, 241 photographs, 6 figures, 32 maps. ISBN 0-395-36001-3 (hardcover) \$19.95, ISBN 0-395-44112-9 (softcover) \$13.95.

The softcover is a mere 4.5 x 7.25 inches, and less than 0.75 inches thick, but the wealth of information concerning the field identification of diurnal raptors is enormous. William S. Clark, from Arlington, VA, (not William H. Clark as stated on the inside of the front cover) is the former director of the Raptor Information Center of the National Wildlife Federation. Brian K. Wheeler, from Longmont, Colorado, is an accomplished painter of birds and other wildlife and his work has appeared in *Birding* and *American Birds*.

"The purpose of this field guide is to present the latest in tried and proven field marks and behavioral characteristics by which 33 regular and six accidental N. American diurnal raptors may accurately be identified. These field marks and characteristics should enable anyone, with a little practice, to accurately identify most flying and perched diurnal raptors when they are seen clearly." This paragraph is from page one of the book and I believe that the goal has been accomplished. This hawk guide has an exquisite cover painting of an American Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon that led me inside with hopes of illustration of the 70+ species of falconiforms in North America. I was quick to discover that "North America" once again means "North America north of Mexico" and that 39 species are discussed. No matter, getting all the details for these species crammed into such a small book would be work enough. Wheeler did a superb job in that the plates do well to illustrate the description in the text.

In the species accounts section (the bulk of the book) each species is discussed in detail in a similar fashion, enabling comparison of different species, if not already discussed. A brief initial description of the species indicates range, size, and general type, and mentions color morphs, sex- and age-related differences, and field marks common to all plumages. Following this is a detailed description of each different age, sex, color morph, or geographically different plumage. Diagnostic field marks are conveniently italicized for quick comparisons. Adult and immature plumages are described and illustrated for all species, as are sexually different and subadult plumage or color morphs. A section on similar species is included in each species description. Range maps are prepared for 33 species and show summer, winter, and permanent resident ranges for those species.

If you want to start hawk watching this is an excellent book to help you through some of the early identifications. If you are a hawk watcher and want to differentiate between forms or subspecies, this guide will help you. If you are an experienced hawk watcher this book will help you explain to the rest of us what you are seeing.

--- Thomas E. Labeáz, Division of Zoology,
University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588

A Bird Watcher's Handbook: Field Ornithology for Backyard Naturalists, Laura O'M'bis Socha. viii + 182 pp. 5½ x 8½. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York. \$16.95 hard cover, \$7.95 paperback.

The chapter headings indicate the book's coverage: The Science of Watching Birds - Identification, birding equipment, field techniques, keeping records, window birding, projects; Hands-on Birding - Bird observatories, bird banding; Cooperative Birding - Atlases, surveys, counts; breeding bird atlas projects, breeding bird surveys, census, colonial bird register, nest record program, beached bird survey, Christmas bird count; Organizing Your Own Project - Choosing a project, defining goals, behaviour, life histories, collections, suggestions for field studies; Caring for Injured or orphaned birds - Care of nestlings, fledglings, release, birds requiring special care, injured birds, oiled birds, diseases, keeping records, thoughts; Aviculture - Captive breeding and re-introduction, birds as pets; Cooperative Research Organizations, References, Contacts - A directory. Each chapter has a list of references on its particular topic. The first chapter takes one from the rawest beginner through the rudiments; the other chapters are for a seasoned birder looking for more worlds to conquer. The author does stress requirements for permits where applicable, and she stresses the need to be sure a bird is orphaned or in need of help before accepting it, and the problems involved in attempting its care. The chapter on aviculture mentions a "back yard aviary", not a cage in the parlor. For one with enough just plain birding under his belt to consider going further the book can offer a good guide to the various fields available. It even includes comments and a reference on the use of computers by birders.

Birding An Introduction to Ornithological Delights for Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals. iv + 24 pp.. Paper. Free from Reference Section, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

"A free national library program of braille and recorded materials for blind and physically handicapped persons is administered by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), Library of Congress. With the cooperation of authors and publishers who grant permission to use copyrighted works, NLS selects and produces full-length books and magazines in braille and on recorded disc and cassette. Reading materials are distributed to a cooperating network of regional and subregional (local) libraries where they are circulated to eligible borrowers. Reading materials and playback machines are sent to borrowers and returned to libraries by postage-free mail." Material for both adults and children is listed, and there are suggestions for bird-listening instead of bird-watching. Probably most people are aware of the services for the blind, but probably not many are aware that specific attention has been given to ornithology.

Audubon's Birds of America Postcards. 9 x 12. Dover Publications Inc., New York. \$3.50

Twenty-four of Audubon's bird pictures are printed in color as postcards, four to a page, which is perforated for easy separation.. Each postcard has an identification of the subject on the back, and on the back cover there is an expanded comment on each.

Life Histories of North American Wild Fowl. A. C. Bent. ix + 244 + 46 pages of photographs, and vi + 314 + 60 pages of photographs. 5.375 x 8.5. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, \$12.95.

The original two volumes are bound as one in this issue.