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BOOK REVIEWS

Life Histories of North American Diving Birds. A. C. Bent. xiv + 240 + 55 pp. of photographs. 5.375 x 8.5, Dover Publications, Inc. New York, paper, \$6.95

Life Histories of North American Gulls and Terns. A. C. Bent. x + 338 + 93 pages of photographs, 5.375 x 8.5. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, paper \$8.95

Dover has reprinted their original reprints of these books in the Bent series with no changes.

Wild Animals I Have Known. Ernest Thompson Seaton. xxvi + 356, 5 x 7.75 Penguin Books, New York, paper, \$7.95.

If this sounds familiar, it is. It was first published in 1898, and is now reissued as a part of the Penguin Nature Library. The author says; "Although I have left the strict line of historical truth in many places, the animals in this book were all real characters." The author also is apt to attribute human thoughts and feelings to his characters, a point that brought objections from Burroughs, as Noel Perrin relates in his introduction. But if read as stories, not as natural history, they are interesting.

Songs of the North. Sigurd Olson. xx + 168 pp., 5 x 7.75, Penguin Books, New York, paper, \$7.95.

Howard Frank Mosher says in his introduction that these twenty selections from Olson's writings fall in three overlapping categories: autobiographical, why he decided to teach, guide, and write; adventurous, his canoeing ventures into the Quetico-Superior Wilderness Area (and beyond) when it was wilderness; and interpretative, based on northern phenomena. For those who don't know Olson's works, a chance to sample them; for those who do (but don't have them immediately available) a chance to have a sample available; and for all, good reading.

The Mammals of Britain and Europe. Anders Bjarvall and Staffan Ullstrom. 240 pp., 7.5 x 10, bibliography, index. Penguin Books, New York. cloth, \$39.95.

This book covers the animals (including wallabies, which have established feral colonies in England, bats, seals, walrus, dolphins, porpoise, and whales). Range maps are provided for all but the whales. Paintings, sometimes several, of all but the least common animals, and in the text measurements, identification features, distribution, choice of habitat and food, reproduction, and other information, such as history of distribution over time. An interesting book to read and to look at, even for non-Europeans. British nomenclature is used: Red Deer for Elk, and Elk for Moose.

The Mute Swan. Mike Birkhead and Christopher Perrine, xiv + 158 pp., 6.5 x 9.5, photographs, line drawings, bibliography, index. Penguin Books, New York, cloth. \$36.95.

The contents cover range and habitat, history and customs, Swan numbers, life-history studies; territories, breeding and life cycle; food and feeding, causes of mortality, and the future. There are Mute Swans in Europe, in Ireland, and feral flocks in North America, but the focus of this book is on England, with Scottish data frequently used. There doesn't seem to be much interchange between the Swans in Britain and the Continent. The section on swan keeping, with quotations from old regulations, should be of interest to antiquarians as well as birders. (Swan keeping lost its importance as turkeys and geese proved easier to raise for the table.) The natural history data for the birds probably is generally true for non-British birds, though less so for the actuarial figures. Lead poisoning is not serious in Scotland; it is very serious in England, where lead poisoning accounts for around 50% of the deaths of "ringed" birds. This is not so much from shot as from fishermen's lead weights, discarded and picked up by the birds as grit. At the time of publication the authors felt that satisfactory non-poisonous substitutes for the weights had been developed and would soon be in use.

The Birds of Israel. Uzi Paz, viii + 264 pp., 7.5 x 10, 60 color photographs by Yossi Eshbol, 29 drawings, bibliography, index, map of Israel in end papers. Penguin Books, New York, cloth, \$26.95.

This book covers 91 resident species, 33 summer residents and breeders, 121 passage migrants (39 of which breed in small numbers), 94 wintering species, and 127 accidentals (some with only 1 record), and 1 extinct, a total of 467. For each of these there is a description and an indication of its abundance. For other than rare accidentals there may be any or all of the following: a description of the species' range, both summer and winter, breeding biology, diet, information of the variation in numbers in the past 40 or so years, approximate dates of appearance and disappearance for non-resident species, and if ringed birds have been recovered, an account of where birds ringed in Israel have been recovered, and where birds recovered

in Israel have been ringed, Measurements are given in metric figures, but there is a table (p. 10) for conversion between metric and English units. Before the individual accounts there is a generalized discussion of the order, of the family, and of the genus (if it includes more than one species). Sub-species names are given in most cases. In addition to some generalized remarks on birds and men at the first of the book, there is a list of birdwatching sites in Israel, drawn up primarily for West European (and so also American) birdwatchers. A surprising number of the non-resident birds come from behind the Iron Curtain, and birdwatchers interested in them may decide that it would be more comfortable watching for them in Israel than on their summer ranges. In the discussion of variations in populations over the years reference is often made to specific factors, such as the draining of the Hula marshes, use of pesticides, spread of agriculture and of fish ponds, which have been influential, sometimes increasing one species while it decreased another. Only 22 of the species were not illustrated in an 8-year old European guide, and four of them probably were subspecies changed to species after the guide was printed, and seven of the others were recorded only once.

A Field Guide to Seabirds of the World. Peter Harrison. 318 pp., 5.25 x 8.5, 741 color photographs, about 155 line drawings, range maps, bibliography, index. Penguin Books, New York, paper, \$24.95.

This is, as the title indicates, the pocket guide version (60,000 words) of the author's 220,000-word *Seabirds: An Identification Guide*, and includes the re-discovered Fiji (Macgillivray's) Petrel, and the new Amsterdam Albatross. The book starts with a summary review of various orders of seabirds, and their general characteristics, then all of the photographs, then the information on the individual species. This includes description, habits, distribution, similar species, and a range map. Since most of the maps cover the world, with its seasons varying by hemisphere, only one color is used, but on some widely-ranging species the numbers of the months in which it may be found in an area are shown. The page number for the photographs is given, and for the drawings, if applicable. The drawings are for the tubenose identification keys. In contrast to the photographs, these have a marker pointing out the significant marks, with comments. For anyone who wants to identify birds on the open sea a book like this would be essential. For birds which frequent the land, or are close offshore the regular field guides probably are adequate. The word "jizz" is frequently used - the characteristics that identify the bird (see "All That Jizz", *TIME* 129:72 ff., 25 May 1987, or p. 21 of *Birding Around the World* (below).

Birding Around the World A Guide to Observing Birds Everywhere You Travel. Aileen R. Lotz. xiv + 266 pp. 6 x 9.25, basic glossary, basic bibliography, index, Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, paper, \$10.95.

A "how to" type of book - equipment, definitions (including "jizz", see *Seabirds*, above), methods, whatever. Much of it you know, but in that case it can serve as a reminder, even for a trip in the States, and certainly for a longer trip. How to get guides for a new area, how to get there (on your own or in a group). And reports of trips to various parts of the world which give one an idea of what conditions to expect, as well as what birds that might be seen. As a reminder of what to take or not to take, of how to or how not to make arrangements, of whether the conditions you may find will or will not be acceptable to you, and the like., it would be hard for the book to fail to be worth its cost or more. One caution, all items on page 22 are indexed as page 21. So if you don't find it on page 21, look on page 22.