

**Arizona and its Bird Life.** By Herbert Brandt. Illustrated by 20 color plates by Brooks, Peterson, Sutton, and Shortt; 25 photographs; numerous pen-and-ink drawings. 1951. The Bird Research Foundation, 2425 North Park Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio. Pp. 1-725. (\$15.00).

Rarely is a bird book written that appeals alike to novice and expert as well as to people not particularly interested in birds. Herbert Brandt has shown in the past, notably in books on birds in Alaska and Texas, that books with such broad appeal can be written, and he has done it again in his latest volume ARIZONA AND ITS BIRD LIFE. The author is one of the most discerning observers on this continent and so has much to tell, and, being an unusually gifted writer, he knows how to tell it.

In selecting southeastern Arizona as a study area the author chose to work in one of nature's great wonderlands. Fascinating birds in fantastic surroundings are common by the standards of most bird enthusiasts, and rarities include certain species that there overflow into the United States from the rich avifauna of Mexico. It is a land of abrupt altitudinal variation and of correspondingly abrupt ecological changes. One can travel quickly by car on good roads from the heat and cactus of the desert to the cool and conifers of the mountain tops. In travelling between these great extremes, he passes through three additional life zones each with its characteristic plant-animal associations. In that intriguing outdoors laboratory it is scarcely surprising that the author devoted considerable attention to the ecology of the area concerned. In introductory chapters he combines features of the 'life zone' and 'biome' concepts of life distribution. To these he adds his original 'life island' concept which is fully and simply explained and is illustrated by a carefully-devised chart of his own making.

The bulk of the book is devoted to the author's bird adventures in Arizona. In vivid writing, now narrative, now discursive, he takes the reader in turn through the wonders of desert, grassland, foothills, and mountains, emphasizing numerous intriguing aspects of the birds he encounters, their home life, and their relationship to the habitats they frequent. Little-known and new facts appear on many a page. Various

other subjects such as the climate, vegetation, and certain mammals, notably man, are often touched upon. Occasional bits of the colorful history of the country gain vividness as he tells of them. Especially delightful is his account of famous old Fort Lowell. One is impressed by his sustained good literary style and vigorous, infectious enthusiasm.

His investigations in Arizona were very prolific of new information. A new bird subspecies, the Sahuaro Martin *Progne subis oberholseri*, is described in the volume here reviewed and another new race, the Apache Wren *Troglodytes brunneicollis vorhiesi*, although described elsewhere, was also a result of Brandt's Arizona studies. Nests of the Richmond Becard, Spotted Screech Owl, Mexican Chickadee, and Apache Wren were located and are described in detail, apparently for the first time. The appendix comprises (a) an annotated list of 170 birds known to breed in southeastern Arizona; and (b) a supplemental list of possibly breeding birds.

ARIZONA AND ITS BIRD LIFE is a sumptuous example of modern book making. It is well-printed on excellent paper, is handsomely and durably bound, and is superbly illustrated by paintings and drawings of some of the best artists of this continent as well as by numerous photographs of usually outstanding quality and interest. There are twenty full-page bleed-to-the-edge color plates, nine of which are some of the last and best work of the late Allan Brooks. Paintings and drawings by Sutton, Peterson, and Shortt represent these outstanding artists at their erstwhile best.

Anyone, whether he knows a little or a lot about birds or is just plain interested in the out-of-doors, will find it a source of great pleasure, profit, and inspiration. The traveller to Arizona will get ineffably more out of his stay there for having read this thoroughly delightful volume and its graphic story of adaptation and survival. — W. EARL GODFREY.

**How I Draw Birds. A Practical Guide for the Bird-Watcher.** By Roland Green, Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd. 1951. 96 pp. Price \$3.25 Canada.

Desiring to record the features of some elusive bird, or to effectively describe some



odd posture, every bird-watcher has at one time or another wished that he were able to draw. Here is a book that will aid him in learning a few basic techniques that will make his drawings more useful and artistic. Although it will prove especially helpful to the novice in bird portraiture, every bird student will value it as an aid in expanding his own general information and capabilities. There is no question of the fact that the ability to sketch is invaluable to the naturalist.

Roland Green, one of the most eminent of British bird artists, is to be complimented for taking us "behind the scenes", so to speak, to show us, in clear and readily understood terms, how he paints birds. He has taken the more common species as examples in illustrating his instructions as to how to paint birds. Fortunately, many species depicted are familiar to bird students in this country, such as, — golden eagle, mallard, barn owl, coot, cormorant and many others.

This book differs from, or rather is an improvement on the usual "how to draw" books by the thoroughness with which it covers the salient features of the subject. It begins with pertinent information on anatomy, plumage, beaks and heads, etc. Following this, there are sections devoted to ducks, waders, and song birds, covering in a general way most of the species that one is likely to encounter.

There are no portraits resembling "stuffed birds" in this book. The writer wisely advocates sketching in the field. Brief but sound instruction is given in field practice. The ground work, i.e., the structure of birds, is then followed by elementary lessons on wash and pen drawing, both media being easily obtained and handled by the beginner. Although the many illustrations are largely rapid sketches taken directly from the artist's field note book, the masterful treatment makes them most instructive. A combination of effective art work and accuracy are rare enough and I feel that the artist has distinguished himself in this respect.

In all I feel confident in recommending this book to beginners in bird painting to shorten the arduous path to proficiency and to all bird-watchers who at one time or an-

other are required to record their observations by graphic illustrations. — JOHN A. CROSBY.

**Stalking Birds with Color Camera.** By Arthur A. Allen. *The National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C., 1951, pp. I-VII, 1-328, 424 illustrations. (\$7.50 U.S.).*

The 424 cleverly-captioned photographs in this book, 331 in natural color, 93 in monochrome, are nothing short of magnificent. They show intimately 266 species of North American birds. The majority are close-ups illustrating plumage detail and color, soft-parts coloration, posture, and often nests, eggs, and young. The many action photos are truly amazing. With the aid of the recently adapted speed flash apparatus (permitting flashes of 1/5000 of a second) the details of a swiftly-flying bird, even the wing tips are as sharply recorded as if the subject were motionless. One of the many impressive pictures 'stops' a Cooper Hawk, with a plucked bird in its beak, in the last few inches of its plunge to the nest and young. Even the hawk's eye color is faithfully recorded. The 55-a-second wing beats of hummingbirds are 'frozen' and details of the spread wing are registered with remarkable clarity. This collection of bird photographs surpasses in quality and beauty anything of its kind heretofore seen by this reviewer. Two hundred and sixty-four of the pictures are from the camera of the internationally-known author himself.

The text is divided into 13 chapters, of which 12 are written by the author. They are extremely readable popular accounts of many aspects of birds and of the travels, tribulations, and triumphs afield of this master wildlife photographer and ornithologist. One chapter tells the fascinating story of the 1948 discovery in Alaska by a party under Dr. Allen's leadership, of the nest of the Bristle-thighed Curlew. This was the last North American bird species to relinquish to man the secret of the locality of its breeding grounds.

Most of the photographs and articles brought together here were originally published in the *National Geographic Magazine*. Obviously it would have been impossible otherwise to produce this outstanding book at anything like the price asked for it. — W. EARL GODFREY.





Crosby, John A. 1952. "How I Draw Birds. A Practical Guide for the Bird-Watcher, by Roland Green [Review]." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 66(4), 117–118. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.341435>.

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