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Brown-headed Nuthatch by Doug Pratt

Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin

April, 2017

Volume 47 No. 4

Next Meeting Monday, April 24, 2017

Time and location: 7:15 pm refreshments; 7:30 pm meeting. Olin T Binkley Baptist Church, corner of Highway 15-501 Bypass and Willow Drive, behind University Mall, Chapel Hill, NC

Members and guests are welcome to gather for dinner at the K & W Cafeteria (University Mall) at 6 pm before the meeting. Go to the back room of the cafeteria to join the group after making your dinner selection.

April 24, 2017 Program Falconry: An Ancient Art in Modern Times Speaker: Dustin Foote

Despite its origins dating back to 2000 BCE, falconry still remains largely unchanged as a sport. Join us as Dustin Foote talks about the storied history of falconry and what it takes to train a bird of prey. Live birds will be on display for audience members to experience up close and personal.

About the speaker: Dustin Foote is the Assistant Curator and Research Coordinator at Sylvan Heights Bird Park. His initial introduction to Sylvan Heights was as an Avian Husbandry & Management Program intern while at

Cornell University, where he graduated with his Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science. During this time, Dustin worked at the Lab of Ornithology in the Education department where he helped develop a curriculum called Connecting Kids Through Birds. After extended internships at San Diego Zoo and Emerald Forest Bird Gardens, he took a position as the park's Assistant Curator. He is currently working on his PhD at East Carolina University in conservation genomics.

Note: There is a small possibility that he might not be able to make it for the meeting; however, he has lined up a backup just in case, so our meeting is still on, same topic. His backup is Nick Nees, an aviculturist for Sylvan Heights Bird Park. Whether it's Dustin or Nick, he is bringing a Harris Hawk and a King Vulture, and, if hatched by then, perhaps a Eurasian Eagle-owl.

Saturday Field Trips

Bob Rybczynski leads field trips for the Chapel Hill Bird Club. The trips are every Saturday, except during the summer, and leave at 7:30 a.m. from the Glen Lennox Shopping Center on Highway 54 in Chapel Hill

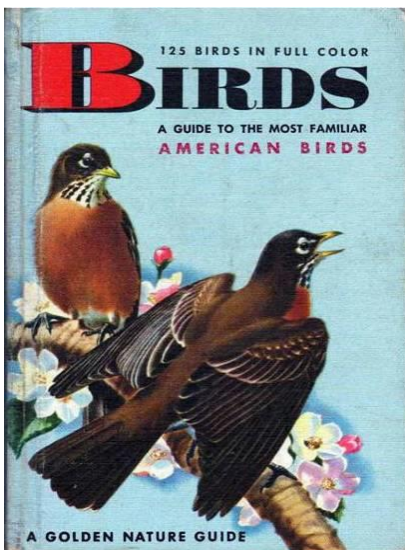
Youth is Wasted on the Young

by Vern Bothwell

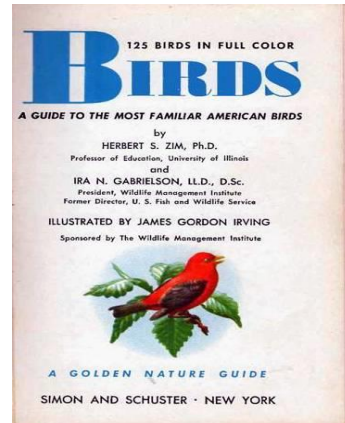
Recently, I was sitting at my computer in my man cave sorting and tagging my bird photographs. Playing in the background was a sad ballad from the first album by my son, Hart Bothwell (*What Lies Ahead* released in 2015).



For no particular reason, I glanced to my left to the shelf of birding books that I keep at arm's length. I felt the siren call of a small pocket-sized book that was part of a multi-volume set of nature-related books that I kept in my bedroom when I was a child over 50 years ago.

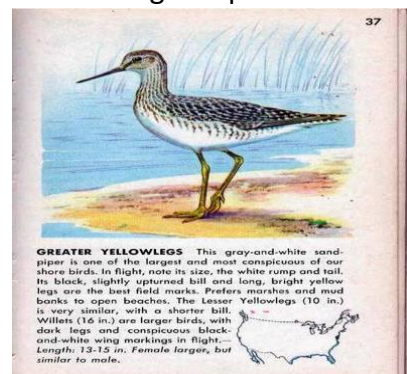


The book was the Golden Nature Guide entitled "*Birds, A Guide to the Most Familiar American Birds*" by Herbert S. Zim, Ph.D., and Ira N. Gabrielson, LL.D., D.Sc. and illustrated by James Gordon Irving.



I suspect that many of you who had the same book in your home. The book was first copyrighted in 1949 and my volume was the revised 1956 edition.

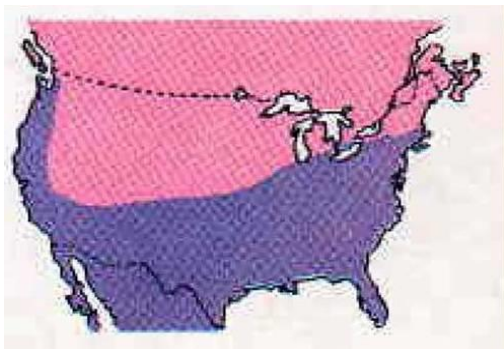
The book is clearly for beginners, but it has just enough detail to satisfy a youngster without overwhelming the reader. Included for each bird are a drawing in its preferred habitat, a paragraph-long description and a United States range map.



I wonder if the range map for this Greater Yellowlegs is wrong or if its range has expanded since 1956.

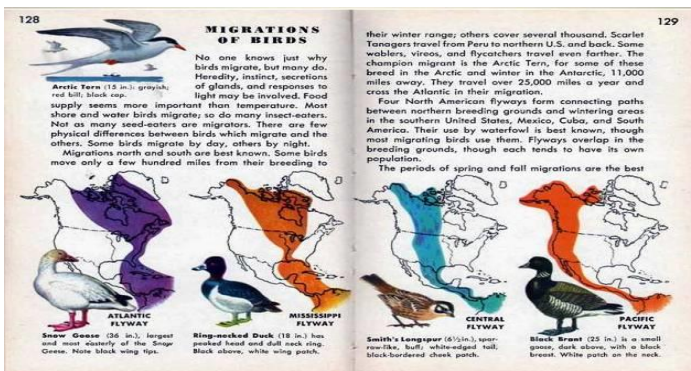
Youth continued

The range maps have no state lines. I think that may be because the book was published when children were taught American geography. If your elementary school experience was like mine, your class assignments included drawing in or labeling each state in a blank American map. I still remember some of the state capitals we were required to memorize. Montpelier, Vermont sticks in my mind. Never been there, but at age 8, I just liked saying "Montpelier". It rolled off my tongue with a satisfying curl.



I know I spent hours going through the book looking at each bird. I never became a birder as a youth, but there must have been some spark of interest in me that was waiting to blossom.

In a fit of nostalgia, all these years later, I flipped through the book once again. There are 125 birds in the book. As I paged through, I found my OCD -self hoping that I had seen every bird in the book. As I got about half-way through, I started to think maybe I had seen all 125 species.



The last few pages were particularly tense. When I got to the Sparrows near the end of the book, my pulse quickened. The last bird was a Fox Sparrow (in plumage generally seen only in the east). Having cut my birding teeth in California, the eastern Fox Sparrow is still new and special to me. I was happy the Fox Sparrow was the bird that made my sightings (based on the book) complete.

36



126

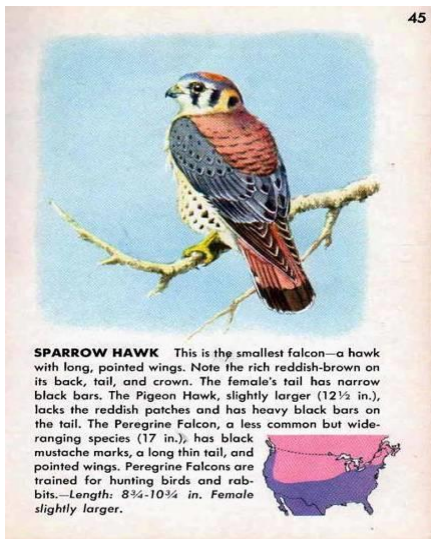


Youth continued

This Sooty (Pacific) subspecies of the Fox Sparrow is the subspecies to which California birders are most accustomed.



I had to pause a few times while going through the birds. Wait a minute, I have never seen a Sparrow Hawk (oh yeah, now it is called an American Kestrel).



The text describing the Sparrow Hawk makes reference to a species called the Pigeon Hawk which is now known as the Merlin. Goggling Pigeon Hawk, I found that John James Audubon called the Merlin "la Petit Caporal" after Napoleon Bonaparte. I kind of like that name. I would like to post one day that I just saw a "Petit Caporal".



Per Wikipedia, the Sparrow Hawk was officially renamed the American Kestrel in the sixth edition of the [AOU Checklist of North American Birds](#) published in 1983. Apparently, the Sparrow Hawk was so named because, at the time, it was thought related to an old-word Accipiter known as the Eurasian Sparrowhawk.

There were several other species with names that are different from the current names.

Youth continued

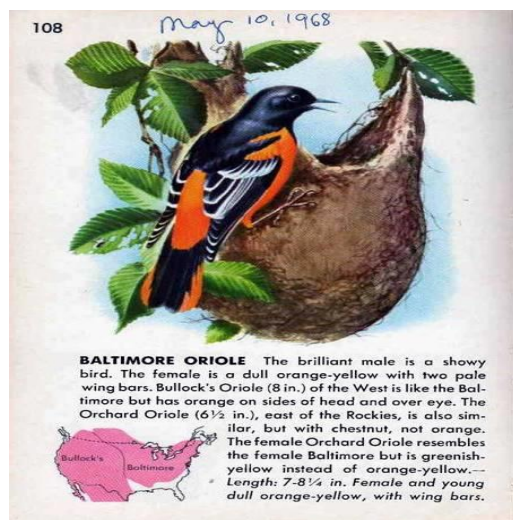
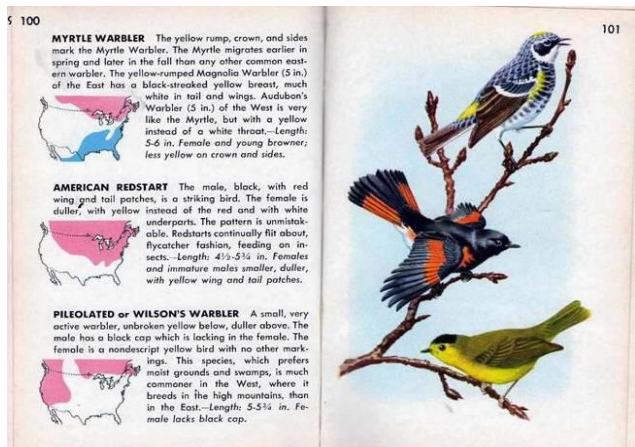


There is now a proposal pending to split the Yellow-rumped Warbler into three (and perhaps four) species. It goes to show you that, if you wait long enough, things come full circle. We may have both the Myrtle Warbler and the Audubon's Warbler in the ABA area. One more tick for your life list!



In 1973, the Myrtle Warbler shown below was lumped with the Audubon's Warbler (and two other species not found in the US).

I got a lump in my throat when I turned to page 108 for the Baltimore Oriole. At the top of the page, in the very recognizable script of my long-gone mother, was a notation that she saw the bird on May 10, 1968.



Youth continued

I would have been 16 years old and probably more interested in getting my driver's license than looking at some bird. I can picture myself saying "Aw Mom, I've got to go, I don't have time to look at a bird."

Now I wish I had an opportunity to look at a bird with my mother. I wouldn't waste it this time.



All photographs by Vern Bothwell

For more like this, go to <http://vbothwell.blogspot.com>

Reporting Window-killed Birds

Scott Winton reminds/informs us that all window-killed birds (all species, anywhere in the world) can (and should!) be reported to this iNaturalist project: <http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/bird-window-collisions>

iNaturalist is free to use and it is very easy to report birds with a smart phone.

We all enjoy posting observations of living birds to listserves, eBird, etc. He hopes more of us will make the effort to report window-collision victims and help raise awareness for this problem and generate data to help us better understand it.

Old Birder Learns New Trick -- the Hard Way

by Ginger Travis



On April 18, 2015 I was in a marsh up at the north end of Jordan Lake to observe an eagle nest that was extremely difficult to see. Arrived by kayak with a tripod lashed to the back deck and a scope inside. There was only one sight line to the nest in a pine tree; surrounding willows, maples, and sweetgums blocked any near view. To see over the deciduous trees I had to back away to about 300 yards from the nest tree -- and set up my spotting scope in 20 inches of water. And stand, in shorts, in the 65-degree water with my feet planted ankle-deep in marsh mud.

Well, it worked. I saw an adult eagle at the nest tearing bits off a prey item, and with 40-power magnification I saw two chicks, even though one was mostly obscured by pine branches. After a while I straightened up behind my scope to relax my back and felt the gentlest puff of wind on my cheek. And then saw my kayak slip away from my side like a bit of dandelion fuzz borne on the wind -- out of reach in a second. Not tied up, of course.

I lurched after it but was stopped dead when my Keen sandal stuck tight in the mud. The only way I could release my shoe was to take my foot out, bend down, burrow my hands under the sole through the mud, and yank straight up. Meanwhile my kayak kept moving.

I was scared and in disbelief but realized that to get my boat back I had to go after it with bare feet. So I did. I held my shoes in one hand and staggered through the mud, sinking with each step, and somehow never stepped on anything sharp or fell over in the water. Caught the boat, led it back over to the abandoned tripod and scope, and packed up. Mud everywhere -- on the tripod, on me, and smeared by me all over the inside of the kayak. But, boy, was I glad to get afloat!

On May 5 I went back. Got out of the kayak and stood in the water, set up the tripod and scope, observed two big eagle chicks. Did only one new thing.

TIED UP THE BOAT!

Last Meeting of the Season

Thanks go to Eddie Owens and Anne Dayer for lining up a stellar group of speakers this year. Last but not least, join us for an enjoyable presentation by David and Judy Smith.

May 22, 2017, David and Judy Smith

- **Topic:** Pantanal: The Wonderful Wetland of Brazil

Officers of the Chapel Hill Bird Club

Elected Officers

President: David Smith
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Co-Vice President: Eddie Owens
(banjoman_57@yahoo.com)

Co-Vice President: Anne Dayer
(annedayer@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Patricia Bailey
(pbailey_489@yahoo.com)

Secretary: Vacant

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