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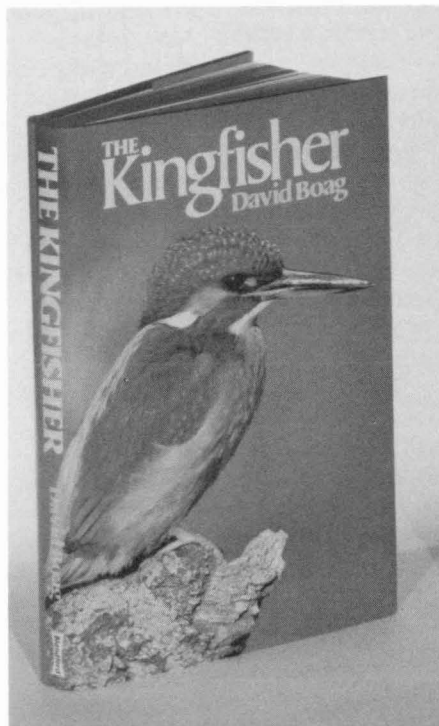
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## The Kingfisher

by Pat Sutherland  
Jackson Heights, New York

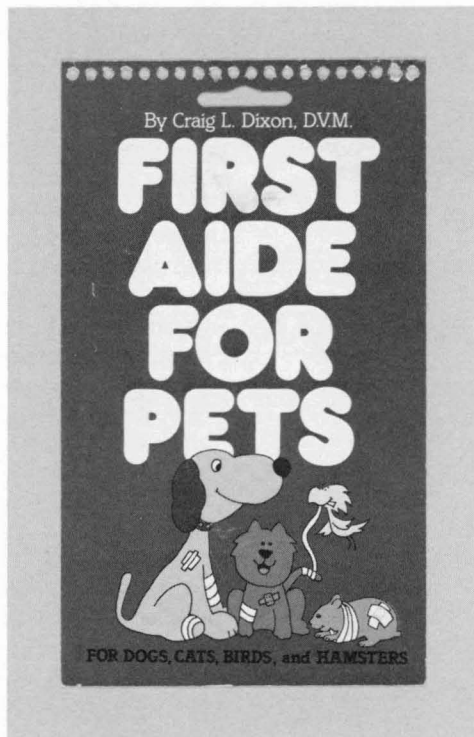
*The Kingfisher*, by David Boag, (England: Blandford Press, 1982). Cloth, 120 pages, \$17.95.

Here is a superb study of the kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis ispida*) published by the Blandford Press and distributed in the United States by Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. This lovely book (even bound in shades of "kingfisher blue") is the result of David Boag's seven years of field research on this species, which regularly nests in the British Isles. During this time he not only studied the birds but perfected methods of photographing them as well. Sixty-six of the author's beautiful color photographs illustrate the species in its complete life-cycle, including series of the birds nesting in their river-bank excavations and another of the birds catching fish underwater.

The text itself is excellent, too. In style, completeness and accuracy, the book reminds me of Alexander Skutch's classic study of hummingbirds. Boag details the bird's habitat, strong territor-

ial instincts, courtship behavior, nest-building, hatching and rearing of the young, feeding habits and food preferences, even its mortality. There is also a chapter on the kingfisher in myths and legends. A bonus for wildlife photographers is an appendix describing the techniques employed to produce the unique photographs which adorn the book.

Boag's book will certainly improve the aviculture of exotic, fish-eating kingfishers. Indeed, he corrects information on this species reported in the *Encyclopedia of Aviculture* (Vol. 3). He also describes his successful hand-rearing and eventual release of a kingfisher brood which he rescued from flooded waters. Birders will want to read the book and compare notes on our Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) which can be seen in much of the U.S. and parts of Canada and the Green and Ringed Kingfishers which frequent Texas. Thus, anyone interested in kingfishers will welcome this splendid book. I recommend it highly. ●



## First Aide for Pets

by Charlene Beane  
Norco, California

*First Aide for Pets* by Craig L. Dixon, D.V.M., Price/Stern/Sloan Publishers, Inc., Los Angeles. 1982. \$2.95.

This handy reference book has value for the multi-pet household since it covers emergency care and first-stage diagnosis for dogs, cats, birds and hamsters.

It begins with a list of important non-prescription first aid supplies that should be in every pet owner's medicine chest.

The bulk of the book is devoted to cats and dogs, but the fact that it includes birds at all is noteworthy. At last birds have been included in a home health care text. Volumes have been written on how to deal with sick or injured dogs and cats, but pet bird owners have been left to their own devices when their canary or budgie drops to the bottom of the cage and refuses to let out a single chirp.

The advice is basic, and certainly too brief to be comprehensive, but the main points are nevertheless sound. Dixon describes a couple of ways to turn an ordinary cage into a heat cage. He makes two other important points: "Birds die in 24-48 hours when not eating," and "Any blood loss is serious!" These simple points are

important because inexperienced bird owners may not realize that they cannot wait a few days and see if the bird gets better as they can with a cat or dog.

Dixon also tells how to measure water intake and count droppings as indicators of a bird's state of health.

The book is spiral bound card stock, a little larger than a postcard. The tops of the pages are die cut to hang on a hook, and the pages lie flat so you can read the step-by-step instructions easily when you need both hands to treat your sick critter.

The author advises finding a veterinarian who is experienced in bird medicine. Hopefully, if the present trend continues, there will be more of these practitioners available.

This book probably won't save you a visit to the vet, but it may help you keep your bird alive long enough to be seen by a doctor, and will certainly help you give your bird better nursing care when it returns home.

If you have only a pet bird, you can find books that deal more specifically with the weaknesses of your particular pet, but if you have a bird and/or cat and/or dog and/or hamster, this little book is well worth the negligible investment. ●



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