



The Watchbird offers free publicity for member club bird shows by announcing the dates and locations of the shows. To have your show listed it is necessary to get the data to the Watchbird four to five months before the show date. For example, if your show takes place the first week of October, it should be listed in the August/September issue. The deadline for that issue is June 1st. (Copy/article deadline is two months preceding publication date.)

Greater Memphis Bird Club
will host

Feather Fair

May 27-28, 1989

at the

Memphis Radisson Hotel
Memphis, Tennessee

For information contact:

Mrs. J.W. Higgins, (901) 476-0736
463-B Rt. 1, Brighton, TN 38011

Middle Tennessee Cage Bird Club

will be hosting its

Annual Spring Fair

at the

Music City Rodeway Inn
797 Briley Parkway at I-40
Nashville, Tennessee

For information contact

fair chairman:

Eva Duffey, phone (615) 361-5939
2545 Forest View Drive
Antioch, TN 37013

The Avicultural Society of America, Inc.,

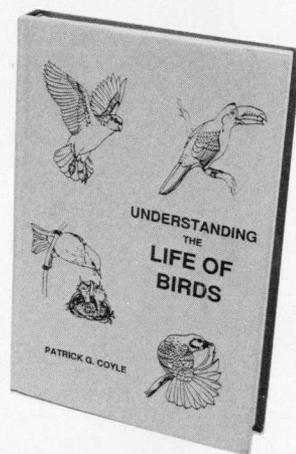
Welcomes new members.



Founded 1927

We publish a monthly bulletin on all aspects of aviculture. For membership information please contact: Helen Hanson, (213) 542-3633, A.S.A., Inc., P.O. Box 2796, Redondo Beach, CA 90278. Yearly dues \$15. Foreign members please add \$5.00 to cover postage. (U.S. funds only)

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Understanding the Life of Birds

written by Patrick G. Coyle, Jr.

reviewed by Jerry Jennings

Woodland Hills, California

Man has held an appreciation of birds for thousands of years, marveling at their capability of flight. He has enjoyed their seranades of sonorous songs and has been enraptured by their often riotous colors. Man's appreciation has been as of a work of art — each species representing a different expression of the devine creation. And, how many representative expressions there are. Over 8,650 different living species.

While some enjoy the trek through the field, and others a trip to the zoo, the aviculturist by definition seeks a "hands-on" involvement. He wants to sense with more than the eye and ear. To feel, if not with the hand, at least deep down inside that he is a part of the process of the life of birds.

To really know what it is that is a bird, one must become a biologist, though not necessarily a university trained biologist — just someone who has gone beyond the "artistic appreciation" stage. One doesn't need to know the technology of painting to appreciate the Mona Lisa, unless one wants to paint the Mona Lisa. Thus, to work with birds, one must understand the technical components comprising the subject.

A working knowledge of birds may be pursued through formal academic training, or it may be self-taught. For those interested in the latter route, no better beginning is there than to acquire and read a copy of *Understanding The Life Of Birds* by Patrick G. Coyle, Jr., a professor of biology

and an aviculturist.

Understanding The Life Of Birds is a concise, well-written volume covering a wide range of topics. Each of its twenty-one chapters is devoted to a specific function of avian physiology. Chapter one discusses breeding behavior and how sex hormones influence behavior and how song relates to courtship, and defense of territories relates to reproduction, while outlining the mechanics of courtship, mating and the nesting cycle. Chapters two and three describe the egg and embryonic development from formation of the egg in the ovary to the fledging of young. Chapters four through thirteen describe the various physiological systems from the skeletal and muscular to the nervous, circulatory, respiratory and digestive.

An excellent and detailed discussion on nutrition is provided in chapter fourteen, including basic information on the components of foods and their specific functions in supplying the body's life sustaining requirements.

Chapters sixteen through eighteen give an excellent introduction to taxonomy. The aviculturist will learn how and why their birds are classified the way they are and, perhaps, gain some insight into interspecific relationships. The final three chapters deal with genetics and are especially helpful to those aviculturists interested in mutations and the results to be expected from particular pairings or matings.

The short prologue at the end of Professor Coyle's book explains the importance of the role of private aviculturists in establishing captive populations of numerous bird species. Against a backdrop of rapidly disappearing rain forest habitats, aviculture is one important tool of conservation.

Understanding The Life Of Birds is both informative and interesting reading. Though aimed at the novice, the advanced aviculturist will find a great deal of useful information. A lengthy bibliography provides many additional, and more detailed, sources of information for those wishing to expand their knowledge. Finally, a glossary of terms provides the budding biologist with the tools of the topics.

For those aviculturists wishing to extend their background beyond bird identification, *Understanding The Life Of Birds* is a must. ●

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