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Book Review

LACK, DAVID. 1966. Population studies on birds. v + 341 pp. 1 pl., 31 figs. + 29 line drawings. Clarendon Press, Oxford. Price - 63 shillings.

This represents a sequel to the author's 1954 work, "The Natural Regulation of Animal Populations", now out of print. Thirteen long term studies of birds, with one exception all over four years duration, are considered in detail and supported by eleven minor studies. Chapters were sent to the principal authors concerned for criticism.

The main body of the work sets out these studies in detail and conclusions on bird populations are drawn from them. In the appendix, Lack summarises chapter by chapter his 1954 work and points out various errors and ideas which have not stood the test of time. He then goes on to summarise his ideas on the natural regulation of animal populations and to examine in some detail the theories of Andrewartha and Birch (1954) and Wynne-Edwards (1962) and to explain why, in his opinion, these do not fit the facts.

Lack's basic ideas, that animal populations are regulated by density dependent factors which have arisen as a result of natural selection, are unchanged, and this book provides further evidence for these in respect of birds. He admits that there is, at present, no conclusive evidence for this, but points out that natural selection itself had to wait some 70 years for a satisfactory mathematical formulation (Fisher 1930) and until 1956 for a field proof (Kettlewell 1956).

Entomologists will find the evidence that birds have little influence on insect populations in the breeding season but considerable effect on overwintering ones, interesting.

Unlike most recent books on animal populations there are no formulae representing hypothetical mathematical models, a point which should please the less mathematically minded.

There are few errors, but Gough Island (p. 268) is in the South Atlantic, not Pacific.

This book represents an important contribution to the literature on animal populations and should be read by all interested in this field. All ecologists should read the appendix.

The book is clearly printed on good quality paper and well bound. Attractive line drawings by Robert Gillmor illustrate the principal species referred to and some techniques.

Peter Graham

The Blew Bottle or Flesh Fly
p. 38.

Fig: 1.



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Plate XXII

Fig: 2.

The Blew Bottle's Wing
p. 40

Reprinted from: Hooke, R., 1665. *Micrographia* or some physiological descriptions of minute bodies made by magnifying glasses with observations and enquiries thereon. Jo Martyn and Ja Allestry, London xxxiv + 246 pp.