

REVIEW

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTING BIRD PARASITES by George E. Watson and A. Binion Amerson, Jr. Information Leaflet 477 of the Smithsonian Institution Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C. 12 pp., illust.; gratis.

"Bird collectors and preparators may make important contributions to the study of avian parasitology. Arthropod ectoparasites and protozoan and helminth (worm) endoparasites are still imperfectly known. A better knowledge of their occurrence and host specificity may shed light on the cause and transmission of disease, delineate relationships of various groups of birds, and provide a better insight into different aspects of zoogeography." So begins this booklet which describes briefly the types of ecto- and endoparasites of birds and methods of collecting and preserving them. The method of autopsy for endoparasites is described and a list of useful field collecting equipment is given. There are 16 illustrations, 14 of types of parasites and two on the method of making a blood smear for protozoa.

Although ectoparasites are found more readily on freshly killed birds ("natural cooling of the host body will usually bring them to the surface of the feathers where they may be picked off"), birds trapped for banding can be examined alive and then released. Nestlings and the nest itself are also good sources of parasites.

Here is one way the average bird watcher can help make important scientific discoveries.

Copies are available free from the Division of Birds, Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

B.G.