



# UP with the birds

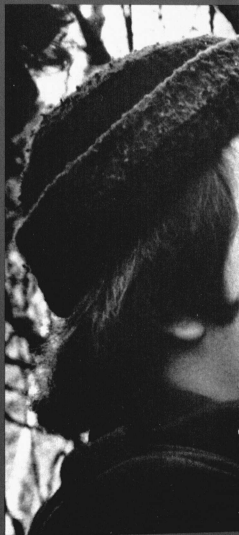
By Jim Domke

It is 6:30 in the morning. The sun has just risen, and the campus is deserted. (Well, almost deserted.) It is spring and birds are filling the air with their singing.

When most students are still



Jim Hemepe (right), a junior from Jefferson City majoring in wildlife-ecology, uses a manual to help identify birds like the redbreasted woodpecker (top).



asleep, 60 students taking Ornithology 150, once known as "early morning bird calls," are in class. Armed with field glasses and handbooks, the students learn to identify more than 100 different birds which come to sing in the Columbia area.

Twice a week students get up with the sun in order to catch the birds when most are singing in order to stake out their territory.

"I have had students get lost coming to class before the sun has risen and before their eyes are completely open," says William H. Elder, professor of biology.

The class is required for wildlife-

ecology majors, formerly known as wildlife management, and according to one student the course is "the most enjoyable 'required' class I've taken."

Noting an increase in the awareness of ecology across the country, Elder finds it hard keeping up with the new literature being published at the rate of one book per week. The class has grown to offer two sections and still having to turn students away until next spring.

Bird migration through Boone County, however, has dropped in Elder's 25 years of teaching. A slow decrease in food caused by "poisons in the environment," he says, is making it more dif-

ficult to find birds near the campus.

Field trips by bus around the county make up about two-thirds of the course work. In addition, students attend a lecture, do laboratory work identifying family groups and do a project of their own choosing.

After taking Ornithology 150, students have received a reference for identifying birds wherever they might travel, but more important to Elder is that they "have been given a feeling of the place they live and have learned something about ecology today."

