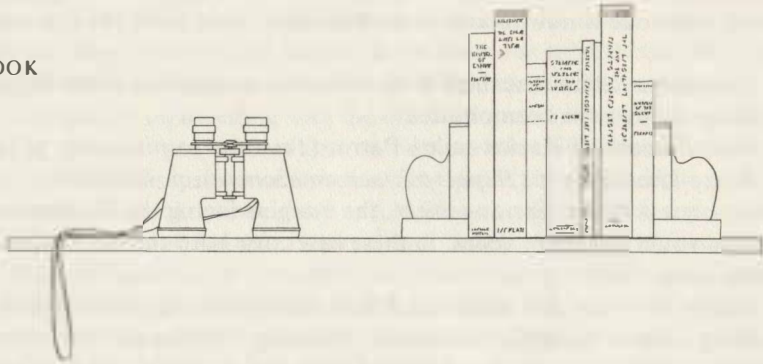


Reviews

ELAINE COOK



Parrots of the World — Joseph M. Forshaw, illustrated by William T. Cooper. Improved 1978 edition with expanded indices. Neptune, New Jersey: T.F.H. Publications. 584 pp., 147 color illustrations, range maps. \$30.00.

Publisher's address:
T.F.H. Publications
Box 27
Neptune, New Jersey 07753

Parrots of the World by Joseph M. Forshaw was published in 1973 by Doubleday and Co. of New York. It carried the then formidable price of \$65.00, but despite that was out of print by 1977. A copy in mint condition sold for \$275.00 in December 1978.

There is good news for all who missed buying the first edition: T.F.H. Publications of New Jersey has produced a "new improved 1978 edition" of *Parrots of the World* that sells for \$30.00. Obviously, at this price, it is not identical to the original Doubleday edition; the introduction to the T.F.H. edition states that an exact reprint of the Doubleday edition would have cost \$100.00 or more.

The T.F.H. edition is a smaller book (12½"x9½"x1½" — the original was 15½"x11"x2½"). As a result, the type size is smaller than in the original edition; this is a hindrance only in the seven page bibliography where "e's" and "c's" often cannot be distinguished. Also, 27 of the 147 color illustrations had to be reduced. Most of these are macaws and cockatoos which ran from margin to margin in the original. The remaining 120 illustrations are the same size as in the original edition.

T.F.H. Publications' other major change is the relocation of the color illustrations within the text. They state that rearranging the illustrations so that the color fell on one side of the page reduced plating and printing costs by fifty percent. Unfortunately, the rearrangement has made the book more difficult to use and a few range maps have been omitted.

A weakness of the first edition was that when browsing through the book, one had to search through several pages on either side of an illustration to find the text for the species illustrated. However (since the text and illustration were never separated by more than four pages), this, although irritating, did not render the book unusable. In the T.F.H. edition the rearrangement of illustrations has put the text and illustration of a species up to twenty-five pages apart. Realizing this, T.F.H. has added the page number for the illustration to the text and index entry

for each species; this is why theirs is a new "improved edition". It is exasperating that T.F.H. did not also add the text page number to the illustration key for each species, since one is now forced to use the index to go from the illustration to the text.

Despite the claim that the T.F.H. edition is a complete unabridged edition, a few range maps have been omitted:

Golden-mantled Racket-tailed Parrot (*Prioniturus platurus*), p. 182-3.

Rusty-faced Parrot (*Hapalopsittaca amazonina*), p. 491-502.

This is a result of the rearrangement; the margins facing the illustration in its new location would not allow room, in these cases, for both the key to the illustration and the range map.

Except for these few maps the T.F.H. edition is very faithful to the original, including various typographical errors, retaining the obscure location of the page numbers at the lower inner margin of the page, and omitting page numbers from the illustrations. One of the few annoying quirks of *Parrots of the World* is the difficulty of finding a page quickly.

Overall, the T.F.H. edition is less attractive than the first edition (except, of course, for the price). The first edition was printed on high quality thick creamy paper, while the T.F.H. edition is printed on thinner, glossy white paper. The color reproduction between the editions is not consistent. Some plates are virtually identical, others are very blue, and others lack blue completely in the new edition.

Parrots of the World brings together virtually all that was known about parrots as of 1973. The species are divided into three geographical sections: the Pacific, Afro-Asian and South American distributions. Interestingly, there are extremely few parrot species that occur in more than one of these areas. Each species account leads off with a description of the adults (with notes on differences between male and female) and of the immatures. This is followed by a brief description of the range of the species; a range map in the margin gives present range, introduced populations, and extinct populations. Then there is a listing of the various subspecies with measurements for males and females and notes on how they differ and their distribution. The General Notes section covers behavior, roosting, habitat, notes on changes in distribution, migration, local movements, the influence of man, food habits, etc. The General Notes can run up to a page and a



White-fronted Parrot
Amazona albifrons

half, and are fascinating reading. Then there is a description of the species' call, nesting, and eggs. Every species for which specimens are extant is illustrated in color on one of the 147 full page illustrations; up to nine individuals are shown in one illustration. Many illustrations include more than one subspecies. One of the great strengths of this book, besides its thoroughness, is the integration of avicultural information on breeding with the field and museum work of ornithologists. There is virtually no information on comparative field identification of parrots and very little discussion of the classification of the Psittaciformes.

I recommend this book, particularly at \$30.00, as a reference for anyone with an interest in the birds of Mexico, Central and South America, Africa, India, South-east Asia, or Australia. If you can't find *Parrots of the World* in your usual bookstores, try a local pet store before ordering it.

Complete Outfitting & Source Book for Bird Watching — Michael Scofield.

1978. Marshall, California: Great Outdoors Trading Company. 192 pp., illus. \$12.95, \$6.95 paperback.

Distributed by:
Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.
383 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10017

The Complete Outfitting & Source Book for Bird Watching is "designed as your basic access tool to the sport. Even experienced birders now have a complete reference guide for getting the most out of their adventures." If this were really the design, the end product is a joke in very bad taste.

The book is broken down into nine sections: a 10-page introduction, a 20-page history of birdwatching, a 48-page section on basic equipment, 26 pages of "thumbnail reviews of books and periodicals," a 22-page listing of clubs and organizations, 18 pages of "Best Bet Birding Sites", 19 pages listing tours and expeditions, 12 pages of appendices — zoos, museums, official state birds, rare bird alert phone numbers, and a checklist of North American birds — and finally a 3-page glossary that defines 125 bird watching terms. *The Complete Outfitting & Source Book for Bird Watching* is illustrated with photos of birdwatchers (taken at ABA conventions) and a few uncaptioned photographs of birds.

The introduction includes such useful advice as "Wear boots with crepe or rubber soles; at least, tennis shoes, so you won't make loud noises when crossing concrete or rocks." How much birding do you do from concrete?

The historical section begins in early Greece and ends about 1950 with Peterson; there is nothing about the last ten years of birding. Scofield has included many personal notes about early naturalists, e.g., in what circumstances they died, whether Audubon's wife stayed faithful to him, and notes on Peterson's married life. It is difficult to see what use any birder would have for this information.

I was particularly anxious to read the pages on basic equipment: binoculars, spotting scopes, telephoto lenses, portable tape recorders, and microphones. I had hoped to find detailed discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of different models, and had hoped to find a listing much like that in *Consumer Reports*, citing the best buys in various price ranges. I was particularly looking forward to a

reasoned evaluation of Leitz and Zeiss 10x40 binoculars.

Absolutely none of this is to be found. Each section is preceded by a lackluster discussion of what to look for in buying equipment, e.g., "Are both exit pupils clear, free of blotches, specks, and gray areas at the edges?" The rest of the 48 pages are taken up by photographs and a few specifications of different models; there is no comparison of similar items. Amazingly neither the Leitz 10x40 nor Zeiss 10x40 binoculars are included. The worst is yet to come:

"prices of all products listed in this book have been omitted primarily because they are subject to frequent change. This would make the book outdated before the next edition could be printed. The publisher does, however, maintain a printed list of current prices . . ."

While prices of optical equipment are subject to frequent change and also to substantial discounts, it would be helpful to have at least a ballpark idea of price. To have the Questar field scope and the Swift 15x - 60x zoom scope listed together, with no indication of the price differential, is ridiculous.

The publications section also omits prices — as well as a number of major works. Phonograph records by the Ontario Naturalists and Ara Records, and the Laboratory of Ornithology's tape cassettes, are not included. Edwards' field guide to the birds of Mexico is included, but not Peterson's. *Fifty Common Birds of Oklahoma* is included, but not Bull's *Birds of New York State*. Once again, there is no attempt to identify the best publications available.

The section on clubs and organizations is just as bad. The Western Field Ornithologists is the only club or organization listed for Arizona; neither the Tucson nor Maricopa Audubon Society is included. Nor is the Linnean Society listed for New York.

The "Best Bet Birding Sites" are strangely limited to National Parks and Monuments, National Wildlife Refuges, and National Audubon Society Wildlife Sanctuaries. As a result the list omits such outstanding localities as Sonoita Creek, Arizona; Cheyenne Bottoms, Kansas; Cape May, New Jersey; Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania; and Jamaica Bay, New York.

The tours and expeditions section lists travel packages originating in the U.S. and Canada for 1979. For each tour the dates, itinerary, cost, and number of participants are given. As a result, this section of the book will be completely out of date by December 31st, 1979. If only the same thoroughness could have been applied to the equipment section — instead of omitting information because it "would make the book outdated before the next edition." I hope the next edition is far in the future.

The glossary includes the following definition:

CHUM (verb); Term coined to describe vocal means of bringing birds closer. Methods include PISHING, sucking back of hand, and playing a recorded bird sound in the field.

Read it and weep.

If, for reasons of your own, you want a book of this sort, buy *The Birdwatcher's Bible* by George Laycock (1976. 207 pp., illus., plates. \$3.50 paperback. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 501 Franklin Avenue, Garden City, New York 11530). Although not outstanding, it's considerably better than *The Complete Outfitting & Source Book for Bird Watching* and, pleasantly, it's illustrated with pictures of *birds* rather than pictures of birdwatchers.

Vanishing Birds — Tim Halliday. 1978. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc. 296 p., illus., plates, maps. \$15.95.

Publisher's address:
Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.
383 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Thankfully, this is not just another book about the Passenger Pigeon, Whooping Crane, California Condor and Kirtland's Warbler. Unlike other books about extinct or endangered species that merely document their disappearance or decline, *Vanishing Birds* discusses the biological peculiarities or special adaptations that have made these species unable to cope with change.

Halliday begins with a chapter on the evolution of birds, followed by one on birds and man. He then discusses four extinct species — the Dodo, Solitaire, Great Auk, and Pink-headed Duck — examining in detail the reasons, biological and historical, for their disappearance. Five chapters follow on the extinct and endangered birds of North America, New Zealand, Islands (primarily Pacific, including Hawaii and Australasia), Europe, and Australia. The book concludes with a chapter on the conservation of endangered birds.

While there are no surprises in the chapter about North America (except the statement that the Rocky Mountains are the home of the California Condor), in other chapters Halliday includes such diverse species as the Kakapo, Blue Duck and Saddleback of New Zealand; the Laysan Duck, Lord Howe Island Wood Rail, and Short-tailed Albatross of islands; the Waldrapp (an ibis), Eagle Owl, Audouin's Gull, and Great Bustard of Europe; the Noisy Scrub-bird, Mallee Fowl, Ground Parrot, Freckled Duck, and Tasmanian Native Hen of Australia.

Vanishing Birds is a very attractive, well illustrated, and reasonably priced book. Halliday's prose is very easy to read; his careful, well-explained, and lucid presentations of ecological theory make r- and K- selection and island biogeography understandable.

I recommend *Vanishing Birds* to everyone interested in birds. If you don't already have books about endangered species this should be your first purchase.



Waldrapp, or Bald Ibis
Geronticus eremita