

*LIFE OF THE TANAGER* by Alexander F. Skutch. 1989. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. xii + 114 pages; 24 color plates, 19 black-and-white illustrations; \$36.50.

Alexander Skutch, acknowledged dean of Neotropical ornithology, has for decades given us vivid accounts of the life histories of scores of Latin American bird species. Occasionally, Skutch sets to work on a book about a whole family of birds, and his previous fine works on hummingbirds and woodpeckers presented nontechnical overviews and outstanding illustrations. The present work continues in the same vein. *Life of the Tanager* is an admirable look at the various aspects of the tanagers' existence, from foraging, voice, and displays through enemies and longevity. The book is intended as an introduction to the 230 diverse, incredibly colorful members of the tanager group and as such succeeds. Dana Gardner's full-page plates are among his best work. The large format makes for a more attractive book but may be part of the reason for the rather hefty price.

*RARE BIRDS OF THE WORLD* by Guy Mountfort, A Collins/ICBP Handbook. 1989. Lexington, Massachusetts: Stephen Greene Press. 256 pages; 32 color plates, 50 line drawings; \$29.95.

*BIRDS TO WATCH* by N. J. Collar and P. Andrew, The ICBP World Checklist of Threatened Birds. 1988. Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. xvi + 303 pages; paperbound \$18.95.

Anyone seriously interested in birdlife and its conservation should make the acquaintance of these two volumes. The Mountfort book is the more readable of the two, and the Norman Arlott artwork is inspiring. *Rare Birds of the World* offers as introduction an essay on man's interaction with birds. The main body of the book is brief accounts of one thousand species of endangered birds, grouped according to zoogeographical region. Appendix I summarizes all threatened species, and Appendix II lists birds which have become extinct since 1600. There are two indexes, one for common, the other for scientific names.

*Birds To Watch* is more compartmentalized and technical in its approach to the same subject. The largest section of text comprises a world list of threatened species presented in phylogenetic order, again with brief accounts of species' status. This is followed by an extensive bibliography of over 700 entries and two appendices, one listing threatened birds by geopolitical unit, the other listing near-threatened species. There are separate indexes for scientific and common names.

Two books now available in paperback from Houghton Mifflin are *HAWKS IN FLIGHT* by Dunne, Sutton, and Sibley (\$9.95) and *A FIELD GUIDE TO MEXICAN BIRDS* by Peterson and Chalif (\$13.95).