

collecting practices, they might -- as a lobby -- demand that open discussions be carried out among representatives of ornithological, environmental, and governmental groups. Such deliberations could result in specific ground rules, established in the light of current knowledge, defining what is necessary to advance our understanding of birds.

As an astronomer, I know that an applicant for observing time on one of the world's giant telescopes must answer questions analogous to those proposed by Dr. Tatum. Is it unfair to ask scientists in another discipline to do as much -- especially when life is involved?

L. J. Robinson

THE SEABIRDS OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND, Stanley Cramp, W. R. P. Bourne, David Saunders; Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., New York, New York, 287 pages, \$14.95.

I have been awaiting the publication of this book for some time, as it is the first of a new generation of works based on the detailed breeding surveys of large areas carried out by hundreds or even thousands of birdwatchers and compiled by professionals of proven competence. It deals with the seabirds of my native British Isles, and I am able to confirm the accuracy of its information from many visits to these colonies in Eire, England, Scotland and Wales. I found the book not only factually correct, but also very readable.

The first chapter, on the biology of seabirds, by Dr. Bourne, is a brief section with numerous references for further reading. It summarizes flight and feeding techniques, breeding, and the general distribution of seabirds (with an emphasis on the North Atlantic). There is also discussion of ocean currents, winds, and areas of maximum food supply.

"Threats to Seabirds" by Stanley Cramp, is a concise summary of the serious effects of man and his pollution. The chapter traces recent ecological history from the first Protection Act of Parliament in 1869 to limit hunting, through the first oil spill in 1907, to the present day. Topics include a discussion of the present state of our knowledge about such chemicals as organochlorines and toxic metals.

The main part of the book presents the results of "Operation Seafarer," which was planned by The Seabird Group and directed by a Census Committee, and which involved almost every major ornithological society in the two countries. The third co-author of this book, David Saunders, was the full time organizer of the census in 1969 and 1970, and this section contains much of the information gathered by The Seabird Group since its foundation in 1956. The objectives were simple:

1. Find out where the 24 species of common seabirds nest in the British Isles.
2. Estimate, as accurately as possible, their present numbers to provide a baseline from which to document future changes.

After an introductory chapter by Stanley Cramp on "Present Numbers and Changing Fortunes," the rest of the book is taken up by the 24 sections on the separate species: Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, 2 storm-petrels, Gannet, 2 cormorants, 2 skuas (jaegers), 11 gulls and terns and 4 auks. For each species there are sections on identification, food and feeding habits, breeding, movements, world distribution, and known past history. The 32 maps which follow the text present the breeding survey results in an easily assimilated form, showing species distribution, colony size, etc. (The precise location of certain "sensitive" colonies is not given for obvious (and good) reasons.) Following the 24 species accounts are 59 pages of appendices and further references.

The text is illustrated throughout with numerous excellent line drawings by Robert Gillmor. There are 11 photographs of seabirds and colonies and many maps. I feel that the serious birdwatcher who is likely to buy this book could have managed without Gillmor's 4 color plates; he would be fairly familiar with the fieldmarks anyway. Omission of these plates might have helped to lower the price from its rather steep \$14.95. However, the wealth of detail in the results of this very comprehensive survey, plus the copious references, make this book an essential buy for anybody with more than a passing interest in North Atlantic seabirds.

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