

Florida Field Naturalist 17(1): 23, 1989.

Hawks in flight.—Pete Dunne, David Sibley, and Clay Sutton. 1988. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. 167 pages of text; 77 pages of black and white photographs; numerous pen and ink drawings. \$17.95.—An entirely new approach to the art of raptor identification is brought to light within this book. Dunne, Sibley, and Sutton take what some consider to be “magic” and simplify it to the point where even the novice hawk watcher stands a good chance of identifying that barely discernable raptor soaring over the mountain ridge. The authors base their book on the holistic or gestalt school of bird identification. Instead of focusing on fine points of plumage or on eye color, the holistic approach emphasizes the use of size, shape, color and behavior to give an overall impression of the bird in question. For those well versed in the Peterson System of bird identification, it is a simple and rather obvious leap over to the holistic approach.

This book is not meant to be a field guide in the traditional sense, yet it should prove useful there. Instead, this book is meant to be read and studied *before* going in the field. The seven chapters on identification provide detailed descriptions of each species, including portrayals of their ranges and behaviors, identifying field marks and sections comparing and contrasting similar birds. The pen and ink drawings accompanying each chapter depict the birds as they are likely to be seen by the observer and show age and sex differences where they occur.

Of the some 38 species of raptors found within the geographical limits of North America, only 23 species are treated. These being selected for their extensive ranges and long or medium distance migrations. “Hawks in Flight” has an admittedly eastern bias and is useful only for those birds which migrate in great numbers each fall and spring. Hawk watchers in the southwest, especially Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, may find this book somewhat frustrating. No mention is made of the many raptors restricted to this area except for the Zone-tailed Hawk which is discussed only in enough detail to avoid confusion with the Turkey Vulture. Floridians will find that the Florida race of the Red-tailed Hawk, the Short-tailed Hawk, the Snail Kite and the Caracara are omitted. All of these omissions are readily acknowledged by the authors as being outside the scope of this book, but a section on these birds would greatly expand its usefulness.

The only other problem I have with this book is the photographs. In terms of quality, they range from very good to poor. Many of the photographs are out of focus or enlarged to the point where they are too grainy to be of much use. The authors selected the photos because they “best illustrate key points and present images that will be seen from the hawk-watching arena.” Adequate photographs of distant raptors are admittedly difficult to achieve, but I think the authors could have done much better in their choice of photographs.

I enjoyed “Hawks in Flight” and found it very helpful in clarifying many of the finer points of raptor identification. The few critical comments I have made about the book are not serious ones and I would recommend this book to the novice as well as to the experienced hawk watcher. It is, as the authors intended it to be, entertaining as well as informative and well worth its modest price.—**Sean J. Kirkpatrick**, Department of Biology, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida 33124.

REPORT

Florida Field Naturalist 17(1):23-24, 1989

Summary of the 1988 fall meeting.—The fall 1988 meeting of the Florida Ornithological Society was held at the Marriott Dadeland in Miami, Florida, from 7-9 October. Tropical Audubon Society was the host chapter, and Bruce Neville was the local committee chairman.

During the Board meeting on Friday, Wayne Hoffman was appointed to the FOS Records Committee. Rich Paul reported that Cynthia Wolf of the University of Florida had been awarded the Helen and Allan Cruickshank Research Award for work on “Growth and

energetics of Brown Noddy chicks near the northern limit of their distribution." Invitations were accepted from Manatee County Audubon Society for spring 1989 and of Indian River Audubon Society for Titusville in the fall. Herb Kale donated many back issues of the FFN to the inventory.

A workshop on cowbirds in Florida was presented on Saturday afternoon. Dr. Tom Bancroft of the National Audubon Research Station in Tavernier was the moderator. Dr. Alexander Cruz of the University of Colorado spoke on the Shiny Cowbird in the Caribbean and his work in Puerto Rico. Bruce Neville presented a review of records of three species of cowbird (Brown-headed, Bronzed, and Shiny) in Florida. Mark Robson of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission spoke on legal aspects of cowbird control. The presentations were followed by a question and answer session.

A skin quiz on fall migrants was prepared by Dr. Oscar Owre of the University of Miami and Bruce Neville. Wally George of Fort Lauderdale won first prize, a copy of "The Birder's Handbook" by Ehrlich, Dobkin, and Wheye. Bill Pranty of Bayonet Point won second prize, a set of drinking glasses with waterfowl decoration.

The banquet Saturday evening was held at Miami MetroZoo. Ron Johnson, Curator of Birds at MetroZoo, was the banquet speaker. He spoke on conservation of birds in New Guinea. Before the banquet program, Wes Biggs presented a framed print of a Barn Swallow to Karen Strobel of Monroe County as Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator of the Year. He also awarded books to Bill Pranty and Eugene Stoccardo for their help during the previous year.

Field trips were designed to view both native and exotic avifauna of south Florida. Field trips for exotics included afternoon visits to a parakeet feeding station, a visit to the evening fly-in of parrots to the night roost, and a winding trip through the suburbs looking for the more reliable exotic species. Fifteen species of psittacid, two species of myna, and the Yellow-fronted Canary were observed during the weekend. The Saturday field trip to Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Recreation Area on Saturday and Sunday probably benefited from a brief, but intense, storm on Friday evening. Eighteen species of warbler were observed on Saturday, and the excellent hawk flight included Cooper's Hawks and Peregrine Falcons. Numbers of both hawks and warblers were down on Sunday. A field trip to the Royal Palm area of Everglades National Park on Saturday was not well attended but productive. Highlights were a light-phase Short-tailed Hawk, two Purple Gallinules, and a female Baltimore Oriole. The staff of MetroZoo led a private tour of the aviary "Wings of Asia" on Sunday morning.—Bruce Neville, 8221 SW 72 Ave., #273, Miami, FL 33143.

FLORIDA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS

Species index to Florida bird records in Audubon Field Notes and American Birds volumes 1-30 1947-1976, by Margaret C. Bowman. 1978. Florida Ornithological Society, Special Publication No. 1. Price \$4.00.

The Carolina Parakeet in Florida, by Daniel McKinley. 1985. Florida Ornithological Society, Special Publication No. 2. Price \$6.00.

Status and distribution of the Florida Scrub Jay, by Jeffrey A. Cox. 1987. Florida Ornithological Society, Special Publication No. 3. Price \$8.00.

Order prepaid from the Treasurer; add \$1.00 for handling and shipping charge. Make checks payable to the Florida Ornithological Society.