

## REVIEW

**Cedar Key: Birding in Paradise. Finding Birds Then and Now.** David W. Johnston. 2009. Bookends Press, Gainesville, Florida. ISBN 978-1-932667-69-1. \$19.95 paperback. 98 pages.

This book provides a wonderful ornithological history of Cedar Key and documents the occurrence of bird life in the area over the past 150 years. It briefly describes how most of Cedar Key's old-growth forests of cedar, cypress, and longleaf pine have given way to the pine plantations, second-growth, and old fields that dominate parts of the landscape in company with the region's scrub, marshes, and mudflats. The book is divided into two parts: 1) Historical Background, and 2) Where to Find the Birds Today.

The "Historical Background", in addition to its short history of the Cedar Key landscape, provides accounts the region's early explorers and collectors. Although other books, such as *Cedar Key Florida, A History* (McCarthy 2007) mention John Muir's visit to Cedar Key, most do not describe in detail the bird life he encountered during his trip or the trips of other collectors. This book follows the ornithological history of Cedar Key through the eyes of over 15 well-known ornithologists, professors, collectors, and naturalists. *Cedar Key: Birding In Paradise* celebrates the rare and uniquely diverse collection of species that have been found and documented in Cedar Key historically as well as today.

"Where to Find the Birds Today" starts by describing the many different birding hotspots concentrated in a small area around Cedar Key. The variety of the habitats accommodates the over 300 bird species that can be found in the area. These locations include: 1) The Town of Cedar Key; 2) Salt Marshes, Beaches and Sand Bars; 3) Cedar Key Scrub State Preserve (Reserve); 4) Seahorse Key, Atsena Otie, Snake, North, and other Keys; 5) Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges; 6) Shell Mound and Black Point Swamp. A list of commonly seen birds associated with each location is provided. The book includes a simple map inside the front cover which includes the highlighted locations and key roads.

A "List of Current Birds" follows the locality descriptions. This section is not intended as a field guide but rather is a complete annotated species list in A.O.U. Check-List order. Following the English and scientific name for each species is a brief account of its seasonal occurrence. For many there are also supporting references to published records or museum specimens documenting their occurrence.

The last section, "Populations—Trends and Changes in the Bird Life" compares historical collection records of species in the Cedar Key Region to current species accounts to identify potential declines and/or shifts in species occurrence. Highlighted species include: 1) Mourning and Eurasian Collared-Doves, 2) Florida Scrub-Jay, 3) House Finch, 4) "Grassland birds", and 5) Salt-marsh sparrows.

The combination of a few key aspects makes this book unique. First, a brief history of the development and history of the Cedar Keys as well as the ornithological history of the area is eloquently captured. Second, an account of what species are commonly seen and where to find them, illustrated by a regional map. Third, a complete species list with local status and reference information. Finally, the book summarizes population information determined by species occurrence and collection information over 150 years. All of this information fits in less than 100 pages and will be an easy addition to field gear.

I recommend this book for any bird-minded visitor to Cedar Key as well as for local birders who have a deep appreciation of the ornithological history and amazing birding opportunities that can be found on any given day in Cedar Key. Birding in paradise is exactly what birding in Cedar Key is all about.

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LITERATURE CITED

MCCARTHY, K. 2007. Cedar Key, Florida: A History. The History Press, Charleston, South Carolina.