

### ANTARCTIC BIRDS: ECOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL APPROACHES

Parmelee, D.F. 1992. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 203 pp. 24 tables, 18 figures of photographs, drawings and paintings. ISBN 0-8166-2000-8.

Dr David Freeland Parmelee began his research in Antarctica during the austral summer of 1972, nearly two decades after establishing himself as a leading Arctic ornithologist under the original tutelage of the late Professor George Miksch Sutton. Working for the University of Minnesota, where he was Director of its field biology programme, David Parmelee actively pursued his new research interests in Antarctica for more than 15 years. In the late 1980s he withdrew from the intense, annual field research schedules that had characterized much of his career and devoted himself to compiling the work that he and his students had completed in Antarctica. David Parmelee's book, *Antarctic Birds: Ecological and Behavioral Approaches*, is the direct result of this effort.

*Antarctic Birds* can best be described as an important chronicle of an individual's long-term personal and scientific achievement in Antarctic ornithological research. The volume's scientific relevance and content is unique for two primary reasons. First, its geographical/ecological setting is the western Antarctic Peninsula, a region that was largely overlooked by early ornithologists involved in the design of new Antarctic research programmes (most researchers favoured sites on the continental side). Second, its species focus is regional, reflecting the full diversity of seabirds found in that area, including permanent and seasonal residents and a host of less common species (35 in total). Special attention is given to detailed, species-specific studies that took place near Palmer Station, the United States base on Anvers Island. These studies focused on species on the families Laridae, Procellariidae and Phalacrocoracidae about which little behavioural and ecological information then existed. The

results reported in *Antarctic Birds* thus present researchers interested in seabird ecology and behaviour with an invaluable record of species in a region not widely known until the mid-1970s. This record is for many of these species supported by extensive data on distribution, breeding biology and chronology, migration and movements (based on band returns), colony-specific population status, diets, predation and winter ecology. Moreover, because these data are in many cases coupled with earlier (albeit scarce) literature, the volume in effect provides a concise summary of what will unquestionably become a key source of baseline data to present and future generations of researchers interested in ecological research in the western Antarctic Peninsula region.

In concluding, it should be noted that a proper review of *Antarctic Birds* would be incomplete without mention of the volume's style and illustrations. David F. Parmelee is not only an outstanding scientist, but an exceptional writer, artist and photographer. In *Antarctic Birds*, strict scientific discipline and reporting blend with a clear, narrative style, beautiful photographs and superb paintings and drawings to produce a volume that exemplifies the classic style of the "traditional school" of ornithology. *Antarctic Birds* is, not surprisingly, dedicated to the late George M. Sutton, a master of this school and its style, and David F. Parmelee's graduate supervisor. It is my pleasure to note that David F. Parmelee was my graduate supervisor and that *Antarctic Birds* was read and reviewed where so much of what he describes took place, Palmer Station, Anvers Island, western Antarctic Peninsula, on 27 December 1994, two decades after he introduced me to this remarkable region.

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