

ume of reports now confronting regional editors and compilers has probably become unmanageable. Nonetheless, screening at a level far more stringent than is currently practiced is mandatory to meet minimal scientific standards. Again, it is time to underscore the time-honored truth that the contributions of birders, valuable as they can be, typically *supplement*, rather than replace, the work of professional ornithologists, especially those involved in serious systematic and distributional research.

The birding mentality established in the Preface sets the standards for the remainder of the book. Notably lacking are the well-documented records and meticulous maps that characterized Grinnell and Miller's authoritative work. Thus, we found no evidence that the author consulted specimens taken in California over the past half-century. The species accounts largely ignore subspecies, a major omission in a state with repeated examples of striking geographic variation. Furthermore, Small's accounts typically are filled with unsubstantiated generalizations, leaving to the reader the task of determining the basis for most statements. This is especially true for routine species, which typically get short shrift by birders because of their preoccupation with vagrants. For example, in Small's account of the Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*), a species previously known to breed locally south of the San Francisco Bay area, we find reports of occurrence northward to southern Trinity and Tehama counties. For a potential breeding range extension of approximately 150 miles, the reader is entitled to detailed information on dates, numbers observed, breeding evidence, subspecies, and names of observers.

Information on rare vagrants is emphasized in this book well beyond its importance. The author attri-

butes the striking increase in detection of vagrants to the large number of birders afield with skills supposedly lacking in their predecessors. While this source of records is undoubtedly significant, it is also likely that absolute numbers of vagrant birds have increased dramatically in California in recent decades as a consequence of continentwide habitat destruction and coincident climatic change.

Recreational birders will find this book of interest because of its plethora of superb color photographs, three useful maps, and fundamental information on seasonal status, habitats, and distribution in the state. Serious amateurs and professionals, on the other hand, should continue to rely on specimen-based distributional data provided by Grinnell and Miller, supplemented with well-substantiated records in other compilations (e.g. for northern California, see G. McCaskie, P. DeBenedictis, R. Erickson, and J. Morlan. 1979. *Birds of northern California*. Golden Gate Audubon Soc., Berkeley, California, plus its supplement; for southern California, see K. Garrett, and J. Dunn. 1981. *Birds of southern California: Status and distribution*. Los Angeles Audubon Society, Los Angeles, California). Information on particular species from these dependable general works should be updated by searches through journals and, especially, by personal fieldwork. The continued importance of proper documentation to the study of avian distribution cannot be underscored more effectively than by inspection of quasiscientific compilations intended for recreational birders, such as Small's new book.—CARLA CICERO AND NED K. JOHNSON, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, and (N.K.J.) Department of Integrative Biology, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, USA.*



Announcements

AOU Student Awards for the 114th Meeting, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, 13-17 August 1996.—The American Ornithologists' Union will offer Marcia Brady Tucker Travel Awards to help defray transportation expenses of students wishing to present a lecture or poster paper at the annual meeting. Students applying for a travel award may have coauthors (not true for presentation awards), but the student's name must be first and the student must present the poster/paper. Marcia Brady Tucker Travel Awards have a limit of two per lifetime. If no more than five poster applications are received, authors of poster papers will be asked to give an oral presentation (as no

poster awards will be given). The number of travel awards is limited, and applicants are expected to present their poster/paper regardless of whether they receive an award. Applications for travel awards do not guarantee a place on the Scientific Program, and awards will be issued only after the paper/poster has been accepted on the program. See the meeting *Circular of Information* for more detailed instructions. To apply for a travel award, send the following materials to the AOU Student Awards Committee by **8 May 1996**: (1) eight copies of an expanded abstract (typed, double-spaced, three pages maximum, including references, tables and figures) stating objectives, meth-

ods, major results, scientific significance, and whether the contribution is an oral or poster presentation; (2) eight copies of a curriculum vitae; (3) eight copies of an itemized budget (transportation expenses only); and (4) one copy of a letter of support (mailed separately) from the academic advisor supervising the research. The Tucker Travel Award competition is separate from the competition for best student paper/poster awards. However, Tucker Travel Award applicants are automatically eligible for a presentation award, as long as the paper/poster is sole-authored. To enter the presentation competition only, send only the expanded abstract (four copies) by the stated date. Send all materials to: *AOU Student Awards Committee, % Carla Cicero, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 3101 Valley Life Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720-3160.*

New Editor Selected.—Thomas E. Martin has selected to be the new Editor of the *Auk*. All new manuscripts should be sent to: Editorial Office, *The Auk*, Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, NS 205, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana 59812, USA. Submit five hard copies of the manuscript and include an ASCII version and a wordprocessor version (preferably Word or WordPerfect; identify the software and the type of computer used) on floppy disk (3.5-inch disk preferable).

Comments by the Editor.—Due to a combination of my professional overcommitment and some health problems (which subsequently have been rectified), publication of the *Auk* fell far behind schedule. I am pleased to note that with this issue, the last for which I have production responsibility, the journal is again back on schedule.

Numerous individuals are involved in the production of the *Auk*. In terms of scientific standards, the most important are the reviewers, who have put in long hours of effort. During my tenure as Editor, over 1,500 individuals have served as external evaluators, many doing a number of reviews.

I appreciate the dedicated work of the individuals who have served as the Managing Editor (Timothy C. Lamey, Neil J. Buckley, Kent E. Thompson, Tabatha A. Franklin), Editorial Assistant (Laura L. Vaughn), Associate Editor for Reviews (Bruce M. Beehler, Robert M. Zink), Index Compiler (Stephanie A. Walker, Mary Sue Schnell, Genevieve M. Tvrdik), and Chair of the AOU Committee on Memorials (C. Stuart Houston). Sharon Kindall and Nancy Owen, as well as other staff members at Allen Press, have been highly professional and very helpful in producing the *Auk*. Pam A. Pogorelc and Marsha K. Womack of the Oklahoma Biological Survey, without charge to the AOU, have provided hundreds of hours of service in handling various secretarial and financial duties associated with the *Auk*. All of these individuals are to be commended for their efforts.—GARY D. SCHNELL.