

point! Askins moves on to general themes of restoration, leaving the reader with a practical vision of "cooperative management." The idea here is that if thinking based on landscape ecology is integrated with human dimensions (e.g. land use economics and policies), we can restore the complex weave of natural landscapes that comprise functioning ecosystems that support our (beloved) native species.

This book is appropriate for all readers with an interest in conservation and/or birds, but the conservation angle is emphasized as the main strength. Because birds are better known biologically than other organisms, a work with similar depth and breadth in community and landscape ecology could not have featured any other taxon. Conservationists dealing with planning at any spatial scale (local, regional, ecosystem management, national, etc.) will find here the kind of insights that spark good ideas for managing ecological communities to favor native species. Although the book is not a procedural manual for conservation, it is clearly more applicable than merely heuristic. I would use this book as recommended reading in undergraduate Landscape Ecology, Conservation Biology, Biogeography, and Wildlife Ecology courses, and as required reading in Avian Ecology and Conservation courses. I will extract parts of it for lectures in my own courses because of its extensive incorporation of scientific findings with relevance to conservation. The book would benefit from an index of concepts (there are taxonomic appendices, chapter notes, and references) to make it more useful in college courses. Ample visuals accentuate the readability; excellent line drawings by Julie Zickfoose and many good photographs enhance the text on most pages, and pithy quotes appear with each chapter heading. *Restoring North America's Wild Birds* should be available in every kind of library because its relevance to conservation crosses all societal boundaries.—KATHRYN E. SIEVING, *Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611, USA.*

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Wetland Birds: Habitat Resources and Conservation Implications.—Milton W. Weller. 1999. Cambridge University Press, New York. xv + 277 pp. ISBN 0-521-63326-5. Cloth, \$74.95. ISBN 0-521-63362-1. Paper, \$32.95.—They are hidden amid the Great Plains, and each spring they awaken from their winter slumber. Life of all forms flourishes within their still waters: stalks of *Typha* and *Scirpus* rise en masse to transform a sea of brown into a carpet of green; larval damselflies and dragonflies crawl to the

water's edge and cast off their shells to become creatures of the air. Predatory mink and giant waterbugs prowl above and below the water's surface. And each spring they are home to the great flocks of migratory birds, many of which will settle in to raise their families. They are, of course, the prairie wetlands, and they rank among the most productive habitats on the face of the earth.

As Milton Weller outlines in *Wetland Birds*, the lifeblood of wetlands is water: it dictates seasonal plant growth and animal succession. Winter snows and spring rains fill ponds and recharge aquifers; small increases in summer temperatures accelerate evaporation, and temporary wetlands disappear while permanent ones shrink. Water control in the Florida everglades, for example, has transformed the annual cycle of seasonal flooding into semipermanent water with community-wide effects, highlighting an important problem: wetlands face the inexorable pressures of human intrusion. North America has lost half of its original wetlands to drainage, and much of the remainder is threatened; the figure is even higher in other regions of the world.

Another author writing about wetland birds might have chosen a more simplistic, taxonomic approach, but Weller, drawing upon a lifetime of experience, does not shrink from the challenge of doing justice to a complex topic. And he succeeds. The real subject of *Wetland Birds* is the intricate web of ecological factors that affect wetland dynamics; bird populations arise as an emergent property of these factors. Weller has done an admirable job of distilling mountains of material into easily digested chapters, 17 in all. Each is a short review of topics, including wetland types, habitat dynamics, foraging strategies, physiological adaptations, population biology, and management concerns. A reference list at the end of each chapter will allow readers access to a much larger underlying literature.

The book is balanced geographically: North American work receives greater attention than other regions, but Weller draws examples from across the globe. And, as someone who has succeeded in working on wetland birds for two decades without studying ducks, the taxonomic balance in this book is welcome. Waterfowl biologists need not worry; they will have plenty to read, but unlike the philosophy of certain management agencies and conservation groups, there is more to life than anseriforms. The layout of the book is handsome, with crisp line drawings and black-and-white photographs, and in this era of upward-spiraling book costs, I would be remiss if I did not draw attention to its modest price. My criticisms of this volume are few. At the risk of being too trendy, I would have liked to see a bit more on the potential effects of global warming on wetlands. This minor item notwithstanding, I can unhesitatingly state that every wetland biologist should have a copy of *Wetland Birds* on his or her shelf. Were I to teach a course

on wetland ecology, this book would be on the required reading list.—SCOTT FORBES, *Department of Biology, University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2E9, Canada.*

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A Birdfinder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley.—

Mark W. Lockwood, William B. McKinney, James N. Paton, and Barry R. Zimmer. 1999. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, Colorado. viii + 280 pp., 43 maps, 5 drawings, 3 photographs. ISBN 1-878788-18-3. Paper, \$17.45.—In the 1950s and 1960s, Fisher and Peterson's *Wild America* and Pettingill's *Bird Watcher's America* stimulated us to dream about birding in exotic settings filled with unfamiliar species. Pettingill's *Guide to Birdfinding East of the Mississippi*, and its companion for the West, provided the information needed to undertake exploration of personal terrae incognitae, giving basic descriptions of the avifauna in each state and good birding sites around selected population centers. After Pettingill, a new era in birdfinding guides began with a series by James A. Lane that covered the nation's most popular birding destinations. The popular Lane Guides, together with refinements by Harold R. Holt (to whom the present volume is dedicated), were known for their level of detail, practicality of information, annotated lists of specialty species accompanied by advice for locating them, and occasional infusions of humor. Recently, the American Birding Association has been updating existing descendants of the Lane guides and developing new guides for additional regions. The present volume, in its third edition and relying on an entirely new cadre of authors, is a fine example of this genre.

This guide covers a larger area than might be inferred by the title, resulting in one of few criticisms I have of this otherwise well-conceived volume. Information is presented for areas along the length of the Rio Grande from the Gulf of Mexico all the way to southern New Mexico, and also for sites as distant from the Rio Grande as the Edwards Plateau, Davis and Guadalupe mountains, and Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Many birders traveling to these areas may miss out on the resources in this book simply because they assume it to be confined to areas along the lower reaches of the Rio Grande. Given the large scope of this coverage, it would have been nice to have included a bit more information on birding opportunities in nearby portions of Mexico. Site accounts in *A Birder's Guide* are divided into three sections: Lower Rio Grande Valley (84 pp.), Trans-Pecos Texas (including Las Cruces and Carlsbad Caverns,

New Mexico; 62 pp.), and Edwards Plateau (22 pp.). The book gradually works the reader upstream. The site accounts are very informative and well written and contain an abundance of attractive maps. Details for finding particular birds at each site are well presented, and at times, finely detailed. For instance, precise directions are provided to a nest tree used by Common Black-Hawks (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) in the Davis Mountains. The authors provide interesting tangential details about other animal and plant species that might be seen, such as endemic fishes confined to individual ponds or springs, and about historical or cultural features.

In addition to the site accounts, the book contains a wealth of supplementary information. The guide begins with a collection of introductory material describing ecological regions of Texas, seasonality, accommodations, sources of information, birding organizations, and the potential for biting insects; it would have been useful to caution visitors more emphatically about the hazardous summer heat. The section summarizing nomenclatural changes in the region's bird species since 1973 is interesting to review in its own right. After the site accounts, the usual bar charts and annotated listing of specialty species have been replaced by a complete annotated list of all the region's birds (56 pp.). This, in itself, is worth the price of the book. Also included are helpful hints regarding identification of Tropical (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) and Couch's (*T. couchii*) kingbirds and Gray-crowned (*Geothlypis poliocephala*) and Common (*G. trichas*) yellowthroats; these provide details not available in standard field guides. Additional lists are provided by Jeffrey S. Pippin for butterflies of the region and by Alan H. Chaney for nonavian vertebrates (excluding fish), both with brief distributional notes. Following a list of selected references, a few pages describe the American Birding Association and its Code of Birding Ethics and provide instructions on how to submit reports of rarities to the review committees of Texas and New Mexico, with additional lists of species for which detailed information is requested. Finally, the index contains an interesting innovation by providing a 25-line Abbreviated Table of Contents on each page that should assist the reader in finding important sections without having to navigate the overall index.

In the interest of providing as well-rounded a review as possible, I feel compelled to point out the handful of deficiencies that I could identify. The text contains occasional grammatical errors. Terminology is occasionally confusing; the word *resaca*, referring to a small body of water, is used initially without introduction, and the use of the terms "Valley," "mid-Valley," and "Lower Valley" at times seems inconsistent. Sometimes species lists are redundant. Although the annotated bird list is a bonus, its depiction of seasonal variations in abundance and of arrival dates is less detailed than when presented as