

BOOK REVIEWS

J. Raptor Res. 37(1):87

© 2003 The Raptor Research Foundation, Inc.

Raptors in the New Millennium. Edited by Reuven Yosef, Michael L. Miller, and David Pepler. 2002. International Birding & Research Center, Eilat, Israel. 276 pp., numerous tables and figures. Softcover, \$20.00.—This volume constitutes the proceedings of the joint meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation and the World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls that was held in Eilat, Israel, from 2–8 April 2000. Close to 200 biologists from 30 countries attended the meeting, which consisted of 84 oral presentations and 17 posters.

In total, the book contains 29 papers (ranging in length from 2 to 22 pages) and 80 abstracts published in English under eight subject headings: General & Techniques (2 papers, 8 abstracts), Diet and Foraging (1, 3), Reproductive Ecology (4, 12), Migration and Wintering Ecology (10, 8), Population Status and Ecology (6, 24), Genetics and Taxonomy (2, 7), Ecotoxicology and Diseases (2, 11), and Conflicts and Solutions (2, 7). As expected, the range of species studied and topics covered is quite large, although taxonomically the papers are dominated by diurnal raptors. Indeed, only four of the 29 papers are devoted to owls (two on Barn Owls [*Tyto alba*], and one each on the Little Owl [*Athene noctua*] and the Tawny Owl [*Strix aluco*]). Among the highlights in the collection is a paper on identifying “real threats” to raptor populations (Kenward), one on the breeding biology of Greater Spotted Eagles (*Aquila clanga*) in Poland (Graszynski et al.), one on modeling habitat suitability for Little Owls in Belgium (Van Nieuwenhuysse and Bekaert), one on migration routes and habitat selection by nonbreeding Lesser Kestrels (*Falco naumanni*) in Africa (Pepler), an update on the status of Great Philippine Eagles (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) on Mindanao (Miranda et al.), and a global review of lead poisoning in falconiforms (Miller et al.).

The proceedings provide a snapshot of raptor research currently underway across a vast portion of the globe, albeit with a bias toward studies of Palearctic falconiforms. The editing is very good considering that English must not have been the

first language for many of the authors. Given the range of topics and species covered, and the attractive price (which includes shipping), *Raptors in the New Millennium* will be a welcome addition to libraries—both personal and public—around the world. To obtain a copy, write the International Birding & Research Center, P.O. Box 774, Eilat 88000, Israel (<http://www.arava.org/birds-eilat/index.html>).—**Jeff Marks, Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812 U.S.A.**

J. Raptor Res. 37(1):87–88

© 2003 The Raptor Research Foundation, Inc.

Birds of the Saskatoon Area. Edited by A.L. Leighton, J. Hay, C.S. Houston, J.F. Roy, and S. Shadick. 2002. Saskatoon Natural History Society Spec. Publ. No. 23. 345 pp., 31 color photographs, 40 line drawings, 14 maps, 8 appendices. ISBN 0-921104-19-7. Softcover, \$39.00 Canadian.—This book presents a compilation of bird records for the Saskatoon Bird Area (SBA), which encompasses an 11 012-km² block centered near Moon Lake just south-southwest of Saskatoon, the largest city in Saskatchewan. The roughly 60 000 observation cards of birds submitted by hundreds of members of the Saskatoon Natural History Society between 1965 and 1988 form the basis of the book, the project being a massive undertaking by a dedicated group of individuals committed to understanding the birds of their local area. The result is a detailed picture of the timing of occurrence and status for the nearly 350 species of birds that were recorded. Introductory sections contain information on the history of the project, the physical and biological properties of the region (including some great color photos of habitat), a glossary of terms, and a brief guide to interpreting the species accounts. The eight appendices contain, among other

things, summaries of Breeding Bird Survey data for four time periods (up to 2000), summaries of banding efforts and recoveries/recaptures for the area, and a list of theses from the University of Saskatchewan that involved bird research in the SBA.

The species accounts range in length from about one-third of a page to just over two pages and focus on arrival and departure dates, status, and habitat affinities. Twenty-nine species of raptors are treated, 17 falconiforms and 12 owls. Perhaps not surprisingly, given that Stu Houston is one of the editors, the raptor accounts are among the most detailed and interesting in the book. For example, it turns out that Saskatoon is one of the best spots on the continent to observe nesting Merlins (*Falco columbarius*). In excess of 30 pairs breed within the city limits in some years, and more than 2000 individuals, mostly nestlings, have been banded there. At the nocturnal end of the spectrum, Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) have also received a lot of attention. The species account reports that 1208 nestlings from 401 nests were banded in the SBA between 1961 and 1998. To date, 130 have been recovered or recaptured, 118 in the SBA and

the remainder in Alberta, Manitoba, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. On balance, each account contains an interesting tidbit or two, including some valuable natural history information, on the bird's presence in the SBA.

I must admit that when *Birds of the Saskatoon Area* arrived, I hesitated to review it for JRR because raptors were not its focus. However, as I flipped through the pages, and especially after I read the introductory portions, I realized the importance of drawing attention to a work of this sort. The publication represents the collective efforts of a group of people who are truly engaged in the natural history that surrounds them. So engaged, in fact, that hundreds of them cooperated to gather the information and make it available to the entire community. Imagine how wonderful it would be if all other cities the size of Saskatoon or larger had among their citizenry a group of people similarly engaged in nature and suitably motivated to compile bird records and produce so useful a publication.—**Jeff Marks, Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812 U.S.A.**