

BOOK REVIEW

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Hawks and Owls of Eastern North America. By Donald S. Heintzelman. 2004. Rutgers University Press, Piscataway, NJ U.S.A. viii + 203 pp., 5 color plates, numerous black and white photos. ISBN 0-8135-3350-3. Cloth, \$29.95.—Donald Heintzelman's original purpose with this volume was to prepare a second edition of his earlier work, *Hawks and Owls of North America* (1979, Universe Books, New York, NY U.S.A.). However, this book restricts coverage to the raptors of eastern North America, which is loosely defined as birds east of the Mississippi River, except for parts of Minnesota and Ontario. The volume begins with six chapters dealing with general topics: Introduction to Raptor Ecology, Hawk Migrations, Owl Migrations and Invasions, Raptor Conservation, Citizen Scientists, and Recreational Raptor Watching; and follows with eight chapters of raptor species accounts mostly in taxonomic order, beginning with Ospreys (*Pandion halieetus*) and ending with Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*). For the most part, the book is nicely illustrated with a selection of outstanding black and white photos.

I found the introductory chapter, "An Introduction to Raptor Ecology," to be well out of date. In the preface, Heintzelman acknowledges that this chapter includes substantial portions of the text from his 1979 contribution. Upon reading this chapter, it is clear that many of the ideas expressed reflect antiquated ecological opinions and speculations of the 1960s and early 1970s. Statements such as, Northern Goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*) are beneficial to Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) populations, that raptors control numbers of prolific rodents, and raptors maintain a delicate and effective ecological balance between predator and prey, without presentation of supporting data or sources are made freely throughout this short chapter.

The subsequent introductory chapters, although brief, provided easier reading and were based on more-current information. The chapter on Raptor Conservation reported a series of interesting and relatively-recent anecdotes. However, when discuss-

ing habitat degradation and loss, Heintzelman emphasizes the "ambitious, long-term restoration" effort of the Lehigh Gap Restoration Project, which has a goal of restoring 750 acres of woodland on the Kittatinny Ridge in Pennsylvania. From a raptor perspective, restoring ca. 3 km² of deciduous woodland habitat is extremely trivial and will likely have little impact on the population of any raptor. I am familiar with several other governmental and private (e.g., the Nature Conservancy) land acquisition/habitat restoration programs that involve many thousands of hectares that are much more likely to have substantial population impacts on several species of raptors. I would have liked to have seen Heintzelman discuss some of these major habitat restoration efforts, perhaps in addition to smaller isolated projects that he has personally spear-headed.

Some minor distractions for me were the provision of selective contact information. Although most major raptor conservation organizations were mentioned in the volume, contact information was only provided for a select few. Perhaps, in this day and age in which an interested person can quickly obtain contact information by googling the name of an organization, this is not necessary. But, why provide detailed contact information (postal address, e-mail address, phone numbers) for a few selected organizations, and no information for others?

Probably more bothersome for a professional ornithologist using this volume is the style of not citing references in the text. Although most chapters are reasonably-well researched and supported with references, albeit selectively, all references are included in the back of the volume listed alphabetically by chapter. Thus, when you encounter a statement in a given chapter, identifying the responsible source is exceedingly difficult. Also, the supporting sources represent a very mixed bag in which some very current and important studies are mentioned and cited, while most of the references are from state journals and generally represent novel anecdotes.

Although I found most of the material presented in the species accounts to be accurate, I ran across several reported "facts" that in my opinion,

amounted to unsubstantiated and rather far-reaching speculations. Some examples include a statement that evidence supports that mated pairs of Rough-legged Hawks (*Buteo lagopus*) perch together on their wintering grounds; statements or implications that several species of raptors covered in the volume relatively commonly exhibit cooperative hunting; that Gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*) are faster than Peregrine Falcons (*F. peregrinus*); and that the food habits of several small raptors include large birds and mammals, such as waterfowl (Anatidae), grouse (Tetraoninae), raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), woodchucks (*Marmota monax*), and hares (*Lepus* spp.). The latter is true, although most of these relatively large preys are taken rarely and most likely involve very-young animals or carrion. This clarification is generally not included and the way accounts are worded, the text implies that such large prey are just as commonly taken as small rodents. The layout of the book, with citations lumped by chapter, makes tracking down the specific sources for these far-reaching speculations and implications nearly impossible. As a scientist, I found this aggravating.

Besides my mild complaints indicated above, the species accounts were concise and informative. Within each account, the known longevity record for each species is reported, which I found to represent an interesting anecdote. Each account is illustrated with one or more high-quality black and white photos of the featured species. For the most part, the volume is well-edited and I found only a few typographical errors scattered about the text.

Generally, I feel this volume would make an excellent primer for an amateur or beginning student interested in North American birds of prey. The presentation of the basic natural history and promotion of recreational hawk watching to the beginning student of birds is clearly the intended target of this publication. I would recommend this volume to a high school or underclass university student that expresses an interest in raptors. Also, this book would make an excellent resource for local public libraries throughout eastern North America.—**James C. Bednarz, Department of Biological Sciences, Arkansas State University, P.O. Box 599, Jonesboro, AR 72467 U.S.A.**