

BIRDERS' BOOKSHELF

A Guide to the Birds of Colombia.

Steven L. Hilty and William L. Brown. 1986. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press. xii + 836 pp., 56 color and 13 black-and-white plates by Guy Tudor, John Gwynne, H. Wayne Trimm, Michel Kleinbaum and others. Hardbound \$95.00, paperbound \$42.50.

REOICE NEOTROPICAL BIRDWATCHERS and ornithologists!! Finally there is a book on South American birds that combines a strong, informative text with excellent plates. To refer to this book as just a field guide would be to underestimate its value. The detail and completeness of the information provided for each Colombian species borders on the quality and quantity of that of a handbook.

Immediately upon opening the book the reader is greeted with two detailed maps, a locality and a vegetation map of Colombia. The locality map pinpoints 174 sites mentioned in the text, including 26 national parks that are highlighted with shading. The vegetational map represents the natural vegetational zones that existed in presettlement Colombia. Needless to say, some of these zones have since been altered significantly by man (see Hilty's 1985 update in *Neotropical Ornithology*).

The format of the book is laid out in the next section. Within it criteria are presented for defining the abundances of birds, as well as to their acceptance on the Colombian list. The criteria of the latter seems odd and inconsistent. The authors do not consider tape recordings as sufficient evidence for adding a species to the list, yet they include dataless "Bogota" specimens as proof. Undoubtedly, some (if not many) of these "Bogota" skins came from sources outside Colombia.

The Topography, Climate, Vegetation, and Habitat Description sections are concise and informative. One simply amazing tidbit in the Climate section is that the average yearly amount of rainfall from one site in the Choco is a staggering 19,839 mm (781")—no

wonder this area remains relatively untouched by man! In contrast to the limited destruction in the Choco, the authors' comments on the wholesale devastation to the natural vegetation in the arid temperate zone of the northern one-half of the eastern Andes and elsewhere is disconcerting.

The Migrants section is notable not only for the discussion on the well-documented North American migrants in Colombia, but also for the lesser known Central American, Caribbean, and south temperate zone birds. Migrants from each of these regions are listed in useful tables.



67. FIERY TOPAZ (♂)

Drawing by Michel Kleinbaum from "Birds of Colombia."

A brief overview of the conservation effort (past and in progress) in the country and a summary of the national parks is provided. This is followed by a synopsis of the evolution of Colombian ornithology up to the present.

Then comes the heart of the book—the species accounts. Each species account usually includes the following divisions: Identification, Similar Species, Voice, Behavior, Breeding, Status and habitat, Range, and Notes. Under the Identification section, a detailed description is provided with italicized, diagnostic field marks. The authors have

supplemented the species accounts for two of the more difficult groups, the woodcreeper genus *Xiphorhynchus* (note the typographical error in the title) and the antwren genus *Myrmotherula*, by summarizing field marks in tabular and diagrammatic form, respectively.

"Even if you may never travel to South America, this book is worth having . . ."

The voice descriptions are quite helpful and accurate. When the authors have had no experience with a species' voice in Colombia, they have provided a description of the voice from other parts of the species' range. In those instances, the authors wisely have given the locality and source of the description, so the reader will be aware of the possibility of a different dialect or even a different species being involved. An array of useful information is included in the Behavior section, ranging from foraging movements and diet to the type of mating system (if known).

One of the more valuable features of this book is the information provided on timing of breeding, nest placement, clutch size, and description of eggs, etc. The authors are to be commended for having done such a thorough job of reviewing the literature and specimens.

Precise localities where a species readily can be found are included under the Status and Habitat section. A detailed description of the Colombian range is provided (often subspecies ranges are delimited), followed by a more general description of the species' entire range. At the end of many of the species accounts there are one or more

". . . the first neotropical book with distributional maps . . ."

Notes. These principally emphasize taxonomic problems. These notes provide a wealth of possible systematic problems on which workers can focus. Also included in these notes are descriptions of species that are as yet un-

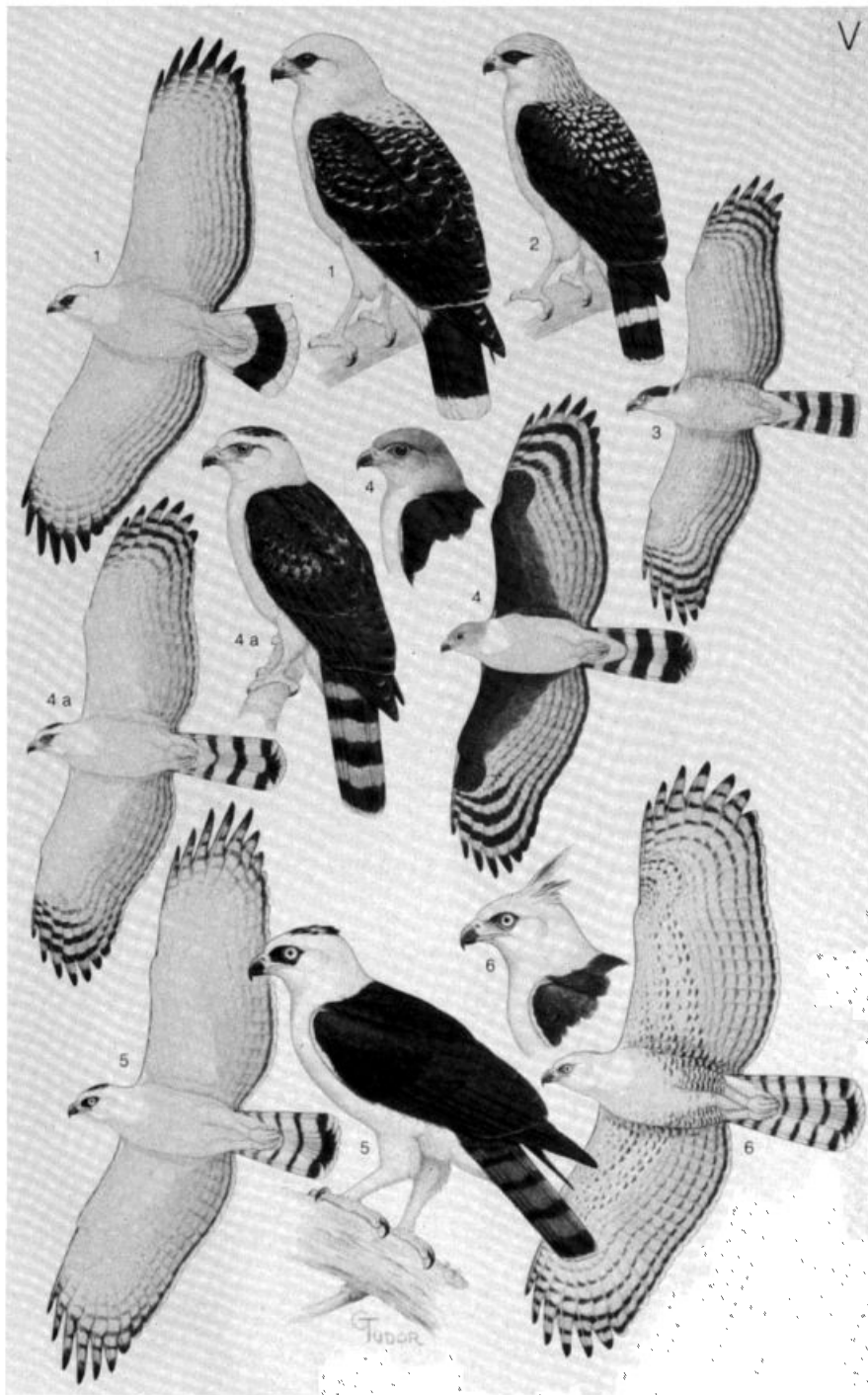


Plate by Guy Tudor from "Birds of Colombia." 1. White Hawk 2. Black-faced Hawk 3. Hook-billed Kite 4. Gray-headed Kite 5. Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle 6. Ornate Hawk-Eagle.

recorded for Colombia, but have been found near the country's border.

Three appendices follow the species accounts. The first is a bird finding section, covering some of the more accessible birding spots in the country. The second is a list of the bird species recorded from the Colombian islands of San Andrés and Providencia. A useful list of the subspecies illustrated on the plates is included in the final appendix.

Two additional appendices would have been worthwhile. A list of the endemic birds (Colombia has more than 50 endemic species) would have highlighted these species for birders and for conservationists. Likewise, a list of the hypothetical species would have been helpful, so the observers could make an effort to more fully document these species.

This is the first neotropical book with

distributional maps (1475 of Colombia's 1695 species are represented). Although these maps are relatively small, they are detailed and sharp. One annoying aspect is the lack of a reference to the text or plate on the maps.

A total of 69 plates (56 in color) depict most of the resident and austral migrants. Only a few (mostly raptors) of the North American migrants are illustrated. Two black-and-white and eleven color plates are entirely new, whereas all of the other plates have been modified from Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps' *The Birds of Venezuela* (1978) and Ridgely's *The Birds of Panama* (1976). Nevertheless, the replacement of species on some of these older plates is so extensive that many of these plates are essentially new. Only ten plates are identical to what appeared in *The Birds of Venezuela*. The reproduction of the *The Birds of Venezuela* plates in this book is inferior, with all of them appearing pale or washed out.

The meshing of the Colombian birds with the Venezuela and Panama plates has resulted in a confusing arrangement for some groups. The worst example of this is the hummingbirds, where some members of the same genus are separated by as many as three plates! Furthermore, the notes accompanying the plates often have totally unrelated birds under the same heading, e.g., Sicklet-winged Guan is placed under the Ground-Cuckoos, when it easily could have been moved down the page, without any reordering, and placed under the correct heading of guans. This type of error is repeated throughout the plate notes.

However, these problems are all eclipsed by the quality of the plates. Guy Tudor has reaffirmed his position as the master illustrator of Neotropical birds. The accuracy and detail of Tudor's renditions are impressive, especially in view that he has never seen some of these birds alive! Tudor has corrected the posture (e.g., both species of *Thamnomanes* and *Mecocerculus stictopterus*) and plumage and soft part colors (e.g., *Zerilus undulatus* and *Dendrocincla merula*) of a handful of birds that were incorrectly portrayed in *The Birds of Venezuela*. The thrush and icterid plates by Yrizarry are a pleasant surprise, and I hope we will see more of his work in field guides.

The toucan plate of Trimm's has a few errors with regard to soft part colors.

For example, the base of the Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan's bill should be maroon with this color extending on the mandible beyond the "plate" of the maxilla. The yellow facial skin should be extended upward in front of the eye, and the skin around and above the eye should be greenish-blue, contrasting with the blue plumage.

Michel Kleinbaum's line drawings enhance the text, leaving the reader wishing that there were more.

“ . . . a strong, informative text with excellent plates.”

I used my softbound copy for a month in Ecuador. I have a softbound copy for a very good reason—the price. A hardbound copy lists for a whopping \$95.00, whereas the softbound copy lists for less than one-half that at \$42.50. My copy has held up admirably, although the tanagers on the cover now appear as ghosts. Despite the weight of the book, the binding has held up nicely and it appears that it may sur-

vive a few additional hardy trips. As with the other Princeton Press field guides, the format, paper quality and printing are superb.

In summary, this book has very few shortcomings. This is the book to use if you will be travelling or working in any of the Andean countries, as well as northwestern Brazil. The detailed, informative text virtually makes *The Birds of Venezuela* obsolete. Even if you may never travel to South America, this book is worth having in your library to showcase the magnificent, avian diversity of the continent.—M.B.R.

We thank the following book reviewers for their careful reading and comments. The initials at the end of each review correspond to these names: Eirik Blom, Matthew P. Drennan, Mark B. Robbins, Fredrick Baumgarten.

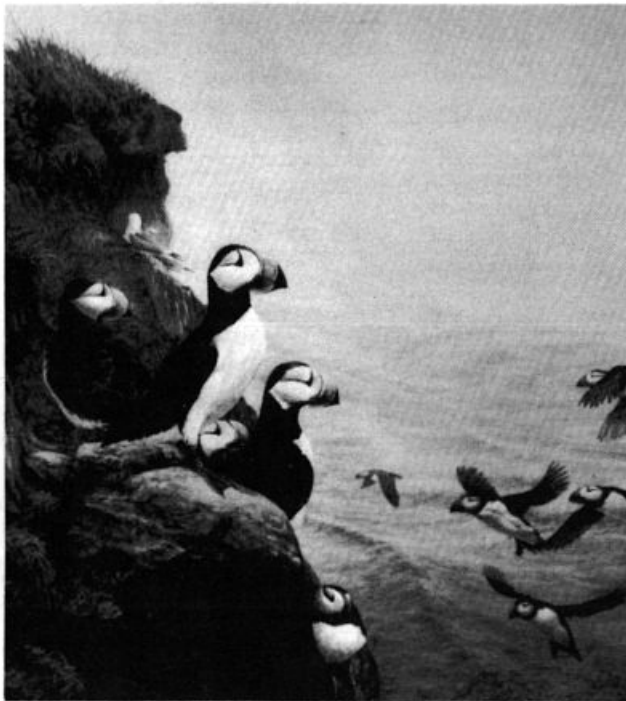
The Puffin

M. P. Harris, 1984. T & A D. Poyser, Calton, England. Illustrations by Keith Brockie. 224 pages. Hardbound \$32.50. (Available from Buteo Books, PO Box 481, Vermillion, SD 57069)

“ . . . divided into sections which allow quick and precise reference.”

INITIALY SOME READERS MAY BE put off by this book's title; it seems either vague or pretentious. However, upon closer inspection, seabird enthusiasts of all sophistications will realize that this book could be called nothing but *The Puffin*. No other title would do justice to the wealth of information Dr. Harris has skillfully presented about one of the world's most popular seabirds, the Atlantic Puffin.

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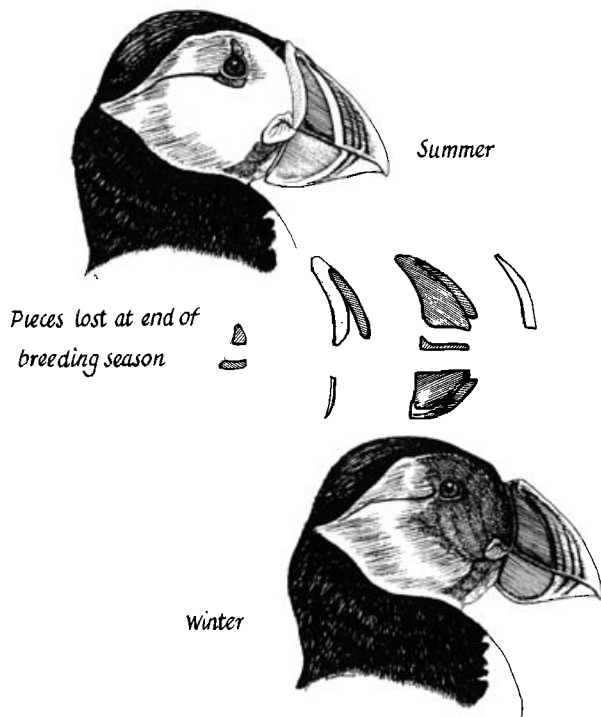
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The transformation from summer to winter plumage by the loss of the bill plates and eye-ornaments, the shrivelling of the atrophic triangle and the darkening of the face. (From a drawing by Bernard Zonfrillo).

All illustrations on this page by Keith Brockie from "The Puffin."

A smooth narrative is maintained throughout fifteen chapters, divided into sections which allow quick and precise reference. The text is supplemented by maps, graphs, and tables, photographs of puffins and puffin colonies, and the appealing line drawings of artist Keith Brockie.

Harris begins by briefly describing puffin colonies where principal studies of the species have been conducted. These include Skokholm and Skomer, St. Kilda, and Isle of May in Great Britain, and Great Island, Newfoundland.



This is followed by a discussion of the evolution and taxonomic position of puffins, and a detailed description of the morphology of *Fratercula arctica*.

The next three chapters consider puffin populations, their distribution across the North Atlantic, and the challenges of monitoring numbers at St. Kilda and

Isle of May. Although a few readers may get bogged down by the numbers and methods presented in this section, students of seabird population ecology will be intrigued by this remarkably thorough compilation of recent counts and historical reports. Anyone interested in the challenge of accurately counting birds will find Chapter 4 particularly worthwhile. We like to think of numbers as being solid, identifiable certainties, but the researcher who must estimate how many hundreds of thousands of birds breed in one archipelago views a number as a rough gauge, not an absolute truth. Historical reports are similarly subject to human opinion and error, and the author makes it clear that many more questions than answers exist about puffin population dynamics.

Chapter 6, Breeding Biology, marks the transition between the population biology section of the book and the behavior oriented section. It describes the stages a bird goes through each nesting season as it returns to the colony, claims a burrow, finds a mate, raises young, and finally departs some four months later. The reader is consistently presented data from different colonies which demonstrate the sometimes vast differences between groups of birds, not to mention researchers.

The next chapter, Behaviour, is authored by K. Taylor. It fits in well with Harris' style and would constitute an ideal guide to both individual and pair behavior for any naturalist encountering puffins on the breeding grounds. The following chapter expands the perspective to concentrate on puffin behavior within the colony, rather than between the pair. Daily and seasonal cycles of colony attendance and the spectacular "wheels" performed by groups of puffins are presented. The latter is a phenomenon involving large numbers of birds flying in a synchronized circle over the water in front of the colony. Similar behavior has been observed in other seabirds, such as terns; here Harris discusses possible reasons for the striking display among puffins.

Delving next into the subject of food and growth of young, the reader is introduced to a wide array of data from studies conducted at a variety of colonies. These are among the most studied aspects of seabird biology simply because they are often the easiest to examine. Researchers can see what food adult puffins are carrying in their bills, and with great care and proper timing, chicks can be removed from burrows and weighed on a regular basis. Because of the large amount of data available concerning feeding and development, it is terribly difficult to make any species-wide generalizations. Regional populations, local groups, island colonies, and groups within those colonies all have their own similarities and dif-



ferences. Dr. Harris serves the reader well by presenting data that differ dramatically year-to-year and colony-to-colony. We gain a keen appreciation of the complexity of the puffin's world.

The remainder of the book completes this picture of a dynamic system. We see how predators, pollution, humans, migration, and other factors influence puffins. *The Puffin* is a fine book in all respects. Not only does it thoroughly inform us about 'puffindom,' it also draws us into the entire intricate ecology of North Atlantic seabirds.—M.P.D.

Eric Hosking's Owls

Eric Hosking with Jim Flegg. Forward by Ian Prestt. Pelham Books Ltd., London 1982. 169 pages. Over 100 color and 90 black and white photographs. Index. Hardbound \$21.95.

THIS IS A BOOK FULL OF PLEASURES and disappointments, and it makes me wonder if some editor is trying to cash in on Hosking's entirely justified reputation as one of the world's fine bird photographers by ransacking his files in search of pictures that can be slapped together into a coffee table offering.

“ . . . very little information in this book about North American owls, except for . . . Common Barn-Owl and Snowy Owl . . . ”

The photographs in this book are, with a few notable exceptions, a very average collection. A great many were taken in zoos and parks and look it. A few are fuzzy or off-color. Most lack the striking quality found in Hosking's previously published work. Still, there are over 190 color and black-and-white photos in this book, and although the quality is uneven, they will appeal to anyone who enjoys owls. A few are excellent: some of the Common Barn-Owl and Snowy Owl photographs leap to mind, just as they seem to leap off the page.

Unlike most coffee table books, the text is better than the illustrations. It is not at all clear however, who wrote which pieces, and that is distracting. Jim Flegg, past director of the British Trust for Ornithology, is credited on the dust jacket with having “contributed” the text. Hosking, in the preface, credits Flegg with “authoring” the text. From these two statements the reader would be entirely justified in concluding that Hosking had provided the pictures and Flegg had provided the words. It is immediately clear however that portions were written by the photographer. In the middle of several chapters there suddenly appear first-person stories about owls and photographing them. Obviously these were written by Hosking. Yet no effort is made to explain which

author wrote which chapter or which paragraph or which sentence. Just as clearly Flegg's fine professional hand can be seen in many sections, especially those dealing with taxonomy, distribution, behavior, habitat, and evolution. These sections are well written and informative. Equally interesting are Hosking's tales of the joys, difficulties, and techniques of photographing owls. I just wish I knew who was doing the writing in each case.

The book has seven chapters, the first four are general. The first, the Fascination of Owls, is Hosking's explanation of why he, and most birdwatchers, are intrigued by owls. The next three appear to have been written almost entirely by Flegg. They are: Exploits of Owls, A Way of Life, and the Breeding Season. This is the most readable and interesting part of the book, a primer to owls that will provide something to even the most dedicated enthusiast. The scope is general, but there are many fascinating pieces of information, bits of history, folklore and science. Within the constraints of the design and intent of the book, Flegg has filled our plate.

The next two chapters focus on the Tawny Owl and the Common Barn-Owl. The choices of these two presumably reflect Hosking's experience with both and the availability of a large number of photographs. Though it is somewhat odd in a general book about owls to highlight two species, both of these chapters are fun reading. They represent (I assume) a combined effort by the authors, being a mix of anecdote and scientific information that works surprisingly well.

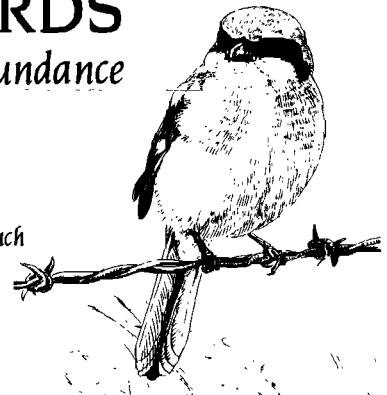
“ . . . many fascinating pieces of information, bits of history, folklore and science.”

The last chapter, A Gallery of Owls, is a collection of color photographs of owls from all over the world. It is not meant to be complete. About 30 of the approximately 133 known species are represented. Regrettably many of the photos are obviously of captive birds. The text in this section consists solely of captions, although most contain in-

ARKANSAS BIRDS *Their Distribution and Abundance*

By Douglas A. James
and Joseph C. Neal

with illustrations by
David Plank & Sigrid James Bruch



ARKANSAS BIRDS fills a space too long empty on the shelves of ornithologists and students alike, of naturalists, wildlife and conservation groups, bird and garden club enthusiasts, artists, and those dedicated people who may be all of these. The authors have drawn upon a wide range of sources, from pre-historic Indian sites to present-day field observation, to cover every species of wild bird recorded in Arkansas. Accounts of such extinct species as the Carolina Parakeet keep us from taking for granted even the Northern Bobwhite and other common modern species.

Early chapters introduce the reader to the habitats favored by various species; full descriptions are accompanied by line drawings and color photos. ARKANSAS BIRDS serves both as a quick reference and a general historical review. A discussion of the Bald Eagle traces its history from bones found in Indian burials, through Audubon's early observations, to modern population declines and successful conservation efforts.

This attractive and accessible volume is a guide long-awaited by both the professional student of birds and the amateur with a backyard feeder

Douglas James is a professor of Zoology at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and has published widely in the fields of ornithology and ecology. Two Fulbright appointments have taken him to West Africa and Nepal.

Joseph Neal is a research assistant in the Department of Zoology at the University of Arkansas, a researcher for the Shiloh Museum, and he also pursues a career as a journalist and professional writer. 320 pages 534 00 0-938626-38-8

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teresting information. I wonder who wrote them.

A section at the end of the book lists the technical information for each photo in the book, including the camera type, film, exposure, speed, and year taken.

A caution. There is very little information in this book about North American owls, except for those like Common Barn-Owl and Snowy Owl, both of which also occur in Europe.

Seeing Eric Hosking's name on a

book prepares you for a superior collection of photographs. This book doesn't deliver in that respect, but the text takes up the slack somewhat, providing a fine if scattershot introduction to owls.—E.B.



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Beyond Birding: Field Projects for Inquisitive Birders

Thomas C. Grubb, Jr. The Boxwood Press, 183 Ocean View Blvd., Pacific Grove, California 93950. 1986. 195 pages. Paperbound \$9.95.

THE CONCEPT OF THIS BOOK IS TERRIFIC. Unfortunately, the execution is flawed. Perhaps, as ornithology has rocketed into the computer/chemical age, the gap between amateur and professional has grown too great to easily cross. Outside of distributional information, the days when the hobbyists regularly contributed to the science seem to be slipping away from us. Yet many birdwatchers want the opportunity to do more than "tick off" new birds, and many are fascinated by the sea of questions that pop up once one passes beyond the "what is it?" school of birdwatching.

“. . . probably a good introduction to the science of field ornithology for college students.”

This book, which claims to help bridge the gap, has an identity problem. It reads, for the most part, as if it were written as supplemental reading for an undergraduate ornithology course. One gets the impression, however, that somewhere along the way the publisher or the author decided to expand the potential audience by adding some introductory information designed to make it attractive to birdwatchers in general. The problem is that the bulk of the book is a detailed description of specific projects. Most involve extensive field work (no problem), rather elaborate design and organization (problems), and the mastery of statistical concepts like Chi-square tests, measures of central tendency, and Spearman Rank Correlation tests (serious problems).

I do not doubt that most birdwatchers can master these tools. I do doubt that they very much want to. For the small percentage who have the drive and the time, this book offers a reasonable introduction to the world of scientific ornithology. But what about the rest? Isn't it possible for "inquisitive birders" to answer questions, solve problems, and contribute to the science without mastering statistical analyses?

The book has twenty-three chapters. The first two describe "Ornithology as a Science" and "Analytical Ornithology." The next twenty describe specific field projects. They include "Why do Ospreys hover?", "Can birds divide energy by seconds?", "How does a robin look for worms?", and "Do Downy Woodpeckers have preferred heights for digging holes?" Each chapter begins with a general description of the problem, and then details a study designed to answer it. The studies involve making artificial trees (Downy Woodpeckers), buying mealworms of different sizes, and timing how long it takes a chickadee to eat them (dividing energy), and estimating the distances American Robins run and measuring the angle of directional change each time they stop and start. This is followed by a short paragraph explaining which statistical analysis is appropriate for the particular study and an example of what sort of charts are needed to record the data.

Beyond my doubt that most bird-watchers want to master analytical statistics, I have another problem with the projects. They raise interesting questions, but the designs, though elaborate in appearance, are often simplistic. Ornithologists, attacking these same problems, spend as much time designing the studies as carrying out the field work. Ignore any one of a dozen variables (are the size of the mealworms a chickadee chooses affected by the presence of other birds on the feeder?), and the results lose their scientific validity.

The last, very short chapter suggests what the amateur should do when he "knows this book." That means reading the four major scientific ornithological journals as well as a few college texts on ecology and behavior. Two appendices are expanded explanations of the statistical methods, and a third lists the scientific names of the birds referred to in the text.

This book is probably a good introduction to the science of field ornithology for college students. It would be useful to a highly motivated high school student planning a science project. For the average birdwatcher it does little more than illustrate the basic design of many modern field projects. What it does *not* do is explore the range of opportunities the amateur has available to expand his participation beyond watching and identifying. The focus is much too narrow for the title.—E.B.

A Guide to Hawkwatching in North America

Donald S. Heintzleman. *Keystone Books, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park and London, 1979. Second printing 1982. 284 pages, index, black-and-white photos. Paperbound, no price.*

ACCORDING TO THE PREFACE, THIS book aims to provide "more comprehensive and detailed information about the observation, identification, biology, and ecology" of diurnal raptors than the standard field guides. Perhaps there is a need for a single volume guide covering all the facets of hawks and hawkwatching, but this book does not fill the bill. It tries to cover too much material in too little space, and as a result the treatment is superficial.


“. . . a comprehensive, useful listing of hawkwatches still eludes us.”

The book has three main sections; hawk identification, hawk study, and places to watch hawks. There are also brief appendices covering accidental occurrences of raptors in North America, hawks of the Hawaiian Islands, raptor conservation organizations, and field data forms.

The species accounts consist of sections covering measurements, field recognition, flight style, voice, nests, eggs, food, habitat, and range. Almost all of the information in these sections is basic, incomplete, and readily available from other sources. The largest part of

each account covers field recognition, and this section is the most disappointing. Heintzleman provides broad plumage descriptions of age and sex classes, and where applicable, subspecific distinctions, even though races are rarely recognizable in the field. What he does not do is tell the reader how to identify the birds. He does not direct the reader to diagnostic field marks, does not even suggest which characters to concentrate on, and does not discuss the critical shape differences. Hawks are unique in that a large percentage of the birds seen are viewed soaring overhead, where plumage characters are frequently useless. As a result, an increasingly sophisticated body of knowledge has evolved concerning the identification of flying birds. The key characters are shape, proportion, flight, and patterns of light and dark. One has only to go to Hawk Mountain or Cape May and watch experienced "hawkers" make correct identifications of distant specks to see how little the usual standard field marks help. Yet in this expanded guide there is almost none of that information. For example, in the vulture accounts there is not a word about the wing shape differences between Black and Turkey vultures that, with practice, make it almost impossible to confuse the two. Whatever else this book may be, it is not successful as a field guide.


Another problem in the species accounts involves the "range" statements. They are so brief that any field guide map is a substantial improvement. For example, there is no indication that Broad-winged Hawks leave the United States entirely in the fall. Or that Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed hawks migrate at all. And there are no statements of relative abundance or migration routes for most species.



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weather conditions can change a hawk bonanza into a desert. For example, Sandy Point State Park, listed by Heintzleman, can have excellent fall flights, but only on light winds 2-3 days after the passage of a cold front. Even then, how is the reader to know that the passage is east to west, across the Chesapeake Bay, rather than the traditional north to south? Or that on Kent Island, directly across from the Bay, flights generally occur on days with strong easterly winds?

In the description of Sandy Point the author tells us how to find the park (any road map can do that), but suggests that upon arriving the visitor check into the park headquarters and ask the staff where to watch hawks! The staff, friendly, helpful, and courteous, doesn't know where to watch hawks. They wouldn't be able to tell you, for instance, that if the conditions are right, one should stand at the corner of the bathhouse on the main beach and look east across the bay.

Similar problems occur in many of the accounts of hawkwatches with which I am familiar. There is just not enough information. If you want a brief, incomplete list of places that hawks have been recorded in North America, with no information on when and why, this section is fine. But a comprehensive, useful listing of hawkwatches still eludes us.

In most places this book is available for less than \$10.00, but even at that price it does not have much to offer. The species accounts have little that is not readily available in the field guides or other widely used references, and fail to provide useful identification material. The section on hawk migration and hawkwatching is far too brief. The listing of hawkwatching sites is just that, a list, lacking most of the requisite information. Perhaps Heintzleman has tried to package too much into a book designed to be a "field guide." Each section is worthy of a book in itself. Here the information is condensed below the level of usability. It is only for those who feel the need to add every publication on hawks to their shelves.—E.B.



THE BIRDS OF MEXICO CITY: The first comprehensive annotated checklist and bird-finding guide to the Federal District by **RICHARD G. WILSON** and **HECTOR CEBALLOS-LASCURAIN**. Includes a 15 page guide to finding many of the more interesting species in and around Mexico City. Indispensable for the birder planning to spend any time in Mexico. 88 Pages; Send US\$ 9.00, plus US\$ 1.50 for Postage & Handling to BBC Printing & Graphics Ltd., 2289 Fairview Street, Unit 425, Burlington, Ontario, Canada L7R 2E3.

The species accounts are followed by a section of black-and-white photographs of perched and flying birds. They vary considerably in quality, but lack real value as there is no attendant text or explanation. The reader is left to figure out which characters showing in which picture are valid. A good field guide does not abandon its reader to sort these things out alone.

The next section is a brief analysis of the timing and mechanics of hawk migration, and some information about the tools and techniques of hawkwatching. Though fairly basic, this is the most useful part of the book. Regrettably it is only 15 pages long and barely scratches the surface of most of the subjects it addresses.

“. . . only for those who feel the need to add every publication on hawks to their shelves.”

The last part of the book purports to be a listing of hawkwatches throughout North America, organized by state and province. In theory, this list is a valuable resource. I suspect many birders would like, and purchase, a fairly complete guide to hawkwatching localities. Heintzleman fails to provide much of the necessary information, however, and it is information readily available from local sources. Examining the list for Maryland, a state with a good deal of published information, exposes the weakness of the presentation. First, almost as important as knowing where to go is knowing when to go. Any hawkwatcher who has been out more than once knows that even a small change in

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CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Rinehart Shouts

R. R. Knudson. New York, Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 1987. 115 pages. Hardbound \$10.95.

IT IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE TO SEE birding taken up as the theme of a children's story. In *Rinehart Shouts* the protagonist, Arthur Rinehart, a small, wiry fifth-grader, exhibits many of the best symptoms of a serious birder. He clings to his field guide until it is worn, and spends his free time composing his "hope list" of birds not yet seen. In one well-drawn episode early in the book, he finds his life Great Blue and Little Blue herons in one place on the Potomac River. Incredibly, he can even distinguish Fish Crows from American Crows "at a glance"! The author's view of birding is nevertheless a flattering one. As with many birders, Arthur finds in birding an activity that transcends everyday routines and unpleasantnesses.

“. . . manages to be predictable, fun, and wholly unbelievable at the same time.”

Its offbeat plot and characters lend the book a certain charm, and children 9 to 10 years of age will find it entertaining, but *Rinehardt Shouts* seems chaotic and sketchy. The story manages to be predictable, fun, and wholly unbelievable at the same time. It involves Arthur, his millionaire-eccentric grandmother, and their 17-year-old red-haired chauffeur. While birding, they find an empty racing shell along the river. In short order, the grandmother purchases a rowing shell of her own, becomes an expert rower, turns Arthur

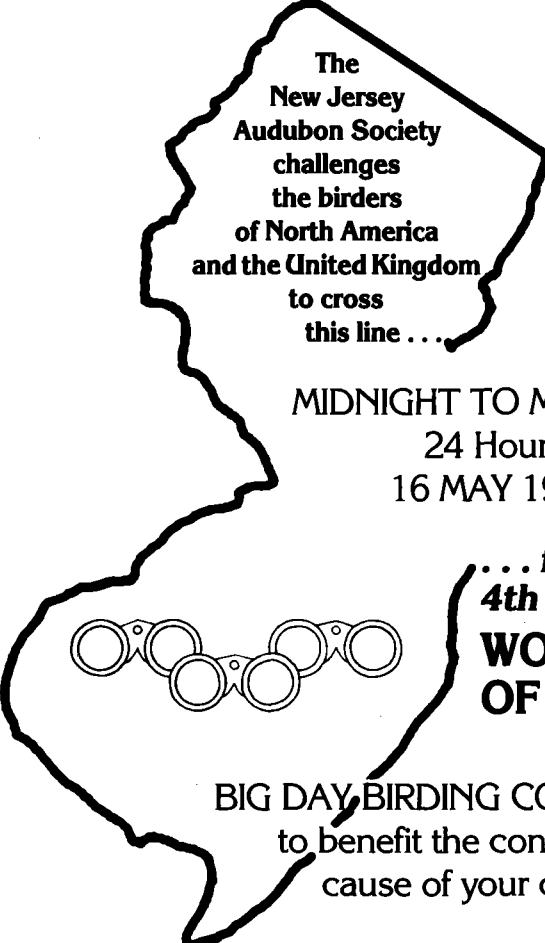
into a coxswain, and enters the "President's Cup Regatta" in order to teach the world the value of reading. Are you following this? The author also tries to wedge into the fantastic proceedings a serious message about Arthur overcoming his lack of assertiveness as he leads his "crew" to victory (you probably guessed that already). The hero of the story, however, turns out to be the most unlikely Lazuli Bunting you will ever encounter.

According to the book jacket, Ms. Knudson has written a lengthy, "popular" series of books about Arthur and

his friend Zan, who appears briefly at the beginning and the end of this story. Perhaps familiarity with the "prequels" to *Rinehart Shouts* would help unravel

"Its offbeat plot and characters lend the book a certain charm . . ."

the perplexities in it. Though an unconvincing book, *Rinehart Shouts* may at least turn a few young eyes toward our favorite creatures.—F.B.



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