Books

Shorebird Ecology and Conservation in the Western Hemisphere. Peter Hicklin (Editor). 1996. International Wader Studies 8. Published by Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, for Wader Study Group. 136 pp. no price given.

This book results from a symposium held during the fourth Neotropical Ornithological Congress held in Quito, Ecuador, in November 1991. Several of the papers presented at the symposium are published here in full. Papers published elsewhere are not reproduced here, but "expanded abstracts" of them are included. All papers and expanded abstracts are published in English, but French and Spanish abstracts also accompany full papers.

Papers and expanded abstracts in this volume are grouped into three sections. Part I consists of four papers and four expanded abstracts on research in North America. Half of these are from Alaska. One expanded abstract is from Mexico, geographically part of North America, but faunistically Central American. Part II consists of nine papers and one expanded abstract on shorebird research in Central and South America. One of these is exclusively on a species (Red Knot) that breeds in the Northern Hemisphere, while most of the others include wintering and/or migrant populations. Part III consists of two papers and one expanded abstract on topics not restricted to either continent. The two papers are reviews of nocturnal foraging in shorebirds and energy constraints on non-breeding distribution of coastal shorebirds. The expanded abstract concerns migration and mass changes of White-rumped Sandpipers in both North and South America.

There is plenty of direct interest to banders in this book. Brian J. McCaffey color-banded adult Whimbrels and Bristle-thighed Curlews in Alaska in 1988 to assess breeding-site fidelity in subsequent years. Six of eight Bristle-thighed Curlews returned to breed in the same area in 1990, but none of four Whimbrels did. Although banding is not mentioned specifically in an expanded abstract on Spotted Sandpiper studies in Minnesota by Lewis W. Oring and J. Michael Reed, banding was obviously important in determining site fidelity, recruitment and the subsequent return to breed by birds first encountered as transients. That site fidelity to migratory stop-over sites is high in shorebirds in at least some areas is shown by data on returns of hundreds of shorebirds banded on the Buenaventura Bay area of Columbia, as noted by Luis G. Naranjo and Jaime E. Mauna. Some site fidelity in shorebirds wintering in Peru was also found by Victor Pulido *et al.* from returns of 1560 individuals of six migrant shorebird species banded between 1987 and 1991, but recovery and recapture rates from birds banded there were generally very low, indicating little fidelity to that site.

Radio telemetry and color banding were used to sort out habitat utilization patterns by Dunlins in a study by Nils Warnock in California. Rapid turn-over rates by Red Knots at a lagoon in Brazil were shown by a lack of recaptures and sightings of birds banded there by Paulo T. Z. Antas and Inez L. S. Nascimento. Knots banded there were recaptured or observed in Argentina, other parts of Brazil, Guyana, along the east coast of the U.S.A. and in Ontario. During studies of habitat partitioning by shorebirds in Argentina, Patricia M. Gonzalez observed Red Knots color-banded both at other sites within Argentina and in the U.S.A.

The full paper of the expanded abstract on White-rumped Sandpiper mass mentioned above was published in *Wilson Bulletin* 103:621-636, 1991, by Brian A. Harrington *et al.* Mass data are also found in the Red Knot paper by Antas and Nascimento. The latter paper also includes molt data on Red Knots, while the paper by Gonzalez on habitat partitioning in Argentina contains comments on molts and plumages of Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Red Knot, and Two-banded Plover.

Apart from a few minor grammatical flaws, this book is nearly error-free. A paper by Gill and Page presumably progressed through the publication process between drafts of an overview paper on

the importance of Alaska to Western Hemisphere shorebirds as it is listed correctly as being published in 1994 in the text (p. 9 twice) and Table 1 (p. 10) and incorrectly as "in press" in Table 2 (p. 11) and 1993 in the references (p. 14). A paper cited as by Goss-Custard and Durell on page 117 is listed in the references (p. 119) as being by three authors. *Larus belcheri* should obviously have been listed (p. 58) as Peruvian Gull, rather than Peruvian Tern. These errors are too trivial to detract significantly from the quality of this interesting compilation of papers.

Martin K. McNicholl

Peterson Multimedia Guides: North American Birds. R. T. Peterson and K. Kaufman. 1996. Houghton Mifflin Interactive, Somerville, MA. $40.00-70.00 U.S.

Since "multimedia" guides are not as standardized as books, this review of the first revision of this guide includes a description of the features included in the CD-ROM. The major advantage of a CD-ROM is the amount of data that it can hold. This guide has drawings and identification details for an impressive 949 species. For more than 650 of these, the guide also provides photographs, life history information, range maps, and recorded songs and calls. The species list can be sorted using various categories to identify unknown birds. Other features include a short commentary on video by the late Roger Tory Peterson, a life list database, a "skill-builder" game for learning to identify birds, and a connection to an inter-net web site. For users not yet connected to the inter-net, the CD-ROM also includes hook-up software.

To use the program a reader needs an IBM compatible computer with at least a 486/33 processor, Windows 3.1 or 95, 8 mb. [megabytes] of RAM [Random Access Memory], 20 mb. of hard disk space, a 2X CD-ROM [compact disk-Read-only Memory] drive, SVGA [Super Video Graphics Array] display with 256 colors, a 16-bit sound card and speakers, a computer mouse and a 14,400 band modem. While all this sounds forbidding, any multimedia IBM-type computer less than three years old should be able to handle it. The most noticeable difference in speed occurs with a faster CD-ROM drive; an 8X should bring up new displays more quickly than my 2X does.

There are several positive features of the program. The artwork, incorporating pictures from a number of Peterson guides, and photos show small birds life-sized or larger on the computer monitor. A wealth of information is available. Access to songs and calls is easy. The Internet site provides a growing network of opportunities. The program is relatively easy to use. Other features, such as maps, are easy to interpret, in contrast to the tiny maps in many field guides. The photographs are good and blow up to full screen size. The text by Kaufman is extensive, covering identification, feeding, nesting, migration and ranges of 672 species (regulars in winter, summer and migration). For the other 277 (accidentals and uncommon exotics), identification data are provided. The accidental list seems current; I found Blue Mockingbird, a recent stray into southern Arizona, as well as the feral Red-crested Pochard which graced my subdivision pond for several winters.

This extensive database, the heart of the program, allows the reader to sort by Peterson's groupings of birds or by using location, season, habitat, size and color. It is a much more satisfying endeavor than thumbing through a field guide page by page. You can also move from one bird to displays of similar species. If you want information on a particular species, you can type its name and go directly to its account. Access to songs and calls is easy and sound quality is good. Access from the program to the Web site, http.// www.petersononline.com, with fora and links to other birding Web sites, is easy.

What would I improve? A more comprehensive manual or help feature would make the learning process easier for users. Easier installation without video adjustments and resolving program conflicts would reduce calls to technical support. The life list feature is primitive by today's computer standards; it does not offer any advantages over a list on paper. The main database should offer more features. You can generate state lists by season, habitat or both, but there is no apparent way to print them. The search feature seems

designed only for identifying unknown species; an ability to search text for specific words or numbers would enhance the guide's usefulness. Unfortunately, hyphens disappeared in the "nesting" accounts of some hawks and owls, giving Bald Eagle an incubation period of "3436" days and Barn Owl a clutch size of "213 or more." Some of the screen fonts are difficult to read. I hope that another upgrade will appear soon to make the program achieve its full potential.

Is this program a must for banders? The answer is obviously "no." The information contained in it is also available in various Peterson field guides and in Kaufman's *Lives of North American birds* (Houghton Mifflin, 1996). But if you use a computer and have the required features, it is a very useful reference to general knowledge about birds. The multimedia guide is priced like computer software rather than books, costing anywhere from $40.00-$70.00 U.S. Some stores may allow you to try it.

Robert C. Tweit

Munias and Mannikins. R. Restall. 1997. Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, hard cover. 264 pp. $60 U.S.

Munias and mannikins comprise a genus (*Lonchura*) of 41 Estrildid finches, small birds with grosbeak-like bills. They are native to various areas within a long arc from Africa through southern Asia to Australia. Some have been kept as cage bird for centuries. They have escaped or been released to establish feral colonies in several of the warmer parts of the World. If you keep pet birds or have visited a pet store, you have probably seen at least one species.

Of what interest are they to Western Hemisphere banders? If you band in southern Florida, Hawaii or Puerto Rico, you already know the answer, as these places all have feral populations of at least one species. With the popularity of cage birds and the ease with which they escape, Los Angeles, San Diego and other warm places in North America may be next. The Western Hemisphere's avifauna in 2150 may include a large number of exotic generalists adapted to urban habitats. Who would have predicted 50 years ago that House Finches, sedentary in the western United States, would spread rapidly through eastern North America?

Munias and mannikins provides detailed coverage of these birds. After an initial section covering taxonomy and general characteristics of the genus, 16 plates portray immature and adult plumages in side view. Individual species accounts then provide extensive detail on the identification, life history and range, with maps, sonograms and line drawings. The final 64 plates provide more detailed plumage views of each species with wings spread in dorsal and ventral views. Species descriptions average three pages, containing information on subspecies, distinguishing characteristics, food, calls and songs, courtship, breeding, eggs, behavior and conservation status. The behavior of birds in cages can be observed much more easily than that of wild birds, enabling the author to provide descriptions and line drawings of behavior of many species. Much of the data are previously unpublished material from the author's own records. This genus has apparently been of major avocational interest to Mr. Restall, and the amount of data assembled on these species is impressive. Even though much of the information was gathered in avicultural situations, the book is not merely a guide to keeping and breeding these species, but rather a well-rounded scientific presentation of knowledge available on them.

I found the jacket illustrations and the line drawings in the text the most attractive of the author's art work. The ventral and dorsal views are excellent for in-hand comparisons and are supplemented with views of perched birds. The first plates with rows of individual views, while apparently quite accurate, have the least aesthetic appeal. Still, not many authors do both writing and illustrating this well.

Munias and mannikins will be a very useful reference for anyone who bands birds in areas where these birds are feral or who keeps pet birds.

Robert C. Tweit