

BOOK REVIEWS—RESEÑAS DE LIBROS—RESENHAS DE LIVROS

Edited by François Vuilleumier

(To whom books for review should be sent)

Evolution, Ecology, Conservation, and Management of Hawaiian birds: a vanishing avifauna.—J. M. Scott, S. Conant, & C. van Riper, III (eds). 2000. Studies in Avian Biology No. 22. A publication of the Cooper Ornithological Society, Camarillo, CA. ISBN 1-891276-18-2 (paper), Price \$29; ISBN 1-891276-25-2 (cloth), Price \$48.50, available from Cooper Ornithological Society, c/o Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, CA 93012.

In 428 pages of this attractively produced monograph 42 articles tell us of the splendors, history, evolutionary importance and ecology of the Hawaiian avifauna, together with the current threats to the avifauna from anthropogenic activity, and what needs to be done to protect it.

The volume is organized in five main sections: historical perspectives, systematics, status and trends, ecology, limiting factors, and recovery and management. Each section is preceded by a short scene-setting introduction. Thus the reader can dip in to this volume and extract information relevant to a specific interest, or read it from start to finish. It is extraordinarily comprehensive; I know of no equivalent. The closest is the exhaustive avifaunistic and taxonomic treatments of European birds.

From a narrow taxonomic point of view the volume has little of special interest to the Neotropical ornithologist. Fleischer and McIntosh use molecular and morphological information to assess the biogeographic

sources of more than 102 species in 21 lineages in 13 families, and find that all came from North America or from across the Pacific to the west, and none of them came from the Neotropics.

From a broader perspective, however, the volume has much of great value for all ornithologist wherever they live. The questions and problems the authors discuss are ubiquitous. They start with birds living in the natural state and end with species in danger of extinction. What was the original avifauna, where did its components come from and when? What are the systematic relationships among the various taxa, how are they determined and with what reliability? Demographically, what governs the increases and decreases in population numbers and how dependent are species on particular food types (especially plants)? What are the particular threats to populations and how can they be ameliorated? What can be done about the problem of introduced diseases? How should reintroductions and translocations be carried out, and what are the costs of saving native birds?

All avifaunas are subject to human influence in one form or another, from deforestation to global warming, therefore this volume has something for everyone. The Hawaiian avifauna is one of the richest in the world for the information it contains on the processes and patterns of evolution. It is also one of the most anthropogenically decimated. One can only regret the parlous state of the Hawaiian bird fauna, and yet at the same time be thank-

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ful that so many ornithologists have dedicated themselves to the task of doing something about it.—Peter R. Grant, Department of

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