

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

BIOGRAPHIES FOR BIRDWATCHERS. By Barbara and Richard Mearns. Foreword by Sir Peter Scott. Academic Press, London and San Diego. 1988:xx + 490 pp., bird drawings by Darren Rees; maps and portraits of biographees. \$35.00.—In the interests of prompt publication of this review, I had originally intended merely to sample the 89 biographies in this book. I found, however, that I could not do that; the accounts were so fascinating that I simply had to read every word. Most of the books I have reviewed are technical or reference works; this is the first of a new series called “Books About Birds,” intended for interested laymen and published under the general editorship of Andrew Richford of Academic Press (London). Richford has every right to be proud of his first production. I hope, also, that the authors are receiving a good royalty and that many copies are sold, because the Mearnses have been working since 1983 on what is obviously a labor of love; I would like to see them get a more tangible reward for their efforts.

The subtitle of the book is more informative than the title: “The lives of those commemorated in Western Palearctic bird names.” “Names” include both English and scientific, and the species covered even include introduced species (such as five exotic pheasants) and those merely accidental or peripheral in the Western Palearctic (such as Baird’s Sandpiper [*Calidris bairdii*] and Verreaux’s Eagle [*Aquila verreauxii*]).

Biographees range from ancient (Aristotle) to living (Christian Jouanin), and most are illustrated with portraits, from busts to photographs. The authors were unable to find portraits of a few of their subjects, and in one instance, that of *Chersophilus duponti*, they are not certain as to which Monsieur Dupont was honored by Vieillot.

The 14 maps illustrate the overland travels or sea voyages of biographees, on some maps only one (Pallas, Steller), and on others as many as eight, on a map of Africa. My only major criticism of the book has to do with the placement of the maps. They are scattered among the pages, located adjacent to the alphabetically first biography among those whose routes are mapped. This results, when several persons’ routes are shown on one map, in time-consuming backward searches for the map appropriate to a biography appearing later in the alphabetic order. It would have been simpler had the maps been collected together in the front or back of the volume.

Darren Rees, an award-winning British wildlife artist, has provided attractive scratchboard drawings of each of the bird species named for one of the biographees, in some instances two or three species per chapter (Tristram’s Warbler [*Sylvia deserticola*], “Grackle” [*Onychognathus tristramii* = Starling], and Serin [*Serinus serinus*]). The poses chosen for the birds are highly varied, sometimes daring (a very dead Denham’s Bustard [*Neotis denhami*] lying sprawled on the sand), and sometimes anything but diagnostic; the Berthelot’s Pipits (*Anthus bertheloti*) are two tiny silhouettes that could be almost any slender-billed passerine, placed in a bleak Canarian landscape, and the Grey-necked Bunting (*Emberiza buchanani*) could be any short-billed passerine with white outer rectrices. But all of the drawings add immeasurably to the attractiveness of the book. The only color reproduction is a brightly painted Montagu’s Harrier (*Circus pygargus*), with an inset portrait of George Montagu (1753–1813), on the dust jacket. Dust jackets being notoriously ephemeral, it is a pity that this colorful painting was not also reproduced as a frontispiece.

The biographies are chock-full of facts of the “gee whiz, I never knew that” variety, and it is a temptation to cite more of these than the editor of *The Wilson Bulletin* would permit. A few examples must suffice.

All good Amherstians know, from their rousing drinking song if not otherwise, that “Lord

Jeffrey Amherst was a soldier of the King." He was also the uncle and adoptive parent of the second husband of Lady Amherst, née The Hon. Sarah Archer (1762–1838), in whose private aviary Benjamin Leadbeater saw the first specimens of the superb pheasant that he named for their owner.

One might assume that because, in addition to Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), John Barrow's name has been commemorated in Point Barrow, Barrow Sound, Barrow Straits, the town of Barrow in the Arctic, and Cape Barrow in the Antarctic, that he was an explorer in polar regions. In fact Barrow (1764–1848) was a naval bureaucrat who held a desk job in London for half his life, with his only foreign travel having been in China and southern Africa. However he was vitally interested in the Arctic, especially in the elusive Northwest Passage, and was directly responsible for expediting the travels of such explorers as Ross, Sabine, Franklin, and Richardson (all of whom are also commemorated in bird names), and the various localities named for Barrow were so designated out of gratitude for his support.

The family name of Georg Wilhelm Steller (1709–1746), of eider, jay, sea-eagle, sea-lion and sea-cow fame, was originally Stöhler. When the 25-year-old naturalist moved to St. Petersburg, he found that his Russian colleagues were incapable of pronouncing Stöhler correctly, so he changed it to Steller for their benefit.

Although the brother of Gilbert White (1720–1793) of Selborne and of White's Thrush (*Zoothera dauma*) lived in Gibraltar and wrote to Gilbert about the flocks of swallows passing through southern Spain each autumn, White himself was never certain as to whether swallows really migrated or passed the winter buried in mud or hidden in chimneys.

No book like this has ever appeared on the names of North American birds. The brief biographies included (along with other bird name derivations) in Gruson's "Words for Birds" (1973) and Choate's "Dictionary of American Bird Names" (revised ed. 1985) cannot compare with those compiled by the Mearns team; for Charles Lucien Jules Laurent Bonaparte, for example, Choate gives one paragraph, Gruson gives four (¾ page) while Mearns and Mearns give 6½ pages plus a full page portrait.

Using the list of North American birds in the sense of the 5th edition of the A.O.U. Check-list as emended in the 34th Supplement (1982. Auk 99, no. 3, supplement), I find that there are 79 persons' names attached to bird species, *other* than the names among the 89 principal biographees in the Mearns book. Furthermore, four of these are included in an appendix of shorter biographies in the back of the Mearns book, "naturalists commemorated by species of uncertain status within the Western Palearctic, together with some naturalists who have had well-known races of birds named after them." An additional 11 of the North American names appear in a second appendix of short paragraphs on "naturalists mentioned in the main text."

It is apparent that a book of comparable size could be compiled on those persons commemorated in the names of North American birds. I wonder if, in North America, there is an author or authors interested and willing enough to do such a superbly thorough job of it as has been accomplished by Mr. and Mrs. Mearns. I recommend their book most enthusiastically.—KENNETH C. PARKES.

BIRD COMMUNITIES AT SEA OFF CALIFORNIA: 1975 TO 1983. By Kenneth T. Briggs, Wm. Breck Tyler, David B. Lewis, and David R. Carlson. Studies in Avian Biology, No. 11, Cooper Ornithological Society, 1987:74 pp., 29 figs., 5 tables. \$7.00.—This latest offering in the "Studies in Avian Biology" series maintains the tradition of excellence and timeliness of topic that has become a distinguishing mark of the series since its inception in 1978. It

is also the first to deal exclusively with the pelagic ecology of seabird populations occupying a specific coastal region for a number of years in a comprehensive manner. Although the treatment is highly academic in form and aimed for use by professional marine ornithologists, a wider audience will find much of interest, particularly in assessing the approach that has been taken to ask questions about habitat characteristics and regulation of seabird communities and the modern and integrative nature of the ensuing analysis. The study of birds at sea (through space and time) has "exploded" in its sophistication and usage of technological advancements since the late 1950s/early 1960s when the oceanic study of seabirds was identified as an important branch of ornithology, one where there was a serious dearth of knowledge (see Bourne 1963: Proc. Intern. Ornith. Congr. 13:831–854). The present study vividly shows how large an expansion in information and study techniques there has been and the high degree of maturity attained over a short period of time.

The volume is structured in five parts. A brief introduction establishes the rationale behind this study of bird communities at sea off California. It reviews the recent evolution of the study of marine birds at sea, and by doing so, presents a succinct overview of the kinds of questions that have been asked in the past and those that need attention today. The object of the present work is defined as an attempt to quantify the occurrence of seabirds in waters off California and relate patterns of distribution, species composition, and abundance to oceanographic characteristics over time.

The second part deals with the methods used. Details of the sampling plan used and coverage at sea and along shorelines are given: southern California from 1975 to early 1978 by ship and aerial surveys (ca 50% each), and central and northern California from 1980 to early 1983 almost entirely by airplane, supplemented by coastal surveys on land in all three regions. This is followed by a description of environmental data recorded during bird observations and the statistical analyses used to determine bird density, species diversity and associations, and water habitat relationships. Part three describes the oceanography of the California Current System comprising the study area with emphasis on those factors most likely to be influencing the distributions of birds, both directly and indirectly, through the annual cycle.

Part four, the results section, makes up the bulk of the volume, comprising more than 70% of the text. It is here where there is a wealth of information to be gleaned on the pelagic ecology of seabirds. A total of 74 marine bird species were recorded during the study (excluding all waders and shorebirds except phalaropes [*Phalaropus* spp.], all anseriforms except Brant [*Branta bernicla*] and scoters [*Melanitta* spp.]), of which 30 were dominant based on biomass and density. These reached maximal abundance in the coastal upwelling zone in the fall and winter (reaching totals of 4–6 million individuals) and accounted for most of the energy cycling through the California seabird community. Accounts of 62 species are presented as an annotated list providing information on population size and status of each species, and comparing, where data are sufficient, monthly mean densities by species and year for the three regions (northern, central, and southern) and overall habitat affinities.

But the community analysis that follows the individual species accounts provides the real excitement. The approach is comprehensive and divided into sections comparing seabird density and biomass, diversity and species composition, species' associations, features of aggregations, bird habitats, and determinants of bird distributions. Analyses of diversity and interspecific associations in several latitudinal/water depth regions are made, followed by an examination of habitat use for a number of important species using a multivariate ordination approach. The findings and highlights are many. They include such things as: marked biomass differences between weak and intense "El Niño" episodes (1976 versus 1982–83, respectively); concordant associations between species—several shearwaters (*Puffinus* spp.) and Northern Fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*), between several *Larus* gulls, and

several members of an inner-shelf/nearshore avifauna including loons (*Gavia* spp.), cormorants (*Phalacrocorax* spp.), Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), and scoters, with Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) standing out as an exception by its very distinct regional occurrence and unique set of habitat characteristics disassociated from any other species; and overall patterns of distribution and abundance of species that suggest different scale-dependent physical processes affect patches of seabirds and their prey in different habitats. Numerous other informative and stimulating aspects of the ecology of the seabird communities are also uncovered. All of this is then elucidated in the final part, a discussion section that is effective in placing the great majority of the new information into a clear and useful perspective. Altogether, an outstanding accomplishment.

There is little in this volume to take serious issue with. It has been well edited and contains few typographical errors. The layout and composition of figures and tables are excellent, as is the quality of printing. The color photograph on the cover adds a nice touch, though it is the "meat" between the covers that forms the lasting treasure for the reader.

This monograph is a must for any student of seabirds. It is exemplary in showing where the study of marine birds at sea is at the present time. The questions asked, and the approaches taken to answer them, combined with a "state of the art" treatment of analysis and the overall high quality of conclusions that have been derived from the data gathered, go a long way in pointing the direction to be taken in the future. The authors are to be congratulated on producing such a milestone, one that is likely to stand as a principal source of reference for marine ornithologists for a long time to come.—DAVID N. NETTLESHIP.

THE KOOKABURRAS' SONG: EXPLORING ANIMAL BEHAVIOR IN AUSTRALIA. By John Alcock, illus. by Marilyn Hoff Stewart. Univ. of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1988:x + 218 pp., 28 black-and-white drawings, 27 range maps. \$19.95.—This delightful little book is an outgrowth of the author's sabbatical work in Australia. It consists of 28 chapters, each focusing on a single animal which illustrates a particular evolutionary problem. The chapters are very personal reflections, really musings of the author, who is a confirmed adaptationist. Typically the chapters start with a description of a particular locality and its denizens, then focus in on some evolutionary aspect of one species of bird, insect, or mammal, posing evolutionary questions, and suggesting possible evolutionary scenarios as answers. The introductory chapter, "The Kookaburras' Song," sets the tone and format for the chapters that follow. It starts with background information on the aboriginal folklore surrounding the Kookaburra (*Dacelo gigas*), then moves to a description of a trip, a shakedown cruise with the family in a campervan, to Little Desert National Park in Victoria. The narrative weaves in some fascinating history of early Australian exploration. Alcock ties these themes together and tells us what the book is really about: "This book is a travel book, too. The scale of exploration, however, will not be transcontinental but biological. . . . The aborigines were on to something: the kookaburras' song deserves a myth, and search for a modern equivalent of the aboriginal account has led me on a journey small in scale but large in pleasure." Finally returning to the kookaburras, Alcock poses some evolutionary questions that the dawn calling of the birds raises, and uses this as a springboard for probing the significance of Charles Darwin.

The 28 chapters are divided into six sections: "On Adaptation," "Nuptial Puzzles," "Machismo and the Competitive Male," "Primitive or Degenerate?," "Life with Others," and "Adaptive Altruism." Each contains a cluster of chapters illustrating the evolutionary questions posed in these subject areas. In 14 chapters birds are the focal animal, in seven insects, and in six mammals (one mammal shares the focus with a plant). Each focal species

is accompanied by a range map which, along with the pen-and-ink drawings, are interesting, informative, and attractive complements to the text. Alcock uses an adaptationist perspective throughout, including taking mild exception to criticism of this approach, and creates evolutionary scenarios for a broad spectrum of structures and behaviors. For example, he suggests that the duet calling of Northern Logrunners (*Orthonyx spaldingii*) may have evolved primarily as a result of sexual conflict and competition, speculates on the adaptive significance of the red tail-panels in Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus magnificus*), and the mound building behavior of the Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*). He touches upon evolutionary convergence in possums and gliders, reviews the arguments about whether cassowaries have flying or flightless ancestors, and the reasons why muttonbirds flock. He describes the farming of edible lerp-(protective sugary coverings) producing psyllid bugs by Bell Miner (*Manorina melanophrys*) birds (which eat the lerps but don't "... eat the goose that lays the golden lerp"). These stories are a virtual "evolutionary primer," with the major points illustrated by the behaviors of Australian birds, insects, and mammals.

The text is very entertaining as well as informative. Alcock weaves his evolutionary scenarios skillfully through a text describing previous published work on each species, historical anecdotes, and personal observations. He often uses metaphors attractively, as in "... beaches set parenthetically between boulder-strewn points, huge overlapping petals of water ...," or with dramatic effect as in "It takes practice to regard a leech calmly, particularly when the creature hangs like a limp miniature sausage, fed to repletion, fat and blood-soaked, attached to an ankle, toe, or leg." In short, the book is a pleasure to read. For those of us fortunate enough to have worked with or witnessed Australian flora and fauna, the book elicits a flood of fond memories. For those not yet so fortunate, it whets the appetite for future encounters. Clearly, Alcock thinks that science should be fun, and this book demonstrates that it can be.

I have little to criticize in the book. I found only one apparent editorial error, the word "placental" being left out of the second sentence on page 109. Some readers may take exception to certain of the author's suggestions about the evolution of particular behaviors. Nevertheless, I highly recommend this delightful book to anyone interested in birds or natural history in general. It will be especially interesting to those concerned with evolution. This is one of the few well written books on Australian natural history, and I hope that it will stimulate the production of more.—WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.

A GUIDE TO BIRD FINDING IN KANSAS AND WESTERN MISSOURI. By John L. Zimmerman and Sebastian T. Patti, illus. by Robert M. Mengel. Univ. Kansas Press, Lawrence, Kansas. 1988:244 pp., 19 line drawings, 26 maps, 1 numbered text fig., 1 checklist. \$22.50 (\$9.95 paper).—Located near the center of the United States, Kansas and western Missouri lie in an ecologically diverse region that is transitional between east and west. It is thus not surprising that over 400 species of birds have been found in this region, and this timely guide to locating the many interesting birds of the area is welcome.

Kansas and western Missouri sit on the northwestern corner of the Ozark Plateau, and extend from the tall-grass prairies of the eastern Great Plains westward to xeric short-grass prairies of the west. The birds found in wooded regions of Missouri and eastern Kansas are those characteristic of the northeast, but in central or western Kansas many of the eastern species are replaced by western ones. Most North American grassland birds can be seen (at one time of the year or another) in Kansas and western Missouri, and northern-breeding birds pass through the region during migration. With this book, Zimmerman and Patti provide us with a valuable guide to finding these ornithological riches.

"A Guide to Bird Finding in Kansas and Western Missouri" is organized around 75 "birding tours," each starting from a city or town. For each tour, clear instructions are given to guide the naturalist to the more interesting local areas, and there are 26 excellent maps that provide extra information for some of the tours. In addition to comments about what species of birds to expect, many of the tours are enlivened by interesting comments on the history, geology, or ecology of the region—making this more than merely a guide to bird finding. The line drawings by Robert M. Mengel are of the fine quality that characterizes his work and greatly enhance the attractiveness of the book.

In addition to the 75 tours, there is a checklist to the birds of the region, a figure illustrating the seasonal occurrence and relative abundances of regional birds, and an annotated list of the "specialty species" of the region. Some of the specialties will surely attract birders: Kansas is one of the best places to see all four species of longspurs (*Calcarius*). The Cimarron National Grassland in southwestern Kansas may be the best place in the world to see Lesser Prairie-Chickens (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*), and Greater Prairie-Chickens (*T. cupido*) and Upland Sandpipers (*Bartramia longicauda*) are common in the Flint Hills of central Kansas. Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (*Tyrannus forficatus*) are locally common in south-central and southwestern Kansas, and Painted Buntings (*Passerina ciris*) breed in forest edge across the southern part of the region. In the short-grass of western Kansas, Cassin's Sparrows (*Aimophila cassinii*) can be seen giving their aerial song; in winter, Harris' Sparrows (*Zonotrichia querula*) are found throughout this region and are especially abundant in south-central Kansas. Henslow's Sparrows (*Ammodramus henslowii*) breed locally in unburned tall-grass prairie in eastern Kansas and western Missouri, and the Stafford County (Kansas) saltmarshes are perhaps the best place in the interior to see Snowy Plovers (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*) and (if you are lucky) Black Rails (*Laterallus jamaicensis*).

I wholeheartedly recommend this book to all ornithologists and bird watchers who live in or plan to visit, Missouri or Kansas. It has been well produced, and although at 9" × 6" is perhaps a bit too large for most pockets, it can easily be carried in the field. The writing is clear and lively throughout, the illustrations first rate, and the text so full of information that even non-birders will find much of interest.—J. D. RISING.

BIRDS OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: A COMPANION GUIDE. By P. A. D. Hollom, R. F. Porter, S. Christensen, and Ian Willis, illus. by Ian Willis. Buteo Books, Vermillion, South Dakota. 1988:280 pp., 40 color plates, 498 range maps, numerous line drawings. \$32.50—While most field guides cover an easily definable area, like North America, Japan, or Australia, books on birds of the Western Palearctic and adjacent areas suffer from an overlap problem. The original (1954) and still classic guide to European birds by Peterson, Mountfort, and Hollom ("PMH") used the Mediterranean and longitude 30°E as its boundaries. Successive "European" guides encroached farther into Russia and invaded North Africa and the Middle East, e.g., "The Birds of Britain and Europe with North Africa and the Middle East," by H. Heinzel, R. S. R. Fitter, and J. Parslow; others were devoted entirely to extra-European regions. R. D. Etchecopar and F. Hue produced one book (1964) on North Africa and a second (1970) on the "Near and Middle East," which they defined as Turkey and Jordan to Iran and Afghanistan, but not the Arabian Peninsula. Other books have covered more limited geographic areas: Cyprus, Lebanon, Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia, the Arabian Gulf and Oman. The monumental "Birds of the Western Palearctic," edited by S. Cramp, covers most of the above but omits Iran and much of the Arabian Peninsula. The present volume covers North Africa and its own definition of the

Middle East, Turkey and Cyprus to Iran and all of the Arabian Peninsula, thus overlapping about 12 other books. So what is its *raison d'être*?

As indicated by its subtitle, it is designed to be used in conjunction with PMH; the senior author is also the "H" in PMH. Exclusion of Europe was deliberate, and complementary geographic area is mirrored by complementary, non-overlapping text and illustrations. Species covered in PMH are not described again here; the reader is simply given the length of the bird and told to "see PMH"; their species accounts give only range, status, and habitat within the region. By contrast, birds not covered in PMH are treated to a lengthy ID section, typically 10–15 lines, up to 25 for more difficult species, followed by a couple of lines on voice. Only birds breeding in the area have range maps; these show breeding but not winter range (why not?). The maps are a reasonable size for a field guide, 6 cm × 2.5 cm, the range in red on a white background, and are fine-tuned, showing many small, disjunct areas, instead of blanketing the range with the "broad brush" approach.

The close interlock with PMH means you must carry both books. This will annoy those who want to have everything within the covers of a single volume for easy comparison, but the inconvenience is worth it. Abbreviating European species leaves room for much fuller treatment of local birds, and by sparing us yet another picture of a Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) or Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), the artist has given himself space for less well known species. While European birds shown in PMH are not illustrated here, an exception is made where local races look very different; thus we find the race *savignii* of *Hirundo rustica*, with bright red underparts, the race *samamiscus* of the Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*), with white wing flash, and the race *phoenicuroides* of the Black Redstart (*P. ochrurus*), with orange belly.

While the choice of illustrations has been thoughtful, their execution is less than satisfactory. Ian Willis's line drawings are first class, such as the page of crows and the larks on p. 158, but the color plates compare unfavorably with Peterson's in PMH. Feather definition is wanting for many birds, which instead are painted in blocks of an almost uniform color; this has the effect of giving them a stiff, un-lifelike appearance. Illustrations sometimes do not agree with the text and are not coordinated with PMH. The anemic-looking Long-billed Pipit (*Anthus similis*) on Plate 25 is said to be more upright than the Tawny Pipit (*A. campestris*) but drawn less upright; lower underparts correctly stated to be deep buff or buff-orange but painted white; legs said to be flesh red to flesh orange, shown as very pale brown. The bill is too short (said to be longer than Tawny but appears same size as the Tawny in PMH), and lacks the drooping tip typical of the species and mentioned in the text. The picture does score one point over the text: the upper mandible is all dark, the lower pale with a dark tip. This is correct for most specimens; few have the upper mandible also pale with dark tip, as stated in the text. Some of the plates appear too washed-out, doubtless the fault of the printer, not the artist; the desert-haunting larks on Plate 23 are pale but not that pale, and even the heavily marked Thick-billed Lark (*Ramphocoris clotbey*) looks rather bland and understated.

The text seems generally free from errors, but one can always find a few. Eversmann's Redstart (*P. erythronotus*) is said to be a "rare scatter from central Iraq"—? Is this some kind of scatological reference? And the writer of the introduction fell into an ancient trap when he talked of "seed-eating finches such as Manakins" (p. 8). Manakins, of course are not seed-eating finches but the New World family Pipridae; he meant *Mannikins*, which are small, seed-eating estrildines.

In spite of some drawbacks, this book and PMH together form the most efficient combination for field identification of birds in North Africa and the Middle East. Definitely recommended.—STUART KEITH.

STATUS OF UNCOMMON AND PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED BIRDS OF EL SALVADOR. By Walter A. Thurber, J. Francisco Serrano, Alfonso Sermeño, and Manuel Benitez. Proceedings of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Los Angeles, California. 1987:Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 109–293, 54 photos, 6 color plates. \$12.00.—This well-researched volume will be of value in much of Central America, and even beyond. Some of the problems—especially conservation—concern us all. Not infrequently the discussions point out problems of breeding distribution, dispersal, and/or migration in much of Central America (notably in herons, Ardeidae). Nor is it entirely restricted to uncommon birds.

Many habitat photos help envision the situation. A map and supplementary gazetteer round out Dickey and van Rossem's classic "Birds of El Salvador" (1938, Field Museum of Natural History, Zoological Series Volume 23). While van Rossem's collecting and careful observations remain an unequalled model for northern Latin America, Thurber et al. add greatly to it, including unpublished data from outside of El Salvador. Usually they treat only status, but rarely (Cracidae) they present and summarize life history data. New techniques (netting, banding) add to van Rossem's findings; some "new" species are properly noted as "probably present" then. Species of changed status are summarized (not quite completely), pp. 276–284. In view of all the diverse data, a subject index would have been helpful.

Occasional lower-level taxonomic problems are also set forth, like the urgent one of the diminishing *Aratinga* parakeets. But most are slighted. Modern writers normally assume that all birds are known (or if subspecies, not worth knowing); all are in various check-lists, and often field guides.

But in general the Pacific lowlands, like El Salvador's, are quite distinct faunally from both the Caribbean slope and the oak-pine mountains. Only collecting can tell us whether the big woodcreeper at El Imposible is, as presumed, *Xiphocolaptes promeropyrhynchus*, and the white hawks *Leucopternis albigollis*. The details of structure and size cannot be told from photos, as of the Hawk in Fig. 19. One hates to have to add a scientific mite to the slaughter (as in a Kansas town where officials still believe the only good hawk is a dead hawk); but a population which cannot sustain individual losses is already doomed, and something should be preserved for posterity. And no perils prevent collecting a few of the "highly territorial" *Empidonax* (p. 241); such cases are indeed "worthy of detailed study." And once collected, specimens (as *Vireolanius*) should be compared as soon as recalcitrant governments permit.

One must remember that in Dickey and van Rossem's time all birds were treated separately. Of the Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) we now read that they "considered the species as 'by no means common'"; actually they so considered the resident subspecies, and did not treat the rest for lack of (racially identifiable) specimens. *Camptostoma imberbe* is also confused: they reported Southern Beardless Flycatchers as not at all common except in one "thinly foliated, low, deciduous forest," particularly in "sparse scrub along the lagoon"—about the opposite of Thurber et al.'s "Northern Beardless Tyrannulet": "humid forests . . . favor these birds."

Generally, however, the literature is well covered. Few pertinent references are omitted (such as Browning, Amer. Birds 28:867, 1974, on winter Swainson's Hawks [*Buteo swainsoni*] from U.S.). Coverage of El Salvador is less complete, as they note (cf. Sierra del Bálsamo). The various typographical errors are not confusing.

More hazardous is their "Blue-throated Hummingbird, *Hylocharis eliciae*." Dickey and van Rossem discussed *eliciae* as Elicia's Golden-tailed Hummingbird, well knowing that "Blue-throated Hummingbirds" were (and are) the more northern *Lampornis clemenciae*. This confusing nomenclature is due to Eisenmann's wholesale name-changing, but has roots

in the varying generic views of Ridgway, Cory, and van Rossem. Eisenmann (1955, Trans. Linnaean Soc. N.Y. 7:47–48) followed van Rossem in uniting all in *Hylocharis*, but followed Cory, in part, on English names, claiming (p. 2) to respect “well-settled usage.” He also claimed his new inventions for “truly neotropical birds” were appropriate to the entire species and useful to the amateur (p. 2). This reasonable introduction preceded an irresponsible assault on established patronymics and, often, geographic names, producing such absurdities and upsetting changes as “Bay-winged Hawk,” “Dark-breasted” and “Dusky-backed” swifts, “Pale-throated Flycatcher,” “Slender-billed Wren,” “Black-headed Oriole,” etc., etc. (Various other well-known names of U.S. birds fared no better, parts of U.S. being evidently “neotropical.”)

In *Hylocharis*, Eisenmann proposed “Blue-throated Goldentail” for *eliciae*, but called the other three species hummingbird (2) and Sapphire. Thurber et al. recognize the absurdity of three entirely different names for the species of one tiny genus, but fail to revert to van Rossem’s name. Compromises between A.O.U. (Eisenmann) English names and logic can be more disastrous than simply rejecting A.O.U. names. Thurber et al. thus show, unintentionally, the importance of scientific names.

Scientific data were understood to be verifiable formerly, but not now. The many banding recoveries must be viewed with caution, as Thurber et al. say (p. 125). Even if the recovery data are correct, no specimens validate the identity of strays (such as a supposed Chipping Sparrow, *Spizella passerina*, from Alberta). Still less likely are some of the many sight reports. What is the “probability” of a brief tour’s really seeing four accipitrids seldom to never seen by resident ornithologists, an otherwise unreported vulture, *Cathartes* (which Thurber et al. properly class as hypothetical), a Sabine’s Gull (*Xema sabini*) (in February, etc.? Note, too, B. Monroe, Jr.’s, simultaneous males of Blue- and Golden-winged warbler, “*Vermivora*” *pinus* and *chrysoptera*, both unknown in or near El Salvador on the Pacific slope, and Fish and Wildlife biologists’ innumerable Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) seen from a plane (“some 40,000” in South America)!

The authors themselves have no such flights of fancy, but do report a White-throated Spadebill (*Platyrinchus mystaceus*) “high in a tree” where unknown otherwise, plus two White-throated Flycatchers (*Empidonax albigularis*) netted but not preserved in the lowlands in August—exactly when van Rossem found the very similar *E. traillii brewsteri* “extremely common.”

Yet Thurber et al. question van Rossem’s identifications of the far easier *Dendroica* warblers. Though van Rossem’s “vivid” is exaggerated, a “yellow breast and dark cheek patch” do indeed distinguish *D. townsendi* from *virens*, the Black-throated Green Warbler, and are “very noticeable in life.” He was *not* “obviously describing adult male Townsend’s Warblers,” whose cheeks are black; 11 specimens of *virens* (and 7 *townsendi*) support his statements. Were Thurber et al. in the wrong places, did they overlook *virens* in the trees, or has its status indeed changed? (Were there earlier “southward displacements” in the 1920s?)

Still, this fine book is important in and beyond northern Central America. Strengthening its weaknesses, it could serve as a model to bring other regional avifaunas up to date. It clearly shows some of the obstacles to preservation of our planet, e.g., the mangroves (p. 164) and the area willed for safe-keeping to the government, which immediately ruined it (p. 119; Fig. 33); see also p. 122.

Expect no help from governments. These intervene primarily for “development”—in plain English destruction, desolation, and of course quick dollars and fat bribes behind the scenes. (For a recent example see *International Wildlife Magazine* 18, #6, Nov.–Dec. 1988, on Brazil.)

Americans should point no finger. U.S. governments are as bad or worse. They pretend

to ban the ruinous biocides that play such stalwart roles in the war on the planet's ecosystems. But in fact they foster their manufacture and export to all possible buyers. Business is business and supports politicians (of both U.S. "parties") and their campaign funds. Are we not responsible for our sad series of recalcitrant (and worse) governments? Maybe the finger should be pointed at US!—ALLAN R. PHILLIPS.

HAWKS AND OWLS OF THE WORLD: A DISTRIBUTION AND TAXONOMIC LIST. By Dean Amadon and John Bull, with the genus *Otus* by Joe T. Marshall and Ben F. King. Proceedings of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Los Angeles, California. 1988:Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 295–357, 2 color plates. \$10.00.—In this volume Amadon and Bull compile a list of all 292 species of living or recently extinct falconiforms and 162 species of strigiforms. For each species they provide a suggested common name, scientific name, a brief description of the geographic range and typical habitat in which it is found, and any unusual or supplementary information regarding its taxonomic classification.

The taxonomic treatment of these raptor species and genera closely follows that presented by Stresemann and Amadon (1979. Checklist of Birds of the World, 2nd ed. Vol. 1:271–425). In the Falconiformes, the four suborders presented are the Cathartae, Sagittarii, Accipitres, and Falcones. The Strigiformes are organized into two subfamilies, the Tytoninae and Striginae.

This volume does not attempt to list subspecies, even though many species, such as the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), are distributed widely and numerous subspecies are recognized. The authors do indicate, however, which taxa they recognize as species that formerly were considered subspecies and vice versa. In addition, they designate which closely related, allopatric species might be considered superspecies.

The range of geographical distribution for each species is indicated in descriptive, broad terms (e.g., North America, tropical America, Africa south of the Sahara). When ranges are restricted to parts of these areas, specific country or island names are given to describe species ranges. The habitat in which each species is found also is described in very broad, general terms (e.g., savannah, grasslands, seasonal forest).

One of the most important contributions of this compilation is its list of common names for all species of falconiforms and strigiforms. While disagreements will occur over some of the suggested name changes, the authors' effort to make the vernacular names of these raptorial birds consistent and logical is much needed.

The authors also provide specific comments on various genera and the taxonomic relationships among the species contained within them. Alternative points of view are included and the literature discussing these points are cited. There is no attempt to ignore differences in taxonomic organization. To the contrary, the authors have tried to identify the issues that need more investigation.

Marshall and King contributed the section of the publication related to the genus *Otus*. Their taxonomic groupings are based on the literature and their experience with the species in the field, particularly tape recordings of their vocalizations. One major change is the grouping of several formerly monotypic genera recognized by many ornithologists (i.e., *Gymnasio*, *Macabra*, *Ptilopsis*, and *Pyrhroglaux*) into the genus *Otus*. Those more familiar with the relationships among the Striginae will no doubt debate the merits of this suggested revision.

This compilation will not replace the specific works dealing with the biology and ecology of raptors in different parts of the world; however, it will help those struggling with the nomenclature and taxonomic relationships of these species.—MICHAEL W. COLLOPY.

PEREGRINE FALCON POPULATIONS: THEIR MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY. Tom J. Cade, James H. Enderson, Carl G. Thelander, and Clayton M. White (eds.). The Peregrine Fund, Flying Hawk Lane, Boise, Idaho. 1988:949 pp., color frontispiece, 68 photos, numerous maps, tables, graphs. \$65.00.—The range of the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) extends from the Arctic to Cape Horn and Tasmania—the greatest of any land bird. To be sure, its preference for tall cliffs excludes it from many areas. Yet locally it is adaptable, nesting in bogs in Finland, in hollow trees in Australia, and in old stick nests in trees in the Baltic countries.

In the late 1940s the populations of the peregrine and of various other avian predators crashed; at its worst in eastern North America, not a single pair of nesting peregrines remained south of the Arctic. In 1965 Joseph J. Hickey organized a conference on the peregrine; the results were published four years later. By that time Hickey and Derek Ratcliffe in England had proved that the disaster was the result of worldwide use of DDT, and to a lesser extent, other chemicals. Use of such poisons was eventually curtailed, but they are persistent and the recovery of the peregrine promised to be extremely slow.

At this juncture Tom Cade and a few others in America and Europe proposed to rear captive peregrines and eventually other species such as the Aplomado Falcon (*F. femoralis*) for restocking purposes. This was a daunting task but persistence and broad public support, through the Peregrine Fund, brought success. Several hundred young peregrines have been “hacked out,” and a fair percentage of them survive to nest in the wild. It was time for another international meeting to assess results and draw up plans for the future. This duly took place in Sacramento in 1985 and the considerably expanded proceedings, well-organized and ably edited, were published. The principal sections, with the number of papers (chapters) in each (in parentheses) are as follows: Keynote Addresses (3); Status of the Peregrine in North America (14); Status of Peregrine Populations since 1965—Europe (10); Status of the Peregrine in Other Parts of the World (8); DDT and Other Chemical Problems (12); Migration and Banding Studies (6); Captive Propagation, Reintroduction, and Management (12); Dynamics and Ecology of Peregrine Populations (13); Geographic Variation in Peregrine Populations (3); Humanity and the Peregrine (5); Summary and Conclusions.

Some peregrines nest on city skyscrapers and feed on the Rock Doves (*Columba livia*) and European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), which infest the streets below. Paradoxically, farther from civilization, habitat degradation may affect peregrines adversely. For example, on an island off Tunisia, peregrines are food-stressed, probably by a decline in European migrant songbirds. Not far away, in the Tunisian hinterland, Lanner Falcons (*F. biamarcus*), which have a wider prey base that includes lizards and mammals, are replacing peregrines.

As should be evident from the above list of contents, the present volume, in addition to the sections on propagation and management, contains much basic biology. This will be of interest to students of predation and to many others as well. The carefully captioned photographs contribute importantly. The peregrine, the world's most spectacular avian predator, whether in the wild or in the hands of a falconer, has also become an important species in ornithological research.—D. AMADON.

ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION OF GRASSLAND BIRDS. Edited by Paul D. Goriup. International Council for Bird Preservation, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, U.K. 1988:252 pp. £17.00.—This is the seventh in a series of technical publications by the ICBP which provide current treatments of major bird conservation issues. Grasslands are defined to include steppe, savanna, rangeland, prairie, and in some locales, desert scrub. At one time these communities covered over half the earth's surface, but the climate that permits this biome to develop is also the climate that permits mankind to feed itself. Thus

grasslands have been eliminated or at the least, have deteriorated under the impact of draining, cropping (cereal grains and tree plantations), mismanaged burning, grazing, and urbanization. Few grasslands remain close to the primeval state. The book, however, is mistitled. There is little on the ecology of grassland birds, and hardly anything but hopes regarding strategies for their conservation. Rather it is a status report on the extinction, extirpation, and decline of grassland birds across most of the world except eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., as reported in 20 papers that were written in conjunction with the XIX World Conference of the ICBP. But the emphasis of this book is still nevertheless important. I suppose it should not be surprising that so little is known about the status of grassland birds; ornithologists like to work in more diverse communities. But determining population status is the initial step in conservation. Furthermore, to quote Beintema from his article on the Netherlands, "... degradation of the natural grasslands of the world, especially those in temperate regions, has taken place largely unnoticed." This book provides notice.

There is ecology in this book. Most of the papers describe the flora and illustrate the biogeography of grassland communities. The paper by Bock and Bock on the grassland birds of southeastern Arizona is an analysis of original data on the effects of fire, grazing, and exotic grasses on bird populations. Petretti's consideration of steppe habitats in Italy offers quantitative data on bird populations in Sardinia and Apulia. Most of the papers, however, are qualitative assessments of the populations of grassland birds and the impacts that affect them. Goriup's treatment of Western Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East provides an excellent synthesis of the various impacts of agriculture that modify grassland communities. The lack of any quantitative data, however, makes conclusions such as Wilson's in the paper on the sahel of central Mali that "impoverishment of the savannah environment ... does not yet appear to have resulted in a major direct negative effect on bird populations" suspect, and probably dangerous.

Little discussion concerns conservation except to stress better land management and the development of preserves of sufficient size to maintain entire grassland ecosystems. Most authors, however, provide no specific suggestions as to how these goals might be accomplished. In fact, no author even suggests that such goals are unrealistic in light of the demographic crisis in the world today. Willis and Oniki (Sao Paulo State, Brazil) do suggest two economic strategies that could lead to habitat preservation but acknowledge the political difficulty in their implementation. While many authors, but surprisingly not all, relate the loss of grassland habitat to the increase in human population, not one suggests that the long-term conservation of grassland birds is utterly and completely dependent upon control of human population growth. What this book sorely needed was a chapter by a Garrett Hardin or a Paul Ehrlich to emphasize that the bottom line for grassland bird conservation is cessation of the exponential growth of the human population.—JOHN L. ZIMMERMAN.

ECOLOGIE ET COMPORTEMENT DES GOBE-MOUCHES (AVES: MUSCICAPINAE, PLATYSTEIRINAE, MONARCHINAE) DU NORD-EST DU GABON. VOLUME I: MORPHOLOGIE DES ESPECES ET ORGANISATION DU PEULEMENT. By Christian Erard. Mémoires du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Série A, Zoologie, Tome 138, Editions du Muséum, Paris. 1987:256 pp., 10 black-and-white plates, 9 figs., 33 tables, ISBN 2-85653-142-3. \$50 or FF250 (available, plus 10% postage, from the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Sales Office, 38 rue Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, 75005 Paris).—Published about a year after Brosset and Erard's important first volume on the birds of northeastern Gabonese forests, which I reviewed (Wilson Bull. 100:157-158, 1988), this new book by Erard is the first of a projected two-volume work on the ecology and behavior of Old World flycatchers living in forests of northeastern Gabon.

The present book describes the study area, the morphology of the thirty species studied, the niche dimensions of these birds, and aspects of community (*peuplement* in French) organization, spatial use, visual and acoustic communication systems, and breeding biology. The data were gathered by Erard during eight lengthy field trips to Gabon, yearly between 1972 and 1977, and again in 1981 and 1985, for a total of over 5000 hours of observation, covering (collectively) the entire annual cycle. No less impressive than the long-term nature of the research is the depth of analysis, since the behavior of the flycatchers in the two study areas was mapped on a grid system. Many birds were caught, marked, and individually followed for long periods of time. The *raison d'être* of this extraordinarily detailed study is to examine critically several postulates of modern eco-evolutionary theory, including especially the possibility that interspecific competition imposes pressures and places constraints on the characteristics of species sharing similar resources (guilds), such that their morphology, behavior, and niche structure permits greater packing of species in tropical than in temperate regions. "Clearly, the flycatcher community constitutes an original array of species that are sufficiently numerous and diversified, so that its study should permit one a better understanding of the mechanisms of interspecific coexistence, if indeed these species exhibit interactions among themselves. Do species really partition environmental resources, and if so, how? What variables can help one to explain the remarkable diversity of food searching behaviors? What kinds of relationships tie together resemblances in food foraging behavior with habitat variables or morphological characters? How can the niche of each species be described? Can the community be considered to be really structured, with species arranged according to limits imposed by competition, or are we dealing simply with an assemblage of species that overlap because their niche is as Grinnell envisioned it?" (p. 18). Erard does answer all these questions but, as one would have expected after such a painstaking field study and an equally exhaustive analysis of several factors, no single or simple answer emerges. Whereas clear-cut correlations exist, exceptions are frequent, and the reader reaches the inescapable conclusion that the eventual (tangle) result of "natural selection" is a compromise between opposite selection forces. I urge all ecologists and evolutionists interested in continental adaptive radiations, especially in wet tropical lowland areas, to read this book. Even though Erard's writing is very clear, the book is slow-reading, in part because it contains so much information, and in spite of the fact that the author is able to present his results in such a way that the reader can form his or her own conclusions, yet never forget what Erard himself believes. I look forward to volume two of this important monograph. Erard should be congratulated for a superb job, and he should be urged to write, perhaps after the publication of volume two, an English-language monograph that would be accessible to the broadest possible audience. I hope also that Erard will undertake a comparative analysis of the "flycatcher guild" in the Old and New Worlds, now that he has spent some time in lowland South American forests.—FRANÇOIS VUILLEUMIER.

A NATURALIST AMID TROPICAL SPLendor. By Alexander F. Skutch, illus. by Dana Gardner. Univ. Iowa Press, Iowa City. 1987:232 + viii pp., numerous half-tone drawings. \$22.50.— This is actually two books within one cover. The even-numbered chapters are on the natural history of the tropics, primarily in Costa Rica. Whether discussing the breeding biology of the Gray Silky-Flycatcher (*Ptilogonys cinereus*) (Chapter 16) or the inflorescences of the hairy birthwort (Chapter 8), Skutch demonstrates in these chapters the meticulous attention to detail for which his earlier books are so well known, and which few other authors match. He describes in wonderful detail the courtship, building of the nest, timing of egg laying, and nestling care for about a dozen bird species (and lesser detail for about a dozen *Euphonias*

in Chapter 26). Anyone who has enjoyed Skutch's other books on natural history will also enjoy the even-numbered chapters of this book. They have the same comfortable, readable style and the same wealth of information that make his works a source of information for the educated layman as well as the experienced ornithologist.

The odd-numbered chapters are an exposition on Skutch's personal philosophy. Skutch's earlier works have often included references to emotions and attitudes, particularly those deemed most noble in humans and in birds. In this book, he has given free reign to his speculations about avian feelings, as well as his apparent belief that the world has been following some divine plan. For example, one recurring philosophical theme is that beauty and aesthetic sense are "... what the cosmos needed for its fulfillment . . ." (p. 20). He suggests that beauty cannot exist without someone to appreciate it, yet appreciation requires an object on which to focus. This means that there must be a sort of coevolution of the two.

Another recurring theme is the principle of universal harmlessness. Chapter 11 is a discussion of the principle and its history in human culture. He points out the wastefulness of living high on the food chain and applies this to other aspects of life, such as choice of clothing and building materials which minimize man's impact on the planet. The theme is also found in Chapter 13, an attack on those who harm animals to learn about them, instead of the more difficult but (he maintains) equally rewarding patient observation of nature *in situ*, and in Chapter 7, a discussion on the importance of preserving pieces of nature (excluding predators, which are not in "peaceful coexistence with their neighbors") in order for us to learn to be closer to it.

Most of the plants and animals discussed by Skutch are illustrated in full-page paintings. Readers familiar with Dana Gardner's illustrations from other Skutch books such as "Life of the Woodpecker" will recognize the same sensitivity and beauty in "A Naturalist Amid Tropical Splendor," although the pictures are half-tone instead of full color.

It is somewhat of a shame that Skutch did not put the two sets of chapters into two separate books. There will be many who would wish to read one of these without the other. Those who wish to read the metaphysical musings of a naturalist are buying a book on biology as well, and those who wish to read about the lives of plants and animals of the tropics are buying also a book on philosophy. This reviewer appreciates the fact that the two subjects were at least segregated to separate chapters. One can choose, then, to read natural history or philosophy, depending on mood, without the possibly unpleasant intrusion of the other. —ROBIN K. PANZA.

BIRDS ON THE MOVE. A Guide to New England's Avian Invaders. By Neal Clark, illustrated by Lucia deLeiris. North Country Press, Unity, Maine. 1988:196 pp., 27 black-and-white illus., 27 range maps. \$8.95.—A clear case of a little knowledge being a dangerous thing, "Birds on the Move" is an "anecdotal guide to 27 species of birds that have increased their numbers and/or expanded their ranges in New England." Each account has an introduction, field guidelines, population and range, and journal notes—all served up in a potpourri of fact and anecdote. The writing is folksy, but one pitfall of the genre is that it often doesn't stand up to close scrutiny for accuracy. Examples abound but consider for example: Glossy Ibis, p. 42—"The ibis is a bird of fresh and saltwater marshes, swamps, flooded fields, and tranquil coastal bays. There it hunts crayfish, fiddler crabs, insects, and snakes—usually the poisonous water moccasin which takes scores of ibis eggs. The moccasin, or cottonmouth, ranges north to Virginia only; it's no wonder that ibises have fared so well in New England." Ornithologists will find it easy to restrain themselves, but country gardeners will love it.—JAMES BAIRD.

BRIEFLY NOTED

THE GREAT CYPRESS SWAMPS. By John V. Dennis. Photographs by Steve Maslowski. Louisiana State Univ. Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. 1988:xiv + 142 pp., 100 colored photos and many black-and-white maps. \$29.95.—As defined in this work, the cypress swamps extend along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from Pocomoke Swamp, Maryland, to the Big Thicket, Texas, with an extension up the Mississippi Valley to Reelfoot Lake. John Dennis, who was raised in this region, has given us an informative “coffee table” book on the biology of these areas. He writes with an obvious love and deep understanding of the area. The first seven chapters introduce us to the cypress forest and describe the plant and animal life. There follows a chapter on each of the individual swamp areas. A chapter on Vanishing Species outlines the stories of the Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*), Bachman’s Warbler (*Vermivora bachmanii*), and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*). Dennis describes his long personal search for the latter.

The photographs taken by Steve Maslowski are fabulous, both from the photographic standpoint and on the basis of their reproduction. Steve has shown himself to be a worthy “chip off the old block.”—G.A.H.

TRACKS AND SIGNS OF THE BIRDS OF BRITAIN AND EUROPE. By Roy Brown, John Ferguson, Michael Lawrence, and David Lees. Christopher Helm, London (available from International Specialized Book Services, 602 N.E. Hassalo St., Portland, Oregon 97213-3640). 1988:232 pp., 45 colored plates, many black-and-white sketches. \$32.95.—This attractive publication will be of minimal use to North Americans, but approximately 100 species occurring in North America are included. Well-illustrated chapters illustrate Tracks and Trails, Nests and Roosts, Feeding and Behavioral Signs, Pellets, Droppings, Feathers, and Skulls. Of these by far the most useful and complete is the chapter on feathers which features good illustrations, a chart indicating the molt period, and measurements for all remiges and rectrices. The usefulness of the other chapters varies. Directions are given for preserving specimens or making casts of tracks.—G.A.H.

OBSELETE ENGLISH NAMES OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS AND THEIR MODERN EQUIVALENT. By Richard C. Banks. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Resource Publication 174, Washington, D.C. 1988:37 pp. Gratis (from Publications Unit, U.S.F.W.S., Room 148, Matonic Building, Washington, D.C. 20240).—In recent years the English names of birds have been as unsettled as are the scientific names. Over 40 years ago Ludlow Griscom remarked that eventually we would need a synonymy for English names, and now we have one. Dr. Banks has gathered together names from the North American literature dating back to the times of Wilson and Audubon. Of particular interest are the English names for subspecies abandoned in the 5th edition of the A.O.U. Check-list (1957) but are prevalent particularly in the literature on birds of western North America. This will be a useful reference for beginning students as they start their careers.—G.A.H.

STATUS OF THE MARBLED MURRELET IN NORTH AMERICA; WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON POPULATIONS IN CALIFORNIA, OREGON, AND WASHINGTON. By David B. Marshall. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Report 88(30). 1988:v + 19 pp. Gratis (from Publications Unit, U.S.F.W.S., Room 148, Matonic Building, Washington, D.C. 20240).—The Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) is considered by the I.C.B.P. to be a “near-threatened” species because of the destruction of its nesting habitat, the old growth coastal forest of the Pacific Coast. Large numbers are also killed in salmon-fishing nets. By summarizing the life history information currently available this report does much to lift the veil of mystery that surrounded the species until the 1970s when the tree-nesting habit was con-

firmed. While populations are still good, although declining, in Alaska and British Columbia, the nesting population in Washington is estimated to be between 1900 and 3500 pairs, in Oregon 2400 pairs, and California less than 1000 pairs. Suggestions for further research and management are given.—G.A.H.