

so they vary somewhat in style, but most include a summary of the overall species distribution and their preferred habitats within the study area, the timing of migration, the source of Portuguese birds, and population trends within and beyond the study area. Most accounts include references, although these are usually very general. Each account also includes an English summary. Marine birds and accidental species (with occurrence dates) are considered in a separate section.

Anyone interested in the distribution of Iberian birds will want to have this book. However, it is probably too specialized to become an important resource for most North American ornithologists. The most useful feature is the maps; readers unfamiliar with Portuguese should still find the information useful.—PHILIP C. STOFFER, *Department of Biological Sciences, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana 70402-0736, USA. stouffer@selu.edu*

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Les Oiseaux de France.—Roger Reboussin. 1999 (edited by Pierre Jeanson). 381 pp., 388 color plates. ISBN 2-9514488-0-5. Cloth, in slip case. Distributed by NHBS Ltd, 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, United Kingdom, and the Association "Les Amis de Reboussin," 164bis, avenue Charles de Gaulle, 92200 Neuilly-sur-Seine (France). Price: 395 FF (\$51).—Since his early childhood, Roger Reboussin (1881–1965) held a life-long passion for animals, painting, and hunting, as well as a love for his native countryside. Because he always remained so tied to his birthplace, he is not well known outside western Europe in spite of his abundant productivity. This includes the illustration of more than 20 books (all in French) on hunting, birds, natural history, and related fables and legends. His gouache and water color paintings convey his feelings for nature, his love of life, his intimate knowledge of birds and his acute sense of movements in a way few artists have ever succeeded in doing. As one of France's most famous animal painters, Reboussin won prizes in many exhibitions from 1907 to 1945, retaining to his death the prestigious title of "Master of Drawing" at the Paris Museum of Natural History.

Reboussin began his monumental work on *The Birds of France* at the request and under the private commission of his friend and patron, Marcel Jeanson, a great French ornithologist, book collector and

hunter. The goal was to portray, in their natural habitat, all bird species recorded in France to date. It took nearly 30 years to be completed. This superb collection of 388 gouaches, the favorite medium of this artist, is now published by Pierre Jeanson, the son of Reboussin's original and faithful supporter. Most of the species are drawn from personal field experience, and the artist succeeded in capturing some of the movement and "attitude" typical of each one. Reboussin combined his interpretation of the spirit of life with a rigorous, yet spontaneous way of painting birds, which was in the impressionist style of his time. Nevertheless, he accomplished this with the accuracy of a portraitist combined with the sharpness and realism of a naturalist. The quality of the edition and the size of the reproductions do justice to the artwork, making the volume much more than a simple coffee table book.

The text is limited to draft prefaces written by Marcel Jeanson and Roger Reboussin in the early 1940s, and a more recent introduction. All of the prefaces are in French and English, making the book accessible to a wide audience. The birds, all depicted in color and often covering an entire page, are presented in scientific, systematic order by their French, English, and Latin names. Details on family status, sex and age characteristics, position in the plate, and alternative French names are given in a 12 page appendix at the end of the book. Many plates depict a single species. Sometimes, two consecutive plates are devoted to the same species, whereas other plates illustrate two to four species together. It is unfortunate, however, that in such a high quality publication there are so many spelling errors to the Latin, English, and even the French names. There are few entirely erroneous names (i.e. the Latin name of the Honey Buzzard, *Pernis apivorus*, and an inversion between the identification information of two terns species). Moreover, the specific English names of several species are not given (e.g. the use of "Buzzard" for the Common Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*). Fortunately, most errors seem to have been corrected in a second edition now available.

The book would have been better titled "The Birds of Europe," because not only are all French breeding species and regular migrants illustrated, but so too are many taxa that are only rare vagrants in France, leaving very few European species not represented (these are cited in an appendix). Also, from an ornithologist's point of view, the paintings of passerines are sharper and more accurate than are many of those of nonpasserines. In spite of these minor criticisms, this splendid homage to the memory of a great artist is worthy of the book shelves belonging to artists, naturalists, amateur ornithologists, and hunters alike.—JEAN-MARC THIOLLAY, *Laboratoire d'Ecologie, Ecole Normale Supérieure, 46 rue d'Ulm, 75230 Paris cedex 05 France. thiollay@biologie.ens.fr*