

is based largely on the increasingly outdated Peters' *Check-list of Birds of the World* series (Harvard University Press, 1931, ff.), and popular modern family monographs or handbooks where available, sequenced at the family level and above by an "in litt." from *Handbook of the Birds of the World's* editors. This higher-level sequencing convention results in some strange and eye-catching placements, such as the kinglets between bulbuls and leafbirds, or the vireos between whydahs and fringillids. Because it has for some well-documented situations in the volumes already published, the Morony, Bock, and Farrand sequence is likely to be updated by the *Handbook of the Birds of the World* team as future volumes are prepared, based upon then-current, widely accepted criteria. Meanwhile, it would have seemed wiser for *Birds of the World* to follow some published hypothesis of relationships, such as that used by Morony, Bock, and Farrand.

Another disappointment for me is the general absence of citations for virtually all deviations from the underlying reference work(s) for each family. For example, *Puffinus atrodorsalis* (Shirihai, Sinclair and Colston, *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 115:75–87) is added to *Birds of the World* without reference or explanation. *Ninox ios* (Rasmussen, 1999, *Wilson Bulletin* 111:457–464) also is added to *Birds of the World* with a reference in the bibliography. *Sula granti* (Pitman and Jehl, *Wilson Bulletin* 110:155–170), on the other hand, is omitted from *Birds of the World* even though it was described a year earlier in the same journal as *N. ios*. What are the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of newly described species? Similar unevenness applies to taxonomic revisions, subspecies, detailed sequence, and choices of names. The Scaly-breasted Thrasher (*Margarops fuscus*) is treated as a monotypic species in the genus *Allenia* in volume 9 of *Check-list of Birds of the World*, the only reference mentioned for the Mimidae, but is considered polytypic in the genus *Margarops* in *Birds of the World*. Why? The usefulness of *Birds of the World* would have been greatly enhanced if all changes, inclusions, exclusions, rearrangements, and renaming at either the scientific or English-name level for all deviations from the given references were documented, even if the citation or footnote were simply "author's opinion/preference."

The relationship between *Birds of the World* and *The American Ornithologists' Union Check-List of North American Birds* (American Ornithologists' Union, 7th ed., 1998) also is less well documented than I would wish. Although AOU's *Checklist* is hardly sacrosanct, it has served the ornithological and birding communities well as the foundation of North American regional taxonomy and nomenclature for more than a century. Explanations of deviations from it would avoid confusing an American audience, particularly those members not fully conversant with all the literature. Examples of unfamiliar treatments can read-

ily be found, such as the sequence and species limits within the genera *Glaucidium* and to a lesser extent *Otus*.

American birders, who probably are the primary intended audience, mostly should be pleased with the appearance and basic simplicity of *Birds of the World*. Those with a more scholarly interest in avian speciation and relationships, however, may prefer to wait. When *Handbook of the Birds of the World* is completed and back-updated, *Birds of the World* hopefully would be revised, either to conform with *Handbook of the Birds of the World*, or giving references to relevant literature for all changes. Only then would it provide the chain of evidence distinguishing science from revelation. In the meantime, for anyone who can work with its simplicity, *Birds of the World* is not only useful, but also very much a bargain.—P. WILLIAM SMITH, P.O. Box 1992, Ocean Shores, Washington 98569, USA. E-mail: birdsmiths@hotmail.com.

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**The Status of Marine Birds Breeding in the Barents Sea Region.**—Tycho Anker-Nilssen, Vidar Bakken, Hallvard Strøm, Alexander N. Golovkin, Vitali V. Bianki, and Ivetta P. Tatarinkova, Eds. 2000. Rapportserie nr. 113, Norsk Polarinstitut, Tromsø, Norway. 213 pp., b/w drawings by Eugeny A. Koblik, numerous maps and figures. ISBN 82-7666-176-9. Cloth. 375 Norwegian Kroner (~\$40). Can be ordered from Norsk Polarinstitut, Polarmiljøseneteret, NO-9296, Tromsø, Norway or by e-mail at sales@npolar.no—The Barents Sea is one of the most important areas for marine birds in the world, both in terms of diversity and abundance. Over 7 million pairs of marine birds of some 40 species breed there, and many of those stay to feed during the nonbreeding season. The region has suffered many environmental insults in the past, and the future holds the distinct possibility of offshore oil and gas development, and increased ship traffic if the Northern Sea Route across Arctic Europe opens up. Thus, there is much to warrant an account of this European Arctic hotspot. Thankfully, marine bird specialists from Norway and Russia have obliged. After extensive collaboration over the past 10 years, they have produced this marvelous book on the status of marine birds in the Barents Sea region, which covers the Barents Sea proper, the Norwegian Sea north of the Arctic Circle, portions of the Greenland Sea and Arctic Ocean west and north of Svalbard and Franz Josef Land, and the entire White Sea.

Six sections and six appendices comprise the 213 pages of the book. Section 1 sets the stage for the work and lists its three main aims as follows: (1) present up-to-date information on all marine bird species breeding in the Barents Sea region, including descriptions of their breeding distribution and habitat preferences, population sizes and trends, migratory patterns and feeding ecology, (2) identify the most important gaps in our knowledge relating to this information; and (3) identify current and potential threats to the populations and, on this basis, propose research, mapping, and monitoring activities that should be given special priority in the near future.

Section 2 provides a description of both the physical and biological oceanography of the Norwegian, Barents, and White seas, emphasizing bathymetry, currents, sea ice, and distribution of marine bird prey species such as forage fish and blue mussels.

Section 3 is the largest and is split into accounts of the 41 species dealt with in the book, and authored by species experts familiar with the Barents Sea region. The marine birds covered are an eclectic mix of the traditional seabirds ( $n = 25$ ), geese ( $n = 3$ ), waders including phalaropes ( $n = 5$ ), sea-ducks ( $n = 7$ ), and a loon. Each account is organized around eight subheadings: (1) general description of the species, (2) breeding distribution and habitat preferences in the Barents Sea region, (3) movements, (4) population status and historical trends, (5) feeding ecology, (6) threats, (7) special studies, and (8) recommendations. For most species, a table of population sizes and trends for seven subregions within the Barents Sea Region is provided. The breeding distribution description is augmented with good, albeit small maps showing colonies (coded by size) and breeding areas. The description of movements is augmented with an even smaller but still useful map of band recoveries; recoveries are color-coded indicating either Russia or Norway as the country of origin. Feeding habits are presented for some species in table form. Each account is headed by a very attractive pen-and-ink portrait of the species drawn by the Russian artist Eugeny Koblik.

Section 4 deals with threats to marine birds in the Barents Sea region. Discussions of nine "threat categories" (e.g. fisheries, by-catch, oil pollution) are summarized in useful color-coded matrices for each subregion. Each cell of the matrix refers to a particular species and threat, and its importance is coded by a number and corresponding color. Code 0 (green) means none or insignificant, code 1 (yellow) means slight, code 2 (orange) means moderate, and code 3 (red) means great. For each threat category, two codes are provided: one for current and one for potential threat. Generally the potential threat cells are "lit-up" orange and red more often than the current threat cells, indicating that the situation could get a lot worse for marine birds in the region. I think that

the matrices would have been just as readable if the cells were simply color-coded and not stamped with the (redundant) numeric code as well.

Section 5 brings forth recommendations to address threats to marine birds described in the previous section. The recommendations cover information needs rather than conservation actions and fall under three headings: mapping, research, and monitoring. Again, summaries are provided in the form of color-coded matrices. The final section of the book contains over 1,000 references. Many papers cited are well known but the section also contains many other hard-to-find Norwegian and Russian papers, theses, and reports. Most of those written in Norwegian or Russian provide English summaries.

Appendices cover species lists (with Norwegian and Russian names), conservation status of marine bird species covered in the book, place names, latitude-longitude and maps of the region, and three short reports on (1) the status of marine bird monitoring in the Barents Sea region, (2) international strategies (mainly covering the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna initiative), and (3) joint Russian-Norwegian seabird projects conducted from 1990-1999.

I am very enthusiastic about this book on several levels. It provides the best, and perhaps only complete snapshot available of the status of marine birds in the Barents Sea region, against which, future studies can be compared. As is usual these days, the snapshot was taken in an environment already altered, in this case by unbelievable misuse as a result of both atmospheric and below-ground nuclear testing, and dumping or storage of nuclear waste. More recently, we heard of the huge oil pollution event in the tributaries of the Pechora River, which empties into the southern Barents Sea. Despite that, the region still teems with vast populations of marine birds and the species upon which they depend for food. In the future, however, oil and gas production in the Barents Sea region is likely, and increased boat traffic and inevitable oil pollution will result if shipping commences in earnest along the Northern Sea Route. This book will contribute greatly to the assessment of the environmental effects of those and other developments, and in the conservation of resident marine bird populations.

For those who do not have a direct interest in the Barents Sea region per se, the book is of value as a model of how to produce an authoritative, rigorous, and meaningful account of the status of a species group that is at the same time both attractive and readable. Unfortunately, to date there are few areas of the world in which the status of marine bird species is laid out so well. Perhaps this book will provide the stimulus for similar accounts to be produced elsewhere.—JOHN W. CHARDINE, *Canadian Wildlife*

Service, P.O. Box 6227, Sackville, New Brunswick E4L 1G6, Canada. E-mail: john.chardine@ec.gc.ca.

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**Pigeons and Doves: A Guide to the Pigeons and Doves of the World.**—David Gibbs, Eustace Barnes, and John Cox. 2001. Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut. 615 pp., 76 color plates, 310 text figures. ISBN 0-300-07886-2. Cloth, \$60.00.—After waiting nearly three decades, a decent book now exists that describes and illustrates all living species of Columbidae. The text is by freelance ecologist and naturalist David Gibbs and wildlife artist and bird-tour leader Eustace Barnes. The color plates are by Eustace Barnes and John Cox. The plates are very nice, although showing each and every species in flight might be overkill, especially for pigeons and doves not known to fly anymore (if ever), such as *Micropodura meeki* (plate 44).

*Pigeons and Doves* is loaded with identification-related information, most of which, as far as I can tell, is accurate. Inaccuracies include repeating the botched story of the extinct Reunion Solitaire ("*Raphus*" *solitarius*, p. 173), which Gibbs et al. say was a columbid even though Mourer-Chauviré et al. (Smithsonian Contributions to Paleobiology 89:1–38) have shown that this insular endemic was an ibis (*Threskiornis solitarius*), not a pigeon. Resurrecting *Caloenas maculata* (pp. 394, 395, plate 44), a doubtfully valid species based on an eighteenth-century, juvenile specimen of unknown locality in the Merseyside County Museum, seems a stretch for a book aimed to please birdwatchers. Gibbs et al. speculate that *C. maculata* might be "the bird that cried 'titi' on Tahiti" (great name for a cheap movie, huh?). This is unlikely because "titi" is an onomatopoeic name throughout East Polynesia for procellariids, especially shearwaters. The authors also repeat (although unreferenced) the old but untrue adage that *Didunculus* is a primitive, relictual genus perhaps related to *Raphus* or to parrots (p. 584).

Picky mistakes, such as misspellings of island names, can be found regularly but are easy to excuse. Errors of omission are more common than those of commission. Targeting ~30 species of Neotropical and Oceanic columbids that I know fairly well, I found errors of one sort or another in about half of the accounts, such as omitting the West Indies in the range map of *Geotrygon montana* (p. 389), or saying that *Ptilinopus perousii* is "not often found near human habitation" (p. 479) when in fact this fig-specialist lives in villages as long as fruiting fig trees are present (Steadman, *Pacific Science* 52:14–34).

The book has 585 pages of text, covering 319 species in a popular family of birds that has fascinated people since long before we were literate, but has only 7.7 pages of literature citations. Barry Taylor's recent (1998), similarly formatted, and highly informative book *Rails*, for example, covers 145 more poorly studied species with 557 pages of text followed by 34.8 pages of literature citations. This 10-fold difference (0.024 citation-pages per species in *Pigeons and Doves* vs. 0.24 in *Rails*) undermines the scholarship in the former and therefore limits its utility to scientists. Related to that is Gibbs et al.'s exceedingly brief introduction (pp. 13–15).

Selfishly I note that, from 1980 to 1999, I published 45 journal articles or chapters in books that dealt substantially or exclusively with columbids, especially on islands. Gibbs et al. cite none of them, even though much of what they mention about extinction of Polynesian columbids (pp. 13, 14, 413, 543) is derived from those papers. Ignoring my papers also results in inaccurate range maps for Polynesian columbids, whether you consider just the modern range or the combined modern and prehistoric range, the latter being most useful to biogeographers. Should I feel bad that Gibbs et al. opted not to cite any of my papers? If the book were meant to be a superficial skimming once-over the columbids, the answer would be no. Given the comprehensive and authoritative intent of this work (see p. 16 as well as the dust jacket and advertisements), however, they should have given credit where it is due. How, for example, could they have failed to cite Baptista et al. (*Handbook of Birds of the World*, 4:60–243), the only other place where all living species of columbids are illustrated in color?

Gibbs et al. state their indebtedness to Nigel Collar for "meticulous and dedicated editing of the entire text" (p. 12). British conservationists are aware of, and their work benefits from, my and other overlooked research (published in journals such as *Conservation Biology*), but they are disinclined to cite it because we are evil museum scientists who occasionally collect birds. A "holier than thou" attitude pervades many bird books written in Britain these days. (*Pigeons and Doves* was produced at Pica Press in Britain; it is sold in the colonies by Yale University Press.)

*Pigeons and Doves* is important for providing modern color plates, range maps, and descriptions of plumages, including subspecies, of columbids world-wide. Other aspects of columbid biology (systematics, evolution, biogeography, behavior, foraging ecology, breeding biology, etc.) are poorly covered. On average, birdwatchers will like it more than ornithologists. This is what we have come to expect nowadays from university presses, who realize that birdwatchers make up a larger market than scientists.—DAVID W. STEADMAN, *Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, P.O. Box 117800,*