

carrion (Sutton 1927, Brown and Amadon 1968). Unfortunately, these records do not assist in the interpretation of the above observations. There was no evidence to suggest either prey scarcity or inability of these three individuals to secure active prey. The *A. fasciatus*, in particular, was observed at other times to make successful captures of Honey eaters (Meliphagidae), the Clamorous Reed-Warbler (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*), and small rodents (Muridae). The absence of regular encounters of the same individuals taking carrion or either species taking carrion elsewhere, in addition to the absence of published records of such behavior, suggests that the above cases were rare, opportunistic events.

#### *Literature Cited*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Country Life Book of Birds of Prey. Gareth Parry and Rory Putman. Country Life Books, London, 1979. 120 pages, 35 color plates. £20.**

Recently there has been a deluge of books about birds of prey on the market, some aimed at the specialist, the majority at a much wider field. This latest volume is of the latter variety—a coffee-table spectacular containing 35 color plates of raptors—including owls—which have been recorded in the British Isles. It is of only marginal interest to the serious ornithologist.

The text by Rory Putman is both accurate and readable but breaks no fresh ground. The book is designed to show off the paintings of Gareth Parry. Here the reviewer wishes he could be more complimentary. Although Parry displays very considerable technical skill, many of his pictures appear highly contrived and static. The immense detail overwhelms the eye, and the living bird is lost.

The book is beautifully bound and printed but marred by a series of irritating errors. The distribution maps are out of date, e.g., Peregrine and Montagu's Harrier. The photographs have been poorly selected and greatly blown-up—the one of the Sea Eagle is so badly touched up it appears grotesque! The plate purporting to show a typical Merlin habitat is totally misleading, and to add insult to injury the drawing of a Goshawk's bill shows a falcon's tooth.

It may well appeal to the drinkers of erstaz coffee, but those who can tell a hawk from a handsaw will doubtless invest their dollars somewhere else.—R. B. Treleven

**Population Ecology of Raptors.** Ian Newton. T & A.D. Poyser, England, and Buteo Books, Vermillion, South Dakota, 1979. 399 pages, 32 plates. \$35.00.

Here is a gem that stands out from the dross of modern ornithological literature, a book entirely devoted to the study of a single subject: What regulates raptor populations? Ian Newton is well known as a lecturer and author with a sharp, incisive mind. In this new volume he has collated a vast wealth of material from more than eight hundred separate papers, all of which have some bearing on an aspect of population control. The data are carefully sifted, evaluated, and presented to the reader as a coherent whole.

Although the book breaks little fresh ground, all serious students of ornithology, and raptors in particular, will want to purchase it; for nowhere else will you find such a rich harvest of knowledge in such readable form. Each chapter has its own brief summary—a real boon for those seeking quick references.

The regulators of all bird populations are the availability of food supplies and nest-sites in a given area, but in the case of birds of prey, many additional factors may affect the outcome: pesticide residues, loss of habitat, and the conflicting interests of man, including game preservation. Light is shone on some old problems: Do 60% of all eyasses really succumb in their first year? How long does it take a Peregrine to find a replacement mate in the breeding season? Is there a correlation between size dimorphism and diet?

At the rear of the book there are sixty-eight pages of invaluable statistics and a complete bibliography. The text contains fifty figures, some of which appear, at first glance, highly complex but on closer inspection prove to be models of succinctness. The photographs are without exception of very high quality, and the eagle-eyed reader will have no difficulty in spotting that many of the birds depicted are in various stages of moult: Sparrowhawk (plate 13), tail feathers; Merlin (plate 25), Jack Merlin (plate 26), and Kestrel (plate 27), primaries—a point not made by the author probably because it is not considered relevant.

Jim Gammie provides some splendid vignettes which are both accurate and pleasing to the eye. The production is excellent and well up to the high standard one has come to expect of Poyser's. I feel certain it will soon become one of the most thumbed books on my shelf. It is worth every penny of the price.

R. B. Treleaven