significant downings in that month On December 9 over 2000 were forced down by a snowstorm, along a 180-mile stretch of Interstate Highway 15 between Provo and Brianhead, and on December 24, 1000 were downed near Cove Fort. In both cases the birds were attracted to the lights of the highway or small cities and landed in the snow. Many rescued as much as 5 days later were still in good condition.

These observations seem to show that Eared Grebes avoid migrating as long as possible in the fall. Yet, if forced down in unfavorable areas, they can survive for several days. In the present case, lacking certain knowledge of the source of the migrants and the time of their departure we cannot resolve whether food shortage or adverse weather, or either, may have been the major factor in causing the die-off However, if the birds originated at Mono Lake, as seems likely, we suspect that bad weather during a trans-Sierran migration is the more likely possibility. If so, the amount of mortality may have been many times higher than we can document because grebes require open bodies of water from which to become airborne. There would have been few such refuges available to migrants downed in the mountains or deserts at that season.

In any event, there is no hint that non-natural phenomena were involved in this event. Perhaps our most important finding is that, even in relatively well-documented cases of large-scale mortality, it may be often impossible to come to a firm conclusion about causality or numbers involved.

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Autumn Book Roundup

Reviews by Robert Arbib, Susan Roney Drennan and Lois Gebhardt

Check-list of North American Birds: The species of birds of North America from the Arctic through Panama, including the West Indies and Hawaiian Islands. Sixth Edition. Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the A.O.U. A.O.U. (Allen Press, Lawrence, KS.) 1983. xxix + 877 pp. Octavo, hardbound. $29.95. At long last—here is the Sixth Edition in all its glory, its red cloth binding now to take place next to the blue of the superseded Fifth of 1957. And although this critic had some harsh comments and strongly critical views of the work in progress, particularly of the changes in some vernacular names, the Sixth, as it finally is revealed, is in sum a tremendous undertaking, admirably done. It is a work that will be essential to any ornithologist, professional or amateur, author or editor for at least the rest of this century. It provides us with the new official order of species, the accepted names, and current species ranges for our entire continent. The total now comes to 1913 species with almost 90 more listed in the Appendices of hybrids, doubtful named forms, and introductions.

The format of the work essentially follows that of previous editions. A detailed introduction explains the history and rationale for decisions that were required of the committee, on geographic coverage (Hawaii, Central America and the West Indies added, Greenland deleted), on taxonomic categories, including the concept of the superspecies, on the book's format, the procedure of the book's long task, and the future needs. Then follows the Check-list itself, beginning with Great Tinamou, and ending with African Fire-Finch. For each species the vernacular and scientific names are followed by a brief notation on nomenclatural origins, these followed by an abbreviated note (a sentence, usually) on Habitat, and a longer, but still condensed paragraph on Distribution. At appropriate places, one finds other taxonomic headings such as orders, suborders, families, subfamilies, tribes, and genera, also with appropriate derivations. Many of us are already familiar with the numerous changes in order and nomenclature and the lumpings and splittings that the Sixth Edition brings, and thus they come with less shock. The committee has been alternately, even simultaneously, criticized for being too radical in its revisions and for being much too conservative. The com-

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