

(All measurements in millimeters, sample averages in parentheses. Taken from Prater *et al.* 1977, *Guide to the Identification and Ageing of Holarctic Waders*. Tring, Hertfordshire: British Trust for Ornithology.)

Note the differences indicated by these measurements: although the Red Knot is considerably larger in body size (as suggested by wing measurement), it has a slightly shorter bill and only slightly longer tarsus than the Curlew Sandpiper.

Most Curlew Sandpipers occurring on the Atlantic seaboard later than August are juveniles. That the bird in the photograph is a juvenile is indicated by the prominent pale edgings to the wing-coverts. A subtle plumage difference between Curlew Sandpiper and Dunlin showing in my shot is the Curlew's thinner, more sharply defined white eyeline.

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News and Notices

DARK NEWS FOR DUSKY SEASIDES — We were alarmed to learn in 1977 that only 30 singing male Dusky Seaside Sparrows *Ammospiza maritima nigrescens* could be found in the very small range of this distinctive form in n.e. Florida; in 1978, only 24 could be located. This year the situation has deteriorated still further: only *twelve* males were singing on territory this spring. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has approved a recovery plan to try to bring the Dusky Seaside back from the brink of extinction, with intensive habitat management and perhaps captive breeding programs.

SPLITTING THE KINGBIRD — The lead article in the April 1979 *Auk* was written from a museum man's viewpoint, but the conclusion it reached will be of exceptional interest to most birders: the author, M.A. Traylor Jr., has gathered evidence to prove rather conclusively that the "Tropical Kingbird" in fact comprises two species. Both of these species occur in the United States. The one which will probably be known as Couch's Kingbird *Tyrannus couchii* is a year-round resident in southern Texas, while the other, probably to retain the name of Tropical Kingbird *T. melancholicus*, is a summer resident in southern Arizona and occurs in small numbers on the California coast in autumn. The two have different vocalizations (on this basis, their specific distinctness has been suspected for some time), but in appearance they are very similar. Thus, a vagrant "Tropical Kingbird" could pose a real identification problem — and both forms are known to be prone to vagrancy.

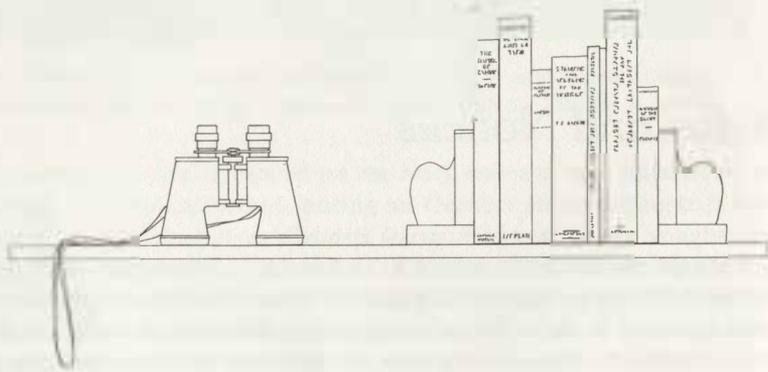
We have an article in preparation to deal with this field problem, and would appreciate hearing from anyone who has innovative field characters (especially behavioral ones) to suggest. In the meantime, it *may* be safe to assume that autumn birds on the California coast are *T. melancholicus* — but any vagrant "Tropicals" elsewhere should be studied with extreme care; ideally they should be photographed in color from several angles, with shots obtained to show the proportions of the bill and shape of the tail.

BUENAS NOTICIAS FROM CHIAPAS — North American birders only recently became aware that a population of the Resplendent Quetzal *Pharomachrus mocinno* still existed in the Lagos de Montebello National Park in Chiapas, Mexico. Still more recent (and, perhaps, even more encouraging) news is that the cloud forest area which the birds inhabit has been set aside as a biological reserve, mainly to protect quetzals and orchids. We visited the area in April 1979, and found Resplendent Quetzals to be present in good numbers; the wardens patrolling the area were polite but firm in warning us not to disturb the birds; local people with whom we spoke seemed proud of the quetzals' protected status. All of this, of course, is indicative of a giant step in the right direction.

Reviews

Edited by

ELAINE COOK



A Field Guide to the Seabirds of Britain and the World. — G.S. Tuck, illustrated by Hermann Heinzl. 1978. London: William Collins, Sons & Co. Ltd. xxviii + 292 pp., 48 color plates, line drawings, maps. £5.25.

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William Collins, Sons & Co. Ltd.
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We need a good identification guide to the seabirds of the world. Most field ornithologists, I'm sure, would agree. There are several reasons why (despite widespread demand) such a work has not been forthcoming. One is that seabird taxonomy is in an unsettled state; some forms are still practically unknown, and there is much disagreement as to which allopatric forms represent full species. Another reason is that important information on seabirds has been published in a number of different languages. Yet another reason — perhaps the most telling one — is that matters of flight action and silhouette are often crucial in identifying seabirds; these points can be learned only through field experience, which can be gained only through a great deal of expensive ocean travel.

That is the crux of the problem: it is not enough for an author and illustrator to simply decide to produce a seabird field guide; good intentions alone will not pull it off. And this book proves it.

A Field Guide to the Seabirds of Britain and the World covers, in brief fashion, the penguins, albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters, storm-petrels, diving-petrels,