

REVIEWS

Fla. Field Nat. 22(3): 85 1994.

West Indian Bird Records in American Birds and Audubon Field Notes (1947-1990): Species Index by Islands.—Robert W. Loftin. Florida Ornithol. Soc. Spec. Pub. No. 5: ix + 90, 1992. \$8.00. — Following on the success of a similar index, this full-grown offspring logically becomes a companion to *Index of Florida bird records in American Birds and Audubon Field Notes 1947-1989* (Loftin et al. 1994, Florida Ornithol. Soc. Spec. Pub. No. 4).

The subject periods are nearly synonymous for each index and struck me for two reasons, particularly for the West Indies region. It essentially covers the expansive, or perhaps explosive, period of interest in the avifauna of the West Indies since James Bond's *Check-list of the Birds of the West Indies* (1956). The last decade of the subject period, the eighties, bridges an era when Bond's series of *Supplement to the check-list of birds of the West Indies* (1956) was in its twilight years. The final supplement appeared in 1987.

The *American Birds* West Indies region report, which originated in 1981 with volume 34, has grown steadily from records of nearly local interest in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to a data source of international importance (e. g. *Threatened birds of the Americas*, ICBP/IUCN Red data book. N. J. Collar et al. 1992, third ed., part 2. Smithsonian Press). In some cases the West Indies region seasonal reports and the Index represent the only published records for a particular island-nation to reach international recognition. Without the foresight and support of the late Robert Arbib, former editor of *American Birds* and *Audubon Field Notes (AB/AFN)*, the "gestation" and ultimately the Index may not have been recognized as an important tool by Dr. Loftin in such a timely fashion.

From researchers to PC software "listers" interested in species conservation or developing comprehensive species lists, the index is essential. This volume contains only the most specific notations of occurrence, or non-occurrence, and locality. It is hoped that this Index, given a wide institutional distribution, will facilitate even greater recognition of West Indian bird species distribution and conservation requirements. Notwithstanding, my major criticism is that this Index does not employ the same method of presentation as its predecessor. Species are noted by island as opposed to locations by species. Thus, the reader does not easily know how many species have been recorded in *AB/AFN* since 1947. Yet, in the former Index, the reader can determine, for example, how many West Indian species have been recorded in Florida by county. How many and what species of exotics have been recorded in the West Indies in *AB/AFN* since 1947? My other criticism is minor. I always look for maps, but the lack of maps of the five sub-regional groups: Bermuda, Bahama Islands, Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles, and Southern Islands covering 125 islands and cays (keys) will, no doubt, require additional searching for otherwise unreconcilable site locations through sources of varying scale. Maps facilitate understanding the complex biogeographical and distributional ranges of the region's native avifauna, especially if taxonomic relationships change in the future. Most readers would find a reliable Florida atlas to pinpoint locations, but the same facility could be problematic for the Caribbean Basin.

The cover portrait of the endemic Puerto Rican Tody by Tracey Pedersen, whose plates will appear in a forthcoming West Indies guide, is a fine choice. Apart from the perceived short-comings, this volume will stand equally next to my other West Indies texts. The value and utility of FOS Spec. Pub. No. 5 will increase as environmental change and time demand. The late Robert W. Loftin, inspired by Henry M. Stevenson to develop this index, has himself inspired a legion of amateur and professional ornithologists alike in Florida, yet his influence will be felt well beyond these boundaries. —**Robert L. Norton**, 3408 N. W. 27th Terr., Gainesville, Florida 32605.