

REVIEW

A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Jamaica, by Ann Haynes-Sutton, Audrey Downer, and Robert Sutton. Photographs by Yves-Jacques Rey-Millet. 2009. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. ISBN 9780691143910. \$29.95 paper. 304 pages.

Although I have a long-standing preference for field guides illustrated with paintings, there are a few that use photos effectively. This guide clearly falls into this category of excellence. The photographs are among the best that I have ever seen in a field guide; remarkably, all of the species that occur regularly on Jamaica are presented in photographs of exceptionally high quality. Even swifts are shown clearly in flight. Not all of the photos come from Jamaica, but this should not matter for species in which the Jamaican birds belong to widespread races. Most of the charismatic endemic species are illustrated with dazzling, full-page close-ups. This guide could be placed on a coffee table, yet is easily small enough to fit in a pocket.

The organization of the book follows the standard format for modern field guide. It begins with facts about the geography and climate of the island, and continues with detailed descriptions of the habitats, migration patterns, conservation, and history of ornithology in the region. There is also a brief but informative guide to some of the best birdwatching spots in Jamaica and tips for birdwatchers visiting the island. Each species is illustrated with a photograph, and a detailed range map with colors and shading patterns that provide information on abundance and seasonality. Endemic species generally receive two full pages, one of which is usually a full-page photo. The guide ends with several appendices listing extinct species, vagrants (which are not illustrated) and a list of endemic species and subspecies. The list of endemic subspecies is especially important for birdwatchers who like to anticipate future splits. For each species, there are local names, descriptions of the taxonomy and races present, a description of the bird's appearance including comparisons with similar species (a useful tool for birdwatchers), and a fascinating section on habitat and behavior. The taxonomy and text are up-to-date.

I hope that this guide will increase nature tourism to the region. Jamaica is perhaps best known for its remarkable streamertail hummingbirds (*Trochilus polytmus* and *T. scitulus*), but there are many other fascinating endemics and many North American species that winter on the island.

The binding is perhaps not as robust as it should be. There are breaks in the binding of my copy already and I have not yet taken it into the field. The brightness, sharpness, and clarity of the color reproduction is excellent.

I strongly recommend this guide for anyone visiting the area and for those of us who collect excellent field guides just in case we ever think about visiting a region. This guide should be sufficient to identify all of the regular birds that live on the island and informative and aesthetically pleasing enough to generate excitement for those of us contemplating a visit to Jamaica.—**Scott K. Robinson**, Florida Museum of Natural History, Museum Road at Newell Drive, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611-7800