

BOOK REVIEWS—RESEÑAS DE LIBROS—RESENHAS DE LIVROS

Edited by John G. Blake

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A photographic guide to the birds of Jamaica. A. Haynes-Sutton, A. Downer, & R. Sutton, Photography by Yves-Jacques Rey-Millet. 2009. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 304 pp. 650 color photographs. ISBN 978-0-691-14391-0. Soft cover. Price \$29.95

Jamaica has about 307 bird species of which 127 breed and 180 are migrants and all of which are included in *A photographic guide to the birds of Jamaica*. With 30 endemic bird species, the island of Jamaica has the highest number of endemic bird species of any Caribbean island and, for its size, one of the highest numbers of endemic bird species of any island in the world. Included in the endemic species are four endemic genera, including *Trochilus* (streamertails), *Loxipasser* (Yellow-shouldered Grassquit), *Euneornis* (Orange-quit), and *Nesopsar* (Jamaican Blackbird), as well as 19 endemic subspecies, 3 Caribbean endemic species and 15 Caribbean endemic subspecies. In addition to these, the book includes accounts and color illustrations of two species and a subspecies presumed to be extinct (Jamaica Petrel, Uniform Crake, Jamaican Pauraque) and descriptions and status of 77 vagrants known from the island, as well as other appendices listing the endemics, scientific names of plants listed in the text, and listing of available Jamaican bird vocalizations.

A photographic guide to the birds of Jamaica is a substantially expanded revision of *Birds of*

Jamaica by Audrey Downer and Robert Sutton published in 1990. The authors of the original text along with the photographer, Yves-Jacques Rey-Millet, and Ann Haynes-Sutton agreed on the need for a thorough revision, which Ann Haynes-Sutton carried through to completion after the untimely deaths of the two original authors. The revised book describes and illustrates with color photos all the birds likely to be seen in Jamaica, resulting in a comprehensive field guide based on the authors' experiences observing and banding birds on Jamaica for over 50 years. This field experience with Jamaica's avifauna is evident throughout the book and greatly enhances the species accounts and the choice of photos. The Introduction provides a brief overview of the avifauna, its origins, winter and altitudinal migrations, breeding seasons, molts and plumages, conservation, threats, bird habitats and their protection, history of Jamaican ornithology, and suggestions on where to watch birds. Also included in the Introduction are maps of the island's topography, average annual rainfall, and land uses and habitat types, as well as photos of the various habitats and representative birds. Each species account includes the scientific name, English common name, Jamaican common name(s); taxonomic notes; description; similar species; voice; habitat; and behaviour; and geographic range and status on Jamaica. Included with each account is a distribution map color

coded to indicate status of each species in its range on Jamaica. The authors caution that the maps are intended to provide only an indication of general distribution on the island and not a comprehensive summary of all distributional records for a species. Nevertheless, the range maps are a publication first for Jamaica's birds and will undoubtedly encourage observations that refine the distributional maps, further contributing to the knowledge of Jamaica's birds.

The original edition of *Birds of Jamaica* also included photos by Yves-Jacques Rey-Millet, but only endemic and resident land birds were illustrated. In contrast, the newer photographic guide includes photos of all the species described in the species accounts, most of which were taken in the wild by Rey-Millet except for a few photos contributed by others. An effort was made to show birds photographed in Jamaica, but in some instances it was necessary to use photos from elsewhere (noted in caption), although in these instances care was taken to depict appropriate races. In most instances, photos show adults and immatures of the birds likely to be seen in Jamaica in a typical year. In addition, both sexes are shown for the sexually dichromatic species and both color morphs are shown for American Kestrel, as well as both North American and Caribbean races of the Osprey. Overall, the quality of the photos range from good to excellent, and some are stunning (e.g., both streamtail hummingbirds, Jamaican Tody, Northern Potoo adult with chick, Ring-tailed Pigeon, Yellow-billed Parrot). The

endemic species are especially well illustrated with several photos per species with some shown in full page format. Many, but not all, migrant species are shown in both basic and alternate plumages. Jamaica's flycatchers, which can be a difficult group to distinguish, are particularly well represented in the photos. Overall, observers using the book's photos and descriptions should have little trouble identifying all of Jamaica's resident and migrant species, although for a few of the latter species they might wish to also refer to a North American field guide for verification of species identifications of migrant species in more confusing plumages.

In summary, the photographic guide makes a valuable contribution to Jamaican ornithology by briefly summarizing information and providing good photographs required for identification of the island's birds, as well as by providing brief notes on each species' natural history, behaviour, habitats, status, and distribution in a compact field guide format (125 mm by 190 mm by 20 mm). Not only do the book's photographs facilitate field identification, but they also highlight Jamaica's unique avifauna in a most attractive manner. This authoritative guide is appropriate for both visitor and native alike who have an interest in Caribbean birds and it belongs in all major ornithological libraries, as well as in every library and school on Jamaica. — Joseph M. Wunderle, Jr., International Institute of Tropical Forestry, USDA Forest Service, Sabana Field Research Station, HC 02 Box 6205, Luquillo, Puerto Rico 00773, USA.