

REVIEWS

EDITED BY M. ROSS LEIN

The following reviews express the opinions of the individual reviewers regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and value of the books they review. As such, they are subjective evaluations and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or any official policy of the A.O.U.—Eds.

Statistics in ornithology.—B. J. T. Morgan and P. M. North (Eds.). 1985. Berlin, Springer-Verlag. Lecture Notes in Statistics, No. 29. xxv + 417 pp. ISBN 0-387-96189-5. \$29.60.—Don't be misled by the title of this book. It is not a comprehensive coverage of statistics, focusing on problems ornithologists would encounter and illustrated with examples they would be familiar with. It is a collection of papers, most presented at a 1982 meeting sponsored by the British Region of the Biometric Society and the British Ecological Society. Although the book did not appear until 1985, literature citations after 1982 are almost exclusively references to dissertations or promises of manuscripts "in prep." (A computer search of abstracting services in June 1986 found 0 of 8 such promises, supporting the reluctance of editors to accept such references in manuscripts.) The deficiency of coverage of recent literature need not be a major weakness, as long as the papers illustrate statistical problems in ornithology clearly, and present equally clear and useful tools for solving those problems.

The volume does not stand up particularly well on these standards either. Coverage of "ornithology" is poor. Three papers address points in foraging and morphology. Three more investigate dispersal and migration. The remaining 19 papers deal with census data. Those who own "Estimating Numbers of Terrestrial Birds" (C. J. Ralph & J. M. Scott [Eds.], 1981, Studies in Avian Biology No. 6) need not fear its obsolescence, however. Only two of the papers in this volume consider transect data (whether circular or line); half the papers address exclusively analysis of banding results. Data from the British Common Bird census, atlas work, nest-placement studies, and migration observatories are each treated in single papers.

Such coverage neglects many areas. A single paper addresses problems of systematics and phylogeny, and then only tangentially. Given the role played by numerical taxonomists in introducing quantitative methods to many ornithologists, the scarcity of morphological examples raises questions about the preconceptions of the meeting's organizers. These questions are reinforced by other neglected areas: there is nothing on physiology (environmental or otherwise) or ecological interactions among species (competitive or otherwise). Habitat use, foraging, diet, social behavior, etc. receive passing treatment at best.

How good is the volume at what it does cover? If one works regularly with capture-recapture data,

there are a few points of note in this volume. Cormack's contribution, "Examples of the use of GLIM to analyze capture-recapture studies," should be particularly useful. It is a straightforward guide to investigating biological questions by applying the power and versatility of GLIM to such data. SAS Procs GLM and CATMOD will be more familiar than GLIM to many North Americans. However, there are enough similarities between those packages (but some important differences as well) that translation should be reasonably easy, and definitely worthwhile. Most of the better capture-recapture papers will be mathematically challenging to many ornithologists. They augment, but certainly do not replace, standard comprehensive texts in the field, such as Seber's "The Estimation of Animal Abundance and Related Parameters" (1982, London, Griffen).

When reading this book, I particularly looked for points I frequently have to make when reviewing articles for journals. Papers in this volume cover some of them. I find that many ornithologists treat abundance as a continuous variable, even when the observations are consistently small integer numbers (often zero) of birds per sample. There are several applications of log-linear models for analysis of such frequency data, a focus that is overdue. I have also pointed out numerous times that simply creating a new index of some entity such as "habitat patchiness" is of little use until the index is applied to simulated data with known underlying patterns, and shown to recover exactly (and only) what is claimed for it. Several papers in this volume illustrate how much is learned from that necessary step. I was struck to see one author point out that fisheries has made much more progress than ornithology with data of much poorer quality (because of much more serious sampling problems). Much of that progress is due to the widespread use of simulation as a tool for documenting one's indices and estimators. Brief papers by Janz ("Prior knowledge and ornithology") and Dale ("A bivariate discrete model of changing colour in blackbirds") expose readers to Bayesian inference and Mantel's test, respectively. Although not universally applicable, both tools should be much more familiar to ornithologists. Unfortunately, neither paper will be easy going for the mathematically poorly trained.

I found some disappointments as well. A paper by Lakhani ("Inherent difficulties in estimating age-specific bird survival rates from ring recoveries") got off

to an excellent start by illustrating the nonidentifiability of a fully parameterized capture-recapture model, but missed the opportunity to use that single context to organize the diversity of proposed solutions to the problem. Most readers will be quite confused by the latter part of that paper. After explaining why linear regression is not a good tool for looking at the influence of weather on migration, Darby ("Migration counts and local weather at British bird observatories—an examination by linear discriminant analysis") uses linear DFA instead, apparently assuming that method avoids the problems. Buckland and Anderson's "Multivariate analysis of atlas data" uses Principal Components Analysis and Cluster Analysis in ways that reflect the state of the art 15 years ago. There is no allowance for intraspecific variation in the PCA scores, nor iteration for objectivity in choosing structure in the clusterings.

I would expect a book entitled "Statistics in Ornithology" to set particularly high standards for attention to assumptions of analyses, and to presentation of measures of errors in estimation. Of the 17 primarily statistical papers, 4 paid scant attention to the assumptions of the method(s) used. In the eight primarily biological papers, assumptions sometimes were treated even more loosely. In at least three cases confidence intervals or comparable indicators of variance were not presented. That sets a poor example for those the volume is intended to serve.

At best I can give a lukewarm recommendation to the book. For those dealing regularly with capture-recapture data, it might be a useful companion to more comprehensive texts. For others, it might be reassuring to have a copy available in a research library, but I found nothing indispensable in the volume. If there is some quantitative ornithologist out there contemplating writing a statistical text for ornithologists, only the title is taken. This volume, at least, leaves the field itself open.—JAKE C. RICE.

A guide to the birds of Nepal.—Carol Inskipp and Tim Inskipp. 1985. Dover, New Hampshire, Tanager Books. 392 pp., 8 color plates, numerous text figures, 7 maps, grid maps for most species. ISBN 0-88072-070-2. \$35.00.—This very useful book is basically an atlas that presents the known bird distribution in a series of grid maps, with a brief text for each species. A second section of the book, illustrated with 8 color plates and many line drawings, presents field identification of the more difficult groups of birds found in Nepal. The helpful introduction discusses Nepal's topography, climate, and vegetation and its relation to bird distribution, the history of Nepal ornithology, and some good areas for birding.

Nepal is a small country, about 800 × 200 km, lying roughly east to west in the central Himalayas. For its size, it has a very large list of 835 species of birds, a species diversity directly related to the country's

enormous topographical diversity. The southern part of Nepal is tropical lowland, just above sea level, the northern extent of the Gangetic Plain. The land then rises into the Himalayan foothills and subsequently into the Himalayas, which cover the northern half of the country. Some of the world's highest peaks are in Nepal, including Mt. Everest. To this south to north, tropical to arctic, climatic shift is added a dramatic diminution of rainfall from east to west resulting in dramatic vegetation changes. Thus, eastern Nepal is in the wet northeastern Himalayas and western Nepal is in the much dryer northwestern Himalayas. Many species reach their eastern or western limits in Nepal (true also of many north/south distributions). Nepal today is one of the world's worst ecological disasters, with rampant deforestation and thousands of square kilometers of cultivation on rapidly eroding steep slopes. While the changes in the birdlife have been mostly unrecorded, they are extensive.

The bulk of this book is devoted to the atlas. The brief text for each species known to have been recorded in Nepal describes abundance in different areas, seasons, and altitudes; information about breeding; habitat (summer and winter listed if different); altitudinal range (summer and winter shown if different); the name of the first person who found the bird in Nepal and the literature reference for the record; unusual records (with literature citation); areas in Nepal where the species is most likely to be found; and the species range in the Indian subcontinent outside of Nepal. One occasionally irritating feature of the book is the highly irregular spacing between words (0.2–1.5 cm!). Only one or two typographical errors were noted.

The grid maps are divided into squares one-half a degree on a side, giving an area of about 56 km² and utilizing 82 squares in all. The symbols used represent: (1) specimen, (2) sight record, (3) sight record in breeding season, (4) possible breeding, and (5) proved breeding. Two graphs accompany each map: a bar graph divided by month and shaded for the times of the year the bird is present in Nepal (breeding season is indicated), and a bar graph divided into 1,000-m intervals, the shaded area representing the altitude at which the bird occurs. Nearly all species are represented by a grid map. Those that are not (5–10%) are vagrants represented by only a few records (cited in text).

The authors have gathered their information from the literature (an extensive 602 titles in bibliography), museum specimens, and the unpublished records of a small cadre of birders who have been particularly active in Nepal in the last 10 years or so. The data base for the atlas appears complete and, as such, the book can be considered to represent all that is known to date about bird distribution in Nepal and thus the jumping-off point for future studies. There is a lot left to be done, a situation graphically illus-

trated by the map of the number of species recorded per square. Thus, 555 species have been recorded in the Kathmandu Valley square while the squares adjacent range from 12 to 327. There is only one square entirely within Nepal with no species recorded from it, but most squares are under-reported, many severely. This limits the usefulness of the maps because it will often be difficult to know whether a range gap is due to the species' absence or merely under-reporting. It is to be hoped that the authors will continue to collect data for future editions as the fieldwork supported by their book will certainly fill many gaps.

The identification section consists of 52 pages of text and line drawings and 8 color plates. Only those species that present difficult field identification problems are included, such as diurnal raptors of the genera *Gyps*, *Accipiter*, *Buteo*, *Spizaetus*, *Aquila*, and *Falco*; some sandpipers; snipe, gulls, owls; races of White and Yellow wagtails; pipits; warblers of the genera *Cettia*, *Bradypterus*, *Locustella*, *Acrocephalus*, *Prinia*, and *Phylloscopus*; tits of the genus *Parus*; the *Carpodacus* finches; the *Emberiza* buntings; and a few other species. While the book is too large (19.5 × 25 cm) for handy field use, this section is valuable because much of the information is unavailable in the books on the subcontinent's birds. Utilizing this book would enable identification of most of these difficult species, which often cannot be done using the other bird books for the subcontinent. Many very useful techniques for separating these difficult species are given. The contrasts and comparisons between species are most helpful. Less helpful are some purely descriptive sections that require the reader to compare descriptions. The voice descriptions are brief, some too short to be useful. The qualities of the notes of a song usually are not described, making it difficult to guess what the syllables might sound like. Only one note for the Collared Scops-Owl (*Otus bakkamoena*) is given, that of the bird inhabiting the Himalayan foothills. The call of the bird inhabiting the tropical southern strip is quite different and I now treat these two birds as separate species (in press). Tawny Owls (*Strix aluco*) normally use only the 2-note call and rarely utter the longer call, common to northern Eurasian forms of this species. The note listed for the Bay Owl is incorrect. Treatment of *Larus argentatus heuglini* as a race of *L. fuscus* is not satisfactory as these forms overlap in their breeding range in northern European Russia. A better case can be made for keeping this form a race of *L. argentatus* or even treating it as a separate species (along with several other northern races of *L. argentatus* to the east of *heuglini*).

The illustrations are uniformly good to excellent. The 8 color plates illustrate difficult warbler genera: *Cettia*, *Bradypterus*, *Prinia*, *Acrocephalus*, *Locustella*, and *Phylloscopus*; *Carpodacus* rosefinches; and *Emberiza* buntings. They are well done and nicely illustrate the subtle color differences necessary to differentiate

species. Some of the *Carpodacus* finches have heads too large, while the *Phylloscopus*, *Acrocephalus*, *Locustella*, and *Prinia* warblers have an odd "jizz." The plates are placed between pages 192 and 193, but the captions are on page 7, a very unsatisfactory situation. There are 16 full pages and several partial pages of line drawings in the identification section, and line drawings of single species are liberally sprinkled throughout the text. These add a great deal to the usefulness of the identification section and the aesthetics of the book. Further, they give the reader a good idea of what the birds of Nepal look like as many genera are represented.

This book is a sound and useful contribution to ornithology, essential to anyone interested in the birds of the Indian subcontinent. Congratulations on a job well done!—BEN KING.

Arizona wetlands and waterfowl.—David E. Brown. 1985. Tucson, Arizona, University of Arizona Press. xi + 169 pp., 7 color plates, 70 text figures, index. ISBN 0-8165-0904-2. \$24.95, cloth.—This volume "attempt[s] to present a general understanding of the character, distribution, and requirements of Arizona's limited wetland resources and the variety of waterfowl that inhabit them." This is accomplished through 5 chapters that introduce the early history of Arizona and the need for waterfowl and wetland conservation; the distribution and abundance of Arizona wetlands and waterfowl; a general overview of waterfowl biology; basic principles of waterfowl management; and accounts of 33 species one might encounter in Arizona. Following the text is an appendix of maps illustrating the distribution of recoveries of waterfowl banded in Arizona and the derivation of birds recovered within the state. A table of metric conversions is provided, as is an 8-page list of cited and recommended reading and an index. Seven full-page color plates by Bonnie Swarbrick Morehouse [Canada Goose, Black-bellied Whistling Duck (with downy young), Mallard, Mexican Duck (with downy young), Northern Pintail, Redhead, and Ruddy Duck (with downy young)] complement the text. The color plates provide excellent detail for the birds, but less for the specific habitat in which they are depicted. The black-and-white figures and photographs are of high quality and provided with excellent captions.

Two major needs guided the preparation of this volume. The first was to update Arizona Game and Fish Wildlife Bulletin No. 5, which, although 26 years old, was nonetheless the most recent review of Arizona wetlands and waterfowl. The second was to provide "... a short course in waterfowl and wetland management..." Thus, this text was not intended to be a field guide to waterfowl, a thorough review of waterfowl ecology in general, or a synthesis of material on the species addressed in particular. It does,

however, serve as an excellent guide for locating and enjoying wetland habitats in Arizona, and it provides an introduction to the life history of Arizona's waterfowl species.

My major disappointments in the text were the uneven coverage and the lack of specific challenges and advice for the reader wishing to preserve and protect Arizona's vanishing wetlands and wetland wildlife. There were several portions of the book that either grossly understated issues or were positively misleading. For example, the hazards to waterfowl from lead-shot ingestion were presented in misleadingly simple terms: neither the scale of the problem nor the cumulative population impacts to waterfowl were evaluated clearly. Likewise, the hazards of various industrial and agricultural chemicals, heavy metals, and other contaminants to wetlands were only superficially mentioned. The naive reader will believe, after reading this text, that such issues are of minor importance, an unrealistic conclusion given the precarious state of many wetland systems. Similarly, with regard to general waterfowl ecology, several aspects of the text will prove confusing to the uninitiated and aggravating to the serious ornithologist. For example, neither common nor scientific names entirely follow the most recent (6th ed.) A.O.U. Check-list; the life-history sections unfortunately omit reference to many recent works and instead credit Hochbaum (1944) and SOWLS (1955) for the sum of the life-history information. Further in the text, the species accounts credit Bellrose's (1976) "Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America" as a major reference, but much of the material nonetheless is dated. The material included in the species accounts was chosen for unclear reasons, and each species is treated in a unique manner. Finally, the source of some of the numerical and statistical data seemed curiously dated. For example, information on the National Wildlife Refuge System was taken from a 1971 summary and the zip code for the Bird Banding Laboratory, changed a number of years ago, was given incorrectly.

From an ornithological viewpoint, several discussions of biological relationships are disturbing. For example, I found the explanation of "reasons" for disparate sex ratios in waterfowl very confusing. Although there is fragmentary evidence that a quaternary sex ratio slightly in favor of males is of advantage to prairie-nesting ducks, the cause-and-effect explanation provided is decidedly unsatisfactory. Brown has more coherently presented these arguments elsewhere. I also was disturbed by the unqualified statement that waterfowl produce more young than either winter habitat, breeding habitat, or both can accommodate. From this assessment, Brown concluded that hunting is necessary to prevent overpopulation. No view of the current status of waterfowl in North America can support this belief. In too many areas, in fact, there is now adequate

habitat but few birds present. Finally, I believe that the statement that refuges and management areas are "the single most important reason for the successful maintenance of large duck and goose numbers in North America" does substantial injustice to the role played by private and other public lands for the maintenance of waterfowl. Refuges do much to redistribute birds in time and space, but the greatest portion of reproduction is off refuges and management areas, and in Canada.

Although several shortcomings detract from the usefulness of this text as a general reference, they in no way detract from its value for the intended audience. It is a unique contribution to the list of books on southwestern birds and will be of value to those wishing an introduction to the waterfowl of the southwest. The avid birder will find many hints regarding specific sites to visit, and the text is an excellent review of the distribution, abundance, and general floral makeup of Arizona wetlands. Community libraries and persons interested in regional ornithological works will be pleased with the text, the quality of the figures, the writing style, and the apparent lack of typographical errors. In particular, Brown's text should raise the awareness of the public regarding the paucity and threatened status of wetlands in arid zones. In this regard, it provides a major benefit to avian species and wetland communities throughout not only Arizona, but the entire southwestern United States.—RONALD E. KIRBY.

Monterey birds.—Don Roberson. 1985. Carmel, California, Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society. vi + 266 pp., 16 color plates, 24 text photographs, 5 maps, 163 species maps. \$14.95 (paper).—Monterey County, a large coastal county in central California, is renowned among ornithologists, birders, and tourists for its exceedingly rich marine and terrestrial biota and its breathtaking natural beauty. In "Monterey Birds," Roberson attempts to summarize the status and abundance of the 427 species (more than are found in many eastern states!) known to have occurred in the county, and to provide a brief guide to birding in the county. Roberson generally has succeeded in achieving both of his objectives.

The book presents a brief overview of the geography and habitats of Monterey County. This may be sufficient for someone familiar with California's habitats, but a newcomer to California would certainly desire much more detail than is provided. There is, for example, nothing about Monterey County's seasons and climate. The book then describes in considerable detail seven major birding routes that include virtually all of the more productive and better-known birding areas in the county. This information will prove very helpful to the out-of-state birder, and even veteran California birders are likely to pick up useful tips along these routes. Although maps are associated

with the first two of these seven routes, in no case is the actual route or even the starting point clearly indicated. I can imagine that out-of-state birders will experience some frustration in trying to locate exactly where these routes start. Once on a route, however, the directions seem adequate.

The main body of the book deals with the status and abundance of Monterey's birds and is organized into brief species accounts. An 8-page introduction precedes the accounts, describing the methods used, sources of information, documentation of records, terminology, taxonomy, and nomenclature. Here, Roberson shows his major interest and greatest expertise. It is clear that he has thoroughly researched virtually all available sources, and I feel confident that his compilation of records is as comprehensive as possible. He furthermore makes extensive use of the decisions of the California Bird Records Committee and generally maintains very high standards for including species in the book.

The brief species accounts are generally concise and informative. They provide information on the seasonality, timing, and geographic location of occurrences and on the preferred habitats of the birds. Additional useful information on recent Christmas Bird Count numbers and on historical changes in range and abundance are often presented. Roberson tries to make a point of distinguishing between the vagrant, "a bird well outside its usual, regular areas of occurrence," and the rare migrant or visitant, a bird "thought to be comparatively close to regular successful routes." The distinctions, however, are not always clear. I do not understand, for example, why he considers Broad-winged Hawks and Semipalmated and Sharp-tailed sandpipers to be migrants, while Palm, Blackpoll, and Black-and-white warblers and American Redstarts are considered vagrants. The former three species occur in annual numbers that are no greater than the latter four, nor are they necessarily any closer to successful routes. Roberson occasionally delves into subspecific matters, a practice of perhaps questionable value in a book designed for the field observer. In some cases, the information presented is erroneous. For example, he states that White-crowned Sparrows of the race *Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli* have been found throughout Monterey County in winter and cites a specimen (or specimens?) at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology as evidence. I would bet that these specimens were misidentified *pugetensis* because 20 years of intensive work on *nuttalli* by numerous workers provides overwhelming evidence that *nuttalli* is extremely sedentary.

Also included with each species account is a bar graph to illustrate the seasonality and abundance of the species. These graphs are repeated as a group at the end of the book, where they occupy 21 additional pages and, to me, represent a waste of paper. Breeding range maps are included with the species ac-

counts for 163 species that are confirmed or probable breeders in the county. Roberson claims that these maps "have been drawn with some care, based upon the information available." Indeed, they are very detailed and look to be the result of a serious atlas project. I fear, however, that the detail shown may be misleading because the information on which they are based is incomplete or, for some areas of the county, as Roberson readily admits, virtually nonexistent. I vividly recall seeing, on a June day in 1980, a Lazuli Bunting and a Rufous-crowned Sparrow singing from the same bush along the Big Sur coast with the Pacific gleaming just below. Yet Roberson's range maps indicate that neither species breeds along the immediate coast. I hope the inaccuracies in the range maps will encourage the reporting of new information.

All in all, the book represents a very good compilation of the status and abundance of Monterey County's birds, and I recommend it for museum libraries everywhere and community and personal libraries throughout California. Nevertheless, I cannot help but feel that the book was produced with considerable haste and with a minimum of care. The headings given in the table of contents do not always correspond to the headings used in the actual text. No scientific names appear in the index. Roberson claims to follow the order of species given in the 6th edition of the A.O.U. Check-list, yet Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, and Prairie Falcon are out of order. The legend for the bar graphs is not included in the introductory material; rather, it is on page 237, after all the species accounts, and took considerable searching to find. The bar graphs themselves are carelessly constructed. The sizes of the bars for a given abundance class vary from species to species on the same page and do not correspond to the size of the reference bars given in the legend, and the size of the box containing them also varies from species to species. This makes it difficult to determine at a glance the abundance class of any given species. The two maps in the front of the book (political map and topographic map) are difficult to use because nothing except the county boundary is common to both. The 16 color plates are of good quality and add considerably to the appearance of the book. However, the legends printed along the inside margins of the photographs are hard to read because they are nearly hidden in the binding. Finally, a number of typos exist throughout the book, including the back cover, which claims that the book contains 68 color photos. In fact it contains only 59 (plus 5 on the front and back covers). It is unfortunate that more effort and care in layout, editing, and proofreading was not expended in the production of this book. That effort could have changed "Monterey Birds" from the good book that it is to the truly excellent book that it is not.—DAVID F. DESANTE.

The marsh hen: a natural history of the Clapper Rail of the Atlantic coast salt marsh.—Brooke Meanley. 1985. Centreville, Maryland, Tidewater Publishers. 123 pp., 33 photos, 7 drawings (6 by John W. Taylor), 3 maps. ISBN 0-87033-332-1. Paper, \$8.95.—The Clapper Rail is as much a symbol of the salt marsh as cordgrass, and is an integral part of every classical representation of salt-marsh food chains. Yet the Clapper Rail has remained an enigma because of its shy nature. No one is more qualified to reveal the true character of the salt marsh and the Clapper Rail than Brooke Meanley. He has spent most of his career working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the salt marshes of the Chesapeake Bay country and Atlantic coast. Before that, he worked with the King Rail in the rice fields of Arkansas and Louisiana. He discovered that King and Clapper rails hybridize in the brackish waters where their habitats meet, and presented us with the taxonomic problem of one or two species. Retirement has given him more time for writing, and this is his latest of a series of books on marshlands, swamps, and their birds. The book is attractive, easy to read, and informative. It is covered by a marsh hen painting by John W. Taylor, and contains a well-balanced number of photos and drawings. The writing style is easy and entertaining. I especially enjoyed the colorful and well-defined colloquialisms “coasters” use to describe the marsh. The book is essentially free of errors; I found but one misspelling: “certian” for “certain” (p. 40). The book begins with the ecology of the rail, includes habitat, associated species, and feeding behavior, and then covers the annual cycle, including arrival, breeding, nesting, fall migration, and mortality. The text is well documented with data and references that do not detract from the flow of reading. The last portion contains four appendices of particular interest to professionals: descriptions of subspecies, sexing and aging, methods of capturing, and methods of censusing. The last appendix contains an appraisal of the use of tape-recorded calls, which have given inconsistent results. My only objections are perhaps based on personal preference. I was disappointed to see some of the same photographs previously published in technical papers, especially those on King Rails. Most of the photographs are excellent, but two (Figs. 2 and 6) were sharper and had better contrast in their original publication. My last objection is a compliment. The book is brief and I would have been willing to pay more for a longer one. In view of the enjoyable writing style, attractive layout, and modest price, I would highly recommend this book to anyone with a casual to a professional interest in salt-marsh or rail ecology.—GERALD W. KAUFMANN.

Guide des passereaux granivores. Embérizinés.—Gilbert C. Armani. 1985. Paris, Société nouvelle des éditions Boubée. 416 pp., 28 color plates. ISBN

2-85004-045-2. 230 F.—This is the second book of three planned to deal with the granivorous passerines. This one is concerned with the emberizines. A monograph on the fringillines, carduelines, and cardinals appeared in 1983; one on the world estrildids and ploceids has yet to appear. These are birds familiar to many aviculturists. One might hope through reading such monographs to become better acquainted with the life histories and natural habitats of the numerous and highly diversified granivorous passerines. These expectations are fully borne out in this book on the world emberizines.

The book consists essentially of descriptive accounts for all the known species of emberizines (as delineated in vol. 8 of Peters' "Check-list of the Birds of the World"), including Darwin's finches. Descriptions of the granivorous drepanids are included "for comparative purposes." In little less than one page per species, Armani succinctly describes the various plumages (including intraspecific variation), voice, habitat, and various life-history traits related to the species' general behavior, nidification, and migratory activities. The distribution of each species is outlined in the main text as well as in synoptic tables at the end of the work. Finally, every species is depicted on over 25 full-page color plates.

The book is intended to be a reference work concerned with factual information on the emberizines. It is based essentially on notes taken in the field and from museum specimens studied by the author, his father, and grandfather. As a result, the book's bibliography is severely limited and of little utility, being comprised of regional guides and monographs. Yet the book comprises original information about songs, nests, and eggs. The song descriptions are extremely difficult to use, however. There is no systematic treatment of the group of any kind.

The book recalls many of the more recent field guides from the most biologically diverse regions of the world (incidentally, all are rather thick). The idea of a worldwide field guide of the granivorous passerines is manageable because they share a common feature, the finchlike bill, that distinguishes them from almost every other passerine. I can think of only a few other taxa with a similar distinctive character that would be missing from the present series, including some icterids and thraupines. As traveling becomes easier and birdwatchers more specialized, such a guide is a most likely outcome. Unfortunately, no attempt was made in this guide to specify identification marks, an especially acute problem for the females and juveniles of many species that are not depicted. Further, the illustrations are not grouped according to overall similarity or geographical distribution. Presumed cases of plumage (and song) convergence and parallelism reported in this group of birds are not dealt with in any significant way in the text.

The book itself (as opposed to its contents) is not

without problems. The text is not organized effectively, with considerable wasted space. More importantly, there are numerous typographical errors in the text, including many scientific names. This is unfortunate as it undermines what is overall a potentially valuable contribution.

The author should be congratulated for his fine work, especially the quality of the plates. These paintings are a great achievement for a presumed beginner. Even the drab North American sparrows have been successfully represented on its plates. The entire work is a testimony to one man's dedication.—**JOCELYN HUDON.**

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Tales of a low-rent birder.—Pete Dunne. 1986. New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press. 157 pp. ISBN 0-8135-1139-9. \$15.95.—Pete Dunne has combined 19 essays of varying length into an entertaining and readable book. In these tales about birds, birding, and birders, Dunne has captured many of the feelings that make birding special. Some of the essays are serious and deal with sensitive issues, such as the origin of the mentality behind hawk gunning. Here Dunne shows remarkable open-mindedness in acknowledging the "truths" and "logic" behind the belief systems of the gunners. Other essays are humorous or satirical, and the object of the humor is often the die-hard lister. A few of the essays are simply interesting anecdotes. All the essays have several things in common—they are well written, entertaining, and involve, in at least some way, the Cape May Bird Observatory. Almost any ornithologist or naturalist would enjoy this book.—**BRAD G. HILL.**

Der Uhu (The Owl).—Rudolf Piehocki and Robert März. 1985. Wittenberg Lutherstadt, East Germany, A. Ziemsen Verlag. 128 pp., 43 figures, 19 tables. ISSN 0138-1423. No price given.—An extraordinarily detailed account of the life history of the Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*). The material is focused on southern Germany, but details of the entire range and characteristics of all subspecies are included. The entire life cycle is treated and covers maintenance activities, breeding behavior, reproduction, diseases, demographics, ecology, adaptations for hunting, diet composition, and conservation.

The book is the result of over 50 years of labor by März, who died in 1979. Piehocki was responsible for the organization and writing. The text is in German with no English summary.—**A.H.B.**

Annotated checklist of the birds of Hong Kong.—M. L. Chambers. 1986. Hong Kong, Hong Kong Bird

Watching Society. 279 pp., 190 figures, plus unnumbered drawings. Order from the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, P.O. Box 12460, G.P.O., Hong Kong. HK\$65.00 (US\$8.50).—This is the fourth edition of the handy volume. The figures are mostly frequency histograms of the seasonal occurrence of individual species. Several figures summarize passage periods of migrants. The species are arranged taxonomically, but each species is numbered; there are 925 total. Category A, which includes species "recorded in an apparently wild state in Hong Kong within the last fifty years," has 380 entries. Categories B-P include species of less certain status. The species numbers are used for indexing.

Each entry includes information on status, dates, breeding localities (there were 8 survey areas), and recent changes in status. Species names are given in Chinese characters, and vernacular names follow previous lists. Publication was supported by the World Wildlife fund.—**A.H.B.**

Handbuch der Vögel mitteleuropas. Vol. 10, Passeriformes.—Urs N. Glutz von Blotzheim (Ed.). 1985. Wiesbaden, Germany, AULA-Verlag. **Part I (Alaudidae-Hirundinidae)**, 507 pp., DM 139; **Part II (Motacillidae-Prunellidae)**, 667 pp., DM 196.—These two books continue the high standards set in the previous volumes. The editor has managed and organized the work of the contributors such that each species account is timely, accurate, and complete. There are four more volumes in preparation to cover the Passeriformes. Part I includes a bibliography of worldwide handbooks and related volumes on birds, and a short, technical glossary. The introductory chapter is rich in general information that includes a family key and color illustrations of nestlings.

The bulk of the text is devoted to species accounts. These include identification, particularly morphology, molt, voice, behavior, breeding data, occurrence, and detailed natural history. There are 209 figures that illustrate nests, behavior, intraspecific variation, plumage features, and morphological details. There are distribution maps for some superspecies groups and histograms of seasonal occurrence. A variety of calls are illustrated with spectrograms.

This series, in German, continues to set the standard for works of its type. The depth of detail is awesome (drawings of Barn Swallows diving, bathing, feeding, copulating, and feeding young—all on the wing!), and the documentation thorough. There is a species index and an index to German and English names. The series should be in every reference library or collection, but is immensely useful to anyone interested in these families as many have a broad distribution and the information is useful throughout the Holarctic. They are a browser's delight.—**A.H.B.**

George Lodge.—John Savory (Ed.). 1986. Dover, New Hampshire, Tanager Books. 118 pp., 37 color plates, 73 text figures. ISBN 0-88072-074-3. \$39.50.—A biography of the artist who, at age 82, created the illustrations for "The Birds of the British Isles." Lodge (b. 1860) was an artist and naturalist who specialized

in birds, especially raptors and game birds. The chapters, by various authors, include a biography, an analysis of his work, his relation to falconers, and a discussion of methods in book illustration.

The color plates are excellent.—A.H.B.

The Editorial Office continually receives material for review. A portion of this material is inappropriate for detailed comment for a variety of reasons. However, because it may be of general biological, but not specific ornithological, interest or potentially of only limited readership, it is not reviewed. As a service to our readers, occasionally these items will be listed briefly.—A.H.B.

Sex in nature. C. Catton and J. Gray. 1985. New York, Facts on File. 224 pp. ISBN 0-8160-1294-6. \$19.95.

Ecological study of bird hazards at Indian aerodromes, phase II. S. Ali and R. B. Grubh. 1984(?). Bombay, Bombay Natural History Society. 96 pp.

Confessions of a Scilly birdman. D. Hunt. 1985. Dover, New Hampshire, Longwood. 176 pp. ISBN 0-7099-3768-7. \$12.95.

Bird watching with Ben. B. Gelman. 1985. Carbondale, Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press. 200 pp. ISBN 0-8093-1222-0. \$9.95.

The wildlife gardener. J. V. Dennis. 1985. New York, Alfred A. Knopf. 293 pp. ISBN 0-394-5382-0. \$17.95.

Art of birds. P. Neruda (translated by J. Schmitt). 1985. Austin, University of Texas Press. 87 pp. ISBN 0-292-70371-6. \$14.95.

Environmental quality. Council on Environmental Quality. 1985(?). Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office. 719 pp.

Entre le Sahara et la Sibérie. G. C. Boere and W. J. Wolf. 1985. The Netherlands, La Fondation WIWO. 31 pp. HFL 5.

Restoring the Earth. J. J. Berger. 1986. Alfred A. Knopf. 241 pp. ISBN 0-394-52372-5. \$18.95.

Ecological knowledge and environmental problem solving. Commission on Life Sciences, National Research Council. 1986. Washington, D.C., National Academy Press. xi + 388 pp. ISBN 0-309-03645-3. \$24.50.

Owls — lords of darkness, Woodpeckers — nature's hammer heads, and Feathered jewels. M. Stouffer. 1985. Aspen, Colorado, Stouffer Productions. (Videotapes prepared for the PBS "Wild America" series.)