sechellensis; Komdeur 1992, 1994; Komdeur et al. 1997) is, of course, not mentioned. Many other important omissions from the literature exist given that no references after 1984 are included in the first or second editions. Thus, an important niche remains unfilled.

We need a book for birders and other lay readers that conveys the excitement of the scientific study of bird behavior. A good model for such an approach is a recent treatment of natural selection in the Galapagos finches (Weiner 1994).

There is a sheep-like tendency among ornithologists to play follow-the-leader with regard to the terminology in this field, and I am as guilty as anyone. Consequently, the terms used in this book and elsewhere are not necessarily rational or usefully descriptive. Such terms as "cooperative," "communal breeding," and "helping," are misleading at best. Cooperative breeders are, in some sense, cooperative, but not in breeding. They are rivals with respect to breeding. It is only in the rearing of young (especially their feeding) where one sees "cooperation" or helping. Other species that are not officially "cooperative breeders" actually do cooperate in breeding by giving alarm calls at colonies. Thus, I favor the terms "cooperative rearing" or "helper systems" and have stopped using "cooperative breeding" or "communal breeding."

In summary, owners of the first edition do not need the second edition. Scientists do not need either edition, although the books are rich in references to the very early literature. Some birders and other lay readers may share my disappointment in the lack of coverage of the scientifically exciting aspects of the study of helping behavior.— JERRAM L. BROWN, *Department of Biological Sciences, State University of New York at Albany, Albany, New York 12222, USA.*

LITERATURE CITED

AUSTAD, S. N., AND K. N. RABENOLD. 1985. Reproductive enhancement by helpers and an experimental examination of its mechanism in the Bicolored Wren. Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology 17:18–27.

AUSTAD, S. N., AND K. N. RABENOLD. 1986. Demography and the evolution of cooperative breeding in the Bicolored Wren, *Campylorhynchus griseus*. Behaviour 97:308–324.

BROWN, J. L. 1988. Book review: Helpers at bird's nests: A worldwide survey of cooperative breeding and related behavior. Quarterly Review of Biology 63:247–249.

KOMDEUR, J. 1992. Importance of habitat saturation and territory quality for the evolution of cooperative breeding in the Seychelles Warbler. Nature 358:493–495.

KOMDEUR, J. 1994. The effect of kinship on helping in the cooperative breeding Seychelles Warbler (*Acrocephalus sechellensis*). Proceedings of the Royal Society of London Series B 256:47–59.

KOMDEUR, J., S. DAAN, J. TINBERGEN, AND C. MATEMAN. 1997. Extreme adaptive modification in sex ratio of the Seychelles Warbler's eggs. Nature 385:522–525.

RABENOLD, K. N. 1984. Cooperative enhancement of reproductive success in tropical wren societies. Ecology 65:871–885.

RABENOLD, K. N. 1985. Cooperation in breeding by nonreproductive wrens: Kinship, reciprocity, and demography. Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology 17:1–18.

RABENOLD, P. P., K. N. RABENOLD, W. H. PIPER, J. HAYDOCK, AND S. W. ZACK. 1990. Shared paternity revealed by genetic analysis in cooperatively breeding tropical wrens. Nature 348:538–540.

RABENOLD, P. P., K. N. RABENOLD, W. H. PIPER, AND D. J. MINCHELLA. 1991. Density-dependent dispersal in social wrens: Genetic analysis using novel matriline markers. Animal Behaviour 42: 144–146.

WEINER, J. 1994. The beak of the finch: A story of evolution in our time. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

WILEY, R. H., AND K. N. RABENOLD. 1984. The evolution of cooperative breeding by delayed reciprocity and queuing for favorable social position. Evolution 38:609–621.

The Auk 117(1):273–274, 2000

Helpers at Birds' Nests: A Worldwide Survey of Cooperative Breeding and Related Behavior.—Alexander F. Skutch. 1999. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City. xv + 298 pp., 62 drawings by Dana Gardner, foreword by Stephen T. Emlen. ISBN 0-87745-674-7. Paper, $24.95.—Although touted as "an expanded edition," this volume appears to be identical to that published in 1987, except for a new preface and the addition of Emlen's foreword. The latter, while providing a bit of interesting history, serves the useful, albeit unorthodox, purpose of warning readers against Skutch's treatment of evolutionary theory as it pertains to cooperative breeding. As for the main body of the book, it offers an overview of cooperative breeding that is organized systematically with more detailed summaries of in-depth studies performed on individual species within each group and is uncluttered by statistics, tables, or the usual complications of scientific progress. The bad news is that the book includes only studies available to Skutch when he wrote the first edition in the early 1980s. Consequently, the volume, which was already outdated in 1987 (Mumme, *Auk* 105:402–403, 1988),

is woefully so now. As hard as it is to imagine a book on cooperative breeding published today that fails to cite work by Nick Davies on Dunnocks (*Prunella modularis*), Andrew Cockburn and Steve Pruett-Jones on *Malurus* fairy-wrens, Jan Komdeur on Seychelles Warblers (*Acrocephalus seychellensis*), and Kerry Rabenold on *Campylorhynchus* wrens, here it is. As a result, the book is frighteningly inadequate unless one is aware of how the field has advanced since the book was first written.

This is not to say that the book lacks redeeming features. Skutch is not just a fine naturalist, he is possibly the greatest avian natural historian alive today. The fact that he is still active at 95 is nothing short of amazing. The ornithological community is truly fortunate that he has devoted so much of his life to observing Neotropical birds and that he has made his observations so accessible as a result of his prolific writings. Skutch's contributions are legion and include the first review of cooperative breeding (*Auk* 52:257–273, 1935), which was published long before most of us were born, much less old enough to hold binoculars and write field notes. The multitude of natural history observations reported and summarized in this book are part of his vast legacy and, as such, deserve publication despite the lack of a modern evolutionary perspective. I'd even go so far as to condone a reprint of the original edition, in spite of it being obsolete, as long as the publisher made it clear that this is what it was. However, passing the volume off as "an expanded edition" when nothing substantive had been expanded is sleazy. I can only recommend it if (1) you don't have the 1987 edition, and (2) you have a shelf of "Skutchiana" that needs filling out.—WALT KOENIG, *Hastings Reservation, University of California, 38601 East Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley, California 93924, USA.*

The Auk 117(1):274–276, 2000

The American Robin.—Roland H. Wauer. 1999. University of Texas Press. Austin. x + 93 pp., 14 color plates, 1 table, 2 maps. ISBN 0-292-79123-2. Cloth, $17.95.—The American Robin is No. 39 in the slim, elegant volumes of natural history in the Corrie Herring Hooks Series by the University of Texas Press. Wauer's book, like others in this series, is written for a lay audience and summarizes the natural history of America's "most visible and beloved songbird," the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). Throughout the book, the author successfully weaves together personal observations, scientific facts, and obscure tidbits of information that make *The American Robin* delightful reading. Its relatively short length and clear, concise writing make it easy material to absorb. I would recommend the book to anyone who is interested in a basic introduction to robin natural history. The book is composed of 10 chapters, each of which addresses different aspects of robin biology ranging from basic descriptions of appearance to the robin's enemies and threats.

In Chapter 1, the author introduces the robin as America's most well-known songbird: "It is as American as apple pie, baseball, and the Stars and Stripes." Our familiarity with this species stems from the widespread distribution of robins throughout North America and their successful adaptability to human-dominated landscapes. Wauer reminds us that we have all experienced close encounters with robins, whether watching them hunt earthworms on our lawns or listening to their cheerful and familiar song. The author provides some of his own interesting experiences with robins that caused him to take up birding as a hobby and natural history as a career (he is a retired National Park Service park interpreter, scientist, and resource specialist). As a result, he refers to the robin as his "spark bird." The introductory chapter concludes with a section on the robin's "claim to fame" by mentioning some well-known popular references to the species, such as the color "robin's-egg blue," and song titles, lyrics, and numerous nursery rhymes that refer to robins. Unfortunately, as the author correctly acknowledges, the cited nursery rhymes most likely refer to the unrelated European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*).

Chapter 2 is brief and offers facts and fiction about robins, including some useful information such as estimated life span, wingspan, body mass, and clutch size. Wauer also provides some interesting (not-so-useful?) and hard-to-find tidbits, such as the fact that the robin has approximately 2,900 feathers on its body (how did he know this?)! I was also unclear on how to interpret the fact that 2,200 to 3,300 cycles per second reportedly have been found in the robin's song. This section would have been more useful if metric measurements had also been provided, especially because mass is given in both ounces and grams a few pages later in the book (p. 13). The next section addresses the derivation of the robin's name, which I found to be an interesting interpretation. I had always thought the American Robin was given its name by the British because its red breast reminded them of the European Robin back home. According to Wauer, however, it was the American Robin's behavior, rather than its plumage, that reminded early settlers of the European Robin. The scientific name, *Turdus migratorius*, is well described in a simple and accurate manner. The chapter ends by providing numerous excerpts from historical legends and folklore that mention the robin. I found "nonscientific" inclusions like these to be particularly interesting and to greatly enhance the readability of the book. The chapter's final quote from Shake-