

as 11 to 14 days on page 62, yet 11 to 13 days on page 55. Published studies actually document an incubation period of 12 to 13 days or 12 to 14 days, depending on geographic location. The penultimate section of this chapter addresses care of young and makes for a delightful combination of scientific facts, fascinating tidbits, and well-written prose. I enjoyed learning things like "by the last day in the nest, a young robin may eat 14 feet of earthworms" and that several other bird species have been documented feeding young robins, both in and out of the nest! The final section in Chapter 7 on "associates" has limited usefulness, in my opinion, and is an unnecessary inclusion in what is already a relatively lengthy chapter.

Chapter 8 describes enemies and threats of robins and is packed with detailed information. The chapter contains seven sections: predators, competitors, brood parasites, overindulgence, weather, diseases, and human-caused deaths. The section on predators is a good one, despite going off on a tangent about a "Dear Abby" column concerning house cat reproduction. The sections on competitors and brood parasites are succinct and solid contributions to the chapter. The section on overindulgence captures the well-known observation of drunken robins that have ingested too much overripe (fermenting) fruit. The section on threats from weather includes an interesting example of mortality from a tornado, as well as a well-chosen quote from Leopold's (1966) "A Sand County Almanac." Robin deaths from disease are difficult to detect. As a result, the next section on diseases considers songbirds in general, but nevertheless is an excellent summary of available information. The use of cited literature is especially good in this section. Wauer begins the final section of this chapter, on human-caused deaths, by reminding us that such deaths are not only senseless, they are also illegal. This section is also enjoyable reading as it moves from a historical perspective to an elaborate discussion of the more recent devastating effects of DDT. It was the robin that became the symbol of the fight to stop the use of this deadly chemical, and the link between earthworm immunity to DDT and robin deaths is well made.

The author nears the end of the book (Chapter 9) with several suggestions on how to invite robins to your home. After reading about the natural history of the robin, I think this is a wonderful attempt to involve the lay audience in providing food, water, and nesting platforms for this species in their own backyards. The American Robin is not my "spark bird" (having grown up with the European Robin in my backyard), but building a nest box as a young child and watching a pair of birds (in my case, Eurasian Kestrels [*Falco tinnunculus*]) use it to successfully raise brood after brood had a significant influence on my choice of career. The author's early encounters with robins clearly show through in his en-

thusiasm for others to have similar personal experiences. Finally, although the artificial diet referred to by the author that was used in the 1960s probably worked perfectly well, a more recently developed banana-soy-protein-fruit diet ("banana mash") has become a standard for feeding robins during behavioral observations in captivity.

The final chapter (Chapter 10) provides highlights from the book with a one-page summary of the robin's characteristic features, adaptability, and familiarity that make it North America's most widespread, visible, and beloved songbird. As such, it is a fitting close to a fascinating book. Following the closing chapter is a bibliography that allows the reader to follow up on references to previous works that are made throughout the book. Although many of the references in the text are made only casually (often, only names are provided, but not dates), the reader should have little trouble identifying the corresponding citation in the bibliography. Finally, the color photographs throughout the book are excellent and enhance its appearance and readability considerably. This book belongs in all university and community libraries, as well in the personal collections of ornithologists interested in learning more about the basic natural history of the American Robin.—  
 REX SALLABANKS, *Sustainable Ecosystems Institute, 30 East Franklin Road, Suite 50, Meridian, Idaho 83642, USA.*

---

*The Auk* 117(1):276–277, 2000

**A Guide to the Birds and Mammals of Coastal Patagonia.**—Graham Harris. 1998. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. xviii + 231 pp., 33 color plates, 30 figures, 251 distribution maps. ISBN 0-691-05831-8. Cloth, \$65.00.—This interesting book is a hybrid in several ways. Its hard cover and size render it rather awkward as a field guide, but it is a nice addition to a personal bookshelf. Its scope encompassing birds and mammals renders it "half interesting" to pure ornithologists or to pure mammalogists. Contents include descriptions, status, and ranges of terrestrial and marine birds and mammals, all elements useful for bird watchers and whale watchers. The book provides insightful comments on habitat and behavior, areas of much interest to ecologists. Its concentration on the coastal strip of Patagonia provides a detailed picture of that specific meeting of sea and land but consequently fails at setting a proper biogeographic context. In addition, its small print throughout is an insult to the tired eyes of bird watchers and reviewers alike. Although I read

the entire book, I will comment only on the part specific to birds.

The presentation of birds follows that of Meyer de Schauensee, with some updates in nomenclature (and a few misspellings). Each species account contains a serviceable description, a welcome section on typical behaviors (illustrated when deemed necessary), a useful summary of abundance and resident status, a depiction of the distributional range (complemented by rather small maps), and sometimes a note about cues that enable one to distinguish some species from other very similar ones. Each account has a referral to a color plate, with rather competent drawing and coloring.

First, there are very few typographical errors. An embarrassing one is the misspelling of wing "converts" (coverts) in the plate for Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*). The Description section of each species account is helpful and easy to understand. Providing measurements of birds in both inches and centimeters was a very good idea. There are a few inconsistencies when judging size, such as when two birds are of the same size but one is labeled "small" and the other "very small." The Behavior section is a treasure chest of keen natural history observations. I found it useful not only for the basic information provided, but also in the complementary description of some peculiar habits of each bird. The Status and Habitat section is informative but with a few misleading exceptions, such as the statement that the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) "needs trees for perching." The Range section is generally accurate, except for some species such as the Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*), which is depicted as ranging into the southwestern United States without mention of the southeastern United States. The Similar Species section is useful but sparse, thus giving the impression that there should not be much fear of confusing bird species in coastal Patagonia.

I have some praises and complaints with respect to the color plates. I like very much the idea of presenting several positions of the bird in focus (e.g. in flight, standing) and showing, of course, any differences between males and females, adults and sub-adults, as well as different color morphs if they exist. On the negative side, Darwin's Tinamou (*Nothura darwinii*) and Elegant Crested-Tinamou (*Eudromia elegans*) are both said to have very short legs, but the drawings show a noticeably longer-legged aspect for the latter. No mention is made of the fact that the only *Podilymbus* species in the area differs from the rather similar *Podiceps* species by the former having black eyes and latter red ones. The same applies to the difference between red-eyed adult Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and yellow-eyed juveniles, and to red-eyed male Rosy-billed Pochards (*Netta peposaca*) and black-eyed females. The Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) is said to

have a yellow bill, but in the drawing the bill is pink. Similarly, we are told that the Silver Teal (*Anas versicolor*) has a black beak with an orange base, but in the drawing the base is yellow. Only the male Green-backed Firecrown (*Sephanoides sephanoides*) is shown, and not the crown-dimorphic female. And only the male Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*) is shown. What does the female look like? We are also told that the male Ringed Kingfisher (*Ceryle torquata*) has a rufous breast and belly and that the female has a gray breast, but in the plate the breast color is red. The White-crested Tyrannulet (*Serpophaga subcristata*) is said to be pale gray below but is depicted as bright yellow. The captions for Black-chinned Siskin (*Carduelis barbata*) and for Grassland Yellow-finch (*Sicalis luteola*) seem to be transposed with respect to the drawings, at least for the males. In a different vein, a couple of plates are so overcrowded with species that it is difficult to figure out the birds' markings (particularly plate 11, and to some extent, plate 17).

The book ends with an Appendix of accidental records and sightings, and another with recommended reading, the last of which I found most wanting and very idiosyncratic in the number and type of references cited. A Glossary of terms follows, which I also think should have been more thoroughly chosen. A Bibliography comes next, which I found to be deficient and very biased. Without any headers, 251 maps follow, packed at six per page, describing in dark and light gray the ranges of the species discussed in the main text. Unfortunately, one has to go back to page 6 to find the key for the dark and light shading (breeding and nonbreeding range, respectively). I take issue with some of the ranges reported, particularly with those of *Circus buffoni*, *Thripophaga modesta*, and *Agelaius thilius* on the western edges of their ranges. Finally, a serviceable index presents English, Latin, and Spanish order and species names of birds.

I am somewhat puzzled as to the intended readership for this book. It is midway between a field guide and an annotated account of birds and mammals of a non-biogeographical region. Having personal long-term interests on everything that has to do with Patagonia, I will stock this book with others dealing with that region. However, I am reluctant to recommend it as a pocket field guide to the birds of coastal Patagonia. It won't fit in any pocket, but it may provide a wonderful filling-in of details back in your tent or guest room once you know what birds you have seen. If you are intent on knowing Patagonia and its critters, I think this is a good book for a personal library. If you are a great fan of Patagonia for traveling or researching, I recommend that you purchase it.—FABIAN M. JAKSIĆ, *Departamento de Ecología, Universidad Católica de Chile, Casilla 114-D, Santiago, CP 6513677, Chile.*