

BOOK REVIEW:

FLIGHT IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN RAPTORS

R. F. Porter, Ian Willis, Steen Christensen, and Bent Pors Nielsen. Published by T. & A. D. Poyser, 281 High Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, England HP4 1AJ. September 1974. 25.5 x 16 cm. Over 450 illustrations. 189 pp., 80 pls. £4.80.

This splendid new book will be an indispensable part of the luggage of all ornithologists visiting Europe. It is far and away the best book yet published on the subject. The fact that it cannot be crammed into one's vest pocket is amply compensated for by much larger and more detailed illustrations than found in most field guides. Furthermore, it has the considerable advantage that the drawings are complementary to the text; one is saved the tiresome job of looking for the plate, then trying to find the relevant reading matter ten pages further on.

The authors not only supply a great wealth of information on the problems of identification of the 38 different species of European raptors but also include notes on behavioral patterns and habitats. Buzzards and eagles, probably the most difficult to identify owing to individual plumage variations and the number of species involved, are dealt with in a very thorough manner.

Even the falconer will find much of interest. The Lanner and Saker Falcons (so often thought of as African species), are included. The Gyrfalcon is dealt with as one species (*Falco rusticolus*) having three color phases, rather than in the old-fashioned and often inadequate system of numerous races.

My sole criticism is but a small one: there is no mention of the pale buff terminal band on the tail of the eyass Peregrine which is a useful way of spotting an immature in bad light.

At the rear of the book there are some 80 pages of photographs of birds of prey in flight, including particularly fine shots of eagles. The layout of the material is excellent. All that is needed is a ticket to the Bosphorous to try it out. *R. B. Treleaven, Rockmount, Launceston, Cornwall, England.*

[Editor's note: This volume has gone out of print, but the publisher says a revision will be out in spring 1976.]