

Recent books and recordings

The Barn Owl.—D.S. Bunn, A.B. Warburton, R.D.S. Wilson. Buteo Books, Vermillion, S.D. 1982. 264 pp. 31 black-and-white photos. Color frontispiece. \$32.50 (hardbound). Another extremely articulate monograph from Great Britain. This study is the result of almost 40 years of field work by the authors and incorporates detailed knowledge and observations by Barn Owl authorities in the United States and Europe. The tone of the work is thoughtful, even, and erudite. Topics covered include general behavior, breeding biology, distribution in the British Isles, and especially interesting sections covering the amazing auditory apparatus of the species and an account and explanation of its unexpected vocal variations, *i.e.*, screeching, wailing, purring, snoring, hissing, chattering, tongue-clicking (bill-clacking), and wing-clapping. The authors' intimate association with *Tyto alba* in laboratory and the wild have prompted them to compare, where appropriate, the behavior of the race in Britain with that of subspecies in other areas of the world and this rounds out the thoroughgoing treatment of an excellent single-species study. Upwards of 15 line drawings by Ian Willis enhance the visual aspect of the book.—S.R.D.

Behavioral Energetics . . . The Cost of Survival in Vertebrates.—Wayne P. Aspey and Sheldon I. Lustick (eds). Ohio State Univ. Press, Columbus. 1983. 300 pp. \$27.50 (hardbound). A collection of nine papers delivered at the Seventh Annual Biosciences Colloquium, October 30–November 1, 1980, the topic of which was the book's title. These papers examine recent important theories on the cost in energy of animals migrating, acting aggressively, foraging optimally, maintaining thermal balance, and reproducing. Of special interest will be papers entitled *Oriental Strategies in Birds: A Tribute to W.T. Keeton*, *Economics of Foraging Strategies in Sunbirds and Hummingbirds*, and *Cost-Benefit of Thermoregulation in Birds: Influences of*

Posture, Microhabitat Selection, and Color. All of the papers are absorbing.—S.R.D.

Bird Habitats in Britain.—R. J. Fuller, T. & A. D. Pouser Ltd., distributed by Buteo Books, Vermillion, S. D. 1982. 320 pp., 32 black-and-white plates, 79 figures, 55 tables, 53 black-and-white drawings by Donald Watson. \$35.00 (hardbound). In 1977, *A Nature Conservation Review* was published, which identified many of the most important natural and semi-natural ecosystems and the plants and animal communities associated with them in Britain. This review would have been impossible without *The Register of Ornithological Sites*, which listed and documented sites which were considered to have major ornithological

value. Most of the information, one should carefully note, was gathered and written up by amateur birders. *Bird Habitats in Britain* further develops, specifically for birds, the theme of *A Nature Conservation Review*. To the extent that it identifies the habitats of concern to conservationists and land preservationists it is a landmark for nature conservation in Britain. Comparisons are made between habitats in terms of the species they may support. Conclusions are drawn concerning what species are affected by changes in land use. The book is useful for its clarity and is immensely readable. This is a valuable contribution to conservation literature.—S.R.D.

Birding in Seattle and King County—Site Guide and Annotated List.—Eugene S. Hunn. Seattle Audubon Society, 2506 22nd Avenue East, 98112. 1982. xiv + 160 pp. Ill.: 22 maps, by Brian Vanderburg photographs, charts, \$7.50 softbound. The author is one of our valued Regional Editors, so we'd better say something nice about this



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book. Actually, we'd say nice things about it regardless; it is a very professional and comprehensive guide to birding in this interesting area: Seattle and its "backyard suburbs." Introductory chapters on the area and its problems, on how to begin birdwatching, on Hunn's eleven recognised habitats and a checklist are followed by a birding Baedeker with excellent maps, followed by a chapter on the patterns of occurrence with bar-charts by families or groups, each with space devoted to the more usual species and the rarities. Chapters on other living things (mammals and trees), and on special birding projects are followed by an excellent bibliography. For the visitor, a must. For the native birdwatcher, an expansion of horizons. Recommended.—R.A.

Birds of the North Solomons.—Don Hadden. Wau Ecology Institute, Box 77, Wau, Papua New Guinea. Available from Bishop Museum Press, Box 19000-A, Honolulu, HA 96819. 1981. ix + 109 pp. 24 color plates (photographs), map. softbound \$9.50. This is a little field guide to the birds of these

equatorial islands (mainly Bougainville and Buka). Hadden's data updates Mayr's and others' publications on the area, and includes description and pictures of an as-yet undescribed "Thicket Warbler" of uncertain affiliations. Of the 155 species listed, no less than 26 are endemic to the Solomons, and many others to the nearby Bismarcks and the Solomons.—R.A.

Birds of Tropical America.—Alexander E. Skutch, Ill. drawings by Dana Gardner, photos. xii + 320 pp. Univ. of Texas Press, Austin. Apr. 1, 1983. \$29.95. No one on earth has devoted more years to the intensive observation of the life histories of birds, and no one has written their biographies more beautifully than the sage of Finca Los Cosingos, San Isidro, Costa Rica. The present volume is a collection, somewhat abridged, of 34 studies published over the last 40 years. Dr. Skutch is this year's winner of the John Burroughs Medal for nature writing; this book will amply demonstrate why. The University of Texas Press is to be congratulated for presenting, in so attractive a form, so eloquent a book.—R.A.

The Birdwatcher's Companion, An Encyclopedic Handbook of North American Birdlife.—Christopher Leahy. Ill. Gordon Morrison. Hill & Wang, New York. 1982. x + 928 pp. \$29.50. This is the second recent encyclopedia on birds and the birdlife of North America (the A.O.U. 5th Edition area). In 1980 John Terres presented us with his monumental 1109-page, lavishly-illustrated, million-word tome (*Am. Birds* 34:940, 1980) and one would have thought that would take care of this genre for many years to come. But Leahy's effort, already well-advanced, was not to be forestalled, and now we can appreciate that two can be better than one. The present work may not be monumental, but it is vastly impressive. It is lesser in words, pages, illustrations, color, heft, and half the cost of the Terres. But it is superb reading—less formal, better organized for quick reference, more personal, often provocative, amusing, even irreverent. The choice of emphasis and entries differs in the two works. Terres includes sketches on each of the species on the list; Leahy wisely omits these and gives space to a variety on topics of special interest to bird watchers not found in Terres. Know what a Caladrius was? An isophene is? Who Kittlitz was? What a "Comic" Tern is? Appendix I is a keyed checklist, but conforms neither to the 5th or 6th A.O.U. lists. Appendix II lists 140 species of vagrants to North America, with notations. Appendix III is a birdfinding guide and directory. A comprehensive 74-page bibliography is grouped by subject matter, a great boon. If you took our advice you already have Terres as your standard reference, now slip the Leahy between it and your Landsborough-Thomson, but first read it from cover to cover.—R.A.

Falkland Island Birds.—Robin W. Woods, an Anglia 'Survival' Book. Anthony Nelson, Oswestry, Shropshire, England. 1982. Ill. photographs, endpaper maps. £ 8.50, hardbound. 111 pp. An abridged version of Woods' full-length treatise of 1975, intended as a pocket field guide, with habitat table, checklist. Included are 32 pp. of excellent color photographs by Cindy Buxton and Annie Price, of the Anglia Television team. For your next visit.—R.A.



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A Field Guide to the Birds of Japan.—Text by eight authors. Ill. 537 species in color by Shinji Takano. Dist. maps by Nobuyuki Monna. Wild Bird Society of Japan. 1982. 336 pp. in English. Available from L.A. Audubon Soc., 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 90046. \$26.50 postpaid. This is the first "quality" field guide to the birds of Japan (it will also be useful in Alaska), patterned on the map-and-text-opposite-plates format, with Peterson "arrows" added. Species treatments include 3 names: English, scientific, phonetic Japanese, plus size, descriptions, similar species, voice, and status. Supporting sections include a checklist, illustrated tips on identification, a bibliography, an illustrated bird finding guide, and location maps. This is a well-produced, attractive, and indeed indispensable guide for the English-speaking visitor. Reflection: the list of vagrant passerines from North America is only four species—all sparrows: White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Fox and Savannah! But there must be more.—R.A.

Flight of the Storm Petrel.—Ronald M. Lockley. Paul S. Eriksson, Middlebury, Vt. Ill. 80 drawings by Noel S. Cusa, maps. March, 1983. 192 pp. \$16.95 clothbound. This articulate and intelligent study considers the 21 species of the family *Hydrobatidae*, but its first half concerns solely the life history of the British Storm Petrel, *Hydrobates pelagicus*, which the author began studying in 1927 on his island of Skokholm in the Irish Sea. Here Lockley gives us an intimate look at this tiny seabird from return to the colony in spring through the departure of the last fledgling. The last half of this worthy book is concerned with the other storm petrels, 12 of which will be included in the forthcoming 6th Edition of our Check-list, and one of which, Wilson's Storm Petrel, *Oceanites oceanicus*, Lockley considers "the hardest small bird in the world." Much of the material here is derived from other sources, but all of it written with Lockley's style and verve, which seems little diminished over the years—forty since his highly-regarded "Shearwaters." Some

may find Lockley too anecdotal and overly anthropomorphic (he imagines dialogues between mated birds, or between petrel and man) but this is merely the salt and pepper on the solid meat of science. Recommended.—R.A.

John Gould, The Bird Man . . . A Chronology and Bibliography.—Gordon C. Sauer. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS. 1982. xxiv + 416 pp., 80 black-and-white figures, 36 color plates. \$65.00 (hardbound). A learned, richly detailed, comprehensive reference work on the life, works, family, associates and times of the ornithologist/artist, John Gould. It is written with an unmistakably American voice and an eye for detail and is the culmination of more than 30 years of research. One of the satisfying aspects of the book is that the author places his subject in historical context. Gould (1804-1881) was born when King George III reigned in England, Thomas Jefferson was President of the United



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BIRDS OF TROPICAL AMERICA

by Alexander F. Skutch

Drawings by Dana Gardner

Among the thirty-four species of tropical American birds whose biographies fill this book are toucans, motmots, jacamars, tinamous, puffbirds, and potoos—birds whose very names evoke visions of the grand, mysterious forests of Central and South America and the fascinating feathered creatures who dwell there. For over five decades Skutch spared no effort to learn all he could about them as living creatures. His lovely, poignant accounts of their lives are equaled by the drawings of talented young artist Dana Gardner and by splendid photographs by the author himself.

Write for other books by Alexander F. Skutch



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States and London had a total population of just under one million. By the time he died the telegraph, cable, typewriter and telephone were all in use, England had become a powerful industrial nation and the population in the United States had increased 15-fold. Gould lived through an era during which Charles Darwin wrote *Origin of the Species*, and John James Audubon, and Edward Lear lived and died. The emphasis in ornithology was tending away from morphology and systematics and approaching behavioral research. The material presented is divided in four major sections: genealogy of Gould and his wife, Elizabeth Coxen Gould; Gould's major published works; chronology of the life and works of Gould; bibliography of Gould, his family and associates. Sauer's scholarship is the literary equivalent of a triple somersault with a jackknife bend off the high board. The 36 color plates are splendidly reproduced. For the art-and ornithologist-historian this is required reading.—S.R.D.

The Kingfisher.—David Boag. Ill. 66 color photographs by the author. Blandford Press. In U.S., Sterling Publishing, 2 Park Ave., New York. 1982. viii + 120 pp. = viii + 120 pp. \$17.95. This is a little gem of a book about a little gem of a bird, the European Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*. Written in clear and readable style, it covers the life history of this fascinating bird, as observed in England in a 7-year study. Physical description, taxonomy, distribution, flight, vocalizations, territoriality, aggression, courtship, nest-digging, raising the young, fishing technique, food resources, predation, survival, and the kingfisher in myth and legend, all receive the author's careful attention. The illustrations are remarkable: motion-freezing, sharp and bright; an appendix on the photography reveals that Boag owned no camera and was a novice when the study began. This commendable book is one more example of the fine single-species studies coming so frequently from Britain and so rarely from America.—R.A.

Marine Birds and Mammals of Puget Sound.—Tony Angell and Kenneth C. Balcomb III. Washington Sea Grant (available from University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA 98105). 1982. xiii + 145 pp., 32 drawings by T. Angell, 108 bird and 9 marine mammal distribution maps, 11 other maps. \$14.50 U.S. (softbound). This particularly admirable, imaginatively-illustrated book is a vital new source of information and a must for anyone birding in the Puget Sound area. The incomparable richness of the marine life there is detailed as well as the complex dynamics of the entire marine system and the aesthetic quality and tone of the work are marvelously maintained by Tony Angell. The writing style represents another clear triumph for the authors for its crisp vitality and constant alertness to the natural world. Special note should be made of the appendices, which concisely present so much essential information, almost wordlessly, that they alone stand as a graphic *coup*. This book was written for a broad and varied audience and we wish it the success it so obviously deserves.—S.R.D.

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Recordings

Une journée chez les oiseaux.—Pierre Morency, assiste de Raymond Cayouette. La Societé Zoologique de Québec. 1981. 33 rpm, 12", 2 sides. Distribution: Diskade, 2322 rue Sherbrooke est, Montréal H2K 1E5. \$9.98 (Can.). Thirty-nine common species, all but two recorded in Canada, plus a mammal and two amphibians, are heard on this estimable album. To me, the pleasure was enhanced by the sound of eloquent French being spoken elegantly, as Pierre Morency introduced each singer: le Pioui de l'Est, le Goglu, le Merle-bleu à poitrine rouge, and the others. The recordings are immaculate: the cat who owns our house and has never heard or seen an owl was spooked for two hours by the terrifyingly real sounds of the Chouette rayée (*Strix varia*).—R.A.