

BIRDERS' BOOKSHELF

The Distribution of the Birds of California

Joseph Grinnell and Allen H. Miller, 1944. Reprinted (1986) by Artemisia Press, P.O. Box 119, Lee Vining, CA 93541. Hardbound \$25.00, Paperback \$18.00 includes shipping and handling (California residents add 6% sales tax).

IN 1944 THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL society published the classic work, *The Distribution of the Birds of California*, by Joseph Grinnell and Alden H. Miller. Commonly known as "Grinnell and Miller," this book was, for many years, out-of-print, hard to find, and expensive to buy if located . . . until now! In 1986, Grinnell and Miller was reprinted by Artemisia Press and is available at a price far below what one must presently pay for the first edition.

The question most likely asked by birders unfamiliar with this book is whether it is worth purchasing, given that it was published over four decades ago. The answer is yes!! This book has yet to be equalled in its thorough treatment of the geographic distribution of the state's subspecies. The identification of these subspecies is not discussed, but the detailed accounts of their geographic range in the state, accompanied by excellent breeding range maps, are un-

surpassed. The habitat accounts for most species are detailed and excellent. And while there have been major changes in the taxonomy and nomenclature of many of the species since, a new appendix in this high-quality reprint summarizes the differences in nomenclature between that found in Grinnell and Miller with that of the 1983 A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* (6th Edition). Additionally, the thorough species accounts have acted as a "benchmark" for documenting the profound changes which have occurred in the status and distribution of many avian species in the state due, in part, not only to massive habitat alteration and loss, but also to the very significant increase in the number of observers afield. This great upsurge in the number of birders during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s has also been characterized by a change of emphasis in the type of fieldwork carried out from that done in the era of Grinnell and



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