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).

I N 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-

"... a 'benchmark' for documenting the profound changes which have occurred in the status and distribution of many avian species in the state..." 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



Miller. Since 1944, well over 100 species have been added to the California list

"This book has yet to be equalled . . ."

(Grinnell and Miller list only 427 species, but do include 644 species and subspecies!), and much more accurate and complete information on the status of migrant and wintering species, including vagrants, in the state has recently been attained. If you are interested in information on the occurrence of vagrant species, unseasonal records, and in early arrival/late departure dates, this is not the book for you. However, if one is interested in the occurrence and distribution of the state's subspecies in an historical context, then Grinnell and Miller's The Distribution of the Birds of California is unequalled.—P.L.

We thank Paul Lehman for his careful reading and thoughtful book review.



Books for Birders

THE ATLAS OF BREEDING BIRDS **IN NEW YORK STATE**

Edited by ROBERT F. ANDRLE and JANET R. CARROLL. This easy-to-use, generously illustrated, reference gives instant information about 238 birds native to New York State. Eight supplementary acetate map overlays showing ecozones, elevations, mean temperatures, precipitation, potential forest type and forest cover, river systems, and Federal and state wildlife areas and counties may be purchased separately. 250 maps, 242 illustrations, 3 tables. \$29.95. Map overlays \$9.95. Available in June

THE WORLD OF NORTHERN EVERGREENS

By E. C. PIELOU. Noted ecologist E. C. Pielou introduces birders and other nature lovers to the flora and fauna of northern evergreen forests. 140 line drawings. \$10.95 paper; \$36.50 cloth. Available in May

Ibis Books, Now Available from Cornell LIFE OF THE WOODPECKER

By ALEXANDER F. SKUTCH. Illustrated by DANA GARD-NER. In this lavishly illustrated volume, an eminent ornithologist affords us an intimate view of this unusual species. 62 color illustrations, 2 maps. \$49.95

A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO JAPAN

By JANE WASHBURN ROBINSON. Designed to help travelers find their way to Japan's best birding areas, this book offers travel information, tips on adapting to Japanese culture, and detailed site guides. 57 maps. \$14.95 paper

CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS 124 Roberts Place, Ithaca, NY 14850 2 Gene @ 1987 Please send me the following: **Price** Title/Author Subtotal NY State residents please add tax. Postage and handling \$2.50 Total Check enclosed Bill my VISA/Mastercard/AMEX Card number _____ Expir. ____ Signature __ Name Address ____ State ____ Zip City _