

A major advancement for neotropical ornithology

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THIS IS THE FIRST BOOK THAT COVERS all bird species of South America that also gives more than just a description, geographic range, and superficial habitat notes. For the first time in one book, field observers will have available to them notes on behavior, vocalizations, detailed habitat preferences, and descriptions oriented toward field identification, along with geographic range statements that include the latest in new information. The authors of *The Birds of South America, Volume 1: The Oscine Passerines*, have done a meticulous job of incorporating data from the latest literature into their text. This compilation represents a tremendous amount of work and is meritorious in its thoroughness. I also much appreciate the fresh perspective with which they examined South American birds and the interesting notes thereby generated. The "notes" sections contain a wealth of valuable observations on species limits of South American birds that should spawn much subsequent research—these notes alone will make the book valuable to those interested in the species-level relationships of South American birds.

Guy Tudor's illustrations are truly outstanding. In my opinion, and the eyes of most of my colleagues, Tudor is one of the best bird artists today. His striking illustrations accurately portray not only the plumage and shape characters of each species but also convey something of the "personalities" of most of the species—this level of talent is difficult to find. So, I feel that University of Texas Press is privileged to showcase such beautiful work. For many species, Tudor's portraits will be the first to be published,

at least in a modern "guide".

I am extremely impressed with the accuracy of detail in the species accounts—they are useful, complete, accurate, and up-to-date. The range maps, compiled by W.L. Brown, are exemplary in their accuracy and completeness.

Everyone who works with South American birds, whether amateur birder or professional ornithologist, will want a copy. There is no question that this will be a valuable addition to the

library of every Neotropical ornithologist.

I hope that everyone will appreciate the tremendous amount of work that went into its completion. The authors are to be congratulated.

I strongly recommend *The Birds of South America, Volume 1: The Oscine Passerines*.

—Museum of Natural Science,
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Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

Robert Ridgely and Guy Tudor have in tandem met the challenge of creating a four-volume work that details the 3100 resident and migrant bird species of South America. The initial volume, *The Oscine Passerines*, covers more than 700 species of true songbirds. Ridgely's text furnishes exhaustive treatments of the habitat, range, habits, and voices of each species. Tudor's superb plates, arranged to show various relationships of species to each other, provide a definitive visual record of nearly all of the species included. The following eight pages are samples from this book. There are 714 range maps. The book's size is 7 × 9½ inches. In addition to 31 color plates there are six black-and-white line drawings. The publisher of *The Birds of South America* is the University of Texas Press, and the subsequent volumes will be: *The Sub-Oscine Passerines*, *The Non-Passerines (Land Birds)*, *The Non-Passerines (Water Birds)*. *The Birds of South America* will serve both amateur bird students and professionals and

should increase awareness of the continent's magnificent bird life and encourage conservation of these species. Volume One, *The Oscine Passerines*, is available now at a cost of \$65.00.—S. R. Drennan.

