

BOOK REVIEWS—RESEÑAS DE LIBROS—RESENHAS DE LIVROS

Edited by François Vuilleumier

(To whom books for review should be sent)

The Hummingbird Collection in Collegio San Giuseppe (Turin, Italy).—Giorgio Aimassi & Lisa Levi. 1999. *Cataloghi XI*. Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali, Torino (Italy). 190 pp., 24 color plates, 5 text-figures, indexes of scientific and English names. ISBN 88-86041-22-5. Cloth. Available from Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali, Via Giolitti 36, 10123 Torino, Italy. Price: 70,000 Italian Lire (about US\$ 35.00).

Appearing at first sight as an anachronism in today's scientific world, after closer study this book proves to be a very interesting document, a sort of intellectual testament that describes some of the activities of an “overlooked” priest from Italy's Piedmont, Pietro Franchetti (1878–1964), who devoted his spare time and spent his own money in the pursuit of his real passion, natural history. This attractively produced volume, published with great care, under hard cover, and with an elegant dust jacket, is Volume XI of the “*Cataloghi*” (catalogs) edited by the Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali in Turin. In addition to annotated catalogs of some of its holdings, including the book under review here, it is worth noting that this regional museum has also published important congress proceedings (such as the 20th International Congress of Entomology) and a series of 29 monographs ranging from checklists of Neotropical amphibians and reptiles to atlases of Piedmont birds.

The authors of this book, Giorgio

Aimassi, from the Museo Civico “F. Eusebio” in Alba, and Lisa Levi, from the Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali in Turin, have compiled with great erudition the annotated and illustrated catalog of Pietro Franchetti's important collection of Trochilidae, which contains no fewer than 94 genera and 226 species. This is a large number when considering that recent checklists enumerate about 350 species in this family. Aimassi and Levi did not spare their energy in updating the nomenclature of the numerous taxa in the collection and in verifying the identification of all specimens to the species level. Useful nomenclatural and distributional comments are given in 144 footnotes. The twenty-four plates are excellent color photographs, by Guido Fino of the Regional Museum in Turin, that illustrate 96 specimens from the collection. Besides an index to scientific names and an index to English names, the book includes a useful list of references.

Born in Turin “in a wealthy and pious family,” Pietro Franchetti started training for the priesthood when he was 18 and was ordained in 1904 at age 26. However, his deep inclination led him to the natural sciences. After graduation from Turin University in 1915 he taught at several catholic institutions, the last being the Collegio San Giuseppe. In 1945, at the age of 67, Franchetti donated to the Collegio San Giuseppe the “didactic zoological museum” that he had set up at his family's home, the Palazzo Saluzzo di Paesana

in Turin. The jewel of this private museum, which included items from “various sectors of Natural Science, from Mineralogy to Botany and Zoology,” was a collection of hummingbirds gathered in the 1920s and 1930s that comprises 1086 specimens, none of which is a type. To give an idea of the size of Franchetti’s collection, the former exhibition gallery of the National Museum of Natural History in Paris held only 900 specimens.

All birds in the Franchetti collection are mounted, thereby following the tradition of public presentation in general use in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, mounting specimens is not the best thing to do for their long term conservation, nor is it very good for scientific studies. Sadly, few documents have been preserved about the contacts established by Franchetti with museum curators, collectors, and dealers, thus making it nearly impossible to reconstruct how he put the collection together. It is clear, however, that he obtained birds from missionaries, through purchases, through exchanges with various institutions, including museums in Europe and the United States, and through donations. Three individuals have especially contributed to the growth of the Franchetti collection. One, Alfredo Colongo, the son of a Turin industrialist, helped Franchetti purchase specimens and display cases. The second, Mario Simondetti, the scion of a wealthy Turin family, was also the owner of a bird collection. The third, Charles de Fernex, a member of a family of rich Swiss bankers, went on an expedition to Argentina and Paraguay in 1903.

The original labels have very incomplete documentation, generally giving only the country of origin (and sometimes the state within a country) and the name of the person from whom Franchetti obtained given specimens. Precise date and locality information, which are mandatory on modern-day labels, are thus lacking, an unfortunate but normal state of affair found not only in the Bogotá,

Trinidad, and Bahia trade skins in the Franchetti collection, but also, for example, in the 27 specimens that were collected during the Enrico Festa expedition to Ecuador in 1895–1897 (but in this latter instance, it is possible to obtain more locality data than exist on the labels by referring to the publication by Tommaso Salvadori and Enrico Festa (*Bolletino del Museo di Zoologia ed Anatomia Comparata*, Torino 15 [368]: 1–52, 1900).

Pietro Franchetti’s purpose in establishing his collection was not for scientific research, however, but for a didactic exhibit. He wished to illustrate, with birds that are famous for their brilliance, and to which he was certainly sensitive, the diversity and evolutionary radiation within a group that shows great structural homogeneity. To this effect he published in Turin in 1933, in Italian, a 53-page booklet entitled “Trochilidae,” in which he described the biology, systematics, and geographical distribution of hummingbirds. Figure 3 of Aimassi’s and Levi’s book, a black-and-white photograph, shows Pietro Franchetti in his collection in the Palazzo Saluzzo di Paesana, and Figure 5 (in color) illustrates the present display of the collection in Turin’s Collegio San Giuseppe. This book is an homage rendered to Pietro Franchetti’s initiative as a collector and to his qualities as a teacher.

“The Hummingbird Collection in Collegio San Giuseppe” was published simultaneously with a temporary exhibit of hummingbirds in science, art, and fashion, called “Colibri,” that was held from 8 October to 21 November 1999 at the Regional Museum of Natural Sciences in Turin, and that highlighted the Franchetti Collection. As shown in a beautiful brochure tucked in the book, the exhibit evoked the figuration of hummingbirds on Precolombian objects, presented a number of important bird illustrations including the magnificent plates in John Gould’s monograph of the Trochilidae, and displayed the past excesses of European fash-

ion using skins of hummingbirds to make elegant ornaments on women's hats and other garments.

In our age of electronic technology, tissue samples, and DNA sequencing, when museum specimens are all too often devalued in the minds of many people, it is refreshing to open such a book, which reminds us all that collections of bird specimens, even when mounted and when brought together by a humble priest, have been, and can remain, the basis for serious study about the living world. We must be grateful to Giorgio Aimassi and Lisa Levi for bringing this forgotten collection to our attention.—Christian Jouanin, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Zoologie, Mammifères et Oiseaux, 55 rue Buffon, 75005 Paris, France & François Vuilleumier.

Where to Watch Birds in Torres del Paine National Park, Chile: An Identification Guide.—Enrique Couve & Claudio Vidal-Ojeda. 1999. Fantástico Sur, Punta Arenas, Chile. 240 pp., numerous color illustrations, indexes of English, scientific, and Spanish (Chilean) names. ISBN 956-288-256-X. Soft cover. Available from Fantástico Sur Birding & Nature Tours, Magallanes 960, 2nd Floor, P.O. Box 455, Punta Arenas, Chile and from UNORCH (Unión de Ornitólogos de Chile), Casilla 13.183, Santiago-21, Chile. Price: 10,000 Chilean Pesos (about US\$ 20).

This small volume by Enrique Couve and Claudio Vidal aims “to promote birdwatching” [in southern Chile] and to “contribute to conservation of many species, which are endangered by huntings [sic], habitat loss and in general all known negative interactions with mankind in unprotected areas.” Published in the wake of two previous guides to the fauna, including the avifauna (by Gladys Garay and Oscar Guineo, 1991, 1993; both of which I reviewed previously in *Ornitología Neotropical* 8: 211, 1997) of the spectacular

Torres del Paine National Park, an increasingly popular destination in southern Chile, this truly pocket-sized book (measuring only 13 x 12 cm) is an identification guide based on the extensive fieldwork of both authors in this region and illustrated with Couve's own photographs (four photographs were provided by Juan Aguirre, Eduardo Vasquez, Alejandro Correa, and Ricardo Matus). In addition to the photographs, two species are illustrated by color drawings executed by Jorge Ruiz.

Following brief introductory sections that include a color map of the different habitats of Torres del Paine National Park (p. 9; difficult to use as the Park's landscapes form a complex mosaic that is nearly impossible to figure out from the map, as it contains neither scale nor topographic landmarks that a visitor might need for orientation), a description of the Park's biotic provinces (p. 10, according to the ecological scheme devised by the late Chilean botanist Edmundo Pisano), three drawings showing the topography of a bird (pp. 11–12), and an illustration of egg shapes (p. 13), the main part of the book (pp. 14–225) consists of the species accounts. Indexes to English, scientific, and Spanish names (or, rather, Chilean names, which at times are rather different from, say, Argentine Spanish names, see Vuilleumier, *Ornitología Neotropical* 10: 69–75, 1999) and a two-page bibliography of general works conclude the book.

The authors state that “resident, visiting or accidental birds in Torres del Paine National Park have been included.” This also comprises “Species without former [sic: surely must mean formal] records, but of regular existence [sic, must mean occurrence] in the northern zone of Province Ultima Esperanza, Chile,” where the Park is located. On the other hand, and somewhat surprisingly given the quoted statement, three species (*Muscisaxicola maculirostris*, *Metriopelia melanoptera*, and *Hirundo pyrrhonota*) have been

excluded because they “have been recorded only once in the territories [sic] of this Biosphere Reserve.” (Interestingly, in a paper published in *Anales del Instituto de la Patagonia Serie Ciencias Naturales* 27: 115–116, 1999, at about the same time as their book appeared, Couve and Vidal themselves recorded the presence of *Metriopelia melanoptera* in the Park.). The number of included species is not indicated by the authors, but by my count is 106. By comparison, the most recent published check-list of bird species found in Torres del Paine National Park, by Ricardo Matus and Carlos Barría (*Anales del Instituto de la Patagonia, Serie Ciencias Naturales* 27: 105–113, 1999) includes a total of 118 species, of which 102 are considered to breed there. Among some of the species that are not included in Couve and Vidal's guide, but that occur in southernmost Chile, are *Buteo ventralis* (which is found, if not yet in, at least near, Torres del Paine) and *Calidris fuscicollis* (“the second most common boreal migrant in Fuego-Patagonia” after *Calidris bairdii*, Vuilleumier, *Ecotropica* 1: 111, 1995).

The species accounts have a straightforward format. Each species is described on two facing pages, the left one with the text (with scientific, Spanish [Chilean], and German names; size in centimeters and inches; status; description; habits; voice; breeding; and habitat), and the right one with a photographic portrait of the species. The systematic sequence is a classical one, starting with *Pteronemia pennata* and ending with *Carduelis barbata*.

Practical in terms of its small and compact size, authoritative because its two authors know their birds well and have clearly spent much time in the field in and around the Torres del Paine National Park, this fieldguide will undoubtedly become an indispensable companion for all visitors to this magnificent region. It is thus important to point out some shortcomings. The individual of *Podiceps occipitalis* (p. 19) looks like a sick bird on the shore,

not the typical stance of this species in the water. The photograph of *Nycticorax nycticorax* (p. 27) shows what appears to be a pale northern bird, not the very dark form (subspecies *obscurus*) that inhabits southern Chile (and which is conspicuously dark in the field). The description and illustration of *Geranoaetus melanoleucus* (pp. 70–71) do not include the dark juvenile plumage, which is at least as frequently observed as the strikingly contrasted adult. The name of *Thinocorus orbignyianus* is misspelled as *orbygnyanus* (p. 108). The *Geositta* individual illustrated on p. 137 as *cunicularia* looks more like *antarctica* than *cunicularia* (tan coloring, short bill, apparent absence of markings on the chest). The text opposite the photograph of *Troglodytes aedon* (p. 190) is unfortunately that of *Fulica armillata*, repeated from page 88, and not that of the wren. (This error, by the way, is known to the authors, who have mentioned it to me in correspondence: apparently some, but not all copies of the first print run contain the mistake, which will surely be eliminated in the future. Be careful when you buy the book that your copy contains the correct text.)

In addition to these specific items, I should mention a few additional points that Couve and Vidal should consider for the next edition of their book. In the first place, typographical errors, while not sufficiently numerous to be a serious problem are nevertheless common enough to be annoying. Also, the English is a bit rough, and could use some thorough going-over by someone who is native to, or at least very fluent in, the English language as well as very fluent also in the authors's own, Spanish, so that their original meaning is correctly translated. The authors should incorporate the latest data published by Matus and Barría on the birds of the park, cited above, as well as other reliable, but as yet unpublished data. The status section in the species entries should include not only a description of a given species's status in the

Torres del Paine National Park, but also its status in adjacent areas, in southern South America, and in South America, or elsewhere, in general. Thus, to give only one example, a visitor unfamiliar with the avifauna would not know from this book that of the three species of *Thinocoridae* present in Torres del Paine, one, *Attagis malouinus*, is restricted to southern South America, but that the other two, *Thinocorus orbignyianus* and *Thinocorus rumicivorus*, are widely distributed in southern South America and in the Andes much further north. As a whole, the photographs are good and can be used for field identification. Some, however, are of much better quality than others: perhaps a more complete photographic record will allow the authors to have a higher overall iconographic quality in future editions. For some species, a smaller photograph as an insert shows a different plumage, for instance the female *Campephilus magellanicus* on p. 135. However, even though the text does describe such sexual dimorphism, the illustration has no legend to confirm it. Finally, the introductory section of this fieldguide should be expanded to describe the habitats in greater detail, and should include a good map of the Park showing its main and secondary roads and trails, its lakes, glaciers, and mountain peaks, as well as other landmarks (with scale). The title of the book ("Where to Watch Birds in Torres del Paine National Park") is inaccurate, as the book gives no indication whatsoever about where to watch birds, but is, as I indicated at the beginning of this review, a fieldguide. Compared with the two previous guides by Garay and Guineo, the new one is much more compact (indeed, it fits into the smallest jacket pocket), includes more species, and is generally more accurate, hence it constitutes a valuable addition to the literature of the natural history of Torres del Paine National Park. However, I look forward to a new and improved second edition.—François Vuilleumier.

Ecology and Conservation of Grassland Birds in the Western Hemisphere.—Peter D. Vickery & James R. Herkert (eds.). 1999. *Studies in Avian Biology* No. 19, Cooper Ornithological Society. viii + 299 pp., numerous text-figures, numerous tables, no index. ISBN 1-891276-11-5 (cloth); 1-891276-08-5 (paper). Available from Cooper Ornithological Society, c/o Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, CA 93010, USA. Price: US\$ 39.50 (hard cover), US\$ 25.00 (soft cover).

The outcome of a conference sponsored by the Association of Field Ornithologists and the George M. Sutton Avian Research Center held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in October 1995, this handsomely produced volume, edited by Peter Vickery of the Massachusetts Audubon Society and James R. Herkert of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board, contains 34 papers by 66 authors (50 from the USA, 8 from Canada, 2 each from Argentina, Brazil, and México, and one each from Germany and the United Kingdom). In the words of the editors (preface, p. 1), the conference was convened to discuss "the ecology, status, and conservation of grassland birds in the Western Hemisphere" and also "reflected the deep concern held by many avian biologists that populations of many grassland bird species are declining throughout the Western Hemisphere."

If I am interpreting these statements correctly, the book has an ambitious purpose. In other words, the reader is led to expect, first that this volume of essays will present, collectively, a status report on the relative health of grassland avifaunas throughout the Western Hemisphere and second that, given the precarious nature of many grasslands and of their avifaunal components, the monograph will suggest a number of concrete conservation measures. I believe that the second aim has been largely fulfilled but that the first has not. Whereas each piece in the volume does

make abundant, explicit, and very useful statements about the conservation of either patches of grasslands or single grassland-dwelling avian taxa, or both, in combination the 34 pieces cannot be said to constitute a balanced view of the state of health of Western Hemisphere grasslands, even though they do offer tantalizing glimpses, either geographically or taxonomically.

The volume is divided into four sections (see Contents, p. iii): (1) Introduction (pp. 2–26; includes one article by the two editors and four other authors, three of whom are from South America); (2) Ecology (pp. 27–111; contains 8 articles dealing with North American [USA and Canada] grasslands and two of its bird species, *Charadrius montanus* and *Amphispiza belli*; the latter species, incidentally, is not included in the lists of grassland birds of North America in the Introduction); (3) Breeding Ecology (pp. 112–243; comprising 5 articles in subsection Habitat Selection, 5 in subsection Fire, 2 in subsection Conservation Reserve Program, 3 in subsection Management, and 3 in subsection Data Collection and Analysis; all 18 articles deal with North American grasslands or their taxa, for example *Poocetes gramineus* and *Ammodramus bairdii*); (4) Latin America (pp. 244–299; contains 7 articles, one on the cerrado region of Brazil, one on *Sturnella defilippii* in the pampas of Argentina, two on birds in Mexican grasslands, one on the genus *Sporophila*, and two on wintering *Spiza americana* in Venezuela, respectively).

Let me articulate eight criticisms (listed in no special order below) before discussing what are the good points of this book and making some general comments.

First, the absence of an index is frustrating.

Second, although I applaud the fact that each piece in the book (except the Introduction) has both an English abstract and a Spanish synopsis, I regret that the title of each

piece has been translated into Spanish to head the Spanish summary. I thus fear that each article now has two titles, and I wonder how some unscrupulous persons will cite a given piece: with its (correct and original) English title, or the (translated) Spanish one? In addition, the language in most Spanish summaries is often awkward, giving the impression of having been translated literally from English into Spanish.

Third, it is a pity that neither the four main sections nor the subsections in the Breeding Ecology section have any introduction by the editors: they exist as sections or subdivisions of the book only in the Table of Contents on pp. iii–iv, and they are not mentioned as such in the introductory piece. Why, then, was the book organized the way it was?

Fourth, only one chapter title dealing with a taxon of grassland birds includes its Latin name (Silva's chapter on the genus *Sporophila* in South America). For a scientific publication dealing with a huge geographic area where two other major languages are spoken besides English, I think that this is a serious omission.

Fifth, there is not a single figure in this volume to illustrate any of the grassland and near-grassland vegetation types discussed. Note that the rich iconography of this book includes many maps, diagrams, graphs, sonograms, histograms, and bivariate plots. It even has two color figures, Figs. 2 and 3 in Knick and Rotenberry's chapter on passerine birds in an Idaho shrub-steppe (p. 108) showing spatial distributions of two species of Emberizidae, one species of Alaudidae, and one of Icteridae. It would probably not have greatly added to the cost of the volume to include at least one good photograph (even in color) of each of the 9 North American and of the 12 South American "major grassland ecosystems" mapped in the Introduction on Figures 1 and 2 (pp. 3 and 4). In addition, photographs depicting specific kinds of grasslands, for example those of southern Maine in Vick-

ery *et al.*'s chapter (pp. 149–159) or the Aspen Parkland of Alberta in the piece by Prescott and Murphy (pp. 203–210), would have been helpful for persons unfamiliar with them, especially Latin American readers. The only illustration of a grassland is on the cover page, showing a group of six *Rhea americana* seemingly running away from the photographer in the pampas of Argentina. Ironically, this species is not listed by Vickery *et al.* (Introduction) as an “obligate” but only as a “facultative” grassland bird.

Sixth, even though the book has a very useful and broadly ranging introductory chapter by the two editors and their four co-authors, it lacks a concluding overview. What do the editors or some of the book's authors think about the overall state of health of grasslands in the Western Hemisphere? What taxa need special further study? What are the most urgent conservation measures that ought to be taken, and where? To be honest, answers to these kinds of question can be found scattered in the chapters of this volume, including in the brief final section of Vickery *et al.*'s Introduction (entitled “Future Research,” pp. 22–23). But these answers and conclusions would have merited being repeated in a forceful concluding piece, a chapter that could have served as a launching pad for future research by scientists and for conservation action by managers and politicians. I believe that a great opportunity has been missed here.

Seventh, the title is misleading. Even though the various chapters of this book do discuss, collectively, the “Ecology and Conservation of Grassland Birds of the Western Hemisphere,” the geographical emphasis is overwhelmingly on North American (and mostly United States) grasslands and their avian taxa. The 7 chapters on Latin American (Mexican, Brazilian, and Argentine) grasslands are no even match for the 26 US and Canadian chapters. Some of the important

grasslands of South America, for example high Andean páramo and puna grasslands and Patagonian grassland, even though mapped on Fig. 2 (p. 4), are not discussed in the book. If there was hardly any literature on the birds of these habitats, or hardly anybody who had studied them, one would not be surprised at their absence from this book, but given its title this lack is a bit of a shock.

Eighth, I have to take exception, not to the definition of grassland given by Vickery *et al.* in their Introduction [“we define a grassland habitat as any extensive area that is dominated by more than 50% grass (Poaceae) or sedge (Cyperaceae) cover and that generally has few scattered shrubs <4 m high) and trees”]; and further: “We have generally excluded habitats that are dominated by more than 50% shrub cover, such as chaparral”], but to their inclusion of habitats that do not, I think, constitute grasslands. Here are a few examples from South America. Not all of what is mapped as “Patagonian grassland” on Fig. 2 (p. 4) is grassland. Although there are extensive grasslands in Patagonia, much of this region is covered by shrubsteppe with hardly any grasses at all (see for example Figure 1 in Vuilleumier, *Ornitología Neotropical* 4: 2; also Hueck and Seibert, *Vegetationskarte von Südamerika*, Gustav Fischer Verlag, 2nd. edition, 1981). Similarly, the vegetation labelled on the same map as “Monte Grassland” is (or was, as it has largely been destroyed) a shrubland, varying in structure and density from shrubsteppe to woodland, locally without grasses, elsewhere with a low and seasonal grass cover. The classic monograph on the Monte by Morello (*La Provincia Fitogeográfica del Monte*, Opera Lilloana 11: 1–155, 1958), which contains a rich iconography, is not cited. The “Espinal” is not a grassland but a woodland that consisted (again, it has been largely removed) of rather densely growing and rather tall thorny trees (see, e.g., Parodi, *Darwiniana* 4: 33–56, 1940). Finally,

to map the entire “Chaco” area as a grassland is to take the definition of grassland quite far. One has only to look at the illustrations in Short's monograph on the birds of this vegetation (Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History 154: 163–352, 1975) to realize that, as a whole, a grassland the chaco is not. It is (or, again, was) mostly covered by woodlands. To quote Short (p. 172): “Natural grasslands are uncommon in the chaco, except in the pampas-chaco ecotone at the southern and eastern border of the chaco.”

Thus this monograph suffers from several flaws, especially when reviewed from a Neotropical perspective. What is very good about this book is some of its individual chapters. Keeping a focus on the Neotropics, I would like to single out José Maria Cardoso da Silva's piece on *Sporophila* in South America (pp. 272–280), Roberto Cavalcanti's all-too-brief chapter (pp. 244–249) on the cerrado of Brazil (which he correctly calls a “region” in his title and a “biome” in his text, not a “grassland”), and the article by Pablo Tubaro and Fabián Gabelli's article on the decline of *Sturnella defilippii*. To be sure, the four other articles in the section on Latin America, one on the distribution of Mexican grassland birds by Townsend Peterson and Mark Robbins, one on grassland birds in prairie-dog towns of Chihuahua by Patricia Manzano-Fischer, Rurik List, and Gerardo Ceballos, and two on Dickcissels in Venezuela in winter by Gianfranco Basilli and Stanley Temple are also excellent. What is also good in this book is its repeated focus on solutions to conservation problems.

Lest I have given what may appear as too negative a view of this monograph, let me repeat here before closing that my criticisms of it are based mostly on a Neotropical viewpoint, as is appropriate for inclusion in *Ornitología Neotropical*. From such an angle, the book does not fully deliver on its sweeping title, and Latin American readers must be

warned. Yet they must also be told that they will gather much helpful and stimulating information (both methodological and in terms of research results) if they read the chapters on extra-Neotropical grasslands and their birds in a spirit of comparisons with the grasslands in their own area. The readers themselves, however, will have to make these comparisons, for they will not find them in the book.

In the final analysis, the book's deficiencies are perhaps also its advantages, in that by having gaps and inconsistencies, it does point the way toward another work, one that would be better focused on the Neotropics and that would be topically less scattered and intellectually more cohesive. Thus, inspired by both its negative (imbalance) and its positive aspects (especially the solid emphasis on conservation), ornithologists in the Neotropics might well be tempted to organize their own conference on grassland birds, picking up where this volume leaves off.

I conclude, as I am afraid I must, on a pessimistic feeling. I note (on the basis of this book and other publications, not to mention my own observations) that native grasslands anywhere in the Western Hemisphere are not in a good state of health, if they are not already extinct and have not been replaced by any variety of vegetational and other exotica. Clearly, what we study today in lieu of grassland birds are the sad remnants of what once inhabited glorious types of vegetation and landscape and can no longer really be called “native grassland avifaunas.” Will we ever know what these truly were like? For an essay that shows powerfully the effects (on the landscape but not on the birds, however) of one destructive human endeavor (cattle raising) in one part of the Neotropics, the Argentine pampas, I refer the reader to Arturo Ragonese's monograph (*Vegetación y Ganadería en la República Argentina, Volume V of Colección Científica, Instituto Nacional de*

Tecnología Agropecuaria, INTA, Buenos Aires: 1–218, 1967). A thorough discussion of such effects will have to be part of the agenda of Neotropical ornithologists

who convene a meeting to update the book edited by Vickery and Herkert.—François Vuilleumier.