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ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

EASTERN BIRDS. A GUIDE TO FIELD IDENTIFICATION OF NORTH AMERICAN SPECIES. By James Coe. Color illustrations by the author. 1994. Golden Press, New York:160 pp. Softbound. $12.95.—Anyone who browses in the "Nature" section of a large general bookstore such as Barnes and Noble, Borders, or Walden is accustomed to finding new bird books upon each visit; not the ones for which we all receive countless fliers in the mail, but usually relatively inexpensive paperbacks in large or small format with titles like "Birds of America," "Birds you should know," "All about birds," and the like. They may be written by third-rate nature writers, or may even be pot-boilers by underpaid professional ornithologists. If illustrated with photographs, these are usually obtained from agencies, and they may include either misidentified species, taxidermic mounts, or both. If illustrated with artwork, the pictures are usually dreadful.

This has certainly been my experience, but recently I found a book that I had not yet, at that time, seen announced or advertised, and it was tucked inconspicuously among a host of other bird books, familiar and unfamiliar. I took a quick look through it and immediately decided to buy it and call it to the attention of *Wilson Bulletin* readers without waiting for a review copy.

For some reason, the name James Coe does not seem to be a "household word" among writers on American bird artists, but there is no question but that he belongs up there among the best. Golden Press does not appear to think of this book as a competitor to its earlier, long standard field guide, "Birds of North America," by Robbins, Bruun, and Zim (hereafter RBZ). Coe's book covers only "the eastern portion of North America, west to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and south into Texas, skirting the eastern rim of the Edwards Plateau" (from the author's introduction). It is intended to be an "abridged guide" suitable for beginners. Coe tried to include enough species so that the beginner would be relatively unlikely to encounter birds not in his book, but leaving out rarities that most people will never see. As he himself realizes, anyone can quibble about his choices, but by and large I think he has done a good job. I do feel that the list price of $12.95 is unduly steep for a small softbound book, especially when the hardbound version of RBZ, with twice as many pages, currently lists for $15.00.

Although having many fewer species than the older guide, the text accounts for each species are often no longer. Measurements are given in the text rather than on the plates as in RBZ, and now include both inches and centimeters. The sonograms in RBZ elicited much debate as to their usefulness; they are omitted in Coe's book. The range maps are bolder and with less detail than in RBZ, and in spite of this being a book covering "the eastern portion of North America," the maps will be of little use to observers in much of Canada, as they extend only to the tip of Maine and southern Nova Scotia. In RBZ the maps extended, when appropriate, to the Canadian Arctic, Greenland, and even Iceland. Granted that most users of Coe's book won't be watching birds in the Arctic, still it should be of some interest to know where the migrants and wintering birds are coming from.

The introductory material strikes me as at least as thorough and as more readable than in RBZ. The diagrams naming the parts of a bird are less cluttered, as Coe has included a closeup of a Song Sparrow head to identify regions and markings in this area, as well as a Yellow-rumped Warbler for the names of the rest of the bird's parts; these occupy half a page. In RBZ this was done with a single painting of a Lark Sparrow occupying only one-third of a page, and hence much more densely lettered.

Coe's brief Appendix includes a two-page illustrated discussion of feeding birds, a paragraph on the advantages of joining "Birdwatchers' clubs and organizations," with a para-

graph each on the American Birding Association and the National Audubon Society, and a brief bibliography of magazines, books, and sound recordings; all of these, of course, could be expanded, and the ease with which such recommendations become obsolete is demonstrated by Coe's listing of the late lamented journal *American Birds.*

I have left until last a discussion of the illustrations, as these are what attracted me to the book in the first place and about which I am especially enthusiastic. They are by far the most consistently lifelike of any field guide illustrations of North American birds. Arthur Singer, the illustrator of RBZ, was a good friend, and I mean no disrespect when I say that he was *not* a truly great bird artist. Unlike most of today's bird painters, Arthur did not come from a boyhood bird-watching background—he was already a commercial artist when he first tried his hand at painting birds. RBZ has been sufficiently popular as to suggest that the Singer illustrations were adequate for identification, but one has only to compare the plates of, say, the spotted-breasted thrushes in the two Golden Press books to see what I mean by calling Coe's paintings "lifelike." They simply capture the personality of the individual species to a degree that Singer seldom attained.

This is not to say that I find all of Coe's paintings faultless. Like many other artists, Coe appears to believe that chickadees have itty-bitty bills (Singer's pointed chickadee bills are even worse, and his titmouse bills utterly wrong). This is a false impression, as can be attested to by any bander who has had occasion to extract an angry chickadee from a mist net. The length of the bills of Black-capped, Carolina, and Boreal chickadees is equal to the distance between the front of the eye and the base of the bill. Bills that are too short by this criterion are obvious in Coe's Black-capped Chickadees, but the error is masked in the Carolina and Boreal chickadees by the fact that he has painted the eyes too far forward in the head.

In general, I think Coe has been more successful with passerines than with non-passerines. The legs and feet of his Mallards, for example, are much too tiny. The figure of the Red-shouldered Hawk does not show the distinctively long legs of this species. With a little imagination, one can see the dusky-tipped primaries of the white immature Little Blue Heron, but this distinctive character is not mentioned in the text. Coe is in good company, however, as the *National Geographic* field guide appears to be the only work adequately figuring this, although Peterson mentions it and shows a Coe-like hint of it in his Western (but not Eastern) guide. A Ruffed Grouse in flight has stiff, cup-like wings for a fast getaway (as do so many galliform birds), and does not show the hawk-like spread primaries of Coe's figure. The red morph Eastern Screech-Owl looks like a stuffed toy. However, all of these comments are not meant to imply that Coe has not had some striking successes among non-passerines. His shorebirds are superior to those of Singer and to many of those of Peterson (compare, for example, their Upland Sandpipers). His Sandhill Crane and Great Blue Heron are also superior portraits, and he wisely abandoned taxonomic sequence to place these birds on the same plate; Great Blue Herons are widely known vernacularly as "cranes," and the direct comparison is obviously useful.

In spite of the individual flaws mentioned earlier, I still believe that, as a whole, Coe's portraits are the best to be found in any current North American field guide, and I look forward to his producing a companion volume on western birds for Golden Press.—KENNETH C. PARKES.

EVOLUTIONARY DIFFERENTIATION IN MORPHOLOGY, VOCALIZATIONS, AND ALLOZYMES AMONG NOMADIC SIBLING SPECIES IN THE NORTH AMERICAN RED CROSSBILL (*LOXIA CURVIROSTRA*) COMPLEX. By Jeffrey G. Groth. Univ. California Publs. Zoology 127:xii+1–143, 34 figures, 14

tables. $17.00 (paperback).—The evolution and systematics of the Holarctic Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra s.l.*) is one of the most enigmatic puzzles that face ornithologists. These crossbills are highly nomadic, wander widely, and breed in any place in any season, when conditions are suitable; yet they show considerable interpopulational variability, indicating that panmixia among morphs is not common. Jeffrey Groth (1) summarizes the natural history and taxonomy of the Red Crossbills, (2) quantifies patterns of morphological variation, (3) describes interpopulational variation in vocalizations, (4) determines the extent to which forms of crossbills identified by vocalizations also differ in body size, bill size, color, and allozymes, and (5) discusses the evolution and taxonomy of the group. This is an ambitious undertaking, but one that Groth handles well.

It has been obvious to ornithologists that there is a great deal of morphological variation in Red Crossbills. Nonetheless, dividing these birds into taxa has been especially difficult, particularly in North America, in part because of a paucity of breeding specimens. It was also recognized that there is variability in vocalizations, but few specimens were of known vocal type. For the present study, Groth assembled 720 individuals, with recorded vocalizations available for 616 (additional calls recorded by others were used in some analyses), and tissues for electrophoretic studies were saved from 561 (and 16 White-winged Crossbills, *L. leucoptera*). Using these birds, Groth has examined the relationships among vocal types, size, color, and allozymes.

Groth found that Red Crossbills could be divided into eight groups on the basis of their flight call (a '*chip*' call). Most of these groups have a wide geographic distribution. One each is found in the southern Appalachians and the Pacific Northwest and three others in both the northeast and the west. On the other hand, one call type was found from only one bird recorded in Newfoundland, and another was recorded only from birds in the Chiricahua Mts., in southeastern Arizona and may be a call type principally of Mexican crossbills. Groth found that size variation (nine measurements on fresh specimens and 21 on skeletons) within vocal groups was not great, but that the different vocal groups differed substantially and in many cases significantly among themselves. In general, the largest birds with the largest bills were found in the southwest (these were the only birds that could successfully extract seeds from robust cones) and the smallest in the northwest, northeast, and Appalachian Mountains (there was not enough material to include the Newfoundland sample in these analyses). In short, the different vocal groups are differentiated morphologically; the groups overlap to some extent, but variability in groups is not great; and intermediate individuals do not have intermediate vocalizations. What we cannot tell from these analyses, however, is if there might be ways other than vocalizations in which the Red Crossbills could be equally well divided. Although Red Crossbills are variable in coloration, there is little evidence that this variation is related to variation in vocalization.

The electrophoretic assessment of 30 protein systems (43 presumptive genetic loci) revealed little differentiation among the song types or between *L. curvirostra* and *L. leucoptera*, perhaps indicating very recent divergence. One can imagine that the variabity in the sizes of cones available would exert strong selection on bill morphology. Minor variations in call notes could have been stochastically established in local populations of crossbills, and these may have become effective species recognition cues, facilitating rapid speciation.

Groth recommends that eight sibling species be recognized. On a practical level, these will be difficult to identify, the principal differentiating feature—their calls—being behavioral, and at that not particularly useful for identification. As Groth notes (1993:51–52), "Despite differences on spectrograms, all flight calls, alarm calls, and excitement calls can be described by the term '*chip*.' Considerable practice may be necessary for human observers to learn these differences and use them reliably in the field." Needless to say, the identities of most of the type specimens for the many subspecies of Red Crossbills that have

been named are uncertain, so if usual conventions are followed, it will be difficult to determine what binominal names would be appropriate. Groth also emphasizes that individuals breeding in a particular place should not be considered to be a "population" as they may well comprise individuals from two or more of the sibling species.

All in all, this is a fine paper—lucidly written, well thought out, and clearly presented. I particularly applaud the inclusion of data—means, ranges, sample sizes, standard errors—in the appendices and the careful attention to collection sites and dates of collection. I think that it is unfortunate that more was not done with the tissues and that a method better suited to differentiating little-different taxa than gel electrophoresis was used, but we can anticipate that this will be done in the future. This paper will be widely cited, both in textbooks and in the primary literature. Groth and his editors are to be commended for a job well done.—J. D. RISING.

BIRDS OF MASSACHUSETTS. By Richard R. Veit and Wayne R. Petersen, illus. by Barry W. Van Dusen. Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Massachusetts. 1993. 514 pp. 24 illustrations, 133 maps of breeding species distribution, front and endpaper maps of Massachusetts. $39.95.—Veit and Petersen's "Birds of Massachusetts" is the latest milestone in Massachusetts' traditional leadership in American ornithology. A well-written, readable, and carefully documented work, this book is the most comprehensive book on the birds of this state since Edward Howe Forbush's giant classic 70 years ago. Appropriately, the forward is by Roger Tory Peterson, who calls it "an important addition to the ornithological literature and a model for other states to follow."

The bulk of the text is a meticulous status review of each of the 460 species recorded for the state; but the book contains far more information than even that ornithological feat. To briefly describe the chapters: "Regional Descriptions of Massachusetts" defines the eight chief physiographic or bio-regions of the state: Berkshire County, the Connecticut River valley, Worcester County, Essex County, the Sudbury River valley, the greater Boston area, southeastern Massachusetts, and Cape Cod and the Islands. "Aspects of Massachusetts Bird Life" includes sections on pelagic birds, colonial waterbirds, migration, and vagrancy. "Sources of Data" gives an exhaustive and specific list of the sources used and the criteria for acceptance of the data.

The species accounts are the principal content of the book, and provide a complete summary of the status and occurrence of all the 460 bird species confirmed to have occurred in Massachusetts through 1991. These include 196 regularly breeding species, 10 rare species, and 5 introduced species. Confirmed escapees from captivity have been wisely omitted. Species accounts begin with a concise overview of the world wide and North American distribution and breeding range, and include, as appropriate, breeding status, seasonal abundance, habitat preference, locality information, early and late seasonal dates, and maximum numbers. Species accounts are precisely and intelligently written. Maps for the breeding species include the information on Possible, Probable, and Confirmed Breeding collected during Massachusetts' pioneering Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

Anyone who has compiled state records will particularly appreciate the quality of this book. It is an essential handbook for all New England birders, an important state book, an admirable model, and an important addition to any birder's library.—SALLY LAUGHLIN.

THE VULTURES OF AFRICA. By Peter Mundy, Duncan Butchart, John Ledger, and Steven Piper, illus. by Duncan Butchart. Academic Press, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, New York. 1992:460 pp., 111 color plates with caption figs., 24 range maps, 11 geophysical maps, 30 numbered text figs., 33 black-and-white illustrations with caption figs., 47 tables, 123 pencil sketches. $118.50.—For some of us, vultures are endlessly fascinating creatures. Perhaps the intrigue begins as morbid curiosity sparked by images of throngs of huge birds that jockey for position at and even *inside* carcasses of large mammals on the African plain, or by the legendary patience of the vulture that sits hunched, eyeing with dispassion the death of a meal-to-be, becoming more animated, salivating even, as meal time draws near. These images are probably realistic, at least for some of the species some of the time. What Mundy, Butchart, Ledger, and Piper have accomplished here is to destroy these caricatures as they reveal the intricacies of the vultures' adaptations for a predominantly scavenging lifestyle and then document the ecological and behavioral diversity that exists among the vultures of Africa. However, vignettes found throughout the book remind us how vultures got their reputations. Examples include brief and humorous quotations describing Egyptian vultures as being "sick with repletion" and "clogged with gore." African vultures comprise 11 species, ranging in size from the small Hooded (*Necrosyrtes monachus*; 1.7 kg), Palm-nut (*Gypohierax angolensis*; 1.75 kg) and Egyptian (*Neophron percnopterus*; 2 kg) vultures to the enormous Lappett-faced (*Torgos tracheliotos*; 6.8 kg), Eurasian Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*; 7.4 kg), Cape Vulture (*G. coprotheres*; 9.4 kg), and Cinereous vultures (*Aegypius monachus*; up to 12.5 kg!).

This is a splendid, encyclopedic volume. Most of its many large-format pages are devoted to scrupulous species accounts which are lavishly illustrated by Duncan Butchart's many wonderful pencil sketches as well as by his formal color illustrations. For each species, the authors summarize historical and current information on distribution and abundance, field identification of all age classes, morphological and physiological specializations, feeding, mating, and nesting biology—in short, everything known about the birds. These chapters embody everything that is attractive about Bent's volumes and, like that work, contain enormous amounts of real information while managing to convey a sense of the awesome task humans face when they try to interpret nature.

Four excellent introductory chapters progressively narrow our focus to the details of individual species. The first chapter contains a global survey of vultures and what is known of their phylogeny and systematics, including arguments centering on the problematic placement of the New World vultures. These authors agree that the New World Cathartid vultures are probably modified storks, while the Old World Accipitrid vultures are related to hawks and eagles. Chapter 2 then focuses on the general characteristics that distinguish vultures from other birds, including exceptionally fine information on flight mechanics of long-distance soaring. It is slightly frustrating that the remarkable convergence between the Old World and New World vultures for their primarily scavenging lifestyles is not more fully developed. The authors can be forgiven, however, for this is a book about the African vultures, after all. When they peel their way down to that topic, beginning in Chapter 3 with discussion of Africa as a setting for vultures, there seemingly is no detail omitted. While the global comparisons make an interesting illustration of convergent evolution in action, it becomes obvious that Africa is vulture heaven; only on that continent and in a small area in India can one find as many as six different species at one carcass.

Following the species accounts are five chapters. The first of these compares in great detail the foraging, feeding, and social behavior of African vultures, and the second takes a comparative look at their breeding biology. This is precisely the stuff that first hooked me, almost 20 years ago, on vultures in general. How can these great animals rely on herds of ungulates that migrate over enormous distances and at the same time feed hungry off-

spring in a nest that is stationary? The answer is that most species do not rely on these herds, but those that do spend a lot of time flying great distances. Presumably constrained by this sporadic and unpredictable feeding regime, vultures are monogamous, lay small clutches (1 or 2 eggs) and their young grow slowly. Whether pairs nest in great aggregations or in isolation varies among species. Some species nest as solitary pairs and often feed in pairs or as the only member of their species, while others, like the griffons, seem to do everything in hordes, from their congregations at carcasses to their huge breeding colonies. These chapters are a treasure trove for behavioral ecologists. The variety of physiological, morphological, and behavioral mechanisms by which closely related species solve problems presented to them by their environments are well illustrated by the guild of African scavenging birds.

The final three chapters trace the history of the important relationship between humans and vultures on the African continent, the problems faced by vultures in modern Africa, and the efforts of the Vulture Study Group to protect these birds. The history is wonderful reading as we learn about the status of vultures as gods to the ancient Egyptians, as central figures through time as depicted in San art, and as food for 20th century Fernando Po and Ivory Coast (although in general vultures are rarely eaten, as "vulture flesh is an acquired taste, rather like roasted African termite alates, Greek olives, or American beer"). Many modern indigenous Africans use vulture body parts in folk medicines for their presumed clairvoyant properties (the superb vision and fast flight of vultures allow them to gather so quickly at carcasses that it seems that they foresaw the death). Finally, the authors devote a chapter essentially to themselves as charter members of the Vulture Study Group, an organization of activists committed to vulture conservation in Africa. The members include thoroughly modern scientists who study the effects of environmental poisons on vultures, document their interactions with modern technology such as high voltage power lines, and design and implement renovations to prevent wholesale electrocutions of vultures. They have established successful "vulture restaurants" that provide supplementary food for vultures in places in which food is thought to be limiting. These stations also allow detailed and up-close study of feeding interactions. The work of this group illustrates that people can, when armed with sufficient good information on the biology of declining populations, begin to address the problems those populations face in today's world.

This is a wonderful book about a group of birds that are so intriguing that they are prominent in folklore, even in distant cultures. The vultures of Africa are demystified by this exposure through good science, natural history, and art by a team of authors dedicated to their conservation.—PATRICIA G. PARKER.

ANIMAL BEHAVIOR. Edited by Tim Halliday, illus. by Barbara Rodanska and Jan Smith. Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma. 1994. 144 pages, 251 color plates, 22 illustrations. $25.95.—This abundantly illustrated volume attempts to cover the breadth of animal behavior, with chapters on topics such as courtship, parental care, hunting, communication, anti-predator behavior, dominance hierarchies, symbioses, and adaptation to man. Each chapter is written by a separate author or pair of authors, mainly British or British-trained. Although the book deals with all animals, birds are given the prominence typically accorded to them in treatments of animal behavior, reflecting the importance of birds as subjects of study in ethology and behavioral ecology.

Overall, the book succeeds in conveying many of the central ideas and discoveries of the modern science of animal behavior in a format that ought to be attractive to the general public. Much emphasis is given to evolutionary costs and benefits of various behaviors,

with predominance given appropriately to the effects of the behaviors on the survival and reproduction of the individuals that perform them. Complex behaviors, such as honeybee dance language or communication in fireflies, are described and interpreted, albeit in simplified form. Complex theories are also presented, again in simplified but recognizable form, such as Triver's parental investment explanation for why female choice of mates is more prevalent than male choice. A great many interesting examples of peculiar behaviors are given, but always to illustrate some general theme, rather than simply to startle the reader with the strange and bizarre.

Illustrations are indeed abundant. On average, about half of each page is devoted to photographs and drawings and half to text, and no page is without illustration. The color photographs (obtained from a variety of sources) are particularly fine. One of the strengths of the book is the tight linkage that obtains between text and illustrations. If cleaning symbioses between mammals and birds are discussed in the text, then an illustration of such a symbiosis appears on the same or facing page; if a photograph shows a pair of electric fish, then the accompanying text discusses some aspect of electric fish behavior. Another strength of the book is the uniformity of style that has been achieved despite the diversity of the authors. All the chapters are written in the same relaxed and clear fashion with the same approximate mix of ideas and examples. This uniformity must be the product of some forceful editing.

The book does have some minor problems. For one, there are a few factual lapses. As one example, Charlotte Hosie, the author of a chapter on "Courting Rituals", states that in the 10% of bird species that are non-monogamous, males and females do not associate beyond copulation and that males do not participate in parental care. This statement overlooks the fact that many non-monogamous species of birds are polygynous or polyandrous rather than promiscuous and do have extended pair bonds and paternal care. Ornithologists will be surprised by a mention elsewhere in the text of the North American "rufous throated hummingbird"; sadly, this turns out from the accompanying photograph not to be a hitherto unknown hybrid but merely a mislabelled reference to the Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*). A second minor problem is that the use of a largely British team of authors skews the examples away from those animals that would be more familiar to an American audience. Thus, urban scavengers are illustrated with hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) rather than raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), and Great Tits (*Parus major*) and Greenfinches (*Carduelis chloris*) are used as examples of status signalling rather than Harris' Sparrows (*Zonotrichia querula*) and Dark-eyed Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*).

These problems are indeed minor and do little to detract from the overall value of the book, which provides a first rate means of introducing a general audience to the subject of animal behavior. Halliday and colleagues are to be commended for producing a volume that conveys so much of the science of behavior in such an attractive and engaging fashion.—WILLIAM A. SEARCY.

DEAN OF THE BIRDWATCHERS. A BIOGRAPHY OF LUDLOW GRISCOM. By William E. Davis, Jr. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington. 1994:xvi + 234 pp., 27 black-and-white photos. $29.95.—Ludlow Griscom was a complex and often controversial individual who strode across both the ornithological and birding worlds in the first half of this century. In some quarters, he is hailed as the founder of modern birding, and the one man who originated and developed the skills of bird identification in the field without the use of a shotgun. The title of this book reflects that view.

We have before us a scholarly biography by William Davis, who had access to the vo-

luminous Griscom correspondence, as well as the cooperation of the Griscom family. Over several years, he conducted interviews with many of Griscom's acquaintances. Much of the book consists of direct quotations from Griscom's letters and these give us an insight into his thought processes and personality. Davis has made an attempt to give us a balanced view of the good and the not-so-good of the man Griscom. He is fairly successful in this but as with most biographies the not-so-good is slighted. We do not really get a full view of the man's often abrasive personality, and the arrogance that is evident in some of his writings that are not quoted in the book.

Davis has wisely rejected the strict chronological order of describing Griscom's life and his varied activities. Part 1, "The Early Years," tells us of his background, education, and private life. Part 5, "The Final Years," describes the last decade of his life, when he was greatly handicapped by health problems. The intervening three parts are titled "Ornithology," "In the Field," and "Conservation."

The Ornithology Part treats his work at A.M.N.H. and M.C.Z. as well as his activities in the A.O.U. and the Nuttall Ornithological Club, and his association with the Boston Museum of Science. While there is a chapter on his ornithological expeditions, we really learn very little about these trips and his subsequent contributions to scientific ornithology. This is partly because while Griscom kept detailed bird lists for his expeditions he did not report detailed accounts of the expeditions. In fact, other than being told how many taxa he described, most of which turn out to be weakly differentiated subspecies, the reader gets little impression of his contributions to scientific ornithology. Although we are told that there were "anti-Griscom" factions among professional ornithologists, and indeed among the members of the Nuttall Club, the reasons for this are not clear.

The Conservation section details his work as Chairman of the Board of the National Audubon Society and his activity with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. This phase of his life and his extensive contributions to the conservation movement have not been adequately addressed in previous accounts of his activities.

But it is as the super-birder and field identification virtuoso that Griscom is best known today. The three chapters of Part three, "In The Field," are devoted to this topic. In one long chapter many people describe their experiences in the field with Ludlow on his strenuous birding days. These must have been a lot of fun. From these descriptions, one gets the impression that Griscom's enthusiasm for birds and birding made him a rather different person when birding in the field and that the darker facets of his personality were suppressed. It is apparent, though, that only a select few were invited on these outings.

The other two chapters belabor the points that Griscom is the man who invented the field identification techniques of birding, proved that birds need not be collected to identify them, and invented the sport of birding. The dust jacket identifies him as the "first birder" and one dust jacket blurb claims that he ". . . almost single-handedly turned birding with field glasses into a respectable pastime." This is myth. Myth formulated by the myopic view from behind the Boston-New York axis which does not admit that any birding in the modern sense took place west of the Hudson River during the critical years. In many places away from the northeast there were enthusiastic and highly skilled birders who had never heard of Ludlow Griscom. They too had abandoned the use of the collecting gun, and some of them had field skills approaching his. They were also engaging in the birding sport. Griscom's direct influence on most of the birders of the country was minimal. His real contribution was that he was the inspiration which led Roger Peterson to write his field guides. These made the task of learning how to identify birds easier, and so have had a real effect on the birding community. In fairness it should be said that Davis makes no such extravagant claims for Griscom, but makes it clear that his influence was mainly local.

The chapter on sight records and collecting points out that Griscom was caught in a

dilemma about collecting. His own skills had been developed by intensive study of museum collections, and he was adamant about having specimen records for rarities. The book closes with a complete bibliography of Griscom's writings, and by examining this, we do get some idea of his contributions to scientific ornithology.

Davis has worked on this book for several years and has succeeded in turning out an interesting account of the life of an interesting ornithologist. The book also gives us some insight into the ornithological world in the second quarter of this century. It fills a definite niche in ornithological historiography.—GEORGE A. HALL.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The above reviews are the last edited by George A. Hall as he will no longer be book editor after this issue. His duties are being taken over by William E. Davis, Jr. (see inside back cover for new address for book review editor).

George Hall has served The Wilson Ornithological Society for many years, first as editor of the journal for ten years, and later as review editor for another 10 years. All who have worked with George during his tenure will agree about his fair, impartial, and kind treatment of manuscripts and their authors. George has helped many young ornithologists with their first research papers. He edited one of my first published studies—a note on nighthawks—and I will not forget (and will always try to emulate) his considerate manner. Many thanks, George, for your long, patient, skillful service.—C. R. Blem.

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