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ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

EDITED BY WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.

A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO ARKANSAS. By Mel White. American Birding Association, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado. 1995:259 pp., 53 maps, 20 black-and-white photographs, 16 line drawings. $16.95 (soft wrap-around cover).—This is the seventh in the series of the American Birding Association's birdfinding guide series, which is a revision and extension of the Lane series which served birders well for many years. Like the other six guides published so far, this book is well-written, well-edited, and well-designed and a must for anyone interested in birds visiting an area covered by one of the series. The book is sturdy, printed on heavy paper with a wire-o binding and a wrap-around cover which serves to protect the book and/or serve as a book mark. Its roughly 15 by 21.5 cm size is small enough to fit into a car's glove box and some jacket pockets. It is designed to be used.

An introductory chapter has sections on the physiography of the state, the birding calendar, and historical and ecological notes. The book is written with humor, and the section entitled "Weather and other pests," which provides useful information on ticks, chiggers, mosquitos, poisonous snakes, etc., concludes with "Try not to walk off any cliffs." The major portion of the text describes 59 birding sites clustered into five geographic regions bounded by county lines. Each regional cluster of sites has an introduction and map of site locations, followed by detailed descriptions, including a map, of each site. The site maps are clear and readable, and descriptions of directions are given to a tenth of a mile—an excellent feature. The usual list of useful telephone numbers for the local birding "hotline," travel information, etc., are supplemented by the numbers to call for information for any of the sites in state or federal parks or preserves. Following the site guide chapters are sections on "specialty birds" and bar graphs for each species giving status (e.g., "hard to miss," "lucky to find") throughout the year. Additional appendices list "seldom-seen" and "accidental" birds, and lists of Arkansas mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and butterflies.

I cannot imagine anyone interested in birds visiting Arkansas without taking a copy of this book along.—WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.

STORIES I LIKE TO TELL: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. By H. Elliott McClure. Privately printed, Camarillo, California. 1995:373 pp., 110 black-and-white photograph figures. Available in paperback for $14 (S&H incl.) from H. Elliott McClure, 69 E. Loop, Camarillo, California 93010-2327.—This is the story of an entomologist turned ornithologist and naturalist who began his professional career as a wildlife biologist studying doves in the mid-west and ended it nearly 35 years later with involvement in an international bird-banding scheme in Asia. This very personal narrative includes recollections of youthful adventures from dodging streetcars with his bicycle to an awe-inspiring viewing of a local doctor's butterfly collection. The pages are full of interesting anecdotes, including many which are bird related. Twenty-five years were spend in Asia, beginning with an encephalitis study in Japan, and many adventures describe exotic birds and places. There are chapters on hornbills and bulbuls and lots of birdwatching adventures in, for example, Australia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaya. A lot of historical information on M.A.P.S. (Migratory Animals Pathological Survey) Asian project is woven into the latter part of the book. Several hundred photographs (usually several per figure) present a photographic collage of everything from family photos to scorpions and hornbills.

Despite the minor annoyance of the many typos, occasional grammatical collapses, lack

of an index, and a table of contents with no page numbers, I found this a delightful book full of the fun and adventures of an interesting ornithological career. The narrative is engaging, and there was enough about birds, conservation, and natural history to satisfy my ornithological cravings.—WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.

THE HORNBILLS. By Alan Kemp, illustrated by Martin Woodcock. Oxford University Press, New York. 1995: 302 pp., 14 color plates, black-and-white line drawings, 53 range maps, 7 tables, glossary. $60.—The hornbills, (Order Bucerotiformes *sensu* Sibley and Monroe. 1990. "Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World." Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Connecticut) are separated by Kemp into two families, including one genus and two species of very large (to 4000 g) ground hornbills (Bucorvidae) and 52 species and eight genera of medium to large (83–3300 g) true hornbills (Bucerotidae). The taxonomy of hornbills seems to be in a state of flux, and there are some taxonomic changes included in this book—primarily the elevation of subspecies to species level and the inclusion of some new common names. For example, Sibley and Monroe (1990) refer to *Tockus albicristatus* as the White-crested Hornbill, a translation of the specific name, whereas Kemp refers to it as the Long-tailed Hornbill. Kemp apparently used Long-tailed Hornbill to reduce confusion with the White-crowned Hornbill (*Aceros comatus*) which has also at times been called the White-crested Hornbill.

The ground hornbills are found only on the savannas of Africa; the true hornbills are forest birds of Africa, south and east Asia, and many of the islands of the Indian Ocean. Most of the hornbills have a large bill with a casque which has suggested functions ranging from sex and age recognition to sound reception, to use in foraging, nest maintenance, or territorial defense. In a dramatic introduction, territorial male Great Helmeted Hornbills (*Buceros vigil*) rivals are described as meeting in a manner analogous to the behavior of rams—by flying at one another and butting heads in mid-air! Unfortunately, it turns out that the behavior has yet to be substantiated (Cranbrook and Kemp, 1995. Ibis 137:588–589).

Hornbills are cavity nesters, most taking advantage of natural tree cavities. In the true hornbills, the female seals herself in and undergoes a complete molt of flight feathers during the nesting effort. As a result of their large size and associated need for large trees for their cavity nests and because of the limited distribution of many species, hornbills may be particularly susceptible to becoming endangered as a result of elimination of old growth forest. Range maps are shown for all but the Visayan Wrinkled Hornbill (*Aceros waldeni*), but these are of historic ranges and populations of many species are already fragmented and declining. At least some species will use nest boxes, and an appendix provides guidelines for captive management and breeding. These management tools are, however, just that—tools. They are not answers to long-term survival. Only protection of natural habitats and ecosystems can provide a future for these birds. Kemp acknowledges the use of hornbills as human food and for medicinal and religious purposes in various cultures and suggests that any efforts to manage the species must consider these human needs. Since most of the larger species produce two eggs, but raise only a single chick, he suggests removal of the second chick as one means of meeting these needs.

Tables include a wealth of morphological and ecological data begging for further analysis and comparison with other taxa. Plates include not only superb field guide style composites, showing each species with sex and age variants, but also ones showing all Asian and all African hornbills in flight. Colored photographs illustrate some habitats, nests, and a skull carved by a Chinese craftsman. The bibliography of nearly 600 references includes some unpublished reports and citations from an incredible array of journals and often obscure

series. Certainly, this is a resource that in itself will facilitate further advancement of our knowledge of this group. The three-page glossary defines some hornbill-specific terms and also a strange assortment of other ornithological and non-ornithological (e.g., "selective logging," "swidden agriculture") terms. "Rectrix" is misspelled in the glossary.

"The Hornbills" is obviously a labor of love, dedication, and deep understanding, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. It is a model for monographic coverage that would be difficult to surpass.—JEROME A. JACKSON.

WOODPECKERS. By Hans Winkler, David A. Christie, and David Nurney. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 1995: 406 pp., 64 color plates, some black-and-white figures, 214 range maps. $40. (hardcover).—This guide to the woodpeckers of the world follows on the heels of somewhat similarly comprehensive monographs on woodpeckers by Short (1982. "Woodpeckers of the World," Delaware Museum of Natural History Monogr. Ser. No. 4, Greenville, Delaware) and Frugis, Malaguzzi, Vicini and Cristina (1988, "Guida ai Picchi del Mondo. Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali Monogr VII. Torino, Italy." In Italian.). How does Winkler et al. compare to these other monographs?

Winkler et al. recognize 214 species, following the systematic arrangement of Sibley and Monroe (1990. "Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World." Yale Univ. Press, New Haven), which was based largely on Short (1982). Short and Frugis et al. recognize "about" 200 species, with Frugis et al. following Short closely. The taxonomic differences in Winkler et al. result in general from recognition of Short's subspecies of two piculets and several woodpeckers as distinct species.

Introductory material in Winkler et al. includes 35 pages that describe the layout of species accounts, the nature of taxonomic decisions made, descriptions of tribes and genera of woodpeckers, basic zoogeography, morphology, plumages and molt, foods and foraging, habitats, ecology, behavior, and interactions with man. Short's introductory coverage is similar in scope and depth; Frugis et al. is a skeleton by comparison, covering a similar scope of material in much less depth but including useful drawings illustrating foraging patterns and a bit more discussion of conservation problems than found in introductory material of the others.

Color plates by Nurney in Winkler et al. include several species/subspecies per page in somewhat field guide fashion. These focus primarily on adult males but also show heads of adult females. The plates in general are excellent, although the bills of *Campephilus* species seem too slender and "weak." Detailed captions face each plate; captions in the other books are essentially limited to species identification. The plates by Sandstrom in Short (1982) are larger but with generally fewer species per page, sometimes showing species-specific habitat characteristics. The plates by Cristina and Vicini in Frugis et al. often include only one or two species per page, are generally adequate but less refined, and not as well reproduced as in the other books. The plates in Short and Frugis et al. focus only on adult males.

Species accounts in Winkler et al. include a range map, statement of identifying characteristics and distribution, description of habitat, sex and age differences, geographic variation, sample measurements, and descriptions of voice, habits, food, and timing of breeding. Short's species accounts provide a similar range and depth of information. Species accounts in Frugis et al. include both English and Italian common names, listing of subspecies, and very brief descriptions of distinctive characteristics, habitat, distribution, and for some species, notes on behavior and diet. There are no range maps in either Short or Frugis et al.

In format and in being more recent, Winkler et al. have the most useful and comprehensive of these monographs. Their "Woodpeckers" is much more than indicated by the subtitle on

the dust jacket (one of three subtitles used!): "An Identification Guide to the Woodpeckers of the World." All of these books are useful introductions to the diversity, behavioral ecology, and adaptive strategies of the Picidae. Frugis et al. was intended only as an illustrated checklist of the woodpeckers of the world, and it succeeds quite well in that. In comparing the two more comprehensive books, however, one must also consider the backgrounds of the authors, for these certainly have influenced the nature of the finished products. Winkler has studied woodpeckers in many parts of the world and has emphasized vocalizations in much of his work. As might be expected, text material for European species is much stronger. Short has spent a lifetime studying woodpeckers throughout the world with an emphasis on taxonomic studies. His studies in the New World and in Africa have been extensive and are strongly reflected in his monograph.

Having established the similarities and differences in these works, I will now focus on the details included in Winkler et al. With the incredible amount of information included in Winkler et al., some problems could be expected and some are present. On p. 12, the authors refer to *Dryocopus magellanicus* as the Magellanic Woodpecker, stating that it is "often seen as a good intermediate between *Dryocopus* and *Celeus*. . ." Surely this is in error, since elsewhere throughout the book (and among other authors) the Magellanic Woodpecker is treated as *Campephilus magellanicus*. Furthermore, the species generally considered intermediate to *Dryocopus* and *Celeus* is *Dryocopus galeatus,* the Helmeted Woodpecker, a species with very limited range in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina.

As a measure of accuracy, I most carefully examined accounts of species with which I had the greatest familiarity. These accounts were generally very good with very up-to-date information, but I found several minor problems with the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) account. The range map for this species appropriately shows a very fragmented distribution but inappropriately seems to show the species still occupying Missouri, Tennessee, and Maryland and a much wider range in Kentucky than has ever been known. It also shows the species absent from some areas of the mid-South where it is known. In the caption for Plate 34, in reference to the adult female Red-cockaded Woodpecker, the authors indicate that this is the "only 'ladder-backed' species in its range." Since this is a guide intended for identification, and since this species is considered endangered, it is important to note the "ladder back" of the very common Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) which occurs throughout the range of the Red-cockaded. Finally, the list of pine species used as nest sites by the Red-cockaded is incomplete (e.g., *Pinus virginiana* isn't included) and seems to inappropriately downplay the importance of loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) relative to others.

Another problem is the perpetuation of the notion that juvenile female Hairy Woodpeckers (*Picoides villosus*) normally have an "orange-red patch on crown" (pp. 35, 291). The females very rarely have even a reduced orange-red patch. Eye color mentioned for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) follows Short (1982) and is given as "white to creamy-white" (p. 354), whereas numerous specimen labels and descriptions of early naturalists who closely observed the species almost always refer to the yellow color of the iris. The range map for the Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) shows the species much farther north than it is known to occur in Canada. These are all minor problems that are sometimes ambiguous or incorrect elsewhere in the literature, illustrating that there is still much to be learned about woodpeckers.

In general, "Woodpeckers" is an up-to-date and thorough compendium of information about the world's woodpeckers. It is put together in a user friendly format with good documentation and outstanding illustrations. Winkler et al. have brought us to a new plateau in our understanding of woodpeckers and have made it easier for us to surge on ahead.—JEROME A. JACKSON.

ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEMS OF THE UNITED STATES: A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF LOSS AND DEGRADATION. By Reed F. Noss, Edward T. LaRoe III, and J. Michael Scott. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Biological Service, Biological Report 28, Washington, D.C.1995: 58 pp., three numbered text figs., eight black-and-white photographs with captions, five appendices, no charge (paper).—The status of natural ecosystems throughout the United States is currently a topic of considerable concern. Unfortunately, minimal information is available to determine the geographical extent and condition of the ecosystems of the United States, and the quality of information varies greatly from state to state. In spite of these difficulties, Noss et al. have done a superb job of defining ecosystems to evaluate and compiling and analyzing large databases in order to estimate the loss and degradation of United States ecosystems. The authors' arguments for managing and protecting ecosystems to prevent the necessity to have to deal with threatened and endangered species focuses on the primary problem of endangered species management.

The booklet is well written and treatments of topics are presented clearly in a logical fashion. The authors list ecosystems as critically endangered (30), endangered (58), or threatened (38), with the real "meat" of the publication located in the appendices where the extent of loss for each ecosystem is presented. The authors indicate that degradation and losses of ecosystems have been most pronounced in the South, Northeast, Midwest, and California. Also evaluated is the potential risk for further loss within each ecosystem. Because pristine sites of many ecosystems are already nearly nonexistent, the authors suggest that restoration be an integral part of ecosystem management. The authors show where significant information gaps occur. The illumination of these gaps should help state and federal agencies adjust methodologies and priorities for data collection. This publication is essential for researchers and managers who work with threatened, endangered, or sensitive species and any aspect of ecosystem management. The authors should be commended for this excellent publication.—RICHARD N. CONNER.

THIS FRAGILE LAND. A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE NEBRASKA SANDHILLS. By Paul A. Johnsgard. Univ. Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska. 1995:xv + 256 pp. 48 numbered figs., 5 tables. $35.00 (cloth).—Warning! Read this book and you will never again travel across the Great Plains on I80 single-mindedly driven by purple mountains majesty over the western horizon. You will be obliged to make a significant diversionary journey northward into the largest area of sand dunes in the Western Hemisphere. But once on the blue highways, of which there are very few, you will discover, as Johnsgard writes, "Most roads in the sandhills lead nowhere." But that is their charm, "a land of no straight lines . . . patiently shaped by water, wind, and time." It's a landscape laid down in the Miocene, formed during the post-glacial, stabilized by prairies, richly endowed with rivers, brooks, fens, and marshes and with a human population of about one person per square mile. This is an ecological natural history that illustrates the diverse biotic communities in a region that comprises almost a quarter of the area of the state. While grasshoppers and grasshopper mice (complete with sonogram), midges, and sticklebacks (yes, they do it in Nebraska just like they do it for European ethologists) are described, birds are well represented, including some bird transect data gathered by H. Elliot McClure in the mid-1940's. Part One takes you around the periphery—the valley of the Niobrara, the (ponderosa) pine ridge and High Plains, the Platte, tallgrass prairie, and cornfields. Part Two takes you into the interior with chapter subtitles such as "Sandreed, Sicklebills, and 'Roo Rats;" "Boots, Burrowing Owls and Box Turtles;" "Whispers, Bells, and Trumpets." Part Three describes the advent of the ranching economy in the nineteenth century and the development of center-pivot irrigation during

the last third of the twentieth century. Irrigation has not depressed the water table very much because of the rapid recharge rates; but as a consequence of the ease at which water returns to the aquifers deep in the sand, irrigation has led to widespread ground-water pollution by nitrates, herbicides, and pesticides. But there is hope. Johnsgard tells us that the people who are making their living in the sandhills have banded together to thwart external economic and political pressures to increase short-term profit at the expense of long-term productivity. The seven appendices in the book comprise 30% of its length and provide, for example, a checklist of the vertebrates and vascular plants indicating the biotic communities in which they occur, a distributional list of sandhills birds, an annotated list of natural areas in the sandhills, and a very helpful glossary. Most of you have read other books by the author. This is Johnsgard at his poetic best, not only in the prose, but also in his delightful line drawings that complement the text.—JOHN L. ZIMMERMAN.

WHERE TO WATCH BIRDS IN SOUTH AMERICA. By Nigel Wheatley. Princeton Univ. Press, 41 William St., Princeton, New Jersey 08540. 1995: 431 pp., 52 black-and-white bird figs., 108 maps, $35.00 US (hardback).—This is a highly useful work that discusses an entire continent and related offshore archipelagos. As some recent books on South American birds have ignored the Galapagos and Falklands, it was good to see them included. Each country (and archipelago) has an introduction, with notes on size, getting around, lodging and food, health and safety concerns, climate and best months to visit, habitats, and conservation; along with country species totals, highlights, and endemic species. The author is a numbers gatherer with many accountings and tables of birds and endemic families per country; species numbers per size of country; statistics on trip lists, day lists; top ten sites for species lists; and endemic family lists per country. The most useful lists are each country's endemics with brief notes on where such endemics are found (with 179 in Brazil, for instance).

The sites within each country are clustered, rather than alphabetized, and well-labeled and numbered in each country's locator map. The nearly 100 site maps are well executed. One would wish that there were maps for all 206 sites. A typical site account has a good introduction, separate lists of endemics, specialties, others (birds), other wildlife (usually a few mammals, good feature), and access notes. Many sites are published for the first time in a book with broad availability.

The highly competitive business of bird listing companies competing with each other for the same clients has led to many great spots being kept semi-secret. Independent travelers have often remarked on how rarely they weaseled information out of such companies or their trip leaders. Some tips on where to go would end up on competitor's itineraries. The outdated code of ethics that birders must share all finding information with no charge for cost of gathering or preparing such information for strangers was in place before the tour businesses. Grossly underpaid bird tour leaders pay top dollar for legal, medical, financial and other consulting advice, but when those same professionals are birders they demand our consulting advice for free. This book will save tour leaders countless hours of *pro bono* work answering the questions so well answered in this work.

The actual species lists given for each locale are confusingly broken up into three categories. What a pain to have to search through three incomplete lists running like prose text. I would have much preferred two columns side-by-side with annotations as to endemics, specialties, and others (via bolds and italics), along with crude abundance symbols (where such information is available). As "no one reads introductions," the reader will have a hard time figuring out what the asterisks mean (tip: it's buried on page 18). Space does preclude complete lists in a book treating an entire continent, but I felt that North American migrants and winterers were rarely covered.

How good are the locale lists? To answer this, I compared my notes from three recent annual visits to the excellent Costanera Sur Faunal Reserve adjacent to downtown (city centre) Buenos Aires, Argentina. Taking civilized non-birders en route to Antarctica at mid-morning and mid-afternoon hours, with no tapes or playbacks, and without wading in the marshes, I found 82 species. We saw four of his 12 specialties listed, 36 of his 51 "Others," and 42 species not mentioned. The author does state that common and widespread species are purposely left off such lists. Not listed in the book were such species as White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) (much commoner than two other ibises listed), the "southern" endemic Coscoroba Swan (*Coscoroba coscoroba*) (large numbers in "dry" years), Red Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) (always there), rarities such as Masked Duck (*Oxyura dominica*) and Pampas Paintedsnipe (*Nycticryphes semicollaris*) and interesting common species for first-time visitors such as Rufous Hornero (*Furnarius rufus*) and Chalk-browed Mockingbird (*Mimus saturninus*).

Ornithologists should note that not a single scientific name appears in the book; other checklists will have to be handy. Fortunately, South America was nearly devoid of British colonies and a confusing plethora of "common" names in English (as has existed in Africa and Asia) did not evolve. Common sense common names with unique modifiers that tied species to "correct" group-names were agreed upon in an early (recent) period by several American ornithologists. It is interesting to note that it was a British birder who put together this work despite the much greater number of Americans traveling there. As expected, there was no mention of the *Malvinas* name in the Falklands chapter. There was also no mention of the 22 pioneering chapters on South America in "Finding Birds Around the World" (Peter Alden and John Gooders, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1981).

Mistakes of commission appeared few. Like so many writers, he says the train climbs UP to the ruins of Machu Picchu (7374 feet) from Cusco (10,200 feet) in Peru. Listing of significant inbound tour operators and lodge addresses is most useful, although I doubt the Venezuelan Audubon Society is the main avenue for booking Hato Pinero in the llanos. The listing of Antarctic ships in this 1995 guide has no mention of the new inexpensive Russian ships on the scene for several years, while mentioning the Ocean Princess which has been out of service since April 1993.

Despite the high price tag for a book with no color plates, this is a work that will repay its cost easily in directing casual and serious visitors to the most representative accessible parks and wild areas on the bird continent.—PETER ALDEN.

A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF MEXICO AND NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA. By Steve N.G. Howell and Sophie Webb. Oxford Univ. Press, New York. 1995. 1,010 pp., 1087 maps, 71 color plates, 44 linecuts. $39.95 paper, $75.00 cloth.—This long awaited handbook covers all birds known from Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and western Nicaragua. The fine color plates by Sophie Webb cover many plumages and subspecies for the first time. The plates in my copy appear to be overexposed, as the colors seem a bit washed out compared to some originals I've seen. Most North American winterers are not illustrated, so that visitors will again have to take along one of the North American field guides. The range maps (all at the species level) are excellent and show where birds are present in migration, as well as breeding and wintering areas. These maps are done on an outline of provinces which is far better than doing so with a few rivers or no provinces as some books present them. The species accounts are exhaustive, with good attention to vocalizations, similar species, ranges, relative abundances, habitats, taxonomic questions, and major subspecies. With such excellent plates, it appears that the descriptions are too long. Every shade,

streak, and pattern is included in minute detail, often running on for many hundreds of words.

Steve N. G. Howell, from Britain, embarked on this project in November 1981 and proceeded to spend the better part of the next dozen years gathering identification, ecological, distribution, and vocalization information in thousands of sites in the field. Based at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, he queried hundreds of (chiefly American) colleagues for details (note the five pages of acknowledgments) and supervised the production of plates and range maps. Most of the field guide work in Latin America has focused on areas from Costa Rica southward since the early 1970s when no less than four were published on the Mexico/Guatemala region. It is so nice to see such a compendium of knowledge come out on this area after a gap of roughly 20 years, especially since this area is an important one for wintering Nearctic birds, contains many endemics and has a rapidly diminishing stock of pristine habitat.

The book suffers from an overuse of abbreviations, and the various keys to this plethora of them are scattered in too many places. Some abbreviations are listed on unnumbered page 87, some on unnumbered pages xv and xvi, others in acknowledgments (by extrapolation), and others such as INIREB, ICACH, RSMHN, and SEDUE, on page 798. They should all have been listed from A–Z on both endpapers for reference. Why can't Chiapas be Chia instead of Chis? Couldn't FCUNAM be shortened somehow? Under each species account the sections are split up into ID, SS, SD, RA, and NB, which could have been spelled out or at least given as Ident., Sim. sp., Status, Distr., Range and Note. In a short sample species account such as Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorus* the reader will have to translate ID, SE, SD, F, C, S, Ver, U, R, S, Tamps, Nay, PA, SNGH, PP, F, U, NE, R, W, DF, RA, E, and SE. This makes for unpleasant reading. It took a long time to figure out what the asterisk indicated. On page 87 you will find that it means different things depending on where it is placed.

The maps on pages 2–6 appear to have enough space to have most names of islands, provinces, and selected cities and towns written out at the correct site rather than resorting to a endless letters and numbers. The biogeographic maps on pages 8–9 are yet another nightmare of letters and numbers. Despite this, the geography and bird distribution section is well organized. The various tables on migration, visitors and species that withdraw from parts of ranges are of great interest. Note that all the microscopic asterisks are actually tiny letter a, b, and c symbols explained on page 35. I was pleased to see the country-by-country chapters on conservation. Maps showing sites of present day reserves would have been helpful.

Rare indeed these days is the author of regional guides who fails to "lump and split" any number of species and attempt to improve English names. This book is no exception. The sequence of orders and families follows the A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds (1983) rather than the more controversial DNA-DNA sequence. The "lumping/splitting" pendulum swings over to splits here with four species created out of the Green Parakeet (*Aratinga holochroa*) and four species created out of the Fork-tailed Emerald (*Chlorostilbon canivetii*). There are several dozen other accepted splits involving such genera as *Amazona* parrots, *Glaucidium* pygmy-owls, *Caprimulgus* nightjars, *Campylopterus* sabrewings, *Cynanthus* and *Amazilia* hummingbirds, *Trogon, Formicarius* ant-thrushes, *Platyrinchus* spadebills, *Progne* martins, *Stelgidopteryx* swallows, *Hylorchilus* and *Troglodytes* wrens, *Vireo, Icterus* orioles, and *Junco*. The Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) is not divided. Many birders will be surprised to see the flowerpiercer genus *Diglossa* placed in the *Emberizinae*.

As for English names he fails to use Louisiana Heron as a good alternate to Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*), coins Eared Quetzal (better than Trogon) for *Euptilos neoxemus,*

and fails to adopt Whitestart for *Myioborus*. Members of *Myioborus* genus (all of which have white outer tail feathers) have no red in the tail and should not retain the grossly incorrect name applied to Old World thrushes of the genus *Phoenicurus*. I note that the silver-like color is spelled grey. An informal group of ornithologists involved with English names in the 1980's proposed that the Americans might use grey (not gray) in return for the British dropping the use of the u in colour and harbour.

Useful appendices include lists of species known from islands and cays of both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, descriptions of fifty species of eastern Honduras that are omitted from the main text, and a 26 page bibliography that somehow omits my "Finding Birds in Western Mexico" (University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1969) that would have been listed first!—PETER ALDEN.

CURRENT ORNITHOLOGY. Volume 12. Dennis M. Power (ed.). Plenum Press, New York, New York. 1995:278 pp.$79.50.—Plenum Press continues to provide outstanding service to the community of scientific ornithologists by publishing this series. The present volume includes chapters on (1) testosterone and polygyny in birds by Les D. Beletsky, David F. Gori, Scott Freeman, and John C. Wingfield, (2) use of migration counts to monitor landbird populations by Erica H. Dunn and David J. T. Hussell, (3) ptilochronology by Thomas C. Grubb, Jr., (4) individual voice discrimination by Marcel M. Lambrechts and Andre A. Dhondt, (5) evolution of bird coloration and plumage elaboration by Udo M. Savalli, and (6) hatching asynchrony and the onset of incubation by Scott J. Stoleson and Steven R. Beissinger. As has been true in all previous volumes, the editing and writing of these chapters is excellent and the content remarkably good, particularly given the length of the series.

I will not describe the contents of the chapters here as the titles pretty much tell the story. The accounts on migration and hatching asynchrony were particularly interesting to me and promise to have wide application in ornithology. The chapters on voice discrimination, evolution of color, and ptilochronology forced me to revise and expand my course notes for my university class in ornithology. The chapter on polygyny illustrates how physiology and behavior can be integrated to better understand birds. As usual, these sources are a gold mine for researchers, graduate students, and teachers.—C. R. BLEM.

LAST OF THE CURLEWS. By Fred Bodsworth. Counterpoint, Washington D.C. 1995. $15 (cloth).—This little book of less than a hundred pages has become a conservation classic since it was published in 1955 by Dodd, Mead & Company. This edition has been expanded by including a Forward by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and conservationist W.S. Mervin, a brief Epilogue by Bodsworth, and a 45 page Afterword by Nobel Prize-winning particle physicist Murray Gell-Mann. Gell-Mann's Afterward begins with the question: "Can the human race learn, while there is still time, how to coexist with the great diversity of bird life on this planet?" In the pages which follow, he examines the question of extinction in the context of geologic time and past periods of catastrophic extinction of species and then focuses on the changes to the biosphere which humans have produced in the past few centuries and the enormous stress we continue to put on the ecological systems of the planet. He eventually enters an arena which is perhaps best described as philosophical or political with a discussion of quality of human life versus quantity, at one point asking: "Why squander quality of life for the sake of mere numbers of humans?" In a world already overcrowded with humans, this is perhaps the most fundamental question one could ask.

The book itself contains 11 chapters which comprise a biographical sketch of the hypothetical "last of the curlews," an Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*). It is a touching story told by a biologist with a deep understanding of shorebird biology. The skillful avoidance of anthropomorphism is quite remarkable, as is the author's use of language to evoke an emotional response from the reader. The chapters are separated by short sections entitled "The Gantlet" [gauntlet] which consist of vignettes quoted from published historical documents which delineate the slaughter of Eskimo Curlews by man and the virtual disappearance of the species.

This classic story of human exploitation and extinction, together with the penetrating analysis of global problems by Gell-Mann, are well worth reading and discussing, particularly in times of political and economic change.—WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.

Erratum

In the paper "Detectability and population density of Scaly-naped Pigeons before and after Hurricane Hugo in Puerto Rico and Vieques Island," (Wilson Bulletin, 107[4]:727–733), the first sentence should be: "Hurricane Hugo hit northeastern Puerto Rico with sustained winds of 30–40 m/s (gusting to 50–60 m/s) on 18 September 1989 (see Boose et al., 1994)."