

rare species are likely to be doomed to small populations and narrow niches. On the other hand, Maurer neglects to mention that many local problems do not require a macroscopic look—tools such as the proper use of fire, control of alien species, or remediation of disturbance often provide acceptable outcomes. One objective recommendation Maurer makes, which has also been noted elsewhere, is that simple tallies of species richness do not necessarily indicate the most important areas for conservation, as the species total is likely inflated by widespread species or by species on the very edge of their geographic ranges.

Who should read this book? Anyone whose interest in community ecology extends beyond comparing species lists should recognize the potential for macroecological processes. It should be required reading for any reviewer who ever dismissed ecological results that did not match existing data from another location, or for any writer who claimed his or her system was representative of a broad geographical area. Ornithologists have been instrumental in providing the data essential for bringing the study of macroecology to where it is today; we should now prepare ourselves to see if the generalizations hold up. For example, will Amazonian birds, with highly specialized niches and low abundance, show the same patterns of distribution and abundance as revealed by the BBS data? Do generalizations from breeding birds hold up on the wintering grounds? Similarly, although Maurer does not mention it, there are useful contributions to be made from museum collections. For example, how do clinal variation and genetic structure across distributions accord with the niche conservatism that should arise from population processes across a geographic range? This book should provide the rationale and the impetus to take a macroscopic look at what we know about birds. Only time will tell how far macroecology will take us in answering the basic questions of ecology.—PHILIP C. STOFFER, *Department of Biological Sciences, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana 70402-0736, USA. stouffer@selu.edu*

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Atlas das Aves Invernantes do Baixo Alentejo (Atlas of the Winter Birds of Lower Alentejo).—Edited by Gonçalo L. Elias, Luís M. Reino, Tiago Silva, Ricardo Tomé, and Pedro Geraldès. 1998. Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds, Lisbon, Portugal. 416 pp., approximately 180 unnumbered

maps, 180 black-and-white drawings, 16 tables and figures. ISBN 972-96786-2-6. Paper, approx. US\$40.00. In Portuguese, with English summaries. Available from: Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo de Aves, Rua da Vitória, 53-2^oD, 1100 Lisboa, Portugal (contact spea@ip.pt for more information).—During the winters of 1992–1995, a large group of Portuguese bird enthusiasts set out to quantify the distribution and abundance of birds in Baixo Alentejo, a region in southern Portugal about the size of Connecticut. Their results are presented in this attractive book that follows the general format of the breeding bird atlases recently prepared for many U.S. states. Indeed, the book is meant to complement the breeding bird atlas for continental Portugal.

The species accounts will probably attract most readers, but the volume also includes four introductory chapters. The first describes the geography, vegetation types, and climate. The second chapter, on methods, allows the reader to interpret the maps in the species accounts. A goal of the work is to present quantitative data on abundance throughout the region, based on 2–4 visits to each of the 166 100 km² blocks. This chapter also describes tape-playback methods for surveying owls and the adjustments for species whose detection was highly dependent on the length of the observation period. It is interesting to note that for most species the abundance is presented as birds/visit, without correction for the length of the visit. This is in contrast to analyses of Christmas Count data, which are based on birds/party-hour. Summaries of the data in the third and fourth chapters include patterns of species richness and abundance, distribution of vulnerable species, and designation of areas most important for conservation. Each chapter includes an English summary.

Species accounts form the bulk of the volume, with two pages dedicated to each of 169 species. I could not find the taxonomy explicitly stated, but it appears to follow Cramp and his collaborators' *Birds of the Western Palearctic* series. Abundance is mapped as scaled circles (as percentage of maximum abundance) for each block in which the species was recorded. Obviously, there is no way to judge the coverage of the various habitats within each block, so it is difficult to interpret whether low recorded abundance reflects lower density or just less time spent surveying the appropriate habitat when that habitat is rare. Species accounts also include black-and-white drawings by a variety of artists, and brief English summaries. Many of the drawings are excellent and combine well with the maps to give a certain visual charm to the accounts. Unfortunately, the Portuguese text, presented in a large font, gets reduced to less than a page and includes relatively little information. The species accounts were written by about 30 different authors

so they vary somewhat in style, but most include a summary of the overall species distribution and their preferred habitats within the study area, the timing of migration, the source of Portuguese birds, and population trends within and beyond the study area. Most accounts include references, although these are usually very general. Each account also includes an English summary. Marine birds and accidental species (with occurrence dates) are considered in a separate section.

Anyone interested in the distribution of Iberian birds will want to have this book. However, it is probably too specialized to become an important resource for most North American ornithologists. The most useful feature is the maps; readers unfamiliar with Portuguese should still find the information useful.—PHILIP C. STOFFER, *Department of Biological Sciences, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana 70402-0736, USA. stouffer@selu.edu*

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Les Oiseaux de France.—Roger Reboussin. 1999 (edited by Pierre Jeanson). 381 pp., 388 color plates. ISBN 2-9514488-0-5. Cloth, in slip case. Distributed by NHBS Ltd, 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, United Kingdom, and the Association "Les Amis de Reboussin," 164bis, avenue Charles de Gaulle, 92200 Neuilly-sur-Seine (France). Price: 395 FF (\$51).—Since his early childhood, Roger Reboussin (1881–1965) held a life-long passion for animals, painting, and hunting, as well as a love for his native countryside. Because he always remained so tied to his birthplace, he is not well known outside western Europe in spite of his abundant productivity. This includes the illustration of more than 20 books (all in French) on hunting, birds, natural history, and related fables and legends. His gouache and water color paintings convey his feelings for nature, his love of life, his intimate knowledge of birds and his acute sense of movements in a way few artists have ever succeeded in doing. As one of France's most famous animal painters, Reboussin won prizes in many exhibitions from 1907 to 1945, retaining to his death the prestigious title of "Master of Drawing" at the Paris Museum of Natural History.

Reboussin began his monumental work on *The Birds of France* at the request and under the private commission of his friend and patron, Marcel Jeanson, a great French ornithologist, book collector and

hunter. The goal was to portray, in their natural habitat, all bird species recorded in France to date. It took nearly 30 years to be completed. This superb collection of 388 gouaches, the favorite medium of this artist, is now published by Pierre Jeanson, the son of Reboussin's original and faithful supporter. Most of the species are drawn from personal field experience, and the artist succeeded in capturing some of the movement and "attitude" typical of each one. Reboussin combined his interpretation of the spirit of life with a rigorous, yet spontaneous way of painting birds, which was in the impressionist style of his time. Nevertheless, he accomplished this with the accuracy of a portraitist combined with the sharpness and realism of a naturalist. The quality of the edition and the size of the reproductions do justice to the artwork, making the volume much more than a simple coffee table book.

The text is limited to draft prefaces written by Marcel Jeanson and Roger Reboussin in the early 1940s, and a more recent introduction. All of the prefaces are in French and English, making the book accessible to a wide audience. The birds, all depicted in color and often covering an entire page, are presented in scientific, systematic order by their French, English, and Latin names. Details on family status, sex and age characteristics, position in the plate, and alternative French names are given in a 12 page appendix at the end of the book. Many plates depict a single species. Sometimes, two consecutive plates are devoted to the same species, whereas other plates illustrate two to four species together. It is unfortunate, however, that in such a high quality publication there are so many spelling errors to the Latin, English, and even the French names. There are few entirely erroneous names (i.e. the Latin name of the Honey Buzzard, *Pernis apivorus*, and an inversion between the identification information of two terns species). Moreover, the specific English names of several species are not given (e.g. the use of "Buzzard" for the Common Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*). Fortunately, most errors seem to have been corrected in a second edition now available.

The book would have been better titled "The Birds of Europe," because not only are all French breeding species and regular migrants illustrated, but so too are many taxa that are only rare vagrants in France, leaving very few European species not represented (these are cited in an appendix). Also, from an ornithologist's point of view, the paintings of passerines are sharper and more accurate than are many of those of nonpasserines. In spite of these minor criticisms, this splendid homage to the memory of a great artist is worthy of the book shelves belonging to artists, naturalists, amateur ornithologists, and hunters alike.—JEAN-MARC THIOLLAY, *Laboratoire d'Ecologie, Ecole Normale Supérieure, 46 rue d'Ulm, 75230 Paris cedex 05 France. thiollay@biologie.ens.fr*