



EDITED BY REBECCA HOLBERTON

The following critiques express the opinions of the individual evaluators regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and value of the books they review. As such, the appraisals are subjective assessments and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or any official policy of the American Ornithologists' Union.

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Erwin Stresemann (1889–1972).—Leben und Werk eines Pioniers der wissenschaftlichen Ornithologie—Jürgen Haffer, Erich Rutschke and Klaus Wunderlich. 2000. Acta Historica Leopoldina, Number 34. Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina e.V., Postfach 110543, D 06019 Halle (Salle), Germany. 465 pp., 74 illustrations. ISBN 3-8304-5091-5. Paper, 68 DM. (Note: This book can be obtained online through Barnes & Noble, [www.bn.com], and then scrolling down the left margin to click on their European partner, [bol.com], click on Germany and finally entering the ISBN number and search.) Erwin Stresemann was clearly the most influential ornithologist of the twentieth century, being primarily responsible for the rise of the New Avian Biology beginning in the 1920s. The first International Ornithological Congress (Vienna, 1884) convened just five years before his birth on 22 November 1889. And, having died two days before his 83rd birthday on 20 November 1972, just two years after the 14th Congress, Stresemann is a distant historical figure. Most present-day ornithologists are largely unaware of his significant contributions to ornithology over three-quarters of a century ago, before most of us were born. Only three of his pre-World War II students (Wilhelm Meise, Ernst Mayr, and Joachim Steinbacher) are still alive. Even the number of ornithologists who actually met Stresemann is decreasing rapidly. His last visit to North America was in 1962 and his last International Ornithological Congress was in 1966 (Oxford). When Stresemann first began his studies, ornithological research (mainly systematic and faunistics) was drastically different from the diversity of avian biological work done during the past half century. That change in the direction of ornithological research was the direct consequence of ideas developed by the young Stresemann during his student days in the 1910s and incorporated into his major work—the *Aves* volume of the *Handbuch der Zoologie*.

The publication of that excellent book provides a detailed history on the life and scientific work of Er-

win Stresemann and enables avian biologists and science historians to learn just about everything about this remarkable ornithologist. Haffer, Rutschke, and Wunderlich provide a detailed history of Stresemann's life and career in three chapters: his personal life (K. Wunderlich), his personality and its influences (E. Rutschke), and his scientific work (J. Haffer). Haffer has added a detailed 29-page summary in English to a series of appendices. Because of the untimely deaths of Klaus Wunderlich (18 April 1997) and Erich Rutschke (12 February 1999), Jürgen Haffer had the responsibility of seeing the manuscript through the publication process.

This work is well illustrated with photographs and line drawings, all of which have an English as well as German legend. An appendix with 14 separate parts includes many details such as a list of avian taxa described by Stresemann (pp. 375–385); taxa named in Stresemann's honor (pp. 387–390); references to published biographies of Stresemann (p. 391); honors (pp. 393–394); festschriften, obituaries, and appreciations (pp. 395–397); a time table of his life (pp. 441–442); several unpublished manuscripts; and the excellent 29-page English summary by Haffer. A list of illustrations and several indices are provided. Very useful are the birth and death dates given for many workers in the Index of Persons (however, my birth date is given as 1939 rather than the correct 1933).

This book is an excellent and thorough treatment of the scientific career of this most important ornithologist of the twentieth century. In the two decades before World War II, Stresemann was at the center of international ornithology with close connections to all of the world's important ornithologists. During that time, he revitalized the systematic work in the Berlin Museum; wrote the *Aves* volume of the *Handbuch der Zoologie*; directed the work of a remarkable group of graduate students in ornithology; was, for 50 years, the central figure in the Deutschen Ornithologen-Gesellschaft; and, most importantly, was the catalyst in the development of the New Avian Bi-

ology beginning in the early 1920s (the "pioneer of scientific ornithology" of the title). If Stresemann did not accomplish anything else during his long career, his action in pushing development of the New Avian Biology is sufficient to insure his position as having the most profound influence on twentieth-century world ornithology. Most interesting is that Stresemann stayed strictly within ornithology during his entire scientific career; he did not branch out into general zoological or theoretical biological topics.

The three authors have done an excellent job in presenting the life and work of Erwin Stresemann, with each of the major chapters full of interesting facts and analyses, and extensive documentation. This history is best read in conjunction with Haffer's 1997 *Ornithologen-Briefe des 20. Jahrhunderts* (see, W. J. Bock, 1999, *Auk*, 116:861–863). Because those chapters were written at different times and independently of one another, there is some duplication of material but that does not distract from the book. One of the little-known aspects of Stresemann's life was that, in 1934, he was offered a research professorship at Yale University through the efforts of Dr. Leonard Sanford, with the possibility of heading up the Peabody Museum (pp. 42, 144). Stresemann visited Yale during his trip to the United States from November 1935 to March 1936, but, feeling himself bound to Berlin and Germany, he declined the offer. There is little discussion of Stresemann's other trips to North America: in 1958 he addressed the American Ornithologists' Union on the status of avian systematics (1959d) at its 75th anniversary meeting in New York City, and in 1962 he attended the International Ornithological Congress in Ithaca, New York to speak on the taxonomic value of wing molt. During both trips, Erwin and his wife, Vesta Stresemann, studied the molt of birds at the American Museum of Natural History (E. and V. Stresemann, 1966). It was during those visits that most North American ornithologists would have met Stresemann.

Stresemann's best known publications are his *Aves* volume in the *Handbuch der Zoologie 1927–1934* (only 536 were sold by 1934 and an additional 156 by 1944, a total of only 692 of the original 2,200 printed; the remaining two-thirds were tragically destroyed by fire toward the end of World War II, see, p. 248), and his *Ornithology: From Aristotle to the Present* (1975; original German edition, 1951). Both were discussed by Haffer (pp. 248–250, and 297–302). The *Aves* volume was analyzed in connection with a long section on the development of the New Avian Biology (pp. 248–295). Haffer points out that Stresemann's history of ornithology was written during the difficult years following World War II when his access to the literature was restricted. That historical work concentrated on avian systematics and on European workers; hence there is still a great need for a thorough treatment of the history of worldwide ornithology.

Another of Stresemann's important contributions in 1939 was part of his *The Birds of Celebes* in which he advocated his ideas of a "dynamic zoogeography" (pp. 213–219; 414–416). That was in reaction to excessive land-bridge building by the biogeographers of the time and which was based on changes in the habitats over time and the differential dispersal abilities of different species. Although a few persons acknowledge credit to Stresemann for these ideas (e.g. E. Mayr, 1944, *The Birds of Timor and Sumatra*, *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, 83:123–194), his concept of dynamic zoogeography is still insufficiently unknown and deserves a full analytic review.

The leading German Academy of Science, the Leopoldina, published this book by Haffer and his colleagues on the life and work of Erwin Stresemann, the leading German ornithologist; hence the bulk of the publication is in German. That is unfortunate because most of the world's ornithologists will not be able to appreciate in depth the importance of Stresemann to the development of ornithology during the first half of the twentieth century, in spite of the excellent English summary by Jürgen Haffer (pp. 399–427). It would be a great benefit to most ornithologists if someone would undertake the great task of translating this volume into English and republishing it, perhaps as a CD-ROM.

In summary, this authoritative history of the life and work of Erwin Stresemann is essential to all ornithologists and science historians with the slightest interest in the history of ornithology. Jürgen Haffer, Erich Rutschke and Klaus Wunderlich are to be congratulated for their excellent and thorough presentation; all ornithologists and historians of science are in their debt. The cost of this book is most reasonable compared to its contents, and I urge anyone interested in the history of ornithology to obtain this valuable addition to our science.—WALTER J. BOCK, *Department of Biological Sciences, Columbia University, 1200 Amsterdam Avenue, Mail Box 5521, New York, New York, 10027-7004 USA. E-mail: wb4@columbia.edu*

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Ecology and Conservation of Grassland Birds of the Western Hemisphere—Edited by Peter D. Vickery and James R. Herkert. 1999. Proceedings of a Conference, Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 1995. *Studies in Avian Biology* No. 19. Cooper Ornithological Society, Camarillo, California. vii + 299 pp., numerous figures. ISBN 1-891276-08-5. Paper, \$25.00; ISBN 1-891276-11-5. Cloth, \$39.50.—Within the past 10–15