



Book Reviews

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ANDERSON, B.W. **Evolution and Taxonomy of White-cheeked Geese.** 495 pages, 24 colour plates, numerous maps, figures (in colour and black and white) and tables Blythe, CA: Avvar Books, 2010. Paperback, US \$25.00, ISBN 0-9708504-4-1. Website: <http://www.avvar.com>.

It must be pointed out right at the start that the term 'White-cheeked Geese' applies solely to Canada Geese *Branta canadensis sensu lato* and does not include the Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* familiar to Europeans.

This book follows on from two earlier works entitled *The White-cheeked Geese* by the late Harold Hanson, from the same publisher, the first volume on 'Eastern taxa' (2006) and the second, co-authored with B.W. Anderson, on 'Western taxa' (2007). They both had the subtitle *Taxonomy, Ecophysiological Relationships, Biogeography, and Evolutionary Considerations*. Had Hanson not died, he and Anderson would have been the authors of this book, too, although Anderson suggests in the Introduction that here he is extending the original scope and introducing his own ideas with which Hanson might not have entirely agreed.

Hanson first came to prominence among goose workers when he proposed, as long ago as the 1960s, that there could be as many as 70–80 identifiable species or subspecies of Canada Geese. Since then, Anderson relates that Hanson had greatly extended his thinking on the subject and, at the time of his death, considered that there were six species of Canada Geese, but perhaps many more, and more than 200 ‘subspecifically recognizable taxa’.

Anderson briefly reviews past taxonomic classification, which has generally oscillated between eight and 12 subspecies, divided only quite recently into two species, but misses out a number of relevant works, e.g. Mowbray *et al.* (2002) *The Birds of North America*, No. 682. He then dives straight into a sequence of chapters discussing and justifying the claim for these 200+ taxa. Chapter titles include ‘Character intercorrelations’, which uses correlations and discriminant functions to sort out the different proposed taxa; ‘The effects of sample size’, which attempts to justify the fact that most of the samples examined are very small (tens of birds); ‘Reproducibility of plumage scores’, scoring 16 characters of a sample of 180 geese and seeing how the scores changed on reanalysis, which led to the conclusion that the chances of making the same identification for a given specimen was 80–85%; ‘Analysis of currently accepted taxa’, resulting in the firm conclusion that the author states ‘I emphatically disagree with the AOU taxonomy of white-cheeked geese’, which hardly needed saying given what this book is about!; and ‘Inter- and intra-taxon analyses’, in which the conclusion is drawn that all AOU taxa are geographically variable.

There follow four more justifying chapters, ‘Clinal variation in *B. canadensis*’, ‘Evaluating clinal variation: arctic geese’, ‘A cluster analysis: large geese’, and ‘A cluster analysis: arctic geese’, all necessary for the author to move towards his explanation of the large number of taxa in his sights.

We then have a series of chapters getting to the nub of things, namely ‘Evolutionary scenario’, ‘Taxonomic considerations’, and ‘Biogeographic and behavioral considerations’. It is in the first of these that one of the author’s biggest hurdles looms large. As he states: ‘There have been no published, continent-wide studies of the DNA of the white-cheeked geese. All the studies combined have not included more than perhaps 20% of the taxa discussed in this study...Nonetheless these studies have provided some insights into the evolution of the white-cheeked geese. In some crucial cases involving adequate samples they seem to provide support for the general findings presented in this book’.

While the author does review the available DNA studies, his marrying of that approach with his own, mainly morphological, analyses is less comprehensive than I felt was needed. He does point out, quite fairly, that some of the authors of DNA studies were not

themselves familiar with the different taxa and relied on others to identify the birds they were working with. As an aside, this brings to mind criticisms I have felt for many years about the illustrations of the 8–12 different subspecies, whether paintings or photographs, that have appeared in various books over the years. The paintings, e.g. by Peter Scott or Hilary Burn, were invariably done from skins, and photographs may be of captive birds, and who, really, is to say whether or not the original identification was correct? Is it satisfactory that that’s what the label said?

The penultimate chapter is headed ‘Demographics, management, hunting, distribution’. I don’t think it is an exaggeration to say that the main conservation thrust in North America regarding Canada Geese is to provide enough for the annual harvest by hunters. Goose management is carried out principally involving flyways. While small, and vulnerable, individual populations will attract necessary conservation measures, wildlife managers are much more into the broader picture and will, I feel, be bemused by the tables in this chapter, reporting on the number of different taxa found in samples obtained from different parts of the country, e.g. 29 from the west coast of the USA, 26 in the Arctic, 28 in Arizona, 34 in Idaho, etc. Bear in mind that these taxa have been named from only small numbers of specimens. Indeed, one could say ‘very small’, given that there are an estimated nine million Canada Geese in North America. It is not possible to take all those into consideration when setting the annual shooting bags for each season.

The final chapter, ‘Guide to identification’, is illustrated with 24 plates of colour photographs of four or five different, named, taxa, presenting a dorsal and a ventral view of each, plus their measurements and also numbers from a scoring system relating to colour, barring, scales, etc., on different parts of the body. I did not find it easy to relate the scores to the colour photographs, not even using the 30–40 pages of preceding text. There is no key to aid the process.

In conclusion, I applaud the dedication of the author, and even more of Harold Hanson, for their single-minded approach to a difficult topic. The taxonomy and classification of Canada Geese has been a subject more of disagreement than agreement ever since the first authors to write about the subject bravely put their heads above the parapet. Today, the disagreements go on, as to whether there are one or two species, or eight or 12 subspecies, or, indeed, whether the existing accepted subspecies interbreed to produce intergrades. I am content to believe they do and have done for decades, but others disagree with me. This book mentions intergrades many times, but seems to prefer to regard them as different subspecies which is indeed a new approach. The one thing this book won’t help you to do, but then the same caution applies to existing books

(see my comment about illustrations), is to identify a single Canada Goose, or even a flock, to one of the 200+ subspecies, but then I don't think that was its purpose. My problem as reviewer of this book is that I'm not sure what the purpose of the author was in writing it.

Malcolm Ogilvie

BORROW, N. & DEMEY, R. **Birds of Senegal and The Gambia**. 352 pages, 143 colour plates, maps. London: Christopher Helm, 2011. Paperback, £29.99, ISBN 978-1-4081-3469-6. Website: <http://www.bloomsbury.com>.

This is a continuation of the series of adaptations, to individual countries, of the plates and text of the same authors' admirable field guide to the *Birds of Western Africa* (2004; reviewed in *Ibis* 147: 432). As with their *Birds of Ghana* (2010; reviewed in *Ibis* 153: 643–644), the plate faces the corresponding species text and map. This book invites direct comparison with a similar guide covering the two countries, *A field guide to the birds of The Gambia and Senegal* by Barlow, Wachter and Disley (1997; see *Ibis* 140: 702). The older book loses out by separating its 48 colour plates from the text, and the illustrations are smaller (although for most species they are perfectly adequate for identification). Barlow *et al.* also omit distribution maps and their text does not satisfactorily overcome this problem. Nik Borrow's illustrations here are generally very good indeed, and for anyone requiring an identification guide for just these two countries, Borrow and Demey's is the obvious choice now.

There is for each species a clear, schematic map of distribution in Senegambia. These lean heavily on the limited fieldwork and coarse representation (by degree square) in the maps in Morel and Morel's *Les oiseaux de Sénégambie: Notices et cartes de distribution* (Paris: ORSTOM, 1990), supplemented by the very useful survey undertaken by Sauvage and Rodwell (*Malimbus* 20 (1998): 75–122). There are many large gaps on the maps here that could doubtless be filled by further fieldwork, and a number of species are detailed and illustrated in the systematic list for which the authors admit there is no confirmed record or where reports possibly result from misidentification; sometimes these are mapped with a '?', but often (confusingly) with an 'x'. Lemon-bellied Crombec *Sylvietta denti* is seriously questioned, but nevertheless illustrated, with a full accompanying text. Such birds are also listed in an appendix of species not accepted. Distribution is often indicated in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau, although the literature has not always been sufficiently taken into account.

The text covers field identification, status and voice (with useful cross reference to commercial recordings). The accounts of status, including habitat, are a

disappointment, often simply cut and pasted verbatim from the authors' handbook *Birds of Western Africa* (2001; reviewed in *Ibis* 144: 535), even when not applicable to Senegambia. This was true also for *Birds of Ghana*, and one even finds here text from that book, complete with uncorrected typos; e.g. Brown-backed Woodpecker *Dendropicos obsoletus* becomes *P(icooides) o.obsoletus* in the text. These three books all claim for Blue-bellied Roller *Coracias cyanogaster* 'numbers augmented by those from further north during dry season', but the map for this species in Senegambia clearly shows that there are none to the north. Barlow *et al.* reported that it is absent north of 15°N, and those authors had the advantage of long-term residence in the region, unlike Borrow and Demey.

The present work does not, unfortunately, investigate the rather large number of reports of unexpected species from The Gambia, which are sometimes questioned here, but for which one would have liked an independent assessment. In the case of three or four Blackstarts *Cercomela melanura*, far from the species' known distribution, a photograph apparently exists. The origins of several of these reports are to be found in Jensen and Kirkeby (1980) *The birds of The Gambia* (reviewed in *Ibis* 123: 376–377) – a reference omitted from the Bibliography here. I had firmly rejected the occurrence of Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill *Bycanistes subcylindricus* in The Gambia in *Ibis*, as had later writers, but it is mapped here, with just the mention that there may have been confusion with another species. No reference is made to a report of Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini* mentioned by Isenmann *et al.* in *Oiseaux de Mauritanie* (2010; reviewed in *Ibis* 153: 445–446), whereas the Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni* mapped here has been rejected by those authors.

Subspecies are listed in the text, but the literature has not been taken fully into account: e.g. *Tyto alba affinis* should be *poensis* (Bruce & Dowsett (2004) *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 124: 184–187). There is confusion over the taxonomic status of the Desert Eagle Owl, *Bubo (bubo) ascalaphus* in the heading, but *B. b. desertorum* in the text.

These may appear to be points of marginal concern, given that this book is essentially a field guide, but it will be taken as an authority on the Gambian and Senegalese avifaunas. As a guide simply to the identification of the birds of the region, aimed at the many novice birders who visit The Gambia in particular, this can be recommended as a very suitable book for one's backpack. But it lacks local value-added text, and the authors' mother work, their regional *Birds of Western Africa*, which covers many more countries and species, and is only slightly heavier and more expensive, is a better buy for the more serious birdwatcher.

R. J. Dowsett

DEL HOYO, J., ELLIOTT, A. & CHRISTIE, D. (eds) **Handbook of the Birds of the World. Volume 16. Tanagers to New World Blackbirds.** 894 pages, 81 colour plates, 499 colour photographs, 766 distribution maps. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions, 2011. Hardback, €212.00, ISBN 978-84-96553-78-1. Website: <http://www.lynxeds.com>.

The first volume of HBW appeared in 1992, although planning for it had started about a decade earlier. Many doubted whether volumes could be produced at the predicted rate or whether they would ever see the final volume. Simple arithmetic suggested that it would not be possible, given the number of species covered in Volume 1, to cover all species in a mere 10 volumes. The sceptics were right about the 10 volumes, it had slipped to 12 by Volume 2 ('a number which can now be considered practically definitive') and, as we now positively definitively know, really required 16 volumes.

The sceptics were very wrong about the production rate or that it would ever be completed. Sixteen volumes in about 20 years is a really major feat of organization, persistence and determination.

It is difficult to know how to review this book. If you have not already seen it, you cannot be particularly interested, though it is still possible to buy the full set. If you have seen it, but have not yet caught up with Volume 16, you will have a pretty good idea of what it looks like. This final volume contains four families, covering some 762 species: Thraupidae (Tanagers), Cardinalidae (Cardinals), Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows) and Icteridae (New World Blackbirds). The higher level groupings of some of these taxa have been – and still are – the subject of much debate, all of these families (and others in Volume 15; reviewed in *Ibis* 153: 901–902) being included in a greater Emberizidae by some authors. Wisely, in my view, the HBW Editors have stayed with a more traditional and to most people more user-friendly set of divisions.

The actual text sticks to the well-trying formula of earlier volumes; an extensive introduction to each family, covering the usual subjects and illustrated with excellent photographs, followed by a separate account for each species which includes fine paintings, a distribution map, details of the subspecies and a bibliography.

Again as in previous volumes, there is a Foreword covering some subject of general interest to the ornithologist. Here it is 'Climate Change and Birds' by Anders Pape Møller, who deals with the problems facing birds as the world warms, covering a wide range of aspects from the timing of breeding and the timing of migration to the effect that global changes may have on bird populations. We need to know the degree to which birds can change their habits to cope with these changes; if they cannot, the chances of extinction

may increase. At the very least, many of the changes need to be taken into consideration in any plans for conservation.

When Volume 7 arrived, completing the Non-passerines, tucked in with it was a stiff plastic sheet on one side of which was a series of coloured vignettes of a bird of each family and, on the other, the list of the families and many of the more important species; on both sides, the volume and page number were given. I first thought that this was a bit unnecessary, but now use it all the time! I am happy to report that, with the completion of the Passerines, a second such sheet has now arrived.

The Editors are to be warmly congratulated on achieving the completion of this work. However, if subscribers feel they can now relax, this is a mistake. More works are in progress! The first of these is a special volume which will include a global index and descriptions of those species discovered after the volume to which they belong was published. Interestingly, this is given as only 52 (so far), so must exclude most of the 'splits' that have been proliferating. There is then to be a two-volume illustrated checklist of all the birds of the world and, third, 'HBW Alive' through which HBW will enter the digital age, thus providing a way to update the information; of particular interest to many will be the incorporation of video and sound.

Christopher Perrins

DHONDT, A.A. **Interspecific Competition in Birds. (Oxford Avian Biology Series.)** xii +282 pages, numerous black-and-white figures and tables, 3 appendices. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Hardback, £65.00, ISBN 978-0-19-958901-2; paperback, £32.50, ISBN 978-0-19-958902-9. Website: <http://www.oup.com>.

One of the ongoing themes of David Lack's career, summarized in his 1971 book *Ecological Isolation in Birds*, was the idea that species are able to maintain coexistence in the same habitat through ecological segregation. This was heavily influenced by his studies of tits (Paridae) in Wytham Woods. Lack argued that sympatric species of tit avoided competition by diverging in diet and habitat use, and that this interspecific competition was so important that it shaped the evolution of species. Lack's view was supported by a number of prominent North American researchers, including MacArthur, Cody and Diamond. In contrast, studies began to emerge indicating that competition was perhaps still present in these populations. This pointed towards interspecific competition as a persistent ecological factor having a continued impact on the fitness of individuals. Finally, some authors questioned whether anyone had

actually managed to show the existence of present or past interspecific competition at all.

This is the scene set by André Dhondt in the opening chapter of *Interspecific Competition in Birds*. He argues that interspecific competition continues to be of importance, supporting this with an impressively thorough and well-structured review of previous studies in this field. As expected, he relies heavily on his own long-term research projects and experiments, but neatly interweaves these with supporting and contrasting results published by other authors.

Two main approaches are taken. The first is a structured review of types of competitive resources, effects of competition, evolutionary effects of competition, and finally the studies themselves that report these effects. The second is the splitting of evidence from tits and that from other species. Here, Dhondt argues that the work on tits provides the most complete picture of interspecific competition, whereas studies on other taxonomic groups are mainly relegated to supporting evidence.

The book begins with an overview of resources under competition, including space, food and nest-sites, each receiving its own chapter. Competition for resources affects individuals and populations in different ways, and the next chapter describes these effects. There follows a review of experimental studies that manipulate foraging and food resources, and those that investigate competition for nest resources. Dhondt then presents a focused review of competition and its effects between Great Tits *Parus major* and Blue Tits *Cyanistes caeruleus*. The book concludes with a discussion of interspecific competition in terms of the arguments made by evolutionary biologists that have, in the past, heavily criticized evidence of its existence.

As one reads the book from cover to cover, one feels that each chapter builds on and complements previously presented work, but with enough cross-referencing to enable each to stand alone. However, this does cause a certain amount of unavoidable repetition. Perhaps the most striking part of this book is its complete coverage of the literature, making it a snapshot of the work done thus far in this field, which is extremely valuable for anyone undertaking research of this kind, regardless of whether they agree with the author's thesis or not. Within chapters, the evidence presented in each section is nicely summarized in a table, listing details of the experiment or manipulation, the type of competition, its effect, and the reference for the work. This structural approach works well for the presentation of the evidence and is also useful for quickly locating the evidence for particular arguments in different sections of the book. Altogether, the layout makes it more readable and useful than textbooks presenting independently authored and loosely related chapters.

André Dhondt's new book is sure to be invaluable for anyone working on interactions across species

boundaries. Following *Avian Invasions* by Tim Blackburn *et al.* in 2009 (reviewed in *Ibis* 152: 662–663), it is the second volume in the Oxford Avian Biology Series. These books together provide an insight into what will I hope become a very useful series on the interaction between ecology, evolution and the environments in which individuals live.

Damien Farine

DICKINSON, E.C., OVERSTREET, L.K., DOWSETT, R.J. & BRUCE, M.D. **Priority! The Dating of Scientific Names in Ornithology: A Directory to the Literature and its Reviewers.** 319 pages, 28 black-and-white illustrations, CD with 66 PDF tables. Northampton: Aves Press Ltd, 2011. Hardback, £80.00 plus p&p £7.50 (UK & Europe), £12.50 (Rest of the World), ISBN 978-0-956811-1-5. Website: <http://www.avespress.com>.

If ever there was a document unfit for purpose in this day and age, it's the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (henceforth 'the Code'). Even though it is stuffed full of examples and recommendations, much of its language and interpretation is impenetrable to the layman. Taxonomy is no longer the preserve of the specialist. Ornithologists of several disciplines quite alien to systematics, and many keen birders, find themselves trying to understand the Code's arcane world of nomenclature. The guardians of the Code have repeatedly failed the zoological community in perpetuating procedures which few can comprehend and when specialist advice or action is required, it is rarely timely in its delivery. The authors of this book admit we are 'In an age where the subject of nomenclature ... is widely viewed as tedious and even unimportant ...' (p. 19). Tedious, certainly; unimportant, no, but if we are to catalogue, and protect, the diversity of life on this planet, the process of giving and maintaining identifying names for everything should not be encumbered with distractions. Consider the energy that could have been directed elsewhere in the recent – and still unresolved – debate over the gender of the generic name *Poecile*, in *Dutch Birding* 30: 19, and *British Birds* 104: 668–669, 105: 36.

One of the basic principles of nomenclature is that the 'correct' scientific name of any particular taxon is (with exceptions, of course) the earliest available one to have been published. This apparently simple statement clouds a host of problems, and this book aims to help the Code's users to navigate their way through some of them. It begins by examining issues related to parts of the Code relevant to the dating of publications. This is followed by a detailed chapter outlining the anatomy of printed books and periodicals, and the process by which books and periodicals came into being, particularly in

the era before the widespread mechanization of paper-making, typesetting, printing and binding. This is especially useful background, as it helps explain why early publications may exist in several states. And then to dates: publication date is often not the date on the title page – if there is one – and frequently the evidence to help pin down the actual date is missing or incomplete. The authors describe where and how to look for help, and the relative value of different types of information. There is also an excellent glossary.

The core of the book comprises a chapter on 148 important books and another on 121 periodicals. For each work, details are given about its publication, reasons to consider the publication date problematic, published information relating to the dating of the book or periodical, and recommendations, concluding with either R (resolved), B (best available advice) or U (unresolved). The accounts of the individual books and periodicals have been contributed (and are initialled) by the authors named above, and by numerous distinguished collaborators around the world. It is sobering to see, after sometimes a century or more of investigation, just how few of the publications they review are considered to have had their dating adequately (if not definitively) resolved. The book also contains a CD with 65 PDFs relating to the dates of the separate parts of 18 books and 47 periodicals, and a large table giving the dates now believed to be correct for many taxa, where different from those in Peters' *Check-list* (1931–1952) or the 3rd edition of *The Howard and Moore Checklist* (2003). These dates will be used in the forthcoming 4th edition of *Howard and Moore*. An accompanying file contains 214 footnotes to this table.

Priority! is a work of great scholarship, incidentally reflecting the care that the lead author devotes to revisions of *The Howard and Moore Checklist*, and contains much that will be of interest to librarians and bibliophiles. The authors and contributors have done enormous service to nomenclature, and to the history of ornithology, in their endeavours to sort out the dating, and priority, of scientific names. It is a shame that this was at all necessary. Surely we have arrived at a stage in the development of our science that would allow the fixation of stable names, dates and endings, while still permitting taxonomic flexibility and progress?

Alan G. Knox

DOUGHTY, R.W. & CARMICHAEL, V. **The Albatross and the Fish – Linked Lives in the Open Seas.** (Mildred Wyatt-Wold Series in Ornithology.) xxiv + 302 pages, 8 colour plates, several repeated in black and white, 4 black-and-white maps, 2 figures and 5 tables. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011. Hardback, US\$29.95, ISBN 978-0-292-72682-6. Website: <http://www.utexas-press.com>.

Some conservation problems are relatively simple. At their breeding beaches, Northern Elephant Seals *Mirounga angustirostris* were hunted to the brink of extinction and became so scarce that pursuing them was no longer economically worthwhile. The population recovered, was protected from further persecution, and now numbers over 100 000. Some problems are more difficult. Identifying the cause of the decline of the Gyps vultures of India required painstaking science. Once the causative agent, the veterinary drug, diclofenac, was known, the solution was evident. Ban diclofenac and give the vultures a helping hand via captive breeding. Except that clearing diclofenac from the veterinary shelves of the sub-continental home of over a billion people is far easier said than done. And then there are albatrosses (Diomedidae).

The fact that the world's 22 albatross species breed at relatively few islands and headlands means onshore conservation is potentially practicable. The birds can be protected from human disturbance and, if necessary, troublesome aliens on the islands can be controlled or eradicated. Indeed, after the depredations of sealers and others during the 19th century, the future of albatrosses was looking moderately rosy during the first half of the 20th century. Then, in 1991, Nigel Brothers reported his estimate that some 44 000 albatrosses were killed each year by longline fishers, principally those targeting tuna.

Coupled with evidence of population decline from well-studied colonies, the search for ways of conserving albatrosses from an awful pathetic death on a longline hook began. Surely the world could unite to save these iconic birds that combined an enchanting docility when tending their chicks with an inspiring disdain for the sea's worst storms, storms that frightened many a sailor. But the world has struggled to unite, and the reasons, explored by Doughty and Carmichael, are many.

At sea, albatrosses are destroyed accidentally (which compounds the tragedy). They are mere bycatch killed in the pursuit of high-value fish such as Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* and various species of tuna (Scombridae). That has two consequences. The first is that the pressure on albatrosses won't diminish when they become scarcer, as happened to the Northern Elephant Seal. The second is that since the commercial incentives driving longlining are irresistible, measures to reduce albatross bycatch, such as streamer lines and thawed bait, may not be universally welcomed by fishers.

While many albatross deaths occur within the 200 miles that constitute a country's offshore Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), many also occur further offshore in the open sea. Such open seas are open in two ways. The wind blows free, untrammelled by the interruption of land. And the high seas fisheries are traditionally open to anyone. This openness, highlighted in the book's title, has bedevilled albatross conservation.

Having reprised how the world's knowledge of albatross biology grew thanks to the pioneer studies of Murphy, Richdale and Tickell, Doughty and Carmichael, geographers rather than ornithologists, explore how the albatross conservation effort has developed over the past 20 years. It has involved luminaries with serious convening power, such as Prince Charles who contributes a Foreword to the book. It has involved NGOs with Bird-Life International's Save the Albatross Campaign at the forefront. It has involved national Governments, with Australia earning particular credit. But all have struggled with the legislative morass that is the high seas, with the failure of regional fishery management organizations to manage the fisheries for which they are responsible, let alone the supplementary issue of albatross conservation, and with the commercial pressures that rear their very ugly heads in the form of difficult-to-stop illegal fishing. Telling the story of this complicated effort is not easy. The narrative strands do not lend themselves to a linear tale, especially while the outcome remains unclear. Today's best hope lies with the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), an offshoot of the Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention). But the authors are worried whether it will deliver in time.

Let me end on an upbeat note, confident that, in my lifetime, the seas will be managed sustainably, with a precautionary approach that would foster intergenerational equity. Such a regime would certainly be good for albatrosses and fish. Alas, Doughty and Carmichael's analysis has made me more and not less pessimistic.

M. de L. Brooke

DUNLAP, T.R. **In the Field, Among the Feathered: A History of Birders & their Guides.** 241 pages, many black-and-white illustrations and 6 colour plates. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2011. Hardback, US\$34.95, £22.50, ISBN 978-0-19-973459-7. Website: <http://www.oup.com>.

Tom Dunlap's long-awaited book is an essential contribution to the history of birding (in North America) and to the history of ornithology generally. Most bird-watchers understand that their passions have a historical past, and that field guides did not simply spring into being. Like birds, they evolved from different forms as they filled a previously uninhabited niche. But for the first time, Dunlap's book lays out the story of field guides, and their authors and users, in glorious detail.

Not the least of its contributions is what the book has to say about the role of women in the study of nature. Florence Merriam's book *Birds through an Opera-Glass* (1889) was the first identifiable field guide, presenting as it did the first coherent printed means to study living birds. On her rambles she used Robert Ridgway's 1887

Manual of North American Birds. As Ridgway noted in the Foreword, his book had been 'reduced to the smallest compass' and included nothing that was not absolutely necessary, in his estimation. Still, at 642 pages, it was no pocketbook, and Merriam realized there was a market for a more compact and effective guide.

The twin aspects of conservation and recreation were an important part of birdwatching early in the 20th century, and Dunlap does a fine job of showing how the recreational aspects of birdwatching helped immeasurably to support and extend conservation measures. The 'citizen scientist' was born out of this impulse, and one can trace a direct line from these field guides to the modern engagement of a wide public with birds.

As Dunlap notes, 'birdwatching's first rule was that science made the rules', but he gives scant ink to an important element that laid the groundwork for field guides: the sometimes-bitter struggle to standardize nomenclature. As one ornithologist in Michigan noted, in trying to develop his list of the state's birds, 'when will the everlasting war cease regarding nomenclature? I am sick and tired of it'. The AOU published their landmark checklist in 1886, this being accompanied by an essential code of nomenclature, which dictated how scientists could or should name birds, both in common and scientific form. The publication of this checklist made field guides possible because it finally provided an agreed-upon and authoritative list of bird names, ranging from genera down to subspecies.

In any case, Dunlap's contribution is invaluable – in no small part because of what it synthesizes: a description and understanding of the role of field guides in imparting knowledge and enthusiasm to a very wide cadre of amateurs indeed. Their enthusiasm and knowledge about the living bird and its ecology would sometimes be fully equal to those qualities in professional field biologists, and they continue to play an essential role in the modern study of birds.

Daniel Lewis

DUTSON, G. **Birds of Melanesia: The Bismarcks, Solomons, Vanuatu and New Caledonia.** 447 pages, 86 colour plates, 5 colour maps, 7 colour photographs. London: Christopher Helm, 2011. Paperback, £40.00, ISBN 978-0-7136-6540-6. Website: <http://www.bloomsbury.com>.

Here is the first comprehensive field guide to the Bismarck Archipelago, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, collectively known as Melanesia, and what an excellent book it is. This little-known region of the Western Pacific is home to a fascinating avifauna, including some 200 endemic species and a further 300 other species. As for earlier publications, *Birds of The Solomons, Vanuatu & New Caledonia* by Chris Doughty

et al. is a slim Helm field guide published in 1999 (see *Ibis* 143: 154), which is useful, but still leaves a lot to be desired. Coates and Peckover's *Birds of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago* (Brisbane, 2001; reviewed in *Ibis* 144: 537–538) covers the Archipelago, but by no means comprehensively, and D. Hadden's *Birds and bird lore of Bougainville & the North Solomons* (Brisbane, 2004) describes and illustrates the birds of the North Solomons Province of Papua New Guinea.

The text has been written solely and very authoritatively by Guy Dutson, whose knowledge of Melanesian birds must be second to none. He has used the International Ornithological Congress taxonomy, as of early 2010, supplemented by a few additional splits backed up by his own published work. He believes that many more subspecies should be treated as full species, all of which are described in the text and many illustrated. The plates consist of a superb set of illustrations by Richard Allen, Adam Bowley, John Cox and Tony Disley, with facing pages describing the main identification features, excluding voice. Also included for most species is a distribution bar in six different colours to indicate status on each of 14 island groupings. This takes a bit of getting used to, but seems an excellent space-saving alternative to maps and works really well. Many of the plates are arranged by island group rather than strict taxonomic sequence, another good feature.

After the Introduction, the book opens with a series of maps clearly showing the areas that are included: Admiralty, St Matthias and Bismarck islands off New Guinea; the Solomon Islands, including Bougainville and Temotu (Santa Cruz); Vanuatu and New Caledonia. There are then chapters on Melanesian ornithology, birdwatching in Melanesia (including concise details of worthwhile sites), and conservation issues, enhanced with a detailed table of globally threatened species breeding in Melanesia, a very useful, 14-page checklist of all the birds, tabulated with status against island group and, at the end of the book, a five-page gazetteer.

Most of the first half the book is taken up by the excellent plates. The artists are to be congratulated on the consistently high quality of all their work. The only slight criticism I would make is that a few of the birds painted by the most prolific artist, Adam Bowley, appear a little too dark. The latter half of the book is devoted to more detailed information on each species: plumage descriptions, comparisons with similar species, very useful notes on voice, habitat preference, distinctive behaviour, conservation status and range. Dutson uses the IOC names as his framework, but also gives alternatives, French names (as New Caledonia is a 'special collectivity' of France), and local name where the species has a very restricted range. This section is very well written, with no significant errors that I could see, and is a most valuable contribution to the collective knowledge of the birds of this intriguing region.

The book is well and attractively produced, a little heavy but portable, and commendably priced. It is to be hoped that it will encourage more keen birders to explore these fascinating islands. There are stunning birds to be seen – from the Kagu *Rhynochetos jubatus* and Cloven-feathered Dove *Drepanoptila holosericea* of New Caledonia to the Fearful Owl *Nesasio solomonensis* and Black-faced Pitta *Pitta anerythra* of the Solomons. Many, such as the Kagu, are highly localized, hardly ever seen (e.g. Slaty-mantled Goshawk *Accipiter luteoschistaceus*, Moustached Kingfisher *Actenoides bougainvillei*), even undescribed officially (Bismarck Flyrobin *Microeca* sp.) or probably extinct (e.g. Choiseul Pigeon *Microgoura meeki*). The book is the fruit of years of fieldwork throughout the islands by Guy Dutson and will undoubtedly be the standard reference for the foreseeable future.

Jon Hornbuckle

FINLAYSON, C. **Avian Survivors: The History and Biogeography of Palearctic Birds.** 304 pages, 29 colour photographs, many black-and-white figures and tables, 2 appendices. London: T & AD Poyser, 2011. Hardback, £50.00, ISBN: 978-0-7136-8865-8. Website: <http://www.bloomsbury.com>.

During the past two decades, phylogeographical studies have significantly increased, and the ornithology and molecular data in these allow us to make inferences about population history and distribution patterns in different species. The main aim of these studies is to place populations in a geographical context in order to make historical inferences. However, in some cases, understanding the history of a species has been made clearer by using ecological data, particularly climatic information where it can be combined with phylogeographical studies. Often, the association between climatic information and phylogeography is a better basis for assessing the history and niche evolution of a species. Inferring the species' history through ecological features (e.g. climate) is a recent development.

In his new book, Clive Finlayson draws attention to the changing pattern of warming and cooling, glacials and aridification through the epochs to discuss the biogeography of the major bird groups in the Palearctic region. He describes their evolution, history and range, from the beginning of the Tertiary 65 million years ago to the present day. This time frame is essentially the period when both mammals and birds underwent a rapid and wide-ranging radiation of forms and species after many ecological niches became available as the climate cooled and dinosaurs became extinct.

In the early chapters of the book the appearance of the first bird groups and formation of genera during the

Tertiary are thoroughly discussed. Three peaks are mentioned for the formation of new genera in the Palaearctic region – the Late Eocene, Early Miocene, and Early Pliocene to Early Pleistocene. Later, the focus is on the climatic structure of the Pleistocene in terms of sea-level fluctuations and the last glacial cycle, together with geological changes in Eurasia.

After introducing the history of climate and birds in the Palaearctic region, the author discusses the origins of Palaearctic birds in chapter 3, and it is there that the data used throughout the book are described. A review of the data on 862 species is followed by an analysis of 556 breeding species, using climatic conditions, habitat and ecological features in the breeding areas. There is also a useful summary of this in Appendix 1.

Starting from chapter 4, bird groups in the Palaearctic are examined according to climate, habitat and migratory status. Fossil records are reviewed for each group of birds, those in Europe being presented as an appendix at the end of book. As the Preface makes clear, the discovery of fossil remains of Iberian Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cooki* and Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* in Neanderthal-occupied caves at Gibraltar was a major spur to research by the author and the subsequent writing of this book. All bird groups are examined in 15 chapters, passerine superfamilies in chapters 4–8, some terrestrial non-passerines in chapters 9–12, and the other non-passerines in chapters 13–18. There is a detailed review of available phylogenetic information, representation in the Palaearctic region and relationships within the genera. In what seems a useful approach, species are also ranked A–E (specialist to generalist) to assess their bioclimatic tolerance, i.e. their ability to survive in a wide range of climate-modulated environments.

In the final chapters, the author looks at the history of birds breeding in the Palaearctic region, from the Palaeocene throughout the Holocene in relation to climatic and ecological features (climate, habitat, niche, etc.). As noted in the Conclusion, all modern bird lineages described by Hackett *et al.* (*Science* (2008) 320: 1763–1768) were present in the Cretaceous. Afterwards, these lineages started to split and diversify, e.g. the split between geese and game birds. Cranes (Gruidae), rails (Rallidae) and cuckoos (Cuculidae) diverged at that time, and shorebirds started their diversification. Finally, the author discusses key characteristics that might allow these species to survive and succeed in the region.

Clive Finlayson's text is comprehensive, easy to read, and the connection between the chapters is clear and understandable. Birds from the Palaearctic have a long and interesting history over the last 65 million years. This book not only presents a new and interesting approach to avian biogeography but also provides the reader with an abundance of data from a variety of sources on which the author bases his conclusions. *Avian Survivors* is an exciting book not only for

scientists but also for anyone interested in biogeography. It is a stimulating read and will be a valuable work of reference in any library. As an ornithologist, I look forward to making good use of it.

Utku Perktas

HILL, G.E. **National Geographic Bird Coloration.** 256 pages, numerous colour photographs, paintings, a few figures and many text boxes. Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2010. Hardback, US\$27.50, ISBN 978-1-4262-0571-2. Website: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com>.

Devised, compiled and edited by Geoffrey Hill and Kevin McGraw, the two-volume *Bird Coloration* (Volume 1: *Mechanisms and Measurements* and Volume 2: *Function and Evolution*) was published in 2006 and reviewed in *Ibis* 149: 432. It has subsequently become indispensable to scientists working on any aspect of avian coloration. *National Geographic Bird Coloration* is a very different type of book. Nonetheless, I suspect it will prove to be just as vital to its target audience.

There is nothing quite like avian coloration to capture the heart of both the amateur and professional naturalist. Who cannot marvel at the strikingly bold Gouldian Finch *Erythrura gouldiae* or the intricately detailed patterning of the breeding Great Northern Loon *Gavia immer*? Colour variation, from the dramatic to the remarkably subtle, is one of the first traits used in bird identification and an appreciation of how and why birds utilize such colours is of immediate interest to many birdwatchers and amateur naturalists. Geoffrey Hill realizes where the general audience's interests lie and here proves the perfect teacher. The book brims with enthusiasm. Its pages are laden with beautiful photographs and artistic impressions. Difficult concepts, such as the physics of structural coloration or the genetics of melanic polymorphism are explained simply but also scientifically, so that the reader feels neither overwhelmed nor patronized.

There are 14 chapters, in the first of which we are introduced to the different types of plumage variation (i.e. sexual, seasonal, intraspecific polymorphism) that need to be understood for successful bird identification in the field. Chapter 2 explains what a bird's-eye view is really like or, to be more exact, how difficult it is for us mere humans to visualize a bird's tetrachromatic view of the world. A non-technical account of the difference between human and avian vision is a real necessity as it underpins much of avian behaviour, giving us a fascinating insight into the inadequacies of *Homo sapiens*, and it is one of the questions researchers in the field are most commonly asked by laypeople. Chapter 3, on measuring coloration, is the most technical and

potentially the least inspiring for the amateur. However, the author is adept at boiling down difficult concepts into easily digestible portions and even the spectrophotometer section is made edible. Chapters 4 and 5, in which we are introduced to the concept that both pigments and cellular structure explain variation in avian coloration, are particularly good, including much detail on the variety of pigments and their uptake and production. Chapter 6 describes our current understanding of the genetics of coloration, gaps in our knowledge being presented as mystery stories that experts and novices alike will find captivating. Chapter 7 to 13 explain the roles that colour can play in avian ecology and behaviour, enabling birdwatchers to comprehend why there is so much variation in colour across birds and what it is colour can tell us about a bird's status, age, diet and lifestyle. Finally, Hill deals with the evolution of bird coloration, a topic understandably based on limited empirical evidence, yet still a necessary component of the book as it places coloration in the larger context of avian evolution and leads to many fascinating questions, such as which pigments are likely to have been present in dinosaurs.

Overall, this is a lovely book. Hill connects science with birdwatching, explaining how a basic understanding of coloration can help one become a better birdwatcher. He explains, for example, why an angle of 45° will give you the best snap when photographing a bird with iridescent plumage. I can foresee many bird enthusiasts and natural historians finding this book both useful and enjoyable. Geoffrey Hill has utilized clever storytelling to make the science of bird coloration accessible for the army of keen birders out there.

Marie Pointer

PEAT, N. **Seabird Genius: the Story of L. E. Richdale, the Royal Albatross and the Yellow-eyed Penguin.** 288 pages, many illustrations (mainly black-and-white and some colour photographs), text boxes. Otago: Otago University Press, 2011. Paperback, NZ\$45.00, £27.50, ISBN 978-1-877578-11-3. Email: university.press@otago.ac.nz; website: <http://www.otago.ac.nz>.

Educator, pioneer seabird biologist and grumpy young man, Lancelot Richdale (1900–1983) was instrumental in persuading New Zealanders to value their wildlife at a time when the concept of conservation was unknown. Almost 30 years after Richdale's death, Neville Peat has brought him back into the limelight by compiling a vast amount of information about his life and work. Now something of a national hero, Lance Richdale in his professional life – as an itinerant teacher – inspired generations of schoolchildren with his knowledge of New Zealand's flora and fauna.

His seabird studies, which didn't start until he was in his 30s, were his hobby and were conducted largely in

his own time. To put this in perspective: Richdale was among the very first to use colour rings, individually marking his Yellow-eyed Penguins *Megadyptes antipodes* to record their behaviour and survival. In November 1936, Richdale came upon a solitary male Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea sanfordi* 'incubating a large white egg' on Taiaroa Head on the Otago Peninsula. The egg subsequently disappeared – stolen by someone – and, as Peat says, it 'rocked Richdale to the core'. He made up his mind to do everything he could to protect the birds. It was a long haul: in the following years birds were shot, others killed by people throwing rocks at them and yet others had their chick taken by dogs. But the local bird vandals had not reckoned with the single-minded, uncompromising and utterly tenacious Richdale. After much effort, by 2011 there were 24 breeding pairs, and the site is now a major and lucrative tourist attraction.

Richdale was just as committed to his study of the rare Yellow-eyed Penguin, and also 'lobbied hard for their protection'. It is a measure of his status and scientific success that Richdale, accompanied by his wife Agnes who typed all his manuscripts, secured funds from the Leverhulme Foundation to visit the Edward Grey Institute in Oxford, to write up his penguin results in 1954–55. The result was *A Population Study of Penguins* (1957; reviewed in *Ibis* 99: 522–523), a landmark in seabird research, and one that David Lack, Director of the EGI, was keen to advertise by subsequently including a chapter on Richdale's work in his *Population Studies of Birds* (1966). During their stay in the UK, the Richdales visited Ronald Lockley, another pioneer of seabird biology, on the island of Skokholm. Despite much in common, it doesn't sound as though the two men really took to each other, for Lockley later described Richdale as a 'dark, dry man'. He was, nonetheless, extraordinary as Peat's book demonstrates and this well-illustrated volume should be of interest to those involved in the history of the conservation of New Zealand's seabirds, and to anyone that knew the 'dark, dry man'.

T. R. Birkhead

PRIKLONSKIY, S.G., ZUBAKIN, V.A. & KOBLIK, E.A. (eds) **Birds of Russia and Adjoining Regions: Pelecaniformes, Ciconiiformes, Phoenicopteriformes** (in Russian). 602 pages, 96 black-and-white figures (including maps and line drawings), 44 tables, 16 colour plates. Moscow: KMK Scientific Press Ltd, 2011. Hardback, RUB700.00, ISBN 978-5-87317-754-7. Contact email (publisher): mikhailov2000@gmail.com; website: <http://avtor-kmk.ru>.

As I pointed out in my review of the 6th volume (2005) to appear in this series on the birds of the former USSR (see *Ibis* 148: 189), 12 years had passed between that

and its predecessor. With the welcome publication of this 7th, which may also be cited by reference to its 29 authors as Andronov, V.A., Ardamatskaya, T.B., Artyukhin, Yu. B. *et al.*, at least the considerable problems associated with its preparation have been finally overcome (it was to have appeared in the late 1980s or early 1990s) and the gap between volumes halved.

The idea of publishing, with appropriate updating and revisions, a worthy multi-volume successor to *Ptitsy Sovetskogo Soyuz* [*Birds of the Soviet Union*] edited by G.P. Dement'ev and N.A. Gladkov (1951–1954) goes back to the late 1970s. There were to be 10 volumes coming out over a period of 10 years and in systematic order, but that has clearly not been achieved and was gradually recognized as unrealistic. What of the future? Of the three non-passerine volumes still awaited (wildfowl, diurnal raptors, waders), work is reported to be proceeding most actively on the first two, while the same is true of only some families in the order Passeriformes.

This latest volume contains accounts of 44 species: 15 Pelecaniformes, 28 Ciconiiformes and the Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*, which, in the former USSR, is mainly confined to bitter salt lakes in central Kazakhstan. There are long and detailed accounts for species such as Greater Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* and White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*. Among many interesting stories is the colonization of northwest Russia by the Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*: a rare vagrant along the Murman coast in the first half of the 20th century, it began to occur there regularly from the 1970s; large summer concentrations were noted from the 1980s and breeding from the 1990s. The importance of the region for rare and threatened species is well known: over 80% of the world population of Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* breeds in an area extending from the Black Sea to Central Asia and Western Siberia; and most of the world range of the Oriental White Stork *Ciconia boyciana* lies in the Russian Far East, mainly along the Amur river and its tributaries, the Ussuri and the Zeya. On a smaller scale, Furugel'm Island in the Sea of Japan has the region's only breeding Black-faced Spoonbills *Platalea minor* (1–3 pairs, 2004–2009) and Chinese Egrets *Egretta eulophotes* (20–40 pairs in recent years).

Once again, E. Koblik deserves praise for his splendid paintings, as does A. Mosalov for his drawings, although many of the latter are based on those in the first volume of *Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas* (Bauer & Glutz 1966) and of BWP (incorrectly cited as Cramp 1977, rather than Cramp & Simmons 1977). In support of all the obviously dedicated work that has gone into this book, and bearing in mind that Dement'ev and Gladkov lacks a bibliography, I would urge the Editors to find someone able and willing to check the non-Russian references (most are in English or German) and eliminate

errors and inconsistencies. In general, however, I wish the editorial team and authors well and hope it will be not too long before this handbook project moves a further step closer to completion.

M. G. Wilson

SANDERCOCK, B.K., MARTIN, K. & SEGELBACHER, G. (eds) **Ecology, Conservation, and Management of Grouse. (Studies in Avian Biology No. 39.)** xvi +356 pages, abundant tables, diagrams and maps. Berkeley: University of California Press, for the Cooper Ornithological Society 2011. Hardback, US\$70.00, £48.95, ISBN 978-0-520-27006-0. Website: <http://www.ucpress.edu>.

At the outset, it has to be made clear that the title is misleading. There are 18 or 19 species of extant grouse (Phasianidae), but two-thirds of this book is about only two: the Greater Prairie Chicken *Tympanuchus cupido* and the Greater Sage Grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus*, with 20 of 25 chapters devoted to steppe (or prairie) grouse. The book comes from the same stable that has already published one of 646 pages on the Greater Sage Grouse edited by Knick and Connelly (2011) and reviewed in *Ibis* 154: 222–223, but I could see no explanation for this emphasis on one species in two books published in the same year, or for the exclusion of more than half the species of grouse.

The 25 chapters are authored by no fewer than 80 contributors in various combinations organized into four sections, the first two dealing with habitat. Contributions employ a huge amount of data from radiotracking and combine sophisticated mapping and modelling with advanced statistical techniques. Nest predation is given as a 'main driver' of steppe grouse populations and it is stated that predation is responsible for 80% of their nest losses. The approach is, however, one of fitting grouse abundance, distribution and productivity to a large variety of habitat variables on various scales. Nesting cover is evaluated in many detailed ways, one study, for example, finding that 90% of nests were under Big Sage-brush *Artemisia tridentata*, but nest predation itself was not included in any of the studies; the 80% quoted above comes not from new work but from Bergerud and Gratson's *Adaptive Strategies and Population Ecology of Northern Grouse* published by the University of Minnesota Press in 1988 and reviewed in *Ibis* 131: 451–452.

So far as brood-rearing is concerned, a general hypothesis emerges from the selection of vegetation characters and brood success in relation to these characters, namely that chick survival is determined in a 'trade-off' between reducing the risk of predation (e.g. selecting tall vegetation) and the availability of insects (e.g. selecting sparse vegetation). Given all the effort, expense and the number of studies, it is difficult to

understand why no attempt was made to measure insect abundance. This is all the more surprising given that earlier work had shown that Sage Grouse chick survival rates increase markedly with the availability of caterpillars (Lepidoptera), predation being only the main proximate cause of mortality (Gregg & Crawford (2009) *Journal of Wildlife Management* 73: 904–913).

The only forest grouse covered is the Hazel Grouse *Tetrastes bonasia*, and this interesting chapter, one of only two focusing on work outside North America, reports studies in southeastern France. Natal dispersal has been quantified in eight species of grouse and because these studies have shown overwhelmingly that males tend to be more philopatric than females, this has often been assumed to be the norm. However, the reverse was found to be the case in this first such study of Hazel Grouse to an extent that it was considered to limit the species' ability to colonize new habitats. Yet in the Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*, the same female philopatry has in the past permitted rapid expansions of range. Some Galliformes show female philopatry whilst some show the reverse, but the causes of this and its relevance to dispersion remain unclear.

Section three consists of seven chapters dealing with Population Biology, including important new work on the re-nesting ability of Willow Ptarmigan *Lagopus lagopus* and on the survival of Greater Prairie Chicken broods as determined by radiotracking. In this last study, 70% of chick losses were found to be the result of predation exacerbated by rain but, once again, there was no measuring of insect abundance. Studies of Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta* in the Alps showed that raptors were responsible for 40–85% of predation, predators were the main cause of nest failure and that 'predator control could be justified in situations where human activities have led to artificially high predator densities'.

Of the five chapters on Conservation and Management in Section four, the last three deal with hunting. With the most obvious exception of Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus scoticus* in northern England, many grouse species are either scarce or declining in numbers. This leads to pressure to stop hunting; a measure which would be beneficial to grouse where hunting is additive to normal mortality. In the first of the three chapters it was found that hunting of Greater Sage Grouse depressed the numbers of males on spring leks and it was concluded from this that hunting mortality was 'additive'. However, spring stocks depressed by hunting are not an indication of unsustainable hunting because numbers can recover by the following hunting season through lower density-dependent losses during the breeding season. The last chapter, about Greater Prairie-Chickens, compares two population models: one with compensatory mortality and the other with 'additive mortality'. The model with compensatory mortality,

including higher breeding success with hunting, gave a higher-fidelity representation of grouse densities.

The book is full of the detail that most grouse biologists will need on their book-shelves but its wider relevance awaits a greater integration of old-fashioned fieldcraft, the latest technologies, experiments and practical analyses.

G. R. (Dick) Potts

ŠTĀSTNÝ, K. & HUDEC, K. (eds) **Fauna ČR. Ptáci. Volume 3, Parts I and II** (in Czech, with German summary). 1192 pages, 668 figures (maps, graphs, black-and-white photographs, line drawings). Prague: Academia, 2011. Hardback, 725Kč, ISBN 978-80-200-1834-2. Website: <http://www.academia.cz>.

The original volumes of the *Fauna ČSSR* devoted to 'Ptáci' (Aves) of the entire former Czechoslovakia were published in 1972–83 under the editorship of K. Hudec and W. Černý (1972, 1977) and K. Hudec (1983). However, masses of data on virtually all aspects of avian biology have been collected in the Czech Republic since then and work thus began on an updated and revised edition. Volume 1 (Gaviiformes to Anseriformes), now referring with its amended title *Fauna ČR a SR Ptáci* to the two independent countries, appeared in 1994. Both the two-part Volume 2 (reviewed in *Ibis* 148: 379), which treated Accipitriformes [Falconiformes] to Pici-formes (Hudec & Štástný 2005), and the final Volume 3, covering all species of Passeriformes recorded up to 2007, describe the birds of the Czech Republic only.

The larger information content of the new edition is obvious already from its length – passerines were allotted c. 200 more pages than in the first edition almost 30 years ago. Instead of the original 21 authors, the revised edition was compiled and rewritten by 25 Czech ornithologists (the unfortunate omission of three of them from the title page is noted on an Errata slip) and additional original data were provided by c. 50 other researchers. The result of their efforts is that the new version of the *Fauna* Volume 3 contains c. 70% new and/or revised text. However, it was not always possible to differentiate between the CR and Slovakia in the data (older sources). In such cases, this is explicitly indicated in the text and figures. Still, even such pooled data sets contain c. 90% of data from the CR, so that the resulting geographical bias is relatively small.

Several new features greatly enhance the usefulness of this book not only for Czech ornithologists and birdwatchers but also for those from abroad. First, the new edition includes original, previously unpublished, data (in the form of bar graphs) on circannual and circadian singing activity of songbirds. Secondly, phenological data on arrivals from, and departures to, wintering grounds are

completely new, covering the period 1994–2007 and including over 50 000 data points collected by members of the Czech Society for Ornithology. Both kinds of data are essential for the planning of bird censuses (e.g. in order not to miss particular species because of their divergent singing activity) and basic or applied research. Thirdly, distribution maps for the CR are based on new distributional data from the 2001–2003 national census, with additional data up to 2007. Fourthly, migration data were fully upgraded to 2002 (in some species to 2007).

Other changes include the removal of the original colour plates showing adult plumages of Czech passerines and their eggs. Although the exclusion of the former is appropriate (many local and translated foreign field guides are available in the CR), omitting the egg plates decreases the potential value of this monograph, as there is no other Czech publication that contains the important visual information on egg phenotypes of birds breeding in the country.

Although the new edition of this work is a great step forward compared with the original volumes, there is still room for improvement. For example, I note inconsistency in the level of detail given in habitat descriptions of different species: such information for tits (Paridae) is virtually the same as in the first edition and, more importantly, on average three times shorter than the thoroughly revised and much more detailed descriptions for warblers of the genus *Sylvia*. Also, in many species, only circannual or only circadian singing activity is shown. In species where both are presented, circannual activity was often recorded in a different locality from that for circadian activity and, as assumed from locality information, also from different altitudes and perhaps habitats. This limits the usefulness of the data for comparative analyses and fieldwork. I would still emphasize that even the singing data as presented are important because such detailed information is typically missing from such standard reference works as BWP or *Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas*.

A new (third) updated edition of Volume 1 is now in preparation. To make it more user-friendly for ornithologists outside the Czech Republic, this new edition is to feature English summaries and figure captions. In the meantime, the second edition of *Fauna ČR Ptáci* will remain the major authoritative source of information for both amateur and professional (Czech) ornithologists and a valuable source of data for meta-analyses.

Tomáš Grim

URFI, A.J. **The Painted Stork: Ecology and Conservation.** xvii + 163 pages, black-and-white and colour figures, tables. New York: Springer Verlag, 2011. Hardback, €99.95, £90.00, ISBN 978-1-4419-8467-8. Contact email (author): ajurfi@rediffmail.com; website: <http://www.springer.com>.

The Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* is found in South and Southeast Asia. After studying the species for over 20 years, A. J. Urfi has shared what may be seen as a labour of love – his and J. H. Desai's observations, mainly at the Delhi Zoo and throughout India. These are remarkable and overdue.

What we have is a book written not just for full professionals but also for the young who are interested in birds and want to learn about basic natural history, for those interested in Painted Storks, in waterbirds more generally, and in Indian ornithology. This is a very complete summary, but for details readers can go to the original articles (each of the eight chapters concludes with a list of references).

Urfi describes in detail the biology of the Painted Stork in India. I studied the similar and closely related American Wood Stork *Mycteria americana*, for almost as many years, half a world apart. We both investigated all aspects, Urfi concentrating on coloniality and breeding, while my main focus was on breeding behaviour and foraging ecology. I am amazed at the similarities of our findings.

Urfi writes from his long-term Indian perspective and sometimes leaves out the links in his logic. When I put my own logic in, I come to the same conclusions, almost every one. When he lists questions for future investigation, mine are similar.

He begins by introducing the Painted Stork as a member of the Ciconiidae, and its relationship among the 19 species of that family. A later chapter deals with feeding ecology. Whereas familiar herons (Ardeidae) are primarily visual feeders, storks feed visually but more often by feel (tactolocation). This allows them to forage efficiently in murky water and at night. It also means that they can do so in groups, whereas many herons, while appearing to feed together, maintain small territories and feed alone.

Much of the book is devoted to breeding and coloniality. The Storks breed on islands in trees over water, which affords them protection from land predators. It is impossible to study birds in these areas without causing severe disturbance. Urfi has avoided this by using photographic measurements (videography), correlated with museum measurements; he has examined sexual size dimorphism and demonstrated that these birds mate assortatively by size.

Breeding areas have been severely restricted by habitat changes over the centuries, and the available colony locations are highly dependent on suitable habitats supported by local people: at the Delhi Zoo and in local communities throughout India. This relationship is well described.

The monsoon is a wet/dry season weather phenomenon that affects mostly South Asia, but also extends through other (eastern) parts of the continent. Whether it be under the monsoons, the Florida wet/dry seasons and even in Venezuela, waterbirds breed at the end of the wet season when the drying of their typical habitat

causes the high concentrations of wetland prey needed for reproduction.

Probably largely because of the loss of suitable wetland, Painted Storks are in decline and the species is now classified as Near Threatened. It was formerly found widely across South and Southeast Asia, but the present distribution range is almost disjunct through loss of habitat in Thailand, where it is close to extinction, though efforts are being made to reintroduce them.

I have only one suggestion: nothing about the contents of the book, but I wish it were in larger type because I read much of this through a magnifying glass.

The Painted Stork is a delightful book. I am biased by the subject and surprised that an unknown colleague half a world away arrived at so many similar conclusions.

Malcolm C. Coulter

Also received

BELIK, V.P. (ed.) **Strepet: Fauna, Ekologiya i Okhrana Ptits Yuzhnoy Palearktiki [The Little Bustard: Status, Ecology and Conservation of the Birds of the Southern Palaearctic]**. Volume 9 (1–2). (in Russian, with English Contents, abstracts and some captions). 116 pages, figures and tables. Rostov-on-Don: Pedagogical Institute of the South Federal University, 2011. ISSN 1992-2361. Contact email: Dr V.P. Belik, vpbelik@mail.ru.

An annotated list of 98 species of passerines in this issue completes the three-part publication in *Strepet* (see *Ibis* 153: 453) of T. Lorenz's paper 'Beitrag zur Kenntniss der ornithologischen Fauna an der Nordseite des Kaukasus' (1887) in Russian translation. Other major contributions include: a review by Yu. E. Komarov *et al.* (pp. 38–67) of the little-known avifauna (217 species) of the Mozdok district in the Republic of North Ossetia–Alania (North Caucasus); distribution, numbers (400–500 pairs in Southern Russia, including 200–250 in the region surveyed) and ecology of Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* in the Cis-Caucasus [Predkavkaz'ye] by V. P. Belik (pp.68–75); and N. N. Efimenko's study (pp. 76–96) of the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* population (46–55 pairs, in decline mainly because of anthropogenic factors) in montane and desert habitats of Turkmenistan.

M.G.W.

GILLMOR, R. **Birds, Blocks & Stamps: Post & Go Birds of Britain**. 55 pages, colour and black-and-white illustrations. Reading: Two Rivers Press, 2012. Paperback,

£12.50, ISBN 978-1-901677-79-9. Email: tworiverspress@gmail.com.

Robert Gillmor was commissioned to design the first pictorial stamps for self-service Post & Go machines – four sets, each of six stamps, showing garden, woodland, water and sea birds of Britain, and issued between September 2010 and 2011. Another 18 stamps, 'on a different theme', will appear in 2012. Not only is there in this slim book a fascinating and detailed account of how linocut prints are made, generally and as applied to each of the species portrayed, but a large illustration of the print is shown above the much-reduced equivalent on the stamp. Background stories influencing the designs include working with the late Ken Simmons on Great Crested Grebes *Podiceps cristatus*, the first Collared Doves *Streptopelia decaocto* in Reading and, among regular visits to Skomer Island, once also to Grassholm, with its huge colony of Northern Gannets *Morus bassanus*.

M.G.W.

HOLDEN, P. **RSPB Birds: Their Hidden World**. 256 pages, numerous photographs and other illustrations, most in colour. London: Bloomsbury Publishing plc, 2012. Paperback, £14.99, ISBN 978-1-4081-5262-1. Website: <http://www.bloomsbury.com>.

Well written and attractively illustrated, Peter Holden's new book of 18 short, but information-packed chapters describes and explains many different aspects of the life of birds and can be warmly recommended as a good and instructive read. There are sections covering dispersion inside and outside the breeding season, courtship and mating systems, nests, and the breeding cycle from egg through to fledging and the juvenile years. Fascinating facts in abundance and, almost certainly, the answers to questions frequently asked are to be found in those chapters and others that consider flocking, voice, survival and longevity, migration, feeding, roosting, and the most quintessentially avian characteristics of feathers and flight.

M.G.W.

JEYARAJASINGAM, A. & PEARSON, A. **A Field Guide to the Birds of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, 2nd edn**. xxxi +449 pages, 74 colour plates, 17 black-and-white maps, including 2 as endpapers, a few line drawings, 6 appendices. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Hardback, £60.00, ISBN 978-0-19-963942-7; paperback, £34.95, ISBN 978-0-19-963943-4. Website: <http://www.oup.com>.

A Field Guide to the Birds of West Malaysia and Singapore was first published in 1999 and reviewed in *Ibis* **142**: 690. This 2nd edition, with slightly amended title, incorporates a number of revisions: not only had 25 species been added to the region's list (now numbering 673) in the interim, but new information on distribution, status, behaviour and voice allowed many gaps to be filled. Alan Pearson has painted two new plates and revised several others. The advisory role of David Wells is acknowledged and his two-volume work *The Birds of the Thai-Malay Peninsula* (1999, 2007) was the main source of reference for updating. Necessary changes to taxonomy and scientific nomenclature are largely based on the 3rd edition of *The Howard and Moore Complete Check-list* (Dickinson 2003), while English names mainly follow *Recommended English Names* (Gill & Wright 2006), and *Khazanah Burung Bukit Fraser – Panduan Bergambar* by M.H.N. Chong and S. Sutari (Kuala Lumpur, 2010) is the reference for vernacular names in Bahasa Melayu.

M.G.W.

NANKINOV, D.N. **Drevnobulgarski imena na ptitsite [Ancient Bulgarian Names of Birds]** (in Bulgarian). 224 pages, 35 black-and-white figures. Sofia: ETO Publishing, 2010. Paperback, price not known, ISBN 978-954-9859-51-5.

This book links ornithology with research on the history of the Bulgarian people, philology, ethnography and archaeology. The author conducted field studies in various parts of Bulgaria, worked in libraries and museums at home and abroad, and consulted over 400 literature sources, thus accumulating material on 348 bird names. He sees these names as evidence of a presumed relationship between the Ancient Thracians (the ancestors of modern Bulgarians) and the Slavs, also of the existence at sometime in the past of a single Thracian nation whose home was the Balkans, but who travelled in repeated mass migrations to the expanses of Eurasia and to North Africa. New settlements and states were established and Thracian (Ancient Bulgarian) also became the basis of modern Slavonic languages which, as they developed and gradually diverged, nevertheless preserved a large number of words in common, including the names of birds.

Ancient Bulgarian bird names are single words and reflect characteristic features of the voice (many are onomatopoeic), outward appearance, behaviour and other aspects of the biology of a particular species. A few examples may be given: *ogar* for the Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* means 'dog' (they were kept as guard dogs and performed a useful service by keeping courtyards free of scraps); *prevez* ('bridal veil') for the Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* alludes to the male's elongated and very deli-

cate head-feathers; *pliska* for the White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* is 'dancing bird'; and *tagan* for the Rook *Corvus frugilegus* is a 'completely black bird'.

Mention must also be made of the author's conviction that the Ancient Thracians discovered America thousands of years before Columbus and brought to the Old World (Egypt and the Balkans) the Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo* and the plant maize *Zea mays*. There is evidence that later, but still before the Christian era, Bulgarians kept Turkeys in the Rhodope Mountains.

M.G.W.

NANKINOV, D.N. **Sistematischen spisuk, status i imena na ptitsite v Bulgariya [Systematic List, Status and Names of Birds in Bulgaria]** (in Bulgarian). 120 pages. Sofia: ETO Publishing, 2011. Paperback, price not known, ISBN 978-954-9859-56-0. Contact emails: nankinov@yahoo.co.uk; publishingeto@gmail.com.

A total of 446 species and 356 subspecies are included in this new list and the Introduction reviews the more significant publications of this kind over 150 years. Among species new to Bulgaria and, in this case, also to the Western Palaearctic, is Relict Gull *Larus relictus*, but this record (March 1978) and another in Turkey in March 1990, were regarded as unauthenticated by Collar *et al.* in *Threatened Birds of Asia* (BirdLife International, 2001). Changes of status noted include rare overwintering by White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*, Goosander *Mergus merganser* and Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* as new breeding species, and the irregular occurrence of Black Lark *Melanocorypha yeltoniensis* on passage and in winter. The author recognizes the need for further work on the taxonomy of species such as the gulls *Larus argentatus* and *Larus fuscus* and the Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* complex. Continuing the theme of the book reviewed above, the List contains more than 7000 bird names.

Professor Nankinov is thanked for donating these two books to the Alexander Library and for providing a useful summary (in Russian) of the first.

M.G.W.

REDMAN, N., STEVENSON, T. & FANSHAWE, J. **Birds of the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Socotra, 2nd edn.** 512 pages, 213 colour plates, 4 colour figures. London: Christopher Helm, 2011. Paperback, £34.99, ISBN 978-1-4081-5735-0. Website: <http://www.bloomsbury.com>.

This revision of the excellent field guide published in 2009 (reviewed in *Ibis* **151**: 787–788) is 16 pages longer, but with the same number of colour plates. The

major changes to the first edition include the substitution of seven plates with new artwork, six involving waxbills and allies (Estrildidae and Viduidae) on plates 201–207, and one of large gulls (Laridae). These are on the whole an improvement, although the reader will be struck by the considerable difference in colour of the dark-backed *Larus (fuscus) heuglini* in the two versions of plate 75. Some groups continue to present the artist and printer with a challenge, and the jizz and colour of a number of warblers (Sylviidae) in particular do not accurately reflect the bird in life. Other helpful changes in this edition involve individual images replaced or amended, as well as an update of the text and a large proportion of the maps. A useful innovation is an annotated Checklist for each of the five countries, plus Socotra Island, based on those of the African Bird Club. The Bibliography contains key references up to 2011. As before, the whole book is attractively produced, and this time there is a glossy plastic cover.

R.J.D.

RYABITSEV, V.K. & TARASOV, V.V. (eds) **Materialy k rasprostraneniyu ptits na Ural'ye, v Priural'ye i Zapadnoy Sibiri. Regional'nyi avifaunisticheskiy zhurnal. Vypusk 16.** [Materials on Bird Distributions in the

Urals, Priural'ye and Western Siberia. Regional Avifaunistic Journal. Issue 16]. (in Russian, with Contents and a few abstracts in English). 158 pages, 1 table. Ekaterinburg: Urals University Press, 2011. ISSN 2218-7685. Contact emails: riabits@etel.ru, grouse@bk.ru (V.V. Tarasov).

From this issue, the publication is officially recognized as a journal (see *Ibis* 153: 457–458), so that it will be now appropriate to include only the title, issue number and page numbers in citations. Apart from a critical review by V. V. Morozov of a paper on some rare and protected species in the Orenburg Region, southern Urals (15: 7–13), there are 31 longer articles and short notes in no. 16. Among the former is a report on the avifauna of Barnaul on the upper Ob' river in Western Siberia (Garms & Ebel', pp. 19–44); also V. V. Tarasov's article (pp. 110–139) on the status of rare bird species (23 raptors) in the Kurgan Region (southwestern Transurals), where three species – Great Egret *Ardea alba*, Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus* and Corn Crake *Crex crex* – have shown a marked recent decrease.

M.G.W.