

Book reviews

The titles reviewed in this section of *Ibis* are available for reference at the Alexander Library of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology, Department of Zoology, South Parks Road, Oxford, UK. The library is open to *Ibis* readers, Monday to Friday (09:00–17:00 h). Please write, telephone (+44 (0)1 865 271143) or email (sophie.wilcox@ouls.ox.ac.uk or enquiries.zoo@ouls.ox.ac.uk) prior to your visit to ensure the library is open.

The aim of the Alexander Library is to build up a comprehensive collection of literature as a service to ornithologists. Its holdings include an extensive range of periodicals and a large number of reprints drawn from many sources: additional reprints of readers' papers are always welcome. The library has always greatly benefited from its close relationship with the BOU. For many years, all journals received in exchange for *Ibis* have been deposited in the library, as have most of the books sent for review, through the generosity of reviewers and publishers.

In return, as a service to readers, this review section of *Ibis* is organized and edited by Michael G. Wilson and Professor Ben Sheldon of the Edward Grey Institute, with the help of a panel of contributors. They are always grateful for offers of further assistance with reviewing, especially with foreign-language titles.

Books for review: publishers are kindly asked to send two copies of each title to *Ibis* Book Reviews, Alexander Library, EGI, Dept of Zoology, Tinbergen Building, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PS, UK.

This book review section is supported by Subbuteo Natural History Books. Subbuteo are an international mail-order book company stocking over 2000 titles covering all natural and environmental sciences. They can also source titles from around the world. Titles reviewed in *Ibis* can be ordered from Subbuteo and payment can be made by credit card or cheques in £/\$. Postage, packing and insurance is £1.99 per order. International postage is charged at cost; please contact Subbuteo for a quote.

Subbuteo Natural History Books

Ref. 0252, The Rea, Upton Magna, Shrewsbury SY4 4UR, UK.

Tel: +44 (0)870 010 9700 Fax: +44 (0)870 010 9699

Email: info@wildlifebooks.co.uk Website: www.wildlifebooks.com

BUCKLAND, S.T., ANDERSON, D.R., BURNHAM, K.P., LAAKE, J.L., BORCHERS, D.L. & THOMAS, L. (eds) **Advanced Distance Sampling**. 434 pages, numerous graphs and schematic diagrams. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Paperback, UK£24.95, ISBN 978-01-9-922587-3.

Inspection of papers that report surveys of animal abundance over the last 15 years reveals that biologists, and especially ornithologists, have come to rely on the software package DISTANCE, devised by Steve Buckland, David Anderson, Ken Burnham and Jeff Laake. Before DISTANCE, ornithologists knew that they should really allow for the fact that they

usually did not detect all of the birds present in the area their survey purported to cover, but they could plead that the methods available to do so were quite difficult to understand and implement. After DISTANCE, these excuses look lame because the package makes allowance for incomplete detection in line and point transect surveys easy to implement. The supporting material, especially the OUP book *Introduction to Distance Sampling* (Buckland *et al.* 2001), allows users to understand the principles and the ways in which things can go wrong. As more biologists have used DISTANCE, an appreciation has grown of the need for distance sampling methods to be extended to cope

with the many inconvenient features of the real world that violate the assumptions of the simplest forms of the methods or render their application impractical. The publication in paperback of *Advanced Distance Sampling* (first published in hardback in 2004) makes this thorough exposition of recent advances in extending the methods more widely available.

Potential purchasers should be clear that this is not a users' guide to advanced distance sampling methods for the generalist. Rather, it pulls together and explains the statistical theory underpinning recently developed methods and, in many cases, takes them further. Hence, readers will need to have an interest in statistics and some statistical expertise to benefit from the book. That being said, it is clearly written and biologists with experience of working with statistics will certainly cope. There are 11 chapters, each written by a different team of authors, but always including at least one of the Editors. As a result, the style and level of treatment of topics is reasonably uniform across chapters. Topics were selected to cover all the major recent advances in the subject. The first two chapters introduce the topics and lay out the theoretical framework for the rest of the book. Each of the remaining chapters deals with a new set of methods in distance sampling and describes the underlying theory and how estimates of the parameters of interest to biologists can be obtained. A key feature of distance sampling is the detection function, which describes how the probability of the observer detecting an animal changes with distance from the sampling point or line transect. This function varies among species and also among and within habitats for the same species. It is usually impossible, for reasons of sample size, to fit a separate detection function for every combination of species and habitat. The chapter dealing with methods in which the detection function is determined by multiple covariates, such as characteristics of species and habitats, provides workable solutions to this problem. There is also a chapter dealing with a frequently encountered discrepancy between reality and the assumptions about the detection function of simple distance sampling methods; the often inaccurate assumption that all animals located at the point or on the transect line are detected. This is often not the case for inconspicuous, quiet species in dense vegetation. Other chapters cover the modelling of trends in density over time and space, cue-counting, the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in survey design, adaptive designs for species whose distribution is very patchy, the use of trapping webs to estimate density and several other challenging problems in density estimation.

The book provides a stimulating account of recent progress with statistical methods for solving the practical problems that biologists encounter when estimating abundance. It underpins the new estimation methods available in the most recent version of DISTANCE and probably in versions to come.

Rhys E. Green

CAMERON, M. **Cockatoos. (Australian Natural History Series.)** 220 pages, 21 colour plates and many black-and-white figures and tables, 3 appendices. Collingwood, VIC, Australia: CSIRO Publishing, 2007. Paperback, AU\$39.95, ISBN 978-0-643092-32-7.

Familiar, yet still among the most mysterious of birds, parrots (order Psittaciformes) continue to fascinate and intrigue us with their striking appearance, bold intelligence, and human-like behaviour. Although the evolutionary origins of the parrots are still debated, the cockatoos remain a monophyletic group that branched early from the stem ancestors of modern parrots. Recent treatises assign this well-established clade either to the level of family (e.g. Cameron following I. Rowley (1997) pp. 246–279 in *Handbook of the Birds of the World*, vol. 4; J. M. Forshaw (2006) *Parrots of the World: An Identification Guide*, L. Christidis & W. E. Boles (2008) *Systematics and Taxonomy of Australian Birds*; and T. W. Wright *et al.* (2008) *Mol. Biol. Evol.* 25: 2141–2156) or to subfamily (e.g. T. Juniper & M. Parr (1998) *Parrots: A Guide to Parrots of the World* and E. C. Dickinson (ed.) (2003) *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*). As an evolutionarily unified and ecologically diverse group, the cockatoos represent a microcosm of all that captivates us about nature and all that concerns us about the future of the biosphere. In his skilfully crafted book, Cameron ably captures this microcosm in succinct but substantive style. He packs an impressive amount of information, gleaned from the considerable research on cockatoos over the decades and updated with ongoing work, in an easily accessed format and readable text.

The book contains 11 chapters, grouped into three major topic areas. The first four chapters introduce us to this taxon of birds, summarizing the species, their characteristics, and their origins. The next four chapters spin a fascinating tale of cockatoo ecology, describing habitats and distribution, movements, food and feeding, and reproduction. They draw on the exemplary work of Cameron's colleagues, including Denis Saunders's decades of work on the Short-billed Black Cockatoo [Carnaby's Cockatoo for Cameron] *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* (the 'black cocky') and Ian Rowley's on the Galah *Eolophus roseicapilla* and Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [Pink Cockatoo] *Cacatua leadbeateri*, as well as Cameron's own detailed studies of the intimate relationship between the Glossy Black Cockatoo [Glossy Cockatoo] *Calyptorhynchus lathami* and its food plant *Allocasuarina*. The final three chapters focus on the dynamics of cockatoo populations, in particular as they collide with, and depend on, those of humans.

How did the author achieve the fine balance between producing text accessible both to laypeople and to his colleagues, compacting information without losing the interest of either audience? Firstly, Cameron has used boxes and tables efficiently, filling them with facts organized

around a specific concept to highlight information quickly, rather than having to extract it from a narrative. The tables put volumes of information right at your fingertips: cockatoo species, including a revised nomenclature (which differs from that of Dickinson (2003) and F. Gill & M. Wright (2006) *Birds of the World: Recommended English Names*) and a simplification of common names (see above) in Table 1.1; cockatoo evolution timeline (3.1); principal habitats of Australian mainland cockatoo species (5.1); the foods of same (7.1); information on cockatoo nest hollows and reproduction (8.1 and 8.2), and on the current conservation status of all cockatoo species (11.1 and 11.2). I particularly liked Cameron's inclusion of the 'Cockatoo Mysteries' boxes and wish he had included one in every chapter. (Why, for example, aren't cockatoos found in Borneo on the 'other' side of Wallace's Line, even though they occur in nearby Sulawesi?) Yet the other boxes solve mysteries that could have been, such as why Galahs are so well adapted to arid environments and why beak-and-feather disease (a devastating viral infection ubiquitous in captive populations of parrots) is not likely to pose a threat to free-ranging wild cockatoos.

Cockatoos originated somewhere in the Australasian realm, a region of most unusual faunas and floras. Recent molecular research by Wright *et al.* (2008) puts the origin of the family Cacatuidae in the mid- to late Cretaceous, suggesting that Table 3.1 needs another row to complete the cockatoo evolution timeline. Fast-forward to the 21st century, and we find little to encourage us that this amazing radiation of birds will not end abruptly. As Chapters 9–11 present in detail, Cameron understates when he affirms that 'the next few decades will be challenging for cockatoos'; they are faced with massive habitat alteration, unpredictable fire regimes, an insatiable trade for pets and aviculture, and overwhelming environmental changes resulting from global warming, including the loss of land area for the already small island populations. Cameron is a cautious optimist. Chapter 11 provides some examples of possible compromises between the demands that humans place on cockatoo populations and some practical solutions, allowing those who exploit also to help cockatoos.

Books on parrots for the laity are usually also written by laypeople. Accurate summaries of peer-reviewed research on wild parrots written by experts in the field are all too rare. Cameron's easy and interesting read on the cockatoos provides an example for future volumes containing broad surveys of scientific knowledge about this worthy group of birds.

Catherine A. Toft

CARLSON, D. Roger Tory Peterson – A Biography. (Mildred Wyatt-Wold Series in Ornithology.) 296 pages, 15 black-and-white photographs and other illustrations in the text. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007. Hardback, US\$24.95, ISBN 978-02-92-71680-3.

ROSENTHAL, E. Birdwatcher – The Life of Roger Tory Peterson. 437 pages, 13 black-and-white and 13 colour photographs. Guilford, CT: The Lyons Press, 2008. Hardback, US\$29.95, ISBN 978-15-9921-294-4.

These two books about Roger Tory Peterson (RTP), a person often referred to as the most influential conservationist of the 20th century, are well researched and a must for the libraries of professional ornithologists as well as amateur birders. Douglas Carlson's is the shorter work, with eight chapters covering events in chronological order from when RTP resided in Jamestown, New York City, Boston, Washington, D.C. to Old Lyme, Connecticut (1908–1996). Carlson mostly looked up records at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute (RTPI) in Jamestown, NY, as well as interviewing some 29 people. Elizabeth Rosenthal's writings involved RTPI records and over 132 individuals from around the world who knew RTP. The six parts embracing 19 chapters in her book have more imaginative titles, for example 'Fledgling', 'Intercontinental migration', and 'Paradoxical *Homo sapiens*'. Apart from important historical facts, the books are valuable for the Chapter Notes that include references to books, scientific papers and letters from RTP housed in RTPI and thus available to students: the Notes take up 15 pages in Carlson and 21 in Rosenthal. Also useful are the Indexes: Carlson's nine pages appear complete, Rosenthal's 14 good, but sometimes incomplete.

The three events in RTP's life that set him on his way to fame were his first edition in 1934 of *A Field Guide to the Birds* (covering all species found east of the Rockies), his long association with the National Audubon Society in New York and his friendship across the Atlantic with the British ornithologist James Fisher. By his simple descriptions and clear illustrations, RTP's first and subsequent field guides contributed enormously to making birding popular. His guide could also really be put in the pocket for fieldwork. The association with Fisher produced, in 1964, a massive volume, *The World of Birds*, and in 1955 a best seller, *Wild America*, where RTP led Fisher on a birding trip around North America, finishing with the ultimate birding experience on the Pribilof Islands, Alaska. RTP's love of birdwatching in Europe and especially Britain encouraged his *Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* (first edition 1954) with Guy Mountfort and P. A. D. (Phil) Hollom, another first for easy birding in Europe.

Both authors outline the critical reviews by professionals of the *Field Guide to the Birds*, 4th edition (1980), which spurred RTP to redo the book. This was his legacy and, in fact, he was working on the illustration the day he died. It was completed in 2002, 6 years after his death, and contained additional information from many professionals.

There is praise for promoting more than birds. For example, his 1968 *Field Guide to Wildflowers of Northeastern and North-Central North America* with Margaret McKenny,

which took 20 years to complete, entailed his drawing, often at ground level for rare species, a total of 1293 flowers.

Rosenthal narrates RTP's first Antarctic visit, at the same time as Peter Scott's, in 1964. Both conservationists subsequently worked with Lars Lindblad in promoting the start of Antarctic ecotourism. Their wives accompanying also encouraged national research organizations to add women scientists to the then mostly all-male teams. RTP's Antarctic travels resulted in one of his best books, *Penguins* (1979).

He was ahead of his time in concerns about DDT contamination, especially in Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* breeding close to his Connecticut home. It was only in 1964, when DDT was demonstrated to be a global pollutant when it was first found in Adelie Penguins *Pygoscelis adeliae* and a Crabeater Seal *Lobodon carcinophagus*, which never left Antarctic pack ice, that environmentalists were more strongly mobilized to seek a ban on DDT in America.

Missing from both books is the 20-year role of Virginia, RTP's third wife, who helped to establish the RTP Institute and co-authored his later field guides while preventing him from exacerbating his health problems. Moreover, he received most of his highest honours, for example the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in the late 1970s with Virginia at his side. The lack of credit is partly understandable because the information was mostly gleaned from the family of his second wife (Barbara). I knew Barbara and, especially, Virginia. In their times and, doubtless, in their different ways, they were both wonderful wives, providing RTP with what he needed to fulfil his ambitions. In a memo quoted by Carlson from RTP to John Devlin in Chapter 30, RTP wrote 'The last years of my life I intend to indulge myself'. Virginia must have provided that need in his lifestyle. Another book could be written on RTP's life with Virginia.

Both authors point out that RTP was a man of many moods, persistent determination, highly competitive, a fantastic teacher and a man of great artistic and writing accomplishments.

William J.L. Sladen

DENNIS, R. **A Life of Ospreys.** 211 pages, illustrated throughout in full colour and black and white with many photographs, maps, graphs, diary entries, sketches and news cuttings. Caithness, UK: Whittles Publishing Limited, 2008. Paperback, UK£18.99, ISBN 978-1-904445-26-5. Websites: www.whittlespublishing.com, www.roydennis.org

It is unquestionable that Roy Dennis is one of the world's foremost authorities on Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus*. His lifelong association with the Osprey began in April 1960 at Loch Garten (Strathspey, Scotland) when the late Scottish Director of the RSPB, George Waterston, appointed him as Osprey warden on the protection project Operation Osprey. It is fitting, therefore, that Dennis should have dedicated this book to Waterston,

stating that 'he was one of the most influential figures in my life'.

The Introduction provides an excellent autobiographical summary for almost a half-century's study of the Osprey in Britain and abroad. Dennis further touches upon his own involvement with Ospreys and their early conservation throughout the second chapter, 'Famous places, special birds'. The reader's attention is drawn towards the early and frustrating efforts made by the author and many others involved to protect nests in Strathspey. In this chapter, Dennis also outlines the sagas of 'Henry' and 'EJ' and the public admiration for these individual birds.

Apart from the story behind the successful recovery in Scotland, the author details the general history of Ospreys in the British Isles. Records have led us to believe until now that the species became extinct throughout Britain in the early 20th century. Dennis's belief that it never did actually become extinct in Scotland thus comes as quite a surprise. He strongly believes that occasional breeding occurred between 1916 and 1954 and supports his expert view with records and witness statements, making this one of the most interesting sections of the book.

A Life of Ospreys then takes the shape of a species monograph. There follows a detailed account of the breeding and ecology of the species, the annual migration, current threats, conservation and recovery in England and Wales. The chapter on migration, ringing and satellite tracking is extremely interesting and insightful. Dennis there explains the knowledge gained by the use of satellite transmitters and presents case studies of individual birds and their epic journeys. He rounds off the book with a final chapter devoted to seeing Ospreys in Britain and an appendix of miscellaneous information on these imposing birds.

Each chapter is brought to life by photographs and/or maps, graphs, sketches, etc. Sadly, some of the graphs appear to be slightly squashed in places. Despite this, the book is very well balanced, presenting scientific information in an easily accessible format that is complemented by fascinating accounts of astonishing events past and present and individual birds' life histories. Dennis's love and passion for Ospreys is apparent throughout the text. The rewritten diary entries and news cuttings succeed in personalizing his story and help to connect the reader with the author throughout the book. I found *A Life of Ospreys* to be a most enjoyable read and an extremely difficult book to put down. I recommend it wholeheartedly.

Stephen Bental

HAILMAN, J.P. **Coding and Redundancy: Man-Made and Animal-Evolved Signals.** 257 pages, black-and-white figures and tables. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008. Hardback, US\$39.95, UK£25.95, ISBN 978-0-674-02795-4. Website: www.hup.harvard.edu

In this book, Hailman explores how signals encode information. He looks at the ways in which signals vary, from simple presence/absence of a display to more subtle and complex differences, and what this variation conveys to recipients. This is a rather different approach from most recent books on animal communication, which have emphasized issues of honesty and deceit. More original still is the attempt to draw parallels between animal and human-constructed signals. The goal, it seems, is to find common principles of coding that cut across the human–animal divide.

The book draws on a huge range of animal examples, covering many different taxa and different modalities and functional types of signal – from UV reflectance in jumping spiders (family Salticidae) or the surface waves generated by water striders (Gerridae), to more familiar instances of birdsong, plumage colour and territorial scent-marking. Readers are sure to encounter at least a few intriguing examples that are new to them, but, for me at least, the real excitement of the book lay in the examples of ‘man-made signalling’. By this, the author refers not to linguistic or symbolic communication, but to constructed signals and codes, such as ‘alarm bells, traffic signals, power lights on appliances, railroad semaphores, tornado sirens, foghorns, channel buoys, and so on’. The wealth of examples makes for fascinating reading, ranging from codes simple to complex: for a boat returning from the sea, black structures mark the left-hand side of a channel and red structures the right-hand side (summed up in the mariner’s mnemonic ‘red-right-returning’); the single-arm railroad semaphore conveys a little more information, with the position of the arm at vertical, oblique or horizontal, signalling that a train should continue, slow or stop; and the examples extend all the way to far more complex systems, such as the 28 ‘words’ of the two-flag semaphore code, one of which serves to indicate a shift from letter to number coding. And there are many more intriguing examples I could have picked.

This great diversity of examples, animal and human, is loosely organized (as in the instances I selected) according to the complexity of the codes they employ – from binary, through multi-state signals, to multivariate displays that combine different channels of communication. This culminates in a discussion of redundancy in signals: both as an unwelcome consequence of the signalling system, to be minimized where possible, and as an intentional or designed feature of a code, which can help to minimize errors in communication. The theory of information provides the underlying theoretical ‘glue’, as the author explains how to quantify the information conveyed by these different kinds of display. Lest I put off potential readers, I should say that the discussions of information and coding theory are very gentle, with only a little in the way of mathematics, and are very clearly explained. In reality, the theory provides more in the way of guiding principles than rigorous analysis, and is certainly not

necessary to appreciate the parallels between human and animal codes.

In sum, by placing examples of animal signalling alongside instances of human-constructed codes, this book offers a novel and stimulating perspective that is sure to make you think afresh about animal communication. It is one of the most enjoyable and thought-provoking books on the topic that I have read.

Rufus A. Johnstone

MAUMARY, L., VALLOTTON, L. & KNAUS, P. *Die Vögel der Schweiz*. 848 pages, 349 distribution maps, 174 maps of ringing recoveries, 322 diagrams for passage migration, 294 graphs of population trends, 2370 colour and a few black-and-white photographs, and drawings. Sempach: Schweizerische Vogelwarte and Montmolin: Nos Oiseaux, 2007. Hardback, CHF188.00, €115.00 from Schweizerische Vogelwarte, Sekretariat, CH-6204 Sempach, Switzerland, by e-mail: info@vogelwarte.ch or through website: www.vogelwarte.ch/VdS. ISBN 978-3-9523006-2-6 (German), 978-3-9523006-1-9 (French).

Also available in French as *Les Oiseaux de Suisse* and beautifully printed on high-quality glossy paper, this volume weighing almost 5 kg is a truly magnificent, sumptuously illustrated work of encyclopaedic scope on the status, biology and conservation of Switzerland’s birdlife – the 419 species recorded in the country and in adjoining areas such as Austrian parts of Lake Constance. Lionel Maumary and his two co-authors, all three surprisingly young, were assisted by 19 others, but many organizations and other individuals, including enthusiastic data-gathering amateurs, contributed all manner of commitment and expertise and thus played an indispensable role in the book’s preparation. It took seven years to complete. Luc Hoffmann’s Foreword emphasizes the fundamental importance of the book for all Swiss bird conservation projects.

For a proper appreciation and understanding of what follows in the species accounts, it is essential to read through the introduction ‘The Switzerland of the Birds’ (pages 11–74), which is anything but an onerous task and is made the more enjoyable by the profusion of illustrations, including lovely photographs. There are sections on geography, habitat, topography, climate and meteorology, which help generate the rich variety of the Swiss avifauna. Of the 174 regular breeders, maps show the 12 species whose range has most contracted and another 12 with the greatest range expansion between the 1970s and the 1990s. Other sections cover migration routes and population trends, some possibly driven by climate change. Moving northward along the Rhône valley, the European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* has become a regular breeder since 1991. Discussion of the impact of human activities in different habitats leads to an assessment of bird–people conflicts and the role of conservation. Finally, the ingredients stirred

into the writing of the book, for example the role of amateurs, the rigorous assessment of records, range and population surveys, and ringing, are discussed.

There is a relevant summary on the back flap of the dust jacket, but it is to pages 70–74 that the reader should turn (probably more than once!) for a detailed explanation of how the species accounts are organized and, in particular, how to interpret the graphs, pink and grey boxes, and the maps with their adjacent small pie charts.

The species accounts comprise a general introduction, the name in Switzerland's four languages and English, then subsections on distribution, movements, population, habitat and behaviour, breeding biology in Switzerland, conservation; status, etc. in a pink box and comments on rare and irregular species in a grey box; literature (details of the short citations and abbreviated titles of standard works are given in the Bibliography). To give just a few examples, excellent up-to-date summaries of information are presented for the country's colourful mountain birds, such as Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*, two rock thrushes *Monticola gularis* and *Monticola solitarius*, the latter sharing one mountain with Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*, the exquisite Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*, and the acrobatic, high-flying and entertaining Yellow-billed Cough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*. There is the exciting news, too, of the reintroduction of the Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*, three pairs of which bred in Switzerland in 2007. Not just a land of imposing mountains and their birds, Switzerland has more large lakes than any other country in Central Europe. Accounts of the very large numbers of wintering wildfowl found there, as well as other breeding waterbirds, make fascinating reading.

In summary, superb! The authors, their many assistants and the publishers deserve warm congratulations. Every major ornithological library should acquire a copy and individual ornithologists in Switzerland and further afield will doubtless be keen to purchase the book at what seems a fair price for what it offers.

M.G. Wilson

ROBB, M., MULLARNEY, K. & THE SOUND APPROACH. **Petrels Night and Day: A Sound Approach Guide**. 300 pages, many colour photographs, colour plates, maps, sonagrams, 2 audio CDs. Poole, Dorset, UK: The Sound Approach, 2008. Hardback, UK£34.95 plus p. & p. (free in UK) UK£3.00 in Europe, UK£6.00 in rest of world, from The Sound Approach, 29 High Street, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1AB, UK, phone +44 (0)1202 676622; website: www.soundapproach.co.uk. ISBN 978-90-810933-2-3.

For many of those people who have done fieldwork on petrels of the families Procellariidae and Hydrobatidae, these birds eventually become mythical. Magnus Robb is no exception. His book is the best piece written to date to help understand why petrels fascinate scientists and sea-watchers, and attract such conservation effort. As Robb

writes correctly in his Preface, those who have never visited a petrel colony at night cannot feel the intense sensations that seize you when hundreds of birds are flying about and calling over your head. However, if you listen to his stereo records in the darkness of your room, think about the smell of petrels, and close your eyes, you'll be there. Despite this, *Petrels Night and Day* is as strange a book as petrels are strange birds. This is not a field guide, nor is it a monograph on petrels: sometimes it looks like a diary (Robb writes about his family, parents and childhood), a colourful tale (relating many personal fieldwork experiences), or a romantic novel (when digging for historical records). This is not to say that science is absent from the book, but I shall return to that point later.

First of all, the book is a tribute to the sounds of petrels. With two CDs (and 127 tracks in total), every single call of the petrel species breeding in the west Palaearctic is presented, and with full details. The quality of the sounds is generally impressive, and in most cases, colony ambience, duets, and male and female calls are given and described in the text. Particular attention should indeed be paid to the text, which describes the calls and accompanies the audio tracks. No doubt this is the main strength of the book, as many calls are released here for the first time, at least to the public. Coverage of the literature is another strength: this has been incredibly well achieved with the acknowledged help of George Sangster, and I must honestly admit that I found many useful references I had previously overlooked. However, in several places, appropriate and relevant citation is not provided: for instance, in a paper published in 1995 (*Ibis* 137: 207–218), I had already reported that Desertas birds (regarded by Robb as a full species, *Pterodroma deserta*, rather than a separate population of Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma feae*) finish their moaning calls on a high-pitched note in 70% of cases.

The book also contains more than 100 colour photographs, of petrels at sea, many of which are extremely good, and also of birds on their breeding grounds. I was particularly delighted to see photographs of colonies, islets and islands where the birds breed: at least for the vast majority of readers, they will never get the chance (or take the risk, as detailed for the Cape Verde islets by the author!) to visit them. I am slightly less enthusiastic about the drawings by Killian Mullarney, though they are good. For instance, Fea's Petrel nearly always shows grey barring on the belly; and as for the 'dark' Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus* on page 157, such a bird simply does not exist.

Distribution maps for each petrel are also provided, though they only indicate breeding localities. The text accounts for each species are, I think, less convincing, because they vary in length, structure, and content according to species. Given that *Petrels Night and Day* proposes many changes in the taxonomic treatment of west Palaearctic petrels, it is worth recalling that 20 years ago only 11 species

were recognized – Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*, four *Puffinus* shearwaters, one gadfly *Pterodroma*, Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* and four storm petrels, *Pelagodroma marina*, *Hydrobates pelagicus*, *Oceanodroma castro* and *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. The current book, in contrast, proposes that there are actually 23 different species, so that a long part of the text is usually devoted to this aspect. I will not comment on these changes, because they are actually not argued on the basis of scientific treatment (even those based on vocalizations). It is hoped that the authors will soon submit their data and conclusions to a scientific and peer-reviewed process. In the meantime, *Petrels Night and Day* will doubtless give rise to much confusion and argument in respect of practical taxonomy and identification. In many cases, identification will require that you are actually in the breeding colony itself, sometimes you will even need to catch the bird, have a sonograph with you, or a portable DNA sequencer. Of course, I do not dispute the importance of recognizing that there are differences between populations, but why (and on what basis) rank these populations as full species, rather than recognizing that for petrel vocalizations, as for many plumage colours in passerines, there is geographical variation? To conclude, I recommend that you take this book and enjoy it for what it is, namely a voyage among the petrels of Europe, with wonderful photographs of the remote places where they breed and, importantly, with the best tape recordings ever produced. Do not take it for what it is not: a review of petrel systematics and taxonomy based on scientific documentation and argument.

Vincent Bretagnolle

ROWLAND, P. **Bowerbirds. (Australian Natural History Series.)** 136 pages, 13 black-and-white figures (mostly photographs), 37 colour photographs, 10 black-and-white maps, 2 tables. Collingwood, VIC, Australia: CSIRO Publishing, 2008. Paperback, AU\$39.95, ISBN 978-0-643094-20-8.

The 20 species of bowerbirds (family Ptilorhynchidae) native to Australia and New Guinea are among the most fascinating yet curiously neglected members of the avian community. The three, for some authorities only two, catbirds of the genus *Ailuroedus* are monogamous. In all 17 species of polygynous bowerbirds, males attract females by constructing some form of bower, which may range from a simple cleared area in a forest to a complex 2-m-wide stick wigwam. Males then augment their bowers with a dazzling array of both man-made and natural objects, in accordance with a species-specific colour preference. Alongside this prodigious display of skill, bowerbirds are also proficient mimics. Bowerbirds are unique in their bower-building behaviour, which allows them to display their quality to females using ornate bower construction and decorations.

Peter Rowland's book is split into two main sections, the first covering general background such as classification, morphology, distribution, bower evolution and sexual behaviour, and the second section comprising individual species accounts. The 10 species found only in New Guinea are described in brief accounts in a supplement towards the end of the book. Included are excellent colour photos of each Australian species of bowerbird and its bower, which renders the identification key somewhat extraneous.

The background sections provide a good overview of salient information about the bowerbird family, including more recent data concerning the role that bower paint (a mixture of masticated plant material and saliva used to decorate bower walls) has as part of the sexual display. Considering the amount of interest in the family's unique bower-building behaviour, the relevant chapter would have benefited from more depth and discussion concerning the evolution of bower building and associated behaviours. In particular, use of bower decorations and the stealing of decorations from rival males' bowers deserve more attention. Males of the Satin Bowerbird *Ptilorhynchus violaceus* steal objects with high ultraviolet reflectance, as these decorations contrast highly with the bower environment and thus are more noticeable to females. Stealing behaviour is also likely to affect inter-bower distances, as species with high bower density tend to have higher incidences of stealing. Although decoration stealing is relatively uncommon in Spotted Bowerbirds *Ptilorhynchus maculatus* [*Chlamydera maculata*], which have large inter-bower distances, rival males destroy bowers when males have artificially inflated numbers of decorations, implying that males of a certain social standing are able to defend only a certain number of decorations against rival male 'policing'. Males also have local 'traditions' of bower design, although significant inter-population differences in bower design, decoration and male display have been observed. The evolution of bower-building behaviour is evidently linked to sexual behaviour, as the monogamous catbirds in this family do not build bowers. However, precious little is known about how the different styles of bowers evolved, or the role that female choice has played.

Prior to this book, Clifford and Dawn Frith had produced the only monograph on bowerbirds, with their excellent and comprehensive 2004 volume in the OUP 'Bird Families of the World' series (reviewed in *Ibis* 149: 178–179). Rowland's *Bowerbirds* is a worthy addition to the literature on the Ptilorhynchidae, and the colour photographs beautifully capture the engaging nature of these birds. Written in an accessible, readable style, it is an ideal introduction for anyone who wants to learn more about a mesmerizing avian family.

Laura A. Kelley

SNOW, D. **Birds in our Life**. 233 pages, colour and black-and-white photographs, paintings and drawings. York: William Sessions Limited, 2008. Paperback, UK£12.99 plus UK£2.50 p.&p. (UK), UK£3.80 (Overseas Surface Mail) from Sessions of York, Ebor Press Division, Huntington Road, York YO31 9HS, UK, ISBN 978-1-85072-381-3. Website: www.sessionsofyourk.co.uk

I first met David Snow in the 1970s at one of the Edward Grey Institute student conferences. I subsequently read and was inspired by his books, *The Blackbird* (1958), *The Web of Adaptation* (1976), *The Cotingas* (1982), and *Birds and Berries* (1988), which was written with his wife Barbara.

Born in 1924, David Snow has had a long and influential career as an ornithologist, among other things serving as Editor of *The Ibis*. Written principally for his family, much as Darwin's was, Snow's autobiography is both fascinating and a valuable source of information. If only more researchers would put finger to keyboard and described their lives for family and future historians of science. In fact, using a computer to record one's life is not enough, for hard discs, CDs and memory stick probably have a much shorter lifespan than the average ornithologist. By publishing his 'life', David Snow has provided us with a permanent record, not only of his own (and his wife's) substantial contribution to ornithological knowledge, but of a period of dramatic changes in the history of ornithology.

Snow's *Blackbird* is popular science writing at its best enhanced by beautiful line drawings by Robert Gillmor, but it is for his work (together with his wife Barbara) on tropical birds that David Snow is best known. Barbara's pioneering investigation of the Bearded Bellbird *Procnias averano* and David's study of the Oilbird *Steatornis caripensis* of Trinidad were groundbreaking. The Oilbird was discovered in 1799 by Alexander von Humboldt and named because young birds, which become enormously fat, were harvested for their oil, but it was David Snow who took the opportunity to identify the extraordinary breeding adaptations in this most unusual bird.

One of the Snows' most significant discoveries was the way fruit provided a year-round supply of nutrients for many tropical birds, freeing them up so they could spend most of their time on reproduction. They were also among the first researchers to study the Cotingidae – tropical, fruit-eating birds, many of which have a lek mating system. I remember David Snow giving a talk on 'The Cotingidae' at one of the Edward Grey Institute conferences when I was a student. The birds sounded interesting, but because the talk was not illustrated and because my knowledge of tropical birds was almost non-existent, I had absolutely no idea what kind of birds he was talking about. The story of how ecology (a fruit diet) drives sexual dimorphism, mating systems and breeding systems in the tropics is beautifully told in *The Web of Adaptation*, a book that I found both educational and inspirational.

Tim Birkhead

WHEYE, D. & KENNEDY, D. **Humans, Nature, and Birds: Science Art from Cave Walls to Computer Screens**. 201 pages, numerous colour and black-and-white illustrations. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008. Hardback, US\$37.50, UK£25.00, ISBN 978-03-00-12388-3. Website: www.yalebooks.co.uk

This novel and fascinating volume is about ornithological art that 'has science as an orienting component'. Bird art has been extremely popular since the 18th century when the first lavishly illustrated and often oversized books were produced. Those of Albin, Vieillot, Gould, Audubon and others were successful precisely because their magnificent colour illustrations did something extraordinary to the viewer's brain: they pandered to people's lust for birds, they fed the imagination, and last and probably least, they provided a scientific identification of the bird.

Humans, Nature, and Birds is partly a history of bird art for it spans the Paleolithic images of owls (Strigiformes) etched into the soft rock wall of the Chauvet Cave, France, through a page of a monk's drawing book from the 1300s, to the 21st century images by one of the authors. The book also contains a valuable timeline (Appendix 1) that skilfully links 'art, technology and study of birds'. Yet this book is much more than a history of ornithological illustration, it is an enthusiastic and enlightening account of the diverse ways our understanding of bird biology has been enhanced by art. Not only is the concept novel, the design of the book is also unusual, set out as a 'virtual gallery' in which the reader is asked to imagine being in a series of rooms filled with some of the most diverse and exciting bird art imaginable. Oh that such a gallery existed! The images collected here would make a wonderful exhibition, and the book, its catalogue. In the absence of the real thing, the book provides us with a remarkable set of images together with an enlightening text that describes the art ('The Narrative') and provides the link with science ('Viewing the Science' or 'The Role of Science Art').

Two examples will give you a feel for the scope. On page 78, we see Paul Klee's *Twittering Machine* painted in 1922 – a childlike illustration that might be one of those mechanical music boxes in which one or more model birds pop out and 'sing'. Beneath it on the same page, Darryl Wheye has reproduced Klee's birds in black and white and added a sonagram to draw attention to the way the birds' heads imitate 'the phrasing and frequency of a vocal exchange, or as perhaps the heads of musical notes'. On page 141 is David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl's fabulous oil painting of a busy Blackcock *Tetrao tetrix* lek at dawn. This must be among the very first closely observed studies of bird behaviour, painted in 1675, a few years before the publication of John Ray's ground-breaking encyclopaedia *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby* (1676 Latin version, 1678 English version), in which – intriguingly – there is no mention of lekking behaviour.

The book is laid out with an upper and a lower 'gallery', within which is a series of 'rooms', each one with a different

theme: birds as icons, birds as resources, birds as teaching tools, birds as a means to understanding biology, science art, from real public venues to virtual ones, and so on. After a brief introduction to each gallery, each of the 52 double-page spreads comprises an image and an account. The quality of production is very high, and the dimensions of the book (18 × 26 cm) make this very much something to read rather than a coffee-table book. It sounds trite, but anyone with an interest in bird art and seeking aesthetic stimulation should have this extraordinary book.

Birds are the embodiment of nature, as Chris Bacon, one of the contemporary artists included in this book, says. Birds have a special place in our lives. Not least because, collectively, they are the canary in the global coal mine. The scientific monitoring of bird populations, motivated largely by a love of birds, provides a sensitive and accurate barometer of the quality of life. This book is a celebration of that fact.

Tim Birkhead

Also received

BENNETT, D. **True to Form.** *Unpaginated, many paintings and drawings.* Peterborough, UK: Langford Press, 2007. Hardback, UK£38.00, ISBN 978-1-904078-30-2. Website: www.langford-press.co.uk

Some 20 books have now appeared in the Langford Press Wildlife Art Series (for reviews, see *Ibis* 149: 860–861, 863–864; 150: 648). David Bennett's paintings and drawings reflect his strong attachment to his native Yorkshire, where his artist's eye focuses on river valley, canal, the Dales and sea cliffs. Coastal and inland areas elsewhere in England and Scotland provide further subjects and inspiration. Among the birds portrayed, there are some fine studies of wildfowl on river and canal, Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix* higher up, nesting Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus*, and the busy life of a seabird colony, including auks (Alcidae) awkwardly riding the updraughts at Bempton Cliffs. I found as much to admire, or more, in Bennett's enchanting portrayal of various mammals: outstanding, for me, are his hares *Lepus europaeus* and *Lepus timidus*, Otters *Lutra lutra* and Grey Seals *Halichoerus grypus*, but several others are wonderfully captured too. I am sorry to end on a critical note: there is nothing wrong with having the text in the author's handwriting, but surely there should have been some editing, at least to correct the misspellings.

M.G.W.

COUZENS, D. **Extreme Birds: The World's Most Extraordinary and Bizarre Birds.** 278 pages, about 150 colour photographs. Richmond Hill, Canada: Firefly Books, 2008. Hardback, US\$45.00, ISBN 978-1-55407-423-5 and 1-55407-423-1. Website: www.fireflybooks.com

Following a brief introduction, Dominic Couzens presents to the reader birds extreme in form, ability and behaviour, and some 'extreme families', too. The style of the text

facing the large and impressive photographs is lively, often with a humorous slant, but there is plenty of good science as well. A few examples will give a flavour of the book. The Sword-billed Hummingbird *Ensifera ensifera* has the longest bill, in proportion to overall length, so preening is strictly with the feet, while the Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* exhibits extreme ability in flock co-ordination, and the Three-wattled Bellbird *Procnias tricarunculatus* makes perhaps the loudest call (an ear-splitting 'bock') of any bird. As for extreme behaviour, how about foraging by flatulence (Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lumulata*)? And in the chapter 'Extreme families', you can read of the most defensive nestlings (Hoopoe *Upupa epops*) and the best water carrier (Burchell's Sandgrouse *Pterocles burchelli*). As an addition to a secondary school library, this book might well elicit a few 'wows' and 'yucks', but it will also provide a stimulating and colourful source of information about the life of some bizarre birds.

M.G.W.

EVENS, J.G. **Natural History of the Point Reyes Peninsula. 2nd edn. (California Natural History Guides, 94.)** 368 pages, many figures (including maps and numerous colour photographs), tables. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2008. Hardback, US\$60.00, UK£35.00, ISBN 978-0-520-25465-7; paperback, US\$24.95, UK£14.95, ISBN 978-0-520-25467-1.

The first edition of this book, one in an impressive series, was published by the Point Reyes National Seashore Association in 1988. Point Reyes lies just north of San Francisco, in Marin County, and the area includes Tomales Bay, through which runs the San Andreas Fault, a bird observatory, and several protected areas, among which, offshore, is the Point Reyes Farallon Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Following general chapters on climate, geology and plant communities, Jules Evens describes the Peninsula's marine invertebrates, fishes, amphibians and reptiles, birds, land mammals, and marine mammals. There are several checklists and the one for birds indicates that about 75% of the 629 species recorded in California are known to have occurred on the Peninsula or in its environs. Point Reyes residents and visitors curious about the area's natural history would surely find this splendid guide fascinating and instructive.

M.G.W.

MATYUKHIN, A.V. **[The Variable Wheatear (*Oenanthe picata* Blyth) in Southern Kazakhstan (a history of one population)]** (in Russian, with short English summary). 53 pages, black-and-white figures and tables. Moscow: A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2007. Paperback, price not known [no ISBN]. Contact email: amatyukhin@rambler.ru

Having eagerly accepted a proposal by E.N. Panov in 1984 that he should travel to Southern Kazakhstan to colour-ring and study a polymorphic population of Variable [Eastern Pied] Wheatears *Oenanthe picata* (130–150 pairs in the

Darbaza area of the Chimkent Region), Alexander Matyukhin worked there in close co-operation primarily with Sergey Lyubushchenko over the field seasons 1985–1988. In 1989 and 1990, the two continued their studies independently of each other, and only Lyubushchenko visited the area in 1992.

Lyubushchenko's dissertation on the Variable Wheatear in 1995 and the publication of Panov's wheatear monograph (in Russian in 1999 and in an expanded English version in 2005: see *Ibis* 148: 580–581) provided the spur to analyse the data from the Darbaza study. This booklet aims to present detailed empirical information, based on the ringing of 235 adult and 233 juvenile Variable Wheatears, to elucidate various aspects of the species' biology, ecology and behaviour. A visit to Darbaza by Matyukhin in 2005 showed that the population had declined almost to extinction, apparently because of an influx of Rose-coloured Starlings *Sturnus roseus* into the breeding area.

M.G.W.

MEY, E. **Aus den frühen Jahren des Naturhistorischen Museums Rudolstadt in Thüringen: Rudolstädter Naturhistorische Schriften, Supplement 7 [From the early years of the Rudolstadt Natural History Museum in Thüringen]** (in German, with English summary). 48 pages, 13 colour plates, 25 black-and-white plates, 1 table. Rudolstadt, 2008. Paperback, €12.50, ISBN 978-39-10013-68-6, ISSN 0949-8702.

This beautiful and fascinating supplement to the journal *Rudolstadt Natural History Papers* was published on the occasion of the Museum's 250th anniversary. Eberhard Mey, the Director of the Museum and Journal Editor, decided to produce something a bit special for their anniversary and he has more than succeeded. With its unusual format of 33 × 21 cm, specially selected high-quality paper, and top-class printing, this slim work is a pleasure to hold and to read.

An aristocratic cabinet of natural history curiosities from 1757 was the starting point of the Museum's collection. Common enough, but Rudolstadt is special in that the original cabinet still exists, and many of the mounted bird specimens are in their first glass cases complete with dioramas. A complete catalogue of its predecessor (general and artistic curiosities) from 1729, a historically important 18th century document, is reproduced here.

The modest present-day bird collection contains c. 2000 specimens and 3000 eggs, but again, the historical interest is the main thing. The first systematic avifauna for Thüringen from the end of the 18th century provides valuable data on population changes, while one of the most striking images in this publication is a coloured engraving of a male Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* from 1772 by a female artist, Barbara Regina Dietzsch.

The preceding 6th Supplement of the Journal was actually the first in this anniversary de luxe format. It

resurrects a series of astonishingly detailed and attractive coloured illustrations from the 18th century of the Lepidoptera (including larvae) of this part of Thüringen that might otherwise have blushed unseen in the museum archives.

B.H.

MILLER, S. (ed.) **Australasian Nature Photography. ANZANG Fifth Collection.** x + 122 pages, many colour and black-and-white photographs. Collingwood, VIC, Australia: CSIRO Publishing, 2008. Paperback, AU\$39.95, ISBN 978-0-643-09569-4. Websites: www.anzangnature.com and www.publish.csiro.au

The fourth ANZANG Nature (Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica, New Guinea) Nature and Landscape Photographer of the Year collection was reviewed in *Ibis* 150: 434. As in 2007, the overall winner in 2008 is for a bird photograph, in this case 'Fighting egrets' (presumably, Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*) by Allen Peate. Birds also feature in Andrew Trowbridge's entry, which took the portfolio prize, and in some of the other competition categories, including the winner of 'Animal Behaviour' and 'Threatened Animals or Plants'.

M.G.W.

PEARSON, D.L. & BELETSKY, L. **Thailand. (Travellers' Wildlife Guides.)** 472 pages, 23 colour photographs of habitats, 108 colour identification plates, 13 colour and 2 black-and-white figures (plates) of plants, 3 maps, 1 table. Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2008. Paperback, US\$29.95, ISBN 978-1-56656-694-0. Website: www.interlinkbooks.com

Other books in this admirable series of well-written and attractively illustrated guides 'aimed at environmentally conscious travellers' were reviewed in *Ibis* 149: 176 (Hawaii), 427–428 (Costa Rica) and 643 (Amazon and Pantanal). *Thailand* follows the established layout in having chapters on ecotourism, geography and habitats, parks and reserves, and how to use the book (explaining ecology and natural history). A separate chapter is then devoted to each of the animal groups, terrestrial and aquatic, surveyed. That on birds is about 60 pages long and ends, as do several others, with an 'Environmental close-up', in this case a discussion of frugivory. Of the 970 bird species recorded in Thailand, 186 are illustrated here (by David Nurney) and the brief texts opposite comprise ID, Habitat (including symbols) and Region.

M.G.W.

SHUBIN, A.O. (ed.) **[Information Materials of the Working Group on Waders No. 18]** (in Russian, with English summaries). 84 pages, figures, tables, line drawings. Moscow: Working Group on Waders, 2005. **No. 19:** 68 pages, line drawings, tables (2006). **No. 20:** 68 pages, line drawings, tables (2007).

MOROZOV, V.V. (ed.) **No. 21: 64 pages, line drawings and tables (2008). Details for Nos 19, 20 and 21 otherwise as for No. 18, above. Website (Russian and English): www.waders.ru**

The Russian WGW celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2007. Regular sections in these bulletins 18–21 (for reviews of 16 and 17, see *Ibis* 146: 185–186 and 701) include the preceding year's main events, news items, information from the regions (also the republics of Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan), projects (among them a long-running one on Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*), ringing and colour marking, study methods, field notes, meetings, and so on. The search for the breeding grounds of the Critically Endangered Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* continues, so far without success, although there has been a trickle of reports of passage birds primarily in Ukraine, including a confirmed sighting in 2005.

Some of the reports of special interest are, in No. 18, the breeding of Grey [Red] Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius* at a site in European Russia further southwest than any known hitherto for the Eurasian population. In No. 19, the first breeding record for Russia and the Palaearctic of American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* in Chukotka, albeit a bird apparently paired, and sharing incubation, with a Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*; observations in recent years in the Koryak Highlands suggest the presence of a small but stable population in NE Russia of the otherwise Nearctic Wandering Tattler *Heteroscelus incanus*. Bulletin No. 20 reports on the establishment of a Threatened Steppe Waders Working Group (for Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*, Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* and others), and gives the disappointing news that very little progress has been made preparing two wader volumes for the 'new' Russian handbook. By analysing recordings of the drumming sounds made by displaying Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* and Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago (g.) delicata*, Vladimir Arkhipov found a clear difference in the frequency of units in the last second of the dive, and he was thus able to confirm the first Russian record of Wilson's Snipe, in South Chukotka in 2007. The BOU Records Committee has recently recognized Wilson's Snipe as a separate monotypic species, *Gallinago delicata* (see *Ibis* 150: 833–835).

M.G.W.

STAMM, H.C. & HERING, J. **Rudolf Zimmermann (1878–1943). (Mitteilungen des Vereins Sächsischer Ornithologen, Band 10, Sonderheft 1.) In German, with one-page English summary. 450 pages, many black-and-white figures (documents and photographs), 2007. Paperback, €17.00, ISSN 0942; ISBN 978-3-9811497-0-8. Contact email (Hartmut Meyer): meyer@vso-internet.de**

An earlier special supplement of the ornithological society of Saxony's journal was devoted to Erwin Stresemann and

reviewed in *Ibis* 147: 622–623. In this supplement, attention is focused on Rudolf Zimmermann, whose many achievements include the founding, in Dresden in 1922, of Saxony's ornithological society and, later, launching and editing its journal (*Mitt. Ver. Sächs. Orn.*). Zimmermann also helped to organize the biannual meetings of the society, which comprised presentations and field excursions. A skilled observer of birds and small mammals and prolific author (some 500 titles are listed in the bibliography), he was also admired for his pioneering work in wildlife photography. A special affinity with water and reed beds is evident from his studies at the Oberlausitz ponds in Saxony and at the Neusiedler See in eastern Austria.

Apart from reminiscences by his sister, Helene, and two 'In memoriam' addresses from 1943, the main part of this publication (pages 34–411) is a selection of letters and postcards from Zimmermann to his closest friend and colleague, Richard Heyder (the author of *Die Vögel des Landes Sachsen*, 1952), in the years 1921 to 1943. The correspondence shows Zimmermann at pains to maintain harmony with Heyder in respect of all society matters (not always an easy task) and to enhance the reputation of the society and its journal. Obviously of great interest to students of the history of Saxonian ornithology and its regional society, the letters and cards also reveal much about the development of ornithology in Germany generally between the 1920s and the 1940s.

M.G.W.

THRELFALL, J. **Between the Tides. 168 pages, many paintings and drawings. Peterborough, UK: Langford Press, 2007. Hardback, UK£38.00, ISBN 978-1-904078-23-4.**

In this celebration of British estuarine landscapes and wildlife, it is John Threlfall's artwork that comes first: drawings and watercolours (and the occasional small acrylic or oil painting) executed on the spot, and larger acrylics, oils and pastels completed in the studio. Then there are his poems, the quotes from a variety of sources (Rachel Carson, a Hopi Indian saying), and the text, that 'emerged last of all', this providing much helpful background information on tides, saltmarsh, birds and mammals, chains and webs, flocks and roosting, threats, and so on. The paintings certainly bring alive the world between the tides, water, sand and mud and big skies, boats and buildings, all affected by subtle changes in colour and light with time of day and weather; then, an integral part of the whole, the birds (mainly wildfowl and waders), shown flying, resting, feeding, and there are seals hauled out, too.

M.G.W.

WARREN, M. **Images from Birding: Observations of an Artist Birder. 168 pages, numerous sketches and paintings. Peterborough, UK: Langford Press, 2007. Hardback, UK£38.00, ISBN 978-1-904078-24-1.**

Michael Warren's regular visits to Langford Lowfields, a gravel pit in the English Midlands, longer journeys, for example to Scotland, to see particular species and occasionally to 'twitches', allow him to study birds, their behaviour, habitat and weather in the field. Sketches and notes can then be used to create a studio image in a well-designed harmony of colour and texture. This, the artist's fifth book, is a superb collection of drawings from his sketchbooks and field notes, also over 60 new paintings. Warren's favourite bird is the Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, and he also declares a special fascination with beaches. Lapwings certainly feature here, as do, wonderfully variegated in colour and composition, beach and other scenes. Many other birds, arranged in systematic order and with brief captions, are depicted, and both they and their habitats confirm Michael Warren's outstanding artistic skills and knowledge of his subjects.

M.G.W.

WINK, M., DIETZEN, C. & GIEßING, B. **Die Vögel des Rheinlandes (Nordrhein). Ein Atlas der Brut- und Wintervogelverbreitung 1990 bis 2000 (Beiträge zur Avifauna Nordrhein-Westfalens, Bd. 36.)** 419 pages, many colour photographs, maps, other figures and tables, 2 appendices. Dossenheim, Germany: Romneya Verlag and Neunkirchen, Germany: Verlag NIBUK, 2005. Hardback, €29.00, ISBN 3.934502-05-9 and 3-931921-07-7.

Earlier books on the birds of the Rhineland, the North Rhine part of the German *Land* of Nordrhein-Westfalen, include a breeding bird atlas in 1987 (survey 1974–84) and one for the winter season in 1990; for reviews, see *Ibis* 130: 327 and 133: 436. In addition, a breeding bird atlas for Westfalen [Westphalia] appeared in 2002. Michael Wink and his co-authors have produced an impressive semi-quantitative Rhineland atlas of breeding and wintering birds (241 species in total, 168 breeding) based on surveys in the period 1990–2000. The information is clearly presented in succinct text, tables, and excellent maps (up to three per species), using a recording unit of c. 13 km² for 413 breeding and 393 winter squares. The introductory sections are essential reading and the text there is well supported by helpful maps, tables and graphs. Comparing data with the 1974–84 survey, 33 species (mainly wetland, farmland birds or insectivorous migrants) showed a clear negative trend in their distribution, whereas for 75 species, including some waterbirds, birds of prey, and resident

woodland species such as woodpeckers (Picidae), the trend was positive.

M.G.W.

YOO BUM-JOO. **Vögel Koreas.** 376 pages, numerous colour photographs. Wiebelsheim, Germany: AULA-Verlag, 2008. Hardback, €39.95, ISBN 978-3-89104-714-9. Website: <http://www.verlagsgemeinschaft.com>

This is a translation from Korean into German by Holmer Brochlos of Yoo Bum-joo's award-winning *Birds of Korea* (2005). The author is first and foremost a photographer, and the 'most beautiful and significant' of his 300 000 images of birds taken over 45 years form the core of this book, handsomely and instructively illustrating in their different ways its seven chapters in three parts. Texts essentially of popular scientific content are well suited to the non-specialist and reflect a desire to foster a widespread interest in birds and their protection. Chapter topics include flight and migration, courtship and breeding, roosting and comfort behaviour, survival, threats and conservation.

As Jürgen Fiebig's valuable Foreword makes clear, the Korean Peninsula's heavily indented west and south coasts with their extensive mudflats represent a hugely important staging area on the East Asian-Australian Flyway for passage waders. Rich in flora and fauna and extremely productive, the Yellow Sea between China and the Korean Peninsula is also an ecosystem under threat. Saemangeum, just south of the Geum Estuary on the west coast of South Korea, a stopover site for thousands of shorebirds, some very rare, appears to have been irretrievably damaged by a disastrous land-reclamation project. A further scheme of this kind threatens the Nakdonggang Delta on the south coast. Among breeding birds of the Korean coast portrayed by Yoo Bum-joo are the threatened Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*, Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes*, and Saunders's Gull *Larus* [*Saundersilarus*] *saundersi*, the last wintering in significant numbers. His photographs also draw attention to the Baikal Teal *Anas formosa*, most of whose world population winters in South Korea and, magically, the wintering cranes *Grus vipio* and *Grus japonensis* of the North-South Korea border area (DMZ).

Other features towards the end of this attractive book are a guide to 204 species in small photographs and concise text, the story of how the author became a wildlife photographer, expert comments on equipment, excerpts from his photo and travel diaries, top sites for birdwatching in South Korea, and a short bibliography.

M.G.W.