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STEVENSON, H.M. & ANDERSON, B.H. 1994. *The Birdlife of Florida*. Pp. 892. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida. £108.00. ISBN 0-8130-1288-0.

Florida holds a special interest for ornithologists and bird watchers as a place where a North American temperate fauna meets an Antillean fauna, enhanced (or cheapened as the case may be) by exotics from around the world. For 60 years, a single text has defined the birds of the peninsula, A.H. Howell's enduring monograph, *Florida Bird Life*. Henry Stevenson set out to supersede this distinguished text, in a 19-year project culminating in the reminiscently titled *The Birdlife of Florida*. Few people get to actually finish their personal magnum opus, but at his death in 1991, Dr. Stevenson knew his project would see the light of day.

The book consists of species accounts of each species including, where information is available, such topics as overall distribution, Florida status, relative abundance, migration, haunts and habits, adverse factors, problems of identification, variation, references and a distribution map symbolically showing seasonal distribution records by county. The book also has an addendum of records in 1993-1994 and an extensive bibliography.

A book such as this may be expected by its readers to serve many purposes. First, it is a list of Florida birds. In this regard the book is somewhat confusing and differs from the principal source list of Florida birds (Robertson & Woolfenden 1992. *Florida Bird Species: An annotated list*. Florida Ornithological Society Special Publication No. 6., Gainesville, Fla.). Woolfenden, Robertson and Pranty (in press, comparing the species lists in two recent books on Florida birds. Fla. Field Naturalist) have thoroughly evaluated these differences. Stevenson and Anderson actually list 481 accredited species, compared with 361 by Robertson and Woolfenden. Because of the care and consistency of the Robertson and Woolfenden book, it, rather than Stevenson and Anderson's book, should be taken as the principal listing of Florida birds.

A book such as this is also a compendium of information, and in this respect, Stevenson and Anderson's book shines. Information presented is drawn from a multitude of sources: standard counts, Stevenson's extensive field notes and those of his many correspondents, results of visits to all U.S.A. museums and the published literature. The previously noted *Annotated List* was available to the authors as were yet unpublished data from the Florida breeding birds atlas project (H.W. Kale, pers. comm.). In species accounts I have examined, information is complete or nearly so, and I expect omissions will be few and relatively inconsequential. Similarly, accuracy appears to be high, but this will be better judged over time as species' statuses are reevaluated.

A book such as this would ideally strive to be a synthesis, but this is not overwhelmingly the case. Generalizations drawn from the data are few, and there are no text sections synthesizing status or trends of species statewide. The extent to which the information presented will be sufficiently extractable to service secondary biogeographic or ecological studies is not clear. It looks like such extraction would be difficult.

The book is certainly a credit to its authors, especially their perseverance and thoroughness, and a credit to the University Press of Florida for agreeing to its publication and for its production qualities. It has admirably succeeded in superseding the venerable Howell.

As such, it has been well received by amateur ornithologists and is sitting on the shelves of nearly all serious Florida birders, despite its high price tag. Any faunistic treatment of Florida or study of the status of any Florida species will need to use the text as a starting point, although not necessarily an ending point. Those concerned with having the most solidly verified species list would be best advised to continue to use Robertson and Woolfenden's *Annotated List* and its successors. But for a compendium of information on the birds of this fascinating peninsula, one could do no better.

I thank Fred Lohrer, Herbert Kale II and Glen E. Woolfenden for assistance with this review.

James A. Kushlan

TACHA, T. & BRAUN, C.E. (eds). 1994. *Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Management in North America*. Pp. 223, illustrations. Washington, D.C.: International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. ISBN 0-935868-75-5.

Our understanding and management of North American shore and upland game birds have expanded greatly within the past 18 years since the first edition of this book was published. A recent survey by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies of wildlife biologists in America indicated that the previous edition was well out of date, and many wildlife biologists sought an updated version that included recent publications and gave an experienced view of the success and limitations of management attempts. As such, this volume is a total rewrite. Based on a species-by-species account of some 14 species each chapter includes detailed information on the management and research needs of this group of birds.

The book is really aimed at North American wildlife biologists, and the group of birds is not what a European may expect from a cursory glance at the title. For example, the book covers what the Americans call their webless migratory species, the dove, crane, woodcock, snipe, coot, moorhen and rail species that can be legally hunted. It is worth noting that this does not include ducks, geese, pheasants, partridge, quail or grouse. Each species section includes a plumage description, migration, nesting, feeding biology, habitat requirements, distribution, abundance and status. The sections that set this book apart from other species accounts are the longer sections on assessing population density, trends in abundance, harvest and management requirements, research needs and recommen-

dations. These are the meat of the book and may well inspire Europeans and others interested in species action plans for threatened and nongame species. The book is data rich with amazing population data sets for species like the American Coot *Fulica americana*, and the editors have done an excellent job in making the species accounts standardized and comparative.

Peter Hudson

TUCKER, V. 1995. *Birds of Plymouth*. Pp. 151. Plymouth: Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society. £7.50 + £1.00 p. & p.

The upsurge in birdwatching as a leisure pursuit has been accompanied by a similar increase in regional 'where to watch birds' guidebooks. Few cities warrant such a book, but Plymouth, located on the southern coast of Devon, encompasses a remarkably diverse range of habitats, and hence birds, within its boundary. The short introductory section of this book describes these habitats, highlights the best birdwatching spots and contains brief notes on the climate, 'ornithological history' and lost habitats of the area. A systematic list occupies the bulk of the text. It draws on information gathered from the Annual Reports of the Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society since 1950 and 35 years of the author's own observations and ends with a checklist of 251 species. Species sections contain information on status (common, vagrant, etc.), the first and latest record and locations. For migrant species, the earliest record in a year, peak month and highest counts are also included, whilst for resident birds some details are given on timing of breeding and typical nesting habitats. A small number of species are illustrated with lovely black-and-white line drawings. A nice touch is that many of these have a 'backdrop' of an easily recognizable feature of the Plymouth landscape—a Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer* with Drake's island behind, and Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta* flying past the Tamar bridge. Although the book is nicely produced and will appeal to the dedicated Plymothian ornithologist, it will otherwise be of interest to a very limited audience. The experienced 'outside' ornithologist in Plymouth will make for the coasts and estuaries anyway, and the interested, but inexperienced, birdwatcher would be best advised to do the same, having invested in a good field guide rather than this book, which is devoted largely to summarizing and documenting previous sightings.

J. A. Vickery

Also Received

ADCOCK, F. & SIMMS, J. (eds). 1995. *The Oxford Book of Creatures*. Pp. xi, 387. Oxford: Oxford University Press. £17.99. ISBN 0-19-214226-7.

Although birds loom large in this anthology of verse and prose, the reader will also encounter a wealth of less obviously literary subjects such as slugs and fleas. Some excerpts are scientific—Darwin, Miriam Rothschild—some considerably less so; there is even a section

entitled *Monsters*. The book is arranged thematically. Some of the categorization seems eccentric, but inventive sequencing from piece to piece entices the reader to press ever onward. The editors have tried to avoid anthropomorphism, though in a sense this is inevitable. Little is sentimental, but human beings are always trying to find themselves, even if it is only by creating images of what is 'other'. This is a generous and delightful collection, both historical and top-