

REVIEW

The Complete Outfitting & Source Book For Birdwatching. Michael Scofield. 1978. 192 p. The Great Outdoors Trading Company, Marshall, California. \$6.95 paper; \$12.95 hardcover.

This good basic source book covers six major categories: history, equipment, publications (books and periodicals), clubs and organizations, best birding sites and tours and expeditions. Its appendices list zoos and natural history museums, rare bird alert phone numbers, birds' favorite plants, a birdlist based on the AOU check-list and specifications for building bird houses. Its casual, conversational style is entertaining, and it is amply illustrated with black-and-white photographs and etchings.

One of the book's more valuable features is its basic equipment section which covers binoculars, scopes, telephoto lenses, tripods, tape recorders and microphones. Explanations of criteria used in comparing different models are very lucid and helpful. Internal workings of binoculars, scopes and lenses are briefly explained. Buying tips are offered.

Birders traveling in North America and abroad will be pleased with the list of bird-related organizations, which details activities and publications of each group as well as giving a local contact person, address and phone number. Covered are 38 states, 8 Canadian provinces and 23 foreign countries representing all continents. Also for the traveling birder, the tour and expedition section discusses how to choose a tour and lists in detail tours to all continents.

Unfortunately, this otherwise excellent book is marred by a few glaring instances of misleading statements and misinformation: e.g., "song birds and hawks attack owls in the daytime – they know he can't see." Omissions also occur (though the compilers made every effort to be complete), usually because organizations failed to respond to queries. However, I would hope that a next edition includes such listings as Robbins' field guide *Birds of North America*, Pentax telephoto lenses, Denver Museum of Natural History under museums, and groups such as Colorado Field Ornithologists.

The section on birding sites is good for its scope. Addresses and phone numbers are listed for further information on each site, and reference books are given for those desiring greater coverage. Unfortunately, this section could also benefit from more thorough research. The description of Aransas Refuge in Texas alerts the birder to watch for Sandhill Cranes, but makes no mention of Aransas' star attraction, the Whooping Crane. Also most visitors to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park will be interested in other birds than the Cardinal and House Finch, two of the three species listed.

Occasional omissions and misinformation aside, *The Complete Outfitting & Source Book for Birdwatching* is the most complete source book available and is a valuable reference addition to birders' libraries. I particularly commend its ethical and responsible attitude. The book points out that playing a tape near nesting birds may cause the parents to desert, mentions bits of birding etiquette, and generally fosters concern and respect for birds and our mutual environment. – *Narca A. Moore*