

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Seabirds of the World: The Complete Reference**, by Jim Enticott and David Tipling. 1997. Stackpole Books. 234 pages, over 800 color photographs. Hardback, \$49.95.

This exciting new photographic guide provides a welcome addition to the growing references available for those bird species grouped under the heading of "seabirds," in this case the penguins, Procellariiformes, most Pelecaniformes, the skuas, gulls, most terns, one skimmer, and the auks. Intelligently, nonmarine species such as the "white" pelicans, are omitted. The misrepresentative "complete reference" title reflects, presumably, the pushing hand of commercial publishers; this book is co-published in Britain as the *Photographic Handbook of the Seabirds of the World*.

The format is along "coffee-table" lines, with a patchwork of photos opposite concise species accounts. The text for each species comprises field-oriented descriptions of the main geographic and age-related plumage variations and a section on status and distribution, including conservation status. Given their brevity, these accounts are good (e.g., far better than the accounts in Harrison's seabird photo guide), as might be hoped from an author who has many years of dedicated seabird study to his credit. This book has kept up well with recent changes in taxonomy and nomenclature (e.g., the correct spelling of De Filippi's Petrel has been adopted) but, inevitably, has already been overtaken by other changes, e.g., the recent revision of albatross genera by Nunn et al. (1996; Auk 113:784–801). The selected bibliography is short (only 34 titles) but varied, suggesting an eclectic sampling of relevant literature.

Books such as this tend to be judged by their photos, and this book stands up well to the test. The 800 or so photos range, for the most part, from good to excellent and cover many plumages, but with an emphasis on "breeding" adults and less treatment of immatures. For example, about 60% of the gull photos are of adults. Many of the photos I have not seen published elsewhere (e.g., several southern storm-petrels and diving-petrels), and this alone will make the book of value to seabird enthusiasts. It is pleasing to see an effort made to give location and date given for the photos, but, unfortunately, many lack such data and, even when data are noted, one could wish for more precision. Thus, an Audubon's Shearwater labeled "Costa Rica, April" could be from either the Caribbean or Pacific population (the latter, I would guess), which are good candidates for separate species. Poorer photos with data would be more valuable than great photos without. Many photos, especially of *Pterodroma* petrels and storm-petrels, are in hand and/or on land at the breeding grounds. While this should ensure correct species- or population-level identification, if such data are given, it is not so helpful for at-sea identification. I encourage those who submit photos for possible inclusion in such works to include date and location on all photos.

It is rare for a review these days to not pick nits and highlight errors, and this review is no exception. The following points, however, are noted with a view to improving an already high-quality work, should future editions be planned. Perhaps the most glaring omission is that of a labeled map of the world's oceans and (relevant) islands, which would help greatly in interpreting the status and distribution sections.

The ethnocentric British bias we have come to expect from the "... of the World" books is manifest such that the Pacific Ocean, home to more seabirds than any other area in the world, is given short shrift. Failure to read widely available North American literature (including a paper listed in the bibliography) has led to the perpetuation of certain identification errors: white axillar spurs are *not* diagnostic of the Magnificent Frigatebird (see Howell 1994; *Birding* 26:400–415); a white hindneck is *not* diagnostic of the White-necked versus Juan Fernandez Petrel (see Spear et al. 1992; *Colonial Waterbirds* 15:202–218); Kermadec Petrels can lack skualike white wing-flashes (Spear et al., op. cit.). Peruvian Pelicans range regularly to Ecuador, not simply

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Peru. The distinctive eastern Pacific race *granti* (a candidate for species status!) of the Masked Booby is ignored in the text but shown in Figure 1, page 115. The text implies that both sexes of the eastern Pacific race *brewsteri* of the Brown Booby have a whitish hood when only the male does, and sex-specific differences in bare-part colors of Brown Boobies are overlooked (a pair of *brewsteri* is shown in Figure 4, page 116). I hope information for other areas of the world is better.

The unhelpful word "jizz" is often used as a convenient way to avoid describing features that have a structural basis; indeed, these days jizz seems increasingly to be used as a synonym for structure. The continued use of archaic terms such as "adult breeding" (arguably better than summer/winter) does little to help an understanding of molts and plumages and can be inherently misleading. For example, contrast the "breeding" and "nonbreeding" plumages of Xantus' Murrelet with the photo of Craveri's Murrelet, which lacks any seasonal modifier.

Few photographic bird guides are free from misidentified or mislabeled photos, and this one is no exception. I found the following on a quick scan through, and I imagine there are others: Figure 3 (page 39) is a Southern not Northern Giant-Petrel; Figure 5 (page 53) is a Juan Fernandez Petrel not a De Filippi's (in fact, the same photo, with different cropping, is used on page 59 for a Juan Fernandez); Figure 12 (page 117) is a Double-crested Cormorant, not a Brandt's; the upper (flying) bird in Figure 8 (page 137) is an immature Great Frigatebird, not a Magnificent. Figure 3 (page 33), labeled as a Shy Albatross, looks suspiciously like an immature Black-browed, but the photo size and quality are insufficient to confirm or deny this possibility.

Also, before readers of *Western Birds* panic and wonder if they missed something, captions for Figures 4 and 5 (page 55) are switched, and the dark-morph Herald Petrel was surely off "Atlantic coast, USA," not Pacific!

These errors of commission and omission aside, I recommend *Seabirds of the World* as a very useful addition to the library of all interested in seabirds, and I commend both the author and photographic editor for bringing together this wealth of information in an attractive book.

Steve N. G. Howell

**Skuas and Jaegers: A Guide to the Skuas and Jaegers of the World**, by Klaus Malling Olsen and Hars Larsson. 1997. Yale University Press. 190 pages, 12 color plates, 156 figures (mainly black-and-white photos). Hardback, \$35.00.

Co-published in the U.K. by Pica Press (which explains why the Parasitic Jaeger is called the Arctic Skua!), this excellent work treats the three jaegers and four skuas with an emphasis on identification. With 190 pages devoted to only seven species, an enviable level of detail has been included.

The well-written introduction includes brief sections on taxonomy, general characteristics (such as plumage polymorphism and kleptoparasitism), breeding behavior; age development and molt, skuas and man, observing skuas in the field; and an explanation of the species accounts. Then follow 13 painted plates (12 in color), the species accounts which comprise the bulk of the book, a selection of color photographs, an extensive bibliography, and the index.

Unlike almost all other books in the Pica et al. "... of the World" series, the introduction includes frequent citations of data to source and I hope this trend is continued by future authors. Occasional lapses in citations, such as some that might have benefited the introductory paragraph on taxonomy, are annoying, but it is all too easy to assume, albeit wrongly, that one's readers have an equal grasp of the subject. A minor gripe is that the introduction's "organization" results in redundant repetition,