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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,

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e.g., pages 16–19 where the discussion of lemmings and the breeding of Pomarine Jaeger is covered three times when once would do. It is good to see in the explanation of the species accounts that measurements such as “wing length” are defined, and to learn that the plates portray individual plumages rather than an amalgam that may, or may not, represent a typical plumage.

The excellent color plates are attractive and well laid out, and the facing-page captions provide succinct species-specific identification criteria (extracting such information from the lengthy species accounts is far harder), although they would benefit from noting the (approximate) date of the plumages portrayed. Most illustrations are of flying birds, with only one plate (juveniles) of standing birds and no paintings of birds on the water, reflecting a not unsurprising European bias; jaegers along and off the Pacific coast of the Americas are seen far more often at rest on the water than on shore and thus present a somewhat different slant to identification. A surprising absence from the plates is any Brown \times South Polar Skua hybrid, presumably not a rare product of pairings in the Antarctic Peninsula and certainly an identification nightmare.

The species accounts include extensive sections on field identification, molt, plumage descriptions of all ages/morphs, geographic variation, biometrics, and migration and wintering, with shorter discussions of voice, food, and breeding. Accounts range from 7 pages for the Chilean Skua (with 9 black-and-white photos and a full-page range map) to 21 pages for Parasitic Jaeger (with 29 black-and-white photos, 3 black-and-white figures—including one showing six morphs of adults, and a full-page map).

The high level of detail in the species accounts is, except for molt (see below), likely to tell you all you want to know (and more!). There is, however, much repetition among the field identification, molt, and detailed description sections, such that a different format might have saved a few pages over the book's length and perhaps increased the user-friendly nature of the text. The many black-and-white photos scattered through the species accounts are good to excellent in quality, and I congratulate the authors for including location and date for apparently all photos. Oddly, the captions appear to have been written for color reproduction—note the frequent reference to cold and warm tones that are not apparent in black and white. The book's European bias is again manifest by the lack of any photos of juvenile Brown or Chilean skuas and only two (presumed) immature South Polar Skuas. The obverse of this is that these real or apparent gaps can be seen and, one hopes, addressed by photographers.

The relatively large-scale range maps are a plus, although the Americas, in particular the eastern Pacific Ocean, seem (as in all European-spawned seabird books) to be the subject of some confusion: I would have thought the “main” non-breeding range of the Pomarine Jaeger should extend north to western Mexico, and I am unaware of *any* conclusive records of Brown Skua from the west coast of South America. The text for Brown Skua mentions two vagrants from Brazil (not shown on the map), and I suspect the vagrant Great Skua plotted for Nicaragua should instead be from Belize.

My only serious complaint is that the authors missed an important opportunity to elucidate upon the molts of jaegers and skuas rather than to confuse the issue further with inappropriate use of “summer” and “winter” terminology. In this case, the northern European penchant for detail runs into an almost impenetrable mass of trees that do not emerge as a forest. Want of data (with which I sympathize) is certainly one factor, but the problem is compounded by trying to fit what undoubtedly are very complex molt patterns into an unsuitable terminology. The authors also seem wrongly to equate “first summer” with “first alternate,” as in the Long-tailed Jaeger, for which they note (p. 154) “probably some head and mantle feathers are molted again during

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spring,” followed by the potentially contradictory “molts directly from first-winter to second-winter.” Is there a first-alternate plumage in the first summer? Are there three cycles of (at least some) body feather replacement by the end of a bird’s first summer (as in gulls)—in which case the authors’ first-winter/first-summer jaegers are, in fact, first-winter/first-summer/second-winter birds! It appears that the Long-tailed Jaeger has a protracted complete first prebasic molt so that the “first-winter” plumage is attained over the first summer and that there may be no first alternate plumage, at least in the first summer. It seems unlikely to me that the remiges would be molted again within a few months of having been replaced (e.g., most gulls do not do this, although certain terns do, in part); rather, it seems possible that a partial (first prealternate?) molt in the second winter could produce the first alternate plumage worn through the second summer and in which birds are seen on the breeding grounds. Subsequent molts would be expected to follow the adult cycle but perhaps averaging slightly earlier for a year or two. A corollary of all this is that the age-labels for several photos may be in error, pending a clarification of the molt of Long-tailed Jaeger: Figure 112 looks like a juvenile (and note the confusing caption), Figures 113, 114, and 126 could be variations of first-alternate plumage (“second-summer” birds), and Figures 124 and 125 could be first basic plumage. Simple bar-chart diagrams showing when various tracts (especially the flight feathers) are replaced would help cut through the confusion generated by the detailed but dispersed text on molt and highlight where critical study is still needed. Confused? I’ll stop here, but similar problems exist for molt in the other jaegers, and then there are the skuas...

Editing overall seems good and typos rare, although on the diagrams of skua topography the line to the bill’s “cutting edge” (tomium, I presume) instead points at the culmen. The design is attractive but following on from columns on one page to the opposite page is unconventional—bottom to top rather than sequential left to right (e.g., see pages 132/133).

Beside the molt dilemma (which is very much a “work in progress”), these are all minor gripes in a remarkable work that sets a new standard in terms of field identification texts. In short, this is one of the best books I have seen in a long time and I recommend it to all west-coast birders whose gaze or thoughts veer away from the confines of land.

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