

## BOOK REVIEWS

(1945). Listing subspecies and their distributions would have increased the value of *Sonora* greatly, although I recognize that this undertaking is far easier said than done.

More synthesis of information on topics such as local and elevational migrations or breeding seasons also would have increased the usefulness of *Sonora*. Simple lists of the avifauna by bioregion and by status (resident breeder, summer resident, transient, etc.) could have served to highlight gaps in our knowledge, perhaps prompting future studies.

The book has an attractive layout that may suggest another University of Arizona Press classic, *The Birds of Arizona* by Allan Phillips, Joe Marshall, and Monson (1964). *Sonora* is large (almost 9 × 12 inches) and library oriented, with liberal use of page space. While this may be a designer's dream, the same information could have been conveyed easily in a work half the size (and half the price!), and I would prefer a more compact and affordable book that could be carried easily in the field, where it would be invaluable. Instead, the book looks so "nice" that I suspect many will be reluctant to carry it even in the car! Typographical errors seem rare but not absent; e.g., the text lists four records of the Long-eared Owl while the map plots five.

These points notwithstanding, I recommend strongly *The Birds of Sonora* as an important addition to our knowledge of the status, distribution, and natural history of Mexican birds, and I look forward to the day when similar works exist for many more Mexican states.

Steve N. G. Howell

**Parrots: A Guide to Parrots of the World**, by Tony Juniper and Mike Parr. 1998. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, CT. 584 pp., 88 color plates, numerous black-and-white drawings, about 350 maps. Hardback, \$55.00. ISBN 0-300-07453-0.

This volume in the "Helm" series (published in the U.K. by Pica Press) might seem of little direct relevance to North American field ornithology, but bear in mind that 63 species of parrot have been recorded free-flying in Florida (Stevenson and Anderson, 1994, *The Birdlife of Florida*), 33 in California (Garrett, 1997, *W. Birds* 28:181–195). A few species maintain large populations in California, south Florida, and southernmost Texas, and 17 species occur naturally in Mexico north of the isthmus. Although parrot identification is well treated in many regional field guides, we find ourselves in a unique situation in the United States. Free-flying parrots and established naturalized populations might be derived from any of five continents; therefore regional guides do not treat all our species or give appropriate comparisons. Juniper and Parr provide the sort of guide that U. S. parrot-watchers have needed. At 7 × 9.75 inches it is hefty but microscopic in comparison to the other comprehensive treatment of the world's parrots, *Parrots of the World* by Forshaw and Cooper. Other advantages over Forshaw's monograph (1989) include a database that is several years more up to date, a substantially lower price, and greater emphasis on field identification, with more plumage variations shown. Portability and affordability are also advantages over the *Handbook of the Birds of the World*, vol. 4 (del Hoyo et al., 1997), which has a thorough and beautifully illustrated treatment of parrots.

The familiar format of this series needs little elaboration. *Parrots* has a slim introductory section, nearly half of which is devoted to conservation issues, befitting this beleaguered group and reflecting the impressive conservation credentials of the two authors. There are also four pages on systematics, five on natural history, and three describing the layout of the species accounts and parrot topography. The species accounts include sections on identification (a brief description and discussion of similar species), voice, distribution and status (conservation issues are treated in this section, underscoring the double threats parrots face from habitat degradation and trapping for the pet trade), ecology (with notes on habitat, foraging ecology, behavior,

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and reproductive biology), detailed description, sex/age, measurements (ranges only, mainly from Forshaw, with sexes pooled and no sample size given), geographical variation (and often additional notes on taxonomic status), and references (listed at the end of each account, without specific citations within the text). A range map for each species thankfully shows national boundaries. English names used for parrots are maddeningly inconsistent, often reflecting a schism between scientific systematic works and the avicultural literature. Juniper and Parr's names do not accord with those of the AOU (for example, they use "Green-cheeked Amazon" for *Amazona viridigenalis*, which the AOU calls the "Red-crowned Parrot"), and the authors do not cite the authorities followed for their English names. The 88 plates were painted by five artists and vary greatly in quality, from quite good (especially those by Kim Franklin, who painted nearly half the plates) to some that are rather poor and obviously painted without reference to museum specimens.

I was disappointed that the introductory sections lack a diagnosis of the various groups (e.g., genera), summarizing their common field characteristics. Nowhere, for example, is there a discussion of flight differences among such genera as *Aratinga*, *Pyrrhura*, and *Brotogeris*, even though some text accounts within those genera accurately describe flight. In Los Angeles, where both *Aratinga* and *Brotogeris* are common, the latter is easily picked out by the frequent brief closing of its wings, as opposed to the more continuous wing-beating of *Aratinga*. *Parrots* does not describe this; instead, the flight of the Canary-winged Parakeet (*Brotogeris versicolurus sensu lato*) is called an unhelpful "swift and direct." One can get the gist of the flight appearance of *Amazona* from many species accounts, but there is no general statement about this group's distinctive rapid shallow wingbeats on bowed wings that are not lifted above the horizontal. On this subject Whitney (1996, *Cotinga* 5:32–42) is more useful because of that author's generic approach.

The maps are often at odds with the range descriptions in the text; in most cases it is the maps that are inaccurate. The map for Military Macaw (*Ara militaris*) in Mexico incorrectly shows a distribution largely confined to the central plateau, and the Barred Parakeet (*Bolborhynchus lineola*) and "Yellow-cheeked Amazon" (= Red-ored Parrot, *Amazona autumnalis*) are shown as occurring north to the Texas border! Distributional information for naturalized populations in the United States is incomplete, though much of this can be forgiven as we still struggle to determine which populations are well established. The authors consider the Red-crowned Parrot a "winter visitor in Brownsville, extreme south-western Texas, USA." Brownsville's hardly being in southwestern Texas aside, these birds are common year-round residents in several south Texas urban areas; although the possibility of natural establishment cannot be ruled out, it is odd that the natural provenance of these birds was not even questioned.

Allopatric species such as the Red-crowned and Lilac-crowned (*A. finschi*) parrots are often compared, which is useful to aviculturalists and those who live in the "outdoor aviaries" of the southern United States. However, these discussions are sometimes rather superficial; for example, there is no mention of the differences in tail shape and pattern, cere color, and voice distinguishing these two parrots. The differences between the White-winged (*Brotogeris versicolurus sensu stricto*) and Yellow-chevroned (*B. chiriri*) parakeets (now split by the AOU) are poorly treated in the combined Canary-winged Parakeet account. The color plate doesn't help matters—it is among the worst in the book. The distinctive body colors are reversed (the Yellow-chevroned should be the more yellow-green), bill colors are incorrect, the greater primary coverts are shown as yellow (they are mainly green in both species), and all figures are "anatomically challenged," to say the least, in their folded secondaries and greater secondary coverts, as well as the number of primaries. Anatomical oddities extend to the parrotlets and some lorikeets and macaws, but many difficult groups (such as the *Pyrrhura* parakeets) appear to be handled well.

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Parrots brings together more identification information in a single volume than has previously been available for this fascinating group. It will be especially useful to those who travel to parrot-rich regions currently lacking good field guides (e.g., much of South America), as well as those who live in parts of California, Florida, and Texas. The book's shortcomings presumably reflect a haste to bring it into print in the competitive world of identification guides; many could have been rectified by stronger regional review and greater use of museum specimens by some of the artists. North Americans who are not parrot aficionados and do not plan to travel to areas of high parrot diversity should be aware that the identification of naturalized parrot populations in North America will be made easier by greatly expanded coverage in the 3rd edition of the National Geographic Society field guide and in David Sibley's forthcoming North American identification guide.

Kimball L. Garrett

**Shrikes: A Guide to the Shrikes of the World**, by Norbert Lefranc, illustrated by Tim Worfolk. 1997. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, CT. 192 pages, 16 color plates, 75 black-and-white figures. Hardback, \$35.00. ISBN 0-300-07336-4.

*Shrikes* follows the familiar format of the Pica/Yale family guides, with brief introductory sections (discussing taxonomy and an overview of genera covered), color plates with short facing-page texts, and species accounts (which include range maps). Despite its title, this book covers only 31 of the world's 75+ shrike species (the principal omission is the bush-shrikes, subfamily Malaconotinae). The author suggests that the three genera covered (*Lanius*, *Corvinella*, *Eurocephalus*) are the "true shrikes," but this classification, based on DNA-hybridization studies, is rather weak, and this book cannot claim to be a comprehensive monograph of the shrikes.

In general, the text is informative, but there is less emphasis on identification than most readers would probably expect, and I found the taxonomic approach frustratingly inconsistent. One recently proposed split is followed, the separation of the Southern Gray Shrike (*L. meridionalis*) from the Great Grey (= Northern) Shrike (*L. excubitor*), while the Red-tailed Shrike (*L. phoenicuroides*) is left within *isabellinus*, despite published evidence for its specific status (partly from the same researcher who suggested the *meridionalis* split!), evidence that even Lefranc admits should "be taken seriously" (p. 14). For the subspecific taxonomy of the Northern Shrike, only weak justification is given for ignoring the conclusion of Phillips (1986; *The Known Birds of North and Middle America*, part 1) that *invictus* should be synonymized with *borealis*, suggesting the author may not appreciate variation in nearctic populations. While the Northern Shrike of North America shows affinities with the eastern palearctic *sibiricus*, the text stresses similarities, omits some significant differences (e.g., the pattern of the outer rectrix), and makes no mention of the possibility that the Northern Shrike may be a distinct species (as has been suggested recently for a number of trans-Beringian avian taxa).

The plates are good if somewhat "flat," but too few non-adult plumages are illustrated, especially where they would be most valuable for identification (e.g., in the *cristatus-collurio-isabellinus* complex). The distribution maps are excellent for palearctic taxa but markedly less detailed for afroropical species and the Loggerhead Shrike.

This book partially fills an obvious niche in the ornithological literature and will be required reading for shrike enthusiasts, but it does little to dispel suspicion that many avian monographs are increasingly Eurocentric and of decreasing value in terms of species (and content) per dollar.

Jon R. King