

REVIEW

TROGONS AND QUETZALS OF THE WORLD. Paul A. Johnsgard. 2000. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D. C. 223 pp. ISBN 1-56098-388-4 (hardcover). \$49.95.

Trogons and Quetzals of the World fills a significant gap in the bird literature. Trogons are a group of birds of great interest in ecology, natural history, evolution, and conservation. However, nearly one-and-a-half centuries have passed since the last publication of a monograph for this group of birds.

Paul A. Johnsgard's reputation speaks for itself. The author has written nearly 40 books, most of them covering technical aspects of particular groups of birds. He has worked closely with the Smithsonian Institution Press to produce titles such as *North American Owls: Biology and Natural History*, *The Hummingbirds of North America*, and *The Pheasants of the World: Biology and Natural History*. *Trogons and Quetzals of the World* maintains the high standards of his previous publications, surpassing the quality and information of many of them.

Trogons and Quetzals of the World opens with a brief introduction in which the author gives an overview of the importance that quetzals had in the pre-Colombian cultures of Middle America, and how such visions had prevailed in modern times. In a broad sense, the book is organized into three main sections. The initial section, entitled "Comparative Biology," covers general information of the family (20 pp.). It is divided into four topics: a) evolutionary relationships, b) anatomy and morphology, c) general behavior and ecology, and d) breeding biology and populations. Gathering all the information for this section is a commendable effort, but generalizations can sometimes result when dealing with a group as diverse as trogons. For instance, figures 3–5 fail in showing an apparent pattern between altitudinal and latitudinal distribution in the New World trogons. Fortunately, such flaws are unimportant and do not detract from the value of this book. The evolutionary relationships are carefully presented, and include the most recent available information for these birds. The review of the external anatomy is nicely illustrated using detailed ink drawings by the author.

The second section, which represents the main body of the book (169 pp.), is focused on the species accounts. The systematic arrangement follows the classification suggested by Sibley and Monroe (1990), which divides the 39 species of trogons into six genera: *Apaloderma*, *Pharomachrus*, *Euptilotis*, *Priotelus*, *Trogon*, and *Harpactes*. The biology of some species is well known (e.g., Skutch 1942, 1944, 1948); nonetheless, there is still much to learn from the natural history and evolution of many of these birds. As Johnsgard asserts in the preface, "I am saddened by the number of times I had to enter 'No information available' in the species accounts [p. ix]." This section observes the classical organization of many ornithological reviews. A short commentary for every subfamily and genus is presented before the detailed species description. Every technical dossier includes a list of vernacular names; the geographic range and an updated map for the species; all the currently accepted subspecies and their distributions; a section of morphometrics including measurements and weights for each subspecies; detailed descriptions of the adult male, female, immature, and juvenile; field and

hand identification clues; a description of the geographic variation; an overview of the ecology, including habitat range, food and foraging strategies; general, social, and sexual behavior; vocalizations (no sonograms are presented); information on breeding biology, which is divided into chronology of breeding, nest sites, eggs and incubation, and brood rearing; and finally, conservation and evolutionary relationships. I have no doubt that ornithologists in all areas will find these summaries most valuable for their work.

The third section encompasses a series of appendices (29 pp.). One presents a nice explanation for the derivations of scientific and vernacular names. A classical dichotomous key to the genera and species of trogons, taken in part from Ridgway (1911), comprises a second appendix. For those who are not well versed on technical terminology, a glossary is included. The bibliography is probably one of the most useful parts for the ornithologist. This final appendix functions as a compendium of the relevant literature written about trogons, and not merely as a list of the references cited in the text.

Before Johnsgard's book, the only available monograph of trogons was published by Gould in 1875. Gould's work consisted of 46 lithographic plates with limited comments on the natural history of the species. Johnsgard uses 35 of Gould's plates to illustrate one of each available species. Most of them are full-page reproductions (125 × 190 mm), and the printing quality is neatly done. For the Whitehead's trogon, the author used a reproduction from a hand-colored lithograph by J. Kuelemann painted for the species original description. The remaining species were splendidly painted by James D. McClelland, Daniel Lane, David Riser, Dana Gardner, and John O'Neill. These illustrations alone are worth the price of the book.

Recapitulating, *Trogons and Quetzals of the World* by Paul A. Johnsgard is clearly a book that reflects years of research, and it is one of the most complete sources of information for trogons in general. This is a technical book, but it is also a comprehensive and attractive review for both scientists and non-specialists. Although each species file includes identification guidelines, it should be emphasized that the book itself is not an identification field guide for trogons. It is the accomplishment of a dedicated ornithologist and a book that should be included in the library of any museum or bird enthusiast.

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