

in Panama. This 15-page section may seem to compare poorly with Edwards and Loftin's guide of the same name, where 60 pages are devoted to the area. Almost a third of the latter, however, is devoted to bird lists, and in fact Ridgley's work represents a valuable updating and revision of the 1971 Edwards guide.

But the bulk of the book is the systematic list of species, and this is a satisfying treatment, following the now-traditional pattern for each species of Description-Similar Species-Status, but with the addition of sections on Habits and Range, the latter covering the range outside Panama and the occasional Note, usually referring to nomenclature. The habits section is particularly useful in giving an observer unfamiliar with the species some idea of what to look for. Other helpful elements in the species' treatments are the italicization of diagnostic features, and the use

of the first sentences of the accounts as a "warning" where necessary: as, for example, "Only known from Darien."

Ridgely indicates he has followed Eisenmann and de Schauensee in English nomenclature and he has adopted a middle-of-the-road approach to taxonomy, not only because he "makes no pretense of being a taxonomist" but because the character of the book makes taxonomic innovations inappropriate.

In summary, *A Guide to the Birds of Panama* represents a major contribution to the available literature on Central American birds, and is essential for anyone planning a visit to see birds in Panama or working with Panamanian avifauna.

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North American Bird Songs — a world of music

By Poul Bondesen. 1977. Scandinavian Science Press Ltd., Klampenborg, Denmark. 254 pp., illus. US \$15.50.

Recent widespread interest in using bird song as a major census tool and the recent proliferation of field guides combine to make the appearance of a guide to bird song seem inevitable.

In a short preface, the author outlines his experience in North America, crediting T. F. McIlwraith of Toronto with stimulating his interest in bird song in 1949.

Bondesen uses a series of short introductory chapters to discuss the concept and biology of bird song, to outline behavior associated with song, and to describe methods of recording and analyzing bird song. Musical and poetic interpretations of bird song are included in a short chapter. In general, the author appears to be up to date and accurate in these chapters. Persons wishing to record birds, however, would do better to read articles in recent issues of *American Birds*, and several books on bird song provide better (though less concise) introductions to the biology of bird song. Poor English hinders the reader throughout these chapters. A very useful feature following the introductory chapters is a chronological list of "grammophone" records (actually including tapes) of North American bird songs.

The bulk of the book consists of a "key" to songs of North American birds. In fact, only passerines are included, with such "true" (vocal) songsters as Blue Grouse, doves, cuckoos, caprimulgids, and Anna's Hummingbird excluded. Most, if not all, native North

American passerines are included, as well as such long established exotics as European Skylark, Starling, the two ploceids, and European Goldfinch. The Crested Myna is, however, missing.

The key is divided into three major groups, referred to as "starling," "warbler," and "thrush" groups. Each group is subdivided several times, with an introductory outline to the major divisions. Having followed the key as far as these major divisions, one must hunt through following pages for further alternatives. Species are arranged according to various features of the song, so that taxonomically related species may be far removed in the book, and species with more than one song may appear twice. In such cases cross reference is made to other pages on which the species occurs. A sonagram accompanies the description of most (not all) songs, as well as details of behavior and habitat, with citations to previous descriptions of the song. A few details are far removed from the subject of the book, such as the number of hosts of the Brown-headed Cowbird.

The key is followed by a glossary (termed "vocabulary"), a "bibliography," a list of literature cited, a list of sources of songs used for the sonagrams (many recordings by W. W. H. Gunn of Canada), and an index.

In general, the book is relatively free of factual errors. Bondesen's use of the term "subsong" is a bit too dogmatic, without referring to other uses of this term. His definition of true song as "vocal music" is not very helpful. His statement that Black-billed Magpies are "decidedly quieter" than most corvids

would surely be challenged in Edmonton! And the description of the song of the Yellow-headed Blackbird as "sounds like vomiting" is overly dramatic.

The "bibliography" is a short list of selected regional bird books, life history works, and some books on song. The important books on bird song by Armstrong, Hinde, and Thorpe are not included, although the latter two appear in the literature cited.

The nomenclature is outdated in places, with such names as Purple Grackle and Blue-headed Vireo, although some of these (e.g., Bicknell's Thrush) are used to distinguish races with distinct songs. *Tyrannus verticalis* is described under its old name of Arkansas Kingbird, with Western Kingbird used to refer to a race of the Tropical Kingbird.

The most serious fault of the book is the poor translation into English, resulting in numerous examples of misspellings, words run together, strange

expressions (such as "told to be" for "said to be"), strange words ("thruberries" for shruberry"), and strange sentences (such as "By attacking habit: if the strange[r] flees, it's a male."). One can usually understand the meaning intended by these strange sentences, but a few require several readings. Perhaps the most amusing sentence (p. 29) describes P. P. Kellogg (to whom the book is dedicated) as using a parabolic reflector to catch flying birds.

In summary, Bondesen has provided a useful compilation of sonagrams and references on songs of North American passerines. As a key, the book is adequate but tedious. For an introduction to bird song, the reader is advised to look elsewhere.

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Birds and Marine Mammals: The Beaufort Sea and the search for oil

By Donald A. Blood, edited by Brian D. Smiley. 1977. Department of Fisheries and the Environment, Sidney, British Columbia. 124 pp., illus. Paper, \$2.50.

This paperback highlights information from 8 of the 45 publications in the Beaufort Sea Project Technical Report Series. The publication provides a general overview of petroleum exploration in the Beaufort Sea region and its potential threat to arctic ecosystems. It is intended for public use and therefore is of limited value to researchers.

The author generally covers aspects of the physical environment, Beaufort Sea wildlife (e.g., marine life, mammals and birds), and wildlife and oil. About one half of the book deals specifically with birds and marine mammals, each species account varying considerably from the others in content. The remaining 40 percent covers an assortment of topics, from climate to ecological relationships and wildlife sanctuaries in the Beaufort Sea.

The real value of this book lies in the descriptions of the climate and oceanography of the Beaufort Sea and in the discussion of environmental pollution as it affects the ecological relationships of wildlife in the area. Also, most of the figures beautifully condense technical data to show such things as migration routes, abundance and concentrations, and major breeding areas for important species of marine birds and mammals.

There are, however, several disappointments in the book. The line drawings, if they are to be used for

identification, are poor; if to enhance the book, they are only fair. The distribution maps for select species add little to the publication since they are available, and have been copied directly, from the major Canadian works on birds (Godfrey) and mammals (Banfield). Some standard references, of use to the reader, have been omitted, for example "Birds of Arctic Alaska" by A. M. Bailey, "The Mackenzie Delta Area, N.W.T.," by J. R. MacKay, and "A Biological Investigation of the Athabasca — Mackenzie Region" by E. A. Preble. Finally the book suffers occasionally from the lack of additional information which would have required a monumental effort to extract from various consultant reports. For example, the author states (page 45) "that . . . trumpeter swan . . . does not nest in the Canadian Arctic." During the summer of 1972, however, a family of Trumpeter Swans (with downy young) was located near the northwestern corner of the Mackenzie Delta (Environment Protection Board, Winnipeg).

In summary, the book is a useful introduction for those interested in the problems of wildlife and oil, and also the economic values of sensitive species in the Beaufort Sea area.

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