

## For the Birds – Recollections and Rambles

By Fred Helleiner. 2013. Willow Printing and Publishing, Brighton, ON, Canada. Obtain from the author at fhelleiner@trentu.ca 20.00 CAD plus 2.50 CAD for postage and handling or the lighthouse gift shop at Presqu'île Provincial Park. All profits will be donated to the Friends of Presqu'île 25th Anniversary Environmental Fund.

Anyone who has visited Presqu'île Provincial Park in the last few years will know Fred Helleiner. He is the gent who roams the park on his (t)rusty bike carrying a telescope. Everyone who visits the park should stop at Fred's house near the lighthouse and read his bulletin board of daily bird sightings or stop for a chat.

Fred's book chronicles his early start with his interest in, then passion for birds. He details his story along with places and people who influenced his progress. I was only a few pages into the book before I became nostalgic. His tale is, I am sure, similar to many in the same age bracket. I am about 10 years younger than Fred and went through the same stages. I halted at "scorn and derision that were heaped on early birders." This was an age when children who were different were persecuted. In my pre-teen and teen years I kept my interests (I was interested in flowers too – not a respected pursuit for a teenage boy) to myself. Fred says "we tended not to advertise ... being birdwatchers ... hid our binoculars under our jackets." This sounds so familiar.

We also share similar losses too. Fred saw his Barn Owls in Blenheim's clock tower which has now been destroyed. I saw my Canadian Barn Owls at Bradley's Marsh, which Fred states was drained for market gardening. Like me, he was also an early visitor and bander at Point Pelee. This was in the days when there

were a thousand birds for every birder, rather than the ratio on my last visit when it was a thousand birders for every bird (at least it seemed that way!). He trots through all the hot birding locales in his travels.

Fred names the many people who influenced his passion for birds. This reads like a who's who of Ontario's birders. He was additionally responsible for inspiring numerous young birders. In his work as a teacher, Fred came into contact with many young people and he used this position wisely. What is odd is that there are two people who are not mentioned – Dennis Rupert, a fixture at Pelee for many years and Harold Axtell, the most respected birder in the Niagara Region.

This was a book for wistful reminiscing when birdwatching went from an obscure obsession practised by a few to a popular pastime of many. Fred started when there were few field guides, while now there are many along with a plethora of DVDs, iPods and iPads, sound recordings and other computer resources. It is a fairly short book and would be an ideal companion on a trip, or at the cottage or simply because it is raining. I think Richard Pope in the Foreword was right when he wrote "more of the old-timers ... (should) write similar reminiscences."

ROY JOHN

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## Birdfinding in British Columbia

By Russell Cannings and Richard Cannings. 2013. Greystone Books Ltd., Suite 201, 343 Railway Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6A 1A4. 466 pages, 29.95 CAD, Paper.

I have been fortunate during my working career to visit BC on many occasions. My meetings took place at all seasons of the year. With the help of local birders I have seen some great birds in the Vancouver and Victoria areas. A couple of summer visits to other parts of BC have added to my list. I made these trips with some scraps of published information, but mostly with the guidance of BC birders.

The Cannings, particularly Richard, are legend in BC. Now Richard and Russell have come out with a bird finding guide to the whole province. They have divided the area into 11 sections. Each section is broken into several zones. So if, like me, you are attending a meeting in Victoria you can read the twenty pages of guidance for that city and surrounding area. There are a number of maps accompanied by detailed instructions to provide the visitor with the best route to follow. This is blended with information on birds likely to be seen. Based on my experience I thought the evalu-

ation the potential birds to found on any given day were realistic. Rarities are included, but they are dealt with in a rational manner (e.g. Spotted Owl – "your chances are extremely slim ...").

I looked up Lighthouse Park, a lovely spot off Marine drive on the north shore of Vancouver. I have visited here several times hoping for a Sooty Grouse. I think the directions and the description of habitat are accurate and appropriate. The bird list includes many that I have found in that locality (but not Sooty Grouse). Over the years I have spent several, combined hours in this park listening to them call, but never seeing them. When I finally saw one at the BC-Alaska border it practically walked over my toes).

The index covers only place names and does not include birds. There is an annotated list of all the special birds (ptarmigan, grouse, tubenoses, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, alcids, owls and warblers) that mostly off-sets this omission. The directions given here can be



specific. For example, for White-headed Woodpecker the authors suggest "McKinny Road between kilometres 9 and 12". This is in addition to a full description of the site given in the main text.

The book begins with a compact discussion of the BC ecosystems – a useful summary for the visitor. There is a description of the birding year which I found most interesting. Mind you it is a bit galling (as an easterner) to read for February that "the early signs of spring .... Swallows search for newly hatched insects ...". In Ottawa we are buried in snow, at temperature in the minus 20s, enjoying the "fun" of winter at Winter-

lude. It will be more than a month before the most adventurous swallow swirl around the capital.

There are a number of charming black-and-white drawings of birds. While these are cute, I would have preferred the space to be used for more maps. The maps included are very good, but not all locales have their own area diagram. Indeed there is not a map of BC itself, showing how they have divided the province into eco-regions. The only other quibble I have is I wished they had produced this book twenty years ago.

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## NEW TITLES

Prepared by Roy John

† Available for review \* Assigned

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## ZOOLOGY

**Handbook of Larval Amphibians of the United States and Canada.** By R. Altig and R. W. McDiarmid. 2013. Cornell University Press, Box 6525, 750 Cascadilla Street, Ithaca, NY, USA, 14851-6525.

\* **Wildlife of Australia.** By Iain Campbell and Sam Woods. 2013. Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, NJ, USA, 08540-5237. 288 pages, 19.95 USD, Paper.

**Bees – A Natural History.** By C. Toole. 2013. Firefly Books Ltd., 66 Leek Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON, Canada, L4B 1H1. 240 pages, 40.00 CAD, Cloth.

\* **Field Guide to the Jewel Beetles of Northeastern North America.** 2012. By S. M. Paiero, M. D. Jackson, A. Jewiss-Gaines, T. Kimoto, B. D. Gill and S. A. Marshall. 2012. Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 1400 Merivale Road, Ottawa, ON, Canada, K1A 0Y9. 411 pages, Free, Paper.

\* **The Natural History and Diversity of Diptera.** By Stephen A. Marshall. 2012. Firefly Books Ltd., 66 Leek Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON, Canada, L4B 1H1. 616 pages, 125.00 CAD, Cloth.

**Ivory, Horn and Blood – Behind the Elephant and Rhinoceros Poaching Crisis.** By R. Orenstein. 2013. Firefly Books Ltd., 66 Leek Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON, Canada, L4B 1H1. 216 pages, 29.95 CAD, Cloth.

\* **Frogs of the United States and Canada, 2-vol. set.** By C. Kenneth Dodd Jr. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2715 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD, USA, 21218-4363. 1032 pages, 180.00 USD, Cloth.

**Mammals of China.** Edited by Andrew T. Smith and Yan Xie. 2013. Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, NJ, USA, 08540-5237. 396 pages, 24.95 USD, Paper.

\* **Handbook of the Mammals of the World – Volume 3.** Edited by Russell A. Mittermeier, Anthony B. Rylands, and Don E. Wilson. 2013. Lynx Edicions, Montseny, 8, 08193 Bellaterra, Barcelona, Spain. 952 pages, 207.23 USD, Cloth.

\* **Nighthawk!** By Jamie Bastedo. 2013. Red Deer Press, 195 Allstate Parkway, Markham, ON, Canada, L3R 4T8. 245 pages, 12.95 CAD, Paper.

\* **Owls.** By Marianne Taylor. 2013. Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 East State Street, Ithaca, NY, USA, 14850. 224 pages, 35.00 USD, Cloth.

\* **Pterosaurs – Natural History, Evolution, Anatomy.** By Mark P. Witton. 2013. Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, NJ, USA, 08540-5237. 306 pages, 35.00 USD, Cloth.

**Sharks – Ancient Predators in a Modern Sea.** By S. Jorgensen. 2013. Firefly Books Ltd., 66 Leek Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON, Canada, L4B 1H1. 256 pages, 39.95 CAD, Cloth.

\* **The Warbler Guide.** By Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle. 2013. Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, NJ, USA, 08540-5237. 560 pages, 29.95 USD, Paper.

**Yellowstone Wildlife – The Ecology and Natural History of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.** By Paul A. Johnsgard and Thomas D. Mangelsen. 2013. University Press of Colorado, 5589 Arapahoe Ave., Suite 206C, Boulder, CO, USA, 80303. 248 pages, 29.95 USD, Paper. (Electronic book: 23.95 USD, 30 day Electronic book rental: 9.99 USD)



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