corals, shells and marine invertebrates. These give similar coverage to the larger divisions

So how well do they succeed, considering the author’s aim to provide a general nature book of commonly-seen species? I estimate in a couple of trips to the area I saw 85 percent of the birds covered in the book, if I exclude the 68 endemics on islands I did not visit. Because I made a special effort (hiring a local guide) I saw six rarities not in the book (e.g. Grenada Dove, Eurasian Little Egret). I believe I saw approximately 70 percent of the plants depicted. These are very good percentages and suggest the authors have succeeded well.

There are a couple of minor points I noticed. There is no mention of Cayenne Tern and I saw a number of the yellow-billed birds. They are closely related to the Sandwich Tern and are probably the same species. However the taxonomic relationship of these terns is still unresolved. The authors include the St. Vincent Parrot (population about 700 plus) and the nocturnal Cuban Solenodon (population low and unknown). Yet they did not include the iconic Grenada Dove (population over 130).

This small (8 x 5 x ½ inches) book slips easily into my pants pocket so it is ideal for the travelling naturalist. It covers most of what you will see wandering the Caribbean. The passionate birder will want to take Raffaele et al.’s other book mentioned above. While you are en route in your comfortable cabin you should read the introductory section which is a good discussion of the Caribbean’s wildlife. The author’s give an account of the devastation caused by humans and the efforts being made by some of those humans to retain what is left of this natural heritage.

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BOTANY

Plants of Southern Ontario, Trees, Shrubs, Wildflowers, Grasses, Ferns and Aquatic Plants


Lone Pine has produced 33 botanical guides mostly covering North America. Five of these specifically cover Ontario: “Trees of Ontario”, “Wetland plants of Ontario”, “Ontario Wildflowers”, “Forest plants of central Ontario”, and “Forest plants of northeastern Ontario”. There is also the ROM field guide to wildflowers (Dickinson et al. 2004), partly authored by Richard Dickinson. Thus, there are plant groups and regions that are covered more completely in earlier guides by the same publisher and by one of the same authors. For example, Linda Kershaw’s “Trees of Ontario” covers 213 species and the guide considered here covers 90. There are also many other guides that cover the various groups in this new book more completely, but it is sometimes convenient to start with a book that has a little of everything. Because it is incomplete however, it does not provide an accurate identification much of the time, although the user may get near to the correct identification and then use more complete books to go further.

The area covered by this guide includes two large ecoregions of southern Ontario, the Southern Deciduous Forest (also known as the Carolinian Zone) and the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Forest. The plants covered are vascular plants, but although it is implied that they are wild plants, some plants only found in gardens are included such as the Maidenhair Tree (Gingko biloba). When a guide is incomplete, the choice of what to include becomes a challenge. It seems best to include what people are most likely to encounter. In this guide the choices have not always been the best. For example, Black Pine, which is not included, is more often seen in plantings and as an escape than Douglas-fir, which is included. The less frequent escape Euonymus europaeus is included while the more common, conspicuous, and native Celastrus scandens (in the same family) is not.

It is also helpful in an incomplete guide to mention related species that are not covered in depth and there are many places in this guide where that could have been done. On p. 245 under the text on Sundew Family, there is ample space to say that “four species occur in Ontario, one with round leaves, one with linear leaves (both shown here) and two with spoon-shaped leaves one of which has smooth leaf stalks (D. intermedia), the other with more or less glandular hairy leaf stalks (D. anglica). Likewise for Claytonia there is ample space to refer to the more northern Carolina Spring Beauty (Claytonia caroliniana) which has leaves less than eight times as long as broad compared to the Eastern Spring Beauty (Claytonia virginica) which has leaves more than eight times as long as broad.

It is not clear what the authority is for the scientific and common names, but for the scientific names at least it appears to be ITIS (Integrated Taxonomic Information System as noted on page 8). For both kinds of names, VASCAN (http://data.canadensys.net/vascan/taxon/6949?lang=en) may be the best choice. Here current scientific names are available and an attempt is made to standardize common names. For example Spiranthes romazoffiana is “Hooded Ladies’-tresses”
https://doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v128i3.1617.

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