

hummingbirds are amazing and give a much better idea of the vibrancy of their plumage. In some cases the birds are given colorful competition by the flowers they are feeding on; lantanas, bromeliads, heliconias, hibiscus, trumpet vines, and powder puffs. I must particularly mention a startling pair of photos showing a strike (unsuccessful) by an eyelash viper wrapped around a scarlet heliconia, towards a hummingbird. The cryptic camouflage of most of the species in this edition comes out very well in many of the photos. This is particularly true of the frogmouths. I remember an occasion when I spent 40 minutes pointing out a sleeping Common Nighthawk to a group of people. Despite the fact it was motionless and only seven metres away it proved difficult for many to "see." There is a photo of a Common Barn Owl floating over a winter field that captures the image of a ghostly vision so typical of this bird.

I normally feel that the quality of the illustrations are a vital component of this type of book. However, in this edition, perhaps because of the similarities in plumage and the missing vibrance I found I was more drawn to the text. The text is authoritative and well researched and contains some remarkable information. Did you know the two species of fairy (hummingbirds) drift off their nests like falling leaves? This seems to be a predator defense. Once away from the nest they fly normally.

So I can think of three reasons to buy this book; to continue with your collection of the series; if you are studying owls, the nightjars group or swifts, and if you simply want a good read.

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Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania Field Guide Edition

By Dale A. Zimmerman, Donald A. Turner, and David J. Pearson. 1999. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. 576 pp., illus. Cloth U.S.\$39.50; paper U.S.\$29.95.

The original full length *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania* was published in 1996. It contained 740 pages and weighed just under 2 kg, which probably meant some hard decisions when packing a day backpack. Now that this field edition is available, you can take your lunch AND the field guide, which weighs half a kilo. Some details which were in the original have had to be omitted or abridged, and the authors stress that this new guide is not a substitute for the original. The lengthy discussions of climate and habitats, and the appendices, gazetteer, and bibliography have been omitted. However, habitat definitions are still included. Species accounts are about half the length of the original, and subspecies have been condensed. Literature references have been deleted, the glossary is smaller and range statements reduced, but distribution maps have been retained, as have all the original colour plates. There are 34 Tanzanian species added which are found in the Serengeti and Tanzania national parks and the Usambara Mountains. Over 80% of the Kenyan species occur in Uganda Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Tanzania so that this one guide would probably suffice for an extensive field trip in East Africa. There is unconventional placement of some small families, such as weavers, to facilitate plate arrangement. This is sensible when

you are trying to identify, say, a buff-breasted, brown streak-backed widowbird from a very similar *Quelea*. In spite of the compressed, but very clear, illustrations, it was wise to retain male, female, and juvenile plumages for the majority of the 1084 species illustrated. The rewritten and condensed species accounts give a longer description than the brief one given opposite the illustration and there is a range map, but the accounts do not follow the same order as the illustrations. The end page inside the front cover has a map of Kenya and Northern Tanzania national parks, towns, and game reserves. Inside the back cover is a clear map of the physical features of the whole area. The intention of this guide is to facilitate identification in the field; the comprehensive original book can be consulted at leisure. English names and scientific names are given in separate indices.

Dr. Rodger Titman, Ornithology Professor at McGill, used this guide during a February 2000 field course in Kenya, and reports: "The illustrations are superb and so accurate that, even though the descriptions are inadequate, you can easily identify a bird."

It is an admirable effort to have condensed so much without losing integrity and to provide a valuable field guide.

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