



REVIEWS

The Birds of Nigeria: an annotated check-list.

By J. H. Elgood, J. M. Heigham, Amberley M. Moore, Anne M. Nason, R. E. Sharland & N. J. Skinner. BOU Check-list No. 4 (2nd edn).

British Ornithologists' Union, Tring, 1994. 306 pages; 64 colour plates; 7 figures; 10 tables. ISBN 0-907446-16-7. £21.00.

We may have given back most of our empire, but we are still in charge of quite large chunks of its ornithology. This is nowhere more apparent than in Nigeria.

Prior to 1964, there was no easily accessible check-list of that huge country's birds, but in that year John Elgood provided just such a stimulus to observers. It featured 814 species. Thirty years on comes a third revision, prepared by Elgood and five other authors and, for the second time, aided by the BOU's initiative in national-list publishing. A total of 883 species is treated in the texts.

The new book is far more than a check-list. Over 70 pages are devoted to a narrative review of the Nigerian environment and ornithology which is complemented by new colour plates exhibiting 16 habitats and 48 birds. Altogether, these sections make up an admirable passport to the country and its birds.

The check-list occupies 194 pages, with an average of 4½ species per page. Within up to 200 words per species, the text summarises numbers and status, qualified by habitat, season of occurrence and, where warranted, locality and date. Evidence of breeding is noted separately. Most British readers will find the information on about 170 Palearctic migrants of interest.

I noted a few errors of date or attribution from my period in Nigeria (for safety, consult the original works). In general, however, this is a huge job very well executed.

How I wish that it had been at my right hand as I blundered around Nigeria 25 years ago. Future workers will be better served. There is much still to be done, however, not least in ensuring that more than one native Nigerian gets a mention in the next edition.

Ian Wallace

Utbreiðsla varpfugla á Suðvesturland: Könnun 1987-1992.

Compiled by: Kristinn Haukur Skarphéðinsson, Gunnlaugur Pétursson & Jóhann Óli Hilmarrsson.

Icelandic Museum of Natural History, Reykjavik, 1994. 126 pages; 78 line-drawings; 78 distribution maps. Price ISK 1180.00 or £11.00.

This is the breeding-bird atlas of southwestern Iceland, covering an area of 3,900 km² (56 10-km squares), surveyed during the six years 1987-92.

Although covering only a tiny part of Iceland, this is the area around Reykjavik, so will be very useful to visitors to Iceland. It is also a remarkable achievement, for the fieldwork relied on a total of only 17 observers (never more than 12 in any one year).

This atlas is very easy to use, even for those who read no Icelandic. There is a 1½-page English summary and, in addition, every one of the 79 species included has not only a distribution map (and line-drawing, and text in Icelandic), but also up to half-a-dozen lines of good English précis.

The maps themselves use the standard three

sizes of dot (for confirmed, probable and possible breeding) and also open circles to indicate confirmed breeding records prior to the survey period.

During the 11-year period 1982-92, a total of 69 species was found breeding in this tiny part of Iceland around the capital, compared with the 70 which breed annually in the whole of Iceland. The most widespread species were European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*, Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* and Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*. There have been declines this century in the numbers and/or distribution of Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*, Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* and Merlin *Falco columbarius*, and also of species which have declined elsewhere in Iceland as well, such as

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*, Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*, Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* and Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*. On the other hand, the species which have greatly increased in numbers or expanded their distributions include Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*, Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*, Common Gull *L. canus*, Lesser Black-backed Gull *L.*

fuscus, Herring Gull *L. argentatus* and Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*.

This is a very well-thought-out publication. That so few observers have produced such a worthwhile piece of work should give encouragement in other countries sparsely populated by birdwatchers. Atlas aficionados and all those interested in the ornithology of Iceland, as well as anyone planning to visit the country, will wish to buy this excellent local atlas.
J. T. R. Sharrock

A Diversity of Birds: a personal journey of discovery.

By George Stebbing-Allen.

Umberleigh Press, Umberleigh, Devon, 1994. 149 pages; 16 line-drawings. ISBN 1-85944-000-2. £14.95.

This autobiographical book tells of one man's quest to make more of his birdwatching than mere rarity-spotting. It aims to encourage interested but essentially amateur birdwatchers to do likewise and thus play a role in bird protection worldwide; indeed, it could almost be termed the thinking man's guide to worthwhile twitching. The themes are large, and include biodiversity, adaptive radiation, endemism, conservation, and ecotourism, all illustrated by the author's own travels and birding experiences, his journey taking us to Costa Rica and New Zealand among other countries abroad as well as to localities in Great Britain, all in search of an answer to the

question 'Why do birds occur where they do?' and taking in subjects such as continental drift and plate tectonics.

The book is attractively produced and well written, in an easy, persuasive, and non-technical if occasionally rather schoolmasterly style. I did find the author's insistence on the role of genes in determining his interest in ornithology irritating, and his answer to his question 'Why' unsurprising, but I enjoyed his book and can recommend it to those attracted by the topics it covers and subject to the same joy in watching birds as he so evidently is.

K. E. L. Simmons

Birds in Counties Galway and Mayo: an account of their status and distribution. By R. F. Rutledge. (Irish Wildbird Conservancy, Dublin, revised edn 1994. 120 pages. ISBN 1-899204-05-9. Paperback IR£5.00) Even bird-watchers who have never visited western Ireland are likely to have heard of Rahasane Turlough, Slyne Head, the Inishkea Islands and Erris Head. This report-sized systematic list, by the doyen of Irish ornithology, will be welcomed by everyone living in or visiting this spectacularly beautiful part of Ireland. Still under-watched, the visitor can make exciting discoveries. The 44 wader species listed include several from the Nearctic, of course, and there must be more to be found, but there has not been a Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* since 1912, nor a Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* since 1927; on the other hand, seabirds abound.

JTRS

Where to Watch Birds in Britain and Europe. By John Gooders. (Hamlyn, London, 1994. 262 pages. ISBN 0-600-58007-5. Paperback £12.99) This latest edition includes several new 'European' destinations, such as Egypt, Jordan and the Gambia. The excitement of the first edition, published (by André Deutsch) as long ago as 1970, remains. As an introduction to where to find birds, this is a good general guide, although some of the information is out of date. Despite this, I would recommend this book for anyone contemplating a birding trip abroad for the first time.

Dave Odell

ALSO RECEIVED

Bird Nests. By Sharon A. Cohen. (Collins, San Francisco, 1993. 128 pages. ISBN 0-00-255110-1. £6.99)

Ducks. Compiled by Jeanne Griffiths. (Dragon's World, Limpsfield, 1994. 45 pages. ISBN 1-85028-289-7. £3.99)

Birds of Nigeria provides a Check list of the birds of Nigeria. It is a complete birdlist or bird list listing all the birds of Nigeria in ornithological taxonomic order. In Nature of Nigeria you can find nature related websites, like on birding, birdwatching, general ornithology, nature, nature conservation, national parks, protected areas, nature reserves, etc. BIRD LISTS WORLDWIDE is a website of the World Institute for Conservation and Environment, WICE. It is an integrated network of web sites dealing with different topics on nature, nature conservation and natural resources management. Read here why we created BIRD LISTS WORLWIDE. Our Methodology explains how we produced our information. This is a list of the bird species recorded in Nigeria. The avifauna of Nigeria include a total of 975 species, of which four are endemic. 31 species are globally threatened. This list's taxonomic treatment (designation and sequence of orders, families and species) and nomenclature (common and scientific names) follow the conventions of The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World, 2019 edition. The family accounts at the beginning of each heading reflect this taxonomy, as do the species counts found This is a list of the bird species recorded in Nigeria. The avifauna of Nigeria include a total of 940 species, of which four are endemic and five are rare or accidental. This list's taxonomic treatment (designation and sequence of orders, families and species) and nomenclature (common and scientific names) follow the conventions of The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World, 6th edition. The family accounts at the beginning of each heading reflect this taxonomy, as do the species counts found in each family account. Accidental species are included in the total species count for Nigeria. The following tags have been used to highlight several categories, but not all species fall into one of these categories. Those that do not are commonly occurring native species.

ANNOTATED LIST Wc recorded the following bird species. New records and endemic subspecies for Pulau Tioman are indicated with and '*'. respectively. The nomenclature follows Inskipp et al. (1996). Sodhi et al: An annotated checklist of the birds of Pulau Tioman.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis* CHINESE POND HERON *Ardeola sinensis* LITTLE HERON *Butorides striatris* YELLOW BITTERN *Ixobrychus sinensis* CINNAMON BITTERN *I. cinnamomina* LESSER FRIGATEBIRD *Fregata ariel* CHRISTMAS ISLAND FRIGATEBIRD *F. andrewsi* ASIAN FAIRY-BLUEBIRD *Ireida puella* BROWN SHRIKE *Lanius cristatus* HOUSE CROW *Coscorophia splendens* LARGE-BILLED CROW *C.*