REVIEWS

Birds of Britain and Europe, with North Africa and the Middle East.
By Hermann Heinzel, Richard Fitter & John Parslow.

The first edition of this ‘Collins pocket guide’ appeared 23 years ago. It has undergone a number of mostly minor revisions since, but has now been, and I quote, ‘completely redesigned, repainted, rewritten, revised and updated’.

Compared with the first edition, of which I still possess a (well-worn) copy, the plates are, indeed, largely redrawn, with the incorporation of more plumages and flying birds. Numerous additional small illustrations of, for example, heads, bills and more flying birds appear on the facing text page. One can spot a number of original paintings that have been lifted from the old edition, but the great majority are new. To highlight just a few changes, I was pleased to see that the amazingly long-necked swans and geese of the first edition now have better, if not perfect, proportions, though I do not care for the new ‘scaly’ effect of the grey-goose plumages. The two pages of flying ducks have disappeared, with more flying birds placed on the species plates, though there is now a useful double-page dealing with duck hybrids. The original double-page spread showing just 19 raptors in flight has been replaced by two spreads with over 100 illustrations. Another addition is that all the accidentals are now illustrated. In general, the colours are good, certainly much better than in the first edition, though perhaps some of the reds and oranges are just a little overdone.

The maps have been completely revised and include more detail, even though reduced in size. There are now maps for all species except vagrants, though some are tiny. Was it really worth inserting 10 × 8 mm maps for both Bolle’s Columba bollii and Laurel Pigeon C. junoniae, on which one is meant to discern that there are coloured dots off the African coast, when the text states that both occur in the Canary Islands?

The text, too, has been improved, and this new edition represents a significant advance over past ones. Everyone has his or her favourite field guide and, for many, Lars Jonsson’s Birds of Europe with North Africa and the Middle East (1992), with its greater amount of detail in both paintings and text, will remain pre-eminent. It is, however, heavier on the pocket in both senses, being substantially larger and more than twice the price. I predict continuing popularity for this much-improved Collins field guide.

Malcolm Ogilvie

One Pair of Eyes.
By Donald Watson.

This book is another quality limited edition from Arlequin Press, this time featuring the paintings and drawings of Donald Watson. The 80 or so paintings span his career and most are previously unpublished. The text is also by Donald Watson, and is mainly about birds and his Galloway surroundings; the anecdotes, often prompted by the paintings, make a good read. Always a strong advocate of working directly from life, his loose ‘on-site’ landscapes reveal a delightful spontaneity and freshness, with a vibrant use of colour. Happily, these qualities translate to the tighter studio works. In most, his birds are skilfully ‘incidental’ focal points.

Being a limited edition, this book is expensive. Nevertheless, it is warmly recommended.

Alan Harris


The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories. By Leslie Christidis and Walter E. Boles. (RAOU, Melbourne, 1994. 112 pages. ISBN 1-875122-06-0. Paperback $18.00) The main interest for ornithologists outside Australasia will be the complete checklist of Australian birds (which it is planned to revise at least every three or four years). Species are listed with both scientific and English names, the latter generally following Recommended English Names for Australian Birds (RAOU 1978), but with changes to accord with international usage following British Birds (86: 1-2) for Palearctic species and Sibley & Monroe (1990) for other regions. The 23-page checklist is followed by 46 pages of discussion on taxonomic decisions taken and other changes, such as the removal of Red-vented Bulbul Pycnonotus cafer from the main list, since the introduced population is now extinct. With 19 pages of references, this is a very clearly set-out, authoritative and useful reference, essential for anyone seriously interested in the birds of Australasia.

Birds in the Yorkshire Museum. By M. L. Denton. (The Yorkshire Museum, York, 1995. 224 pages. ISBN 0-905807-10-3. Paperback £7.50) This is a nicely produced catalogue of the bird collections of the Yorkshire Museum, which comprise 5,000 skins, mounts, skeletons and eggs. All data are included, where these exist, and there is a useful cross-referencing list of material by species.

Follow That Bird!: around the world with a passionate bird-watcher. By Bill Oddie. (Robson Books, London, 1994. 172 pages. ISBN 0-86051-919-8. £12.95) The six chapters detail Bill’s adventures (actually outnumbered by misadventures) when binding in Morocco, Scilly, India, Ireland, Shetland and Papua New Guinea. The catastrophes and crises are mostly the sort which are not funny at the time (ruined honeymoons, cars stuck in the mud, and unhelpful foreigners), but Bill Oddie’s gift for writing turns every episode into an amusing and entertaining anecdote. Recommended light reading for every birdwatcher.

The Barn Owl. By Mike Read & Jake Allsop. (Blandford Press, London, 1994. 128 pages; 80 colour photographs; 8 line-drawings. ISBN 0-7137-2349-1. £16.99) A delightful book on one of my (and many other people’s) favourite birds. The text gives a good account of the life history of the Barn Owl Tyto alba, its habits and conservation problems, with added value from Jake Allsop’s many personal observations and anecdotes. Mike Read’s photographs cover every possible aspect, from habitat to pellets to birds in all plumages, and have been very well reproduced. Even if the text were not so good as it is, the book would be worth it for these illustrations alone. The dust-jacket photograph is nothing less than stunning.


£12.95) The photographs make the book, with some marvellous images: a Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* with a writhing Eel *Anguilla anguilla*, a Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* flicking its forked tongue, a Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* at full tilt. I wish the short texts included even more information on where, when and how the photographs were taken.


**ALSO RECEIVED**


Images of birds are generally very good, and if necessary pictures of colour morphs or distinct subspecies will be included. A comment on the maps; because this book was published in 1974, some maps may show that birds have larger ranges than in present day. A list of accidental birds is at the end of the book before the index, though just one of these many birds is illustrated. This book is very suitable for use in the field due to its small size, but purchasing a copy of this book in very good condition will probably be difficult, and some information may be outdated. Read more. 2 people fou Birds of the Middle East and North Africa. by Hollom, Philip Arthur Dominic, R.F. Porter, S. Christensen, and Ian. 1988, 280pp, ISBN: 0931130158. hardcover, 40 color plates of 350 species, 720+ species discussed, 510 range maps. (2484). Field Guide to the Birds of the Middle East. by Porter, Richard, S. Christensen, and P. Schiermacker-Hansen. 1996, 460pp, ISBN: 0856610763. (1278). Important Bird Areas in the Middle East. Birdlife Conservation Series No.2. by Evans, M.I.
Get it by Tue, 10 Mar - Thu, 12 Mar from South East, United Kingdom. Very Good condition. 30 day returns - Buyer pays return postage | Returns policy. Publisher: Collins ISBN 13: 9780002192347. Used-like N: The book pretty much look like a new book. There will be no stains or markings on the book, the cover is clean and crisp, the book will look unread, the only marks there may be are slight bumping marks to the edges of the book where it may have been on a shelf previously. Read full description. See details and exclusions - The Birds of Britain and Europe with North Africa and the Midd... Rich Dad Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not! by Robert T. Kiyosaki (2017, Mass Market Paperback).