

## RECENT LITERATURE

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### BOOK REVIEWS

#### The Goshawk.

R. Kenward. 2006. T & A D Poyser, London. 360 pp. \$52.50 hardcover.

Northern Goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*) are large, forest-nesting raptors that have been studied extensively in Europe and, more recently, have become the focus of conservation efforts in parts of North America. Until the publication of *The Goshawk*, however, there has been no comprehensive synthesis of the research conducted on Northern Goshawks that includes the extensive European literature, including hard-to-obtain works such as reports in the Russian literature, and a summary of information from North America. And that is perhaps the most important contribution of Robert Kenward's book—it provides interested parties in both North America and Europe an overview of the state of knowledge about Northern Goshawk ecology and conservation across their entire geographic range.

Included in this volume are syntheses of information regarding taxonomy, size and measurements, reproduction, movements, diet and foraging, predation, population dynamics, falconry and management, and conservation. Kenward starts each chapter with a description of an experience (or a hypothetical situation in a couple of cases) that he has had with goshawks, followed by a synthesis of pertinent information, implications for conservation, and a summary of key points. Kenward has spent a great deal of his life working with goshawks, as a researcher, falconer, and conservationist, and his passion for goshawks is obvious.

The book includes 23 color figures (on eight plates), and the text is illustrated liberally with figures taken from the published literature, compiled from multiple works, or from some of Kenward's unpublished work. Appendices provide scientific names for species referenced in the manuscript, and a list of references for data included in figures. The reference section at the end of the book includes most North American works on Northern Goshawks and, presumably, a nearly complete list of European literature.

As someone familiar with the North American literature and having worked on goshawks for the past 10 years or so, I found Kenward's characterization of Northern Goshawks in Europe quite informative. For example, in many parts of Europe, goshawks persist as relatively common breeding birds in landscapes that are only minimally forested and intensively used for agriculture—very different from most landscapes that support goshawks in North America. Similarly, Northern Goshawks have occupied urban landscapes in Europe, and that has not yet been observed in North America. Of some interest, Kenward also provides evidence that Northern Goshawk predation may be high enough in some places and under some circumstances that prey populations are depressed or even driven to local extinction—not the historical perspective on raptor predation, but one that is becoming increasingly apparent

in both Europe and North America. These and other patterns in goshawk ecology and behavior observed in Europe should spur an assessment of conservation priorities for goshawks in North America. Goshawks in Europe appear to be able to persist in landscapes that would not be considered goshawk habitat in North America—how different are Northern Goshawks in Europe and North America, and how would these differences affect conservation and management? Kenward offers his assessment of many of the issues that are not well documented for goshawks, and provides stimulation for thought about future research questions. Kenward also addresses goshawk conservation in Europe in the last chapter of this book, and offers an alternative to past conservation approaches that should prompt assessment of goshawk conservation in North America.

*The Goshawk* makes some important contributions to understanding Northern Goshawk ecology and conservation, but several factors detract from its readability. First, the first two chapters focus on taxonomy and size, and are perhaps the driest reading in the book—the book would perhaps capture readers more readily had it started with topics of more interest to readers concerned with ecology and conservation. Second, the writing is uneven, and the chapter format—story, data summary and presentation, conservation implications, and summary of key points—does not always work well. Kenward strays back and forth between summaries of published literature and detailed summaries of his own published and unpublished work, and it was not always clear to me how well supported some of his conclusions about goshawk ecology were. Third, although most of the recent North American goshawk literature was included in this book, it is clear that Kenward is not as familiar with North American conservation and management as he is with that in Europe. Several incorrect references to, for example, national forests as parks, were distracting. Finally, the prevalence of typographical errors, misspellings (even allowing for different spellings of the same word on opposite sides of the Atlantic), and errors (e.g., 1–2 pairs/km<sup>2</sup> instead of 1–2 pairs/100 km<sup>2</sup> in the conclusions of the last chapter) was also distracting.

Overall, though, Kenward should be commended for his contribution to our understanding of Northern Goshawk ecology and conservation. *The Goshawk* provides the best summary to date of information about Northern Goshawk ecology across their entire range, challenges some of the dogma about goshawk predation and conservation, and makes it more possible for European and North American goshawk researchers and other interested parties to take a less myopic view of goshawk ecology and conservation. *The Goshawk* is destined to be a valuable reference and information synthesis for anyone interested in goshawk ecology and conservation and, more broadly, raptor ecology. In addition, for North American readers, *The Goshawk* should provide a broader context for issues related to goshawk conservation.

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### **Albatrosses, Petrels and Shearwaters of the World.**

D. Onley and P. Scofield. 2007. Princeton University Press, Princeton, Oxford. 256 pp., 45 color plates, 136 maps, \$29.95, paperback.

This reasonably compact and lightweight field guide (6¼" × 9¼") is one of the latest additions to the Princeton Field Guide series and provides comprehensive coverage of the currently accepted 137 members of the avian order Procellariiformes, those most pelagic of seabirds, the "tubenoses." This order is typically divided into four families consisting of the albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters, storm petrels, and diving petrels. These birds spend most of their lives at sea, coming ashore to breed at often remote and inaccessible islands scattered across the globe. As a result, they are relatively unknown to most birders, and even many experts are only casually familiar with many members of this order. This is partly why a limited number of field guides are currently available for this group and may help to account for the weaknesses that trouble this field guide.

The book begins with an introductory section consisting of 31 informative pages, including an easy-to-use list of species and subspecies that serves as a "rapid index" to the 137 species illustrated on the plates. After all, quick and easy access to species illustrations is the heart of any field guide. The inclusion of colored footnote bars to denote text sections based on broad taxonomic groups (e.g., albatrosses, shearwaters, etc.) also provides a handy navigation aid when browsing through the book. In addition, the authors have done an excellent job of providing a succinct and thorough overview of the current taxonomic relationships of the four families based on recent taxonomic decisions. This includes an interesting and relevant discussion on the species concept that both beginners and experts will find useful and, most importantly, understandable. This is particularly appropriate given that the latest taxonomy will likely introduce species unfamiliar to those accustomed to more traditional taxonomy and nomenclature. This section also serves as a reminder of how difficult the classification process can be and should give readers some perspective as they attempt to tackle the latest classification of the great albatrosses (genus *Diomedea*) and the problematic Little/Audubon's/Manx shearwater complex. The authors provide additional in-depth discussions of each of these taxonomies, including a phylogenetic tree for the little shearwater complex, at the start of the species accounts for each group of similar species. Considering the ongoing taxonomic debates for many of these birds, we found this to be a welcome addition typically beyond the scope of a field guide. However, the molecular phylogeny of the little shearwater complex (p. 207) was reproduced in such a way that the branches do not emphasize how different these putative species actually are. The introduction also includes a useful section on current conservation issues impacting many members of this order. However, the lack of comprehensive citations is disappointing and detracts

from this section. We especially like the "what you can do about it" section, and hope that future guides will continue to stress the importance of engaging in more than just identification of these wonderful birds.

The bulk of the introduction consists of an identification section that includes useful information related to the field identification of Procellariiformes. In particular, the discussion on how different types of variation such as age, wear, molt, and viewing conditions can affect a bird's appearance is well done, accompanied by excellent illustrations that convey, for example, how lighting conditions affect the appearance of a Cook's Petrel on page 20. This section is a welcome addition and one we hope will be duplicated in future guides. Unfortunately, the illustration depicting age variation in giant petrels on page 22 is mislabeled. The introduction closes with a brief section on how to use the book and a plate depicting seabird topography. The mislabeled feather tracts for secondaries and secondary coverts on the lower right drawing and the apparent missing label for the median covert feather tract on the upper left drawing are examples of careless errors found throughout the book. Overall, the introduction is accessible to birders at all levels of expertise and serves as an appropriate primer for birding on the high seas.

Following the introduction are 45 plates illustrating all 137 species, including recently "discovered" species such as the Vanuatu Petrel and New Zealand Storm-Petrel, and poorly known species such as Beck's, Fiji, and Magenta petrels. Birds are typically shown in flight from above and below with an alphanumeric label corresponding to a brief description of relevant diagnostic features on the opposing page. Some plates include illustrations of juvenile plumage and, where appropriate (e.g., albatrosses), sequential plumage stages likely to be encountered as birds mature to adult plumage; in many cases headshots are included to highlight important features. Most plates include 3–5 species, which makes navigating the plates relatively straightforward. Unfortunately, one of the most challenging plates, plate 37, includes eight species and illustrates the Little/Audubon shearwater complex, making navigating this plate tricky at best. Given the authors' emphasis of keeping similar species together, this may be unavoidable. We like this emphasis because it facilitates comparisons between problematic species that are often confused. For example, plate 15 of the dark *Bulweria* and *Pseudobulweria* petrels includes the dark morph of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater to facilitate comparisons. However, finding the correct plate depicting the various morphs for di- and polymorphic species requires plenty of page turning and can be frustrating for those used to finding all relevant illustrations for a species on one plate.

In general, the illustrations are a great improvement over Harrison's seabird field guides (the previous standard for all seabirds including Procellariiformes), although the quality and accuracy is extremely uneven. For example, the illustrations for species found in the southwest Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand are particularly strong, whereas those for species in the western hemisphere, particularly the northeast Pacific sector, are particularly weak. In their defense, the authors admit to not being as familiar with the Procellariiformes found in these regions, but one would have expected them to have consulted the birding communities in these regions more heavily than their acknowledgments indicate. Issues include peculiar