

Short reviews

Bird Flight: an illustrated study of birds' aerial mastery. By Robert Burton. (Facts on File Ltd, Oxford, 1990. 160 pages. £14.95) This is a very attractive and accurate presentation of the current propagated theories. This subject, of both popular and academic interest, has, however, not been resourced sufficiently to unlock fully the secrets of slow-speed, unsteady aerodynamics with vorticity control, which the birds efficiently and instinctively manipulate. The true merit of the book is the pageant of superb flight photographs, showing great artistry by both bird and cameraman, again demonstrating the scientific advances achieved in commercial photography.

[KEITH ALLSOPP]

The Curlew. By Gerry Cotter. (Shire Publications, Princes Risborough, 1990. 24 pages. Paperback £1.95) A review of the Curlew *Numenius arquata*, its distribution, breeding, feeding, migration and predators, with maps culled from the BTO atlases. Written in 'essay' style, it will introduce new bird-watchers to one of our familiar waders, but what a shame that the pronounced sexual dimorphism is neither clearly explained nor shown; basic facts such as this make bird-watching so much more enjoyable.

[IAN BAINBRIDGE]

The Red Kite in Wales. By John Evans. (Christopher Davies, Swansea, 1990. 64 pages. Paperback £4.95) A brief history, and where to see Red Kites *Milvus milvus* in Wales. Many curious statements are con-

trary to the evidence: for example, that Spanish-breeding Red Kites are mainly migratory; that loss from many areas was due to severe weather rather than to persecution; and that the relict range is good habitat. Nevertheless, this is a convenient introduction for those wishing to see kites without disturbing them (although a reminder of the illegality of disturbing breeding birds would have been wise). For more information, turn to Roger Lovegrove's compilation (*The Kite's Tale*, 1990), pending a full treatment.

[MIKE PIENKOWSKI]

The Black Eagle: a study. By Valerie Gargett. (Acorn Books, Randburg, RSA, 1990. 280 pages. £35.00) Parts of this classic 21-year study of Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii* in Zimbabwe have been published in the literature, but here is the whole story of this remarkable co-operative venture in a single book. Full of data, very well written and superbly illustrated, this is a 'must' for all raptor researchers and enthusiasts—and ought to be read by all field ornithologists. Highly recommended. [MIKE EVERETT]

Hickling Broad and its Wildlife: the story of a famous wetland nature reserve. By Stewart Linsell. (Terence Dalton, Lavenham, 1990. 171 pages. £18.95) This is a fascinating account of the evolution of an internationally famous reserve. Not only is it a natural history, but it is also an intriguing social history of this important wetland. A 'must' for anyone interested in East Anglia.

[ANDY LOWE]

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The Golden Eagle. By **John Love & Jeff Watson.** Shire Publications, Princes Risborough, 1990. 24 pages. £1.95) Yet another valuable mini-monograph in this excellent series. As one would expect from these authors, a concise, authoritative and up-to-date summary, which is easily the best handy reference work available on the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. Recommended.

[MIKE EVERETT]

Seabirds of the Northern Hemisphere. By **Alan Richards.** (Dragon's World, London,

1990. 192 pages. £19.95) This attractive book covers seabirds which breed mainly on either (or both) the Pacific or Atlantic coasts of North America and those which breed around the coasts of Britain and Western Europe, or occur as non-breeding visitors to all or some of these areas. A superb selection of 160 colour photographs and a comprehensive and authoritative text will appeal more to the generalist than to the seabird-identification enthusiast. Pelagic species are poorly represented and most non-breeding species, and some breeding ones, are without any photographs. [B. A. E. MARR]