odds with the normal behaviour of gadfly petrels in the northern hemisphere, which is to breed on oceanic islands in the south in the winter and disperse north in the summer, possibly owing to the absence of suitable sites in higher latitudes. Fea’s Petrel may move all round the North Atlantic, with maxima off the eastern USA in early May, northwest Europe in early August, and in the North Sea, possibly on the way back south, in early September (table 1). Thus it seems likely that the bones were of subtropical and tropical gadfly petrel populations (one or more of Fea’s, Bermuda P. cahow, Black-capped P. hastata, Herald P. arminjoniana or Kermadec P. neglecta; Imber 2004) while they were still numerous, before the arrival of humans at breeding sites from the fifteenth century. While they might have been wrecked by storms, it has become notorious that seabirds are easily caught in fishermen’s gear.

Since Zino’s Petrel P. madeira breeds in the northern summer, it would seem more likely to disperse south, where two petrels of this size have been beached in South Africa (Clancey et al. 1981), and less likely to reach northwest Europe, although similar bones, together with smaller numbers of bones of larger gadfly petrels, have now also been found at Gibraltar (Cooper 1999). Presumably, Fea’s Petrel evolved during the Pleistocene in the warm, arid Cape Verde Islands, breeding in winter and migrating north in summer, while Zino’s Petrel evolved in the cooler, moister archipelagos to the north, breeding in summer and migrating south in winter; and since the greatest difference between them is in bill size, they may now feed together on foods of different sizes. Since the climate became warmer, Zino’s has now retreated uphill to breed in the cool, moist highlands of Madeira, while Fea’s has also colonised the arid peak of outlying Bugio, rather similar to its breeding habitat on the Cape Verde Islands, and is also beginning to breed earlier, in late summer. While Steele (2006) claimed that ‘most authorities now consider’ these a separate race P. f. deserta, it remains to be shown that there is any other marked difference, so how would it be identified in Britain? It should be noted that the date for the bird reported at Flamborough, East Yorkshire, given by Steele (2006) as 24th October 2003 has now been corrected to 24th August (Brit. Birds 100: 25).

References


Table 1. Combined reports (from personal observations and published literature) of Fea’s-type gadfly petrels (Pterodroma mollis/madeira/feae) in the North Atlantic.

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US east coast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>mid June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Atlantic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td>late August</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Sea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>early September</td>
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</table>
With a circumpolar distribution and a long history of research, the Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* is probably the most studied of all raptorial birds. In 2006, the European and North American literature was reviewed in *Studies in Avian Biology*, so the present volume by Robert Kenward is a timely addition. *The Goshawk* is comprehensive, covers most of the literature from the oldest to the most recent and details research techniques and practical experience from hawking. In addition, there is frequent citation of comments from colleagues, and reference to important material coming up for publication. Consequently, the volume will remain an insightful overview and contemporary reference for many years.

The chapter sequence follows traditional ground for Poyser monographs, beginning with taxonomy (names, races and relatives), followed by description (weights and measures), breeding (nesting and laying, incubation and rearing), movements, diet and foraging, predation pressures and population demography. The final two chapters – ‘Falconry and management methods’ and ‘Conservation through protection and use’ – are unconventional but relevant for this species considering its long history of interaction with people.

The writing style is engaging. Each chapter starts with a relevant anecdote drawn from the author’s own field experience of hawking or ecological research. The text rapidly moves on to a detailed account and culminates with a short list of ‘Conclusions’, summarising the chapter’s content. This mode of presentation captures the reader, sustains interest and enables closure so that the reader is ready to move on to the next chapter. Most of the text is easy to read, although in the chapter on ‘Death and demography’ I had to reread some paragraphs several times before I grasped the meaning. Occasionally there is scientific jargon that many readers cannot be expected to know – a simple glossary could usefully have dealt with technical terms. In addition, the subject index at the end of the book is deficient and could have been much expanded to enable the reader to follow up on particular topics. I found very few typographical and printing errors.

Mostly the content is about Northern Goshawks and thus relevant, but in some chapters the detail could be a little laboured for the average readership. Early in the book, in the second chapter (weights and measures), some readers could get ‘swamped’ by the detail and be tempted to start skimming text. In fact, the detail is important, as variation in size, shape and mass is critical in the adaptation of agile predators to the pursuit and capture of their prey. There are other aspects where the detail seems insufficient. In a few places, I found myself wanting statistical test results to support some claims, or at least some error bars on the relevant figures. However, this criticism is probably unfair in that these ornithological monographs have to include a great range of evidence from anecdote to scientific experiment. In practice, no mix will satisfy all readers so what is offered here could be viewed as a good compromise. Nevertheless, on occasions the reader deserves to be reminded of the nature of evidence – which relationships have only limited support, which ideas are compelling because they have been tested experimentally and which are believable simply because they make good sense.

Such criticism aside, the book is largely free of problems, but this cannot be said of Northern Goshawks themselves, which are commonly perceived to have significant impacts on some populations of their prey. Most ill feeling stems from the predation of game, particularly on released Common Pheasants *Phasianus colchicus* and grouse (*Tetraonidae*). However, there are other issues involving the predation of animals of conservation concern such as Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus* and Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*. The chapter on ‘Prey selection and predation pressures’ is a remarkably well-balanced account of the current situation and consequently gives credence to proffered solutions, amongst which ‘live-trapping for translocation’ is considered by many as controversial. Raptor management is a ‘hot topic’ at present, and the keeping and flying of hawks has long generated polarised views. Robert Kenward is a research ecologist with experience in both the conservation and the practical use of hawks, so he is well placed to debate these issues and offer solutions.

In summary, the book ranks well among the better ornithological monographs because of the substantial amount of information, the comprehensive literature review and the direct approach to controversial topics. For many BB readers, the concepts may be complex and the accounts rather detailed. However, for those prepared to engage with such detail, the book offers a wealth of thought-provoking material. I am no stranger to the species or the controversy that surrounds it and I found this book both interesting and stimulating. I strongly recommend it for both professional and enthusiast.

*Mick Marquiss*
MIGRATING RAPTORS OF THE WORLD: THEIR ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

This is a well-researched, well-written and thoroughly worthwhile book which I greatly enjoyed reading. Keith Bildstein is director of conservation science at the Acopian Center for Conservation Learning at the famous Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania, and ‘has studied migrating raptors on four continents’. In ten chapters, he has mixed personal narrative and analysis with summaries of information based on almost 600 publications.

Some may find the book’s subtitle a little misleading, as the single chapters on ecology and conservation total only one-fifth of the text. Nevertheless, the 23 pages on ‘The Ecology of Migratory Raptors’ summarise what is known about fat reserves, feeding en route, the advantages and efficiencies of soaring flight, water needs, differences on timing of migration between flocking and non-flocking species, between males, females and juveniles, between autumn and spring migration, and between summer and winter feeding and behaviour. The chapter entitled ‘Protecting Migratory Raptors’ is concerned mainly with the major threats that affect so many animals: habitat loss, pollution and persecution. Many raptors are peculiarly susceptible because two-thirds of the threatened species depend on forest, because many are at the tops of food chains and so highly vulnerable to pesticides and other chemicals, and because they are historically and, in some areas, still currently – shot for the damage that they may do to game and poultry (plates 11–12 highlight the appalling persistence of the shooting of raptors as a traditional right in Malta). Like other large birds, migrating raptors are also at serious risk from injury through flying into power lines, and preliminary discussions of the relatively new dangers of wind turbines and the effects of global warming are included.

The first five of the other ten chapters relate to the phenomenon of raptor migration: its origins and evolution (with a hypothetical history back at least to the Eocene); an overview of published and other studies worldwide (satellite-tracking is listed for 29 species); flight strategies; and orientation and navigation. After the ecological chapter 6 comes one on migration geography, which considers the processes that determine the directions, routes and distances travelled by migrating raptors and discusses the world’s major flyways (four of the main five of which are in the Old World). Chapter 8 goes into particular detail on a slightly curious selection of just eight species, and chapter 9 is an introduction to twelve sites for ‘Great Hawkwatches’ (only four of which are outside the Americas and, regrettably, none in the Far East). The end of the book includes a bibliography, an appendix of scientific names, a seven-page glossary and an index.

Although the book does in several places deal with the main migration routes in Eurasia and Africa, it has (perhaps inevitably) something of a North and Central American bias. Otherwise, my criticisms are few. Reproduction quality of the 18 monochrome photos scattered through the text is so poor as to make them almost useless: it would have been better to have allowed a larger number and a more effective selection of colour images than the 16 in the centre of the book. Also, although Bildstein frequently quotes references in the text, the sources are not always made clear; this applies, for example, to some data on population sizes and biometrics – the latter not necessarily allowing for the ranges of variation resulting from sexual dimorphism – in his chapter on ‘Migration Life Histories. His nine-page appendix of the scientific names of the 314 raptors (and other animals) mentioned in the text indicates that his taxonomy is a little tired; some of his choices of English names are also disappointing, and the fact that these are listed in alphabetical order of the first word both there and in the index makes it difficult to see how many of each group of related raptors he discusses. (His six-page table 2, however – one of 19 that bring together a mass of interesting data – does list 202 raptors in systematic order within three categories of complete, partial, and ‘irruptive’ or local migrants.). Quibbles apart, I recommend this book as a valuable summary of what is known about raptor migration.

James Ferguson-Lees

WHERE TO WATCH BIRDS IN WORLD CITIES

This book has been written with those birders travelling the world on business firmly in mind. The author does just that for a living and is Secretary of the Irish Rare Birds Committee in his spare time. He has chosen 61 cities from around the world that he feels are the most frequently visited by birders for non-birding purposes, i.e. business, non-birding pleasure, family holidays or some other non-birding reason. For each city, he has then selected the best birding sites within an 80-km radius, and placed a particular emphasis on those sites that can by visited easily using public transport. He has also included a few major
sites that are a little further away, but which he considers are worth the additional time and effort involved to reach them. Thus, the book is designed not for those planning a birding trip abroad, but for those who will be there anyway and who might have a few hours spare to spend looking for birds.

The cities are divided up under continent headings, and dealt with in alphabetical order – thus the book starts with Africa and Addis Ababa. A contents list on page 3 makes it easy to check which cities are included and where to find them in the book. There is also an extensive species index at the end, allowing one to locate the references to any particular bird. The sites close to each city are dealt with first and a map is provided to show the location of all the sites. Individual site maps are provided for a few locations, but by no means all. Each site is then described in a few paragraphs, together with directions on how to get there. This is followed by a list of key species, broken down into subheadings for resident, summer visitors, winter visitors, etc., where appropriate. The names used follow the 5th edition of Clements’s *Birds of the World: a checklist*, except for the Western Palearctic, where the *British Birds* names are used. A list (surprisingly short) is also included of those species where the Clements's name differs from the names commonly used in the country concerned.

I read the texts for the cities with which I am most familiar and found them to be pretty accurate, both in their descriptions, access details and lists of species. This will surely prove to be an extremely useful book for those who travel the world regularly for purposes other than birding, and can be recommended.

*David Fisher*

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**REVIEWS**

**BIRDING IN EASTERN EUROPE**


For those of us that went birding behind the ‘Iron Curtain’ in the early 1980s, there can have been little inkling as to just how things were to change from the mid 1990s onwards. From the occasional trip with an organised tour, via a veritable swarm of commercial bird-watching companies, we have now reached the stage where birding anywhere from Estonia in the north to Bulgaria in the south is as easy and straightforward as birding in the south of France.

Not only is getting there easy, but information describing where to go and what to expect is readily available. If you were going to find an author for a book on guidance in eastern Europe (although most of the countries in this region would prefer to be called middle Europe!), then you would quickly settle on Gerard Gorman. He not only lived and travelled behind the ‘Iron Curtain’, but has continued to guide birding visitors in large numbers since the political changes.

This guide covers the 11 most popular countries for visiting birders: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Between 20 and 25 sites are detailed for each country, providing an excellent introduction to all the countries. A few more site maps would have been handy – but remember, this book is just the start. Following a visit, you will be able to add your own notes; and any exploring birder is bound to discover additional areas worthy of attention.

The production is good, with well-laid-out and clear text, and the overall package is lightweight and ideal for packing without exceeding the ever-reducing airline baggage allowances. The downside is that if you are visiting just one country, do you really want to carry all the other information with you? I can see great advantage in studying this book closely before departure and perhaps copying the pages you are likely to require. Certainly I would strongly recommend that if you are travelling to these now easily accessible countries, you consult this volume before you go.

*Bob Scott*

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**IVORYBILL HUNTERS: THE SEARCH FOR PROOF IN A FLOODED WILDERNESS**


This book describes year 1 (winter 2005/06) of the search for Ivorybilled Woodpeckers *Campephilus principalis* along the Choctawhatchee River woodlands in Florida. Written by the leader of the search team, ornithologist Geoffrey Hill from Auburn University, it is a personal and partly autobiographical account of the background to Hill’s interest in ‘ivorybills’, culminating in the surprising claims of sightings of the birds. The narrative also tackles the political and human aspects surrounding the birds, being openly critical of Cornell University’s overstatement of the evidence for the persistence of ivorybills in 2004/05 in Arkansas and showing more than a hint of envy at the political clout carried by big names at fashionable Ivy League Universities. It is, as stated by the author, primarily a human story. That much is true – it is nothing to do with the birds, which almost certainly went extinct many years ago.
It is a birding tale, and anyone who has ever found themselves lost and miles from the car as dusk starts to fall will feel for the book’s characters as they navigate their way by looking for a banana they left hanging in a tree on the way out. You cannot help but like the people involved and admire their determination. There is an argument that the book could have waited for a year or two until a more reflective assessment of the search and its results could be made. But when ornithological archaeologists of the future pick over the wreckage of the ivorybill ‘rediscovery’, they will be grateful for the immediacy of the moment captured here. Maybe it will go some way to explaining the psychology of birding, and how expectation and excitement can potentially bias the records of experienced and competent observers.

Martin Collinson

THE BIRDS OF MALAWI
By Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire and Robert J. Dowsett.
Tauraco Press and Aves, Liege, 2006. 556 pages; 16 colour plates; 625 distribution maps.
Paperback, £25.00.

Compared with several other countries in southern Africa, Malawi has not really been in the limelight of ornithological publishing in recent years. Perhaps this is because it has no endemic species, although the Cholo Alethe Alethe choloensis is found only here and on two peaks just across the border in neighbouring Mozambique.

Formerly known as Nyasaland, Malawi was the subject of checklists by Charles Belcher in 1930 and Con Benson in 1977. Ken Newman also published a short supplement to his Birds of Southern Africa in 1992 to feature the 70 species known from Malawi that had been excluded from his field guide and others. This new checklist has appeared to redress the balance and provides a detailed account of the 650 species known to have occurred in the country.

Anyone familiar with the thoroughness of the Dowsetts will not be disappointed by this book. It is rather like a BOU checklist, although by being published in softback format, it has been produced at a very reasonable price. An introductory section starts with a detailed review of Malawi’s vegetation and habitats, together with conservation challenges. Information is also given on the country’s 46 national parks and reserves. The history of ornithology of the country is described in some depth and about 700 references are listed elsewhere. Not surprisingly, many of these references are from the Dowsetts themselves, as they were the powerhouse that initiated the Malawi atlas project two decades ago. Their work was continued by a small band of enthusiasts and the resultant two-colour maps form the backbone to this book. These show the presence of most species in a total of 175 squares (each roughly 30 km × 30 km), which are overlaid on a contour map. A total of the number of occupied squares and an indication of abundance are provided for each species.

Keith Betton

SECRET LIVES OF BRITISH BIRDS
Paperback, £14.99.

This book, competently written and nicely illustrated, is clearly aimed at those new to birdwatching. While there is little to criticise in its presentation and execution, it is typical of its kind and unlikely to be of long-term value to beginners, who deserve more imaginative offerings from publishers. There is no pleasure in being critical of such an inoffensive volume, but in my view it is from the pens of expert fieldmen such as Leslie Brown, Desmond Nethersole-Thompson and Derek Ratcliffe that real and lasting inspiration and insight flows.

Pete Combridge

Also Received:

AMAZING BIRDS: A TREASURY OF FACTS AND TRIVIA

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