

## Book Reviews

sections labeled large, long tailed birds, probing sandpipers, zebra-backed woodpeckers, larger doves, smaller geese, and other vernacular groups. Similar kinds of birds are gathered together on color-coded pages of the text, and the birds are grouped by shape and type, not necessarily in AOU order. Within each category, he breaks down the group further. For instance, in the category "Ducks, Swans and Geese," he subdivides as follows: dabbling ducks, teals and shoveler, diving ducks, scoters and harlequin, eiders, goldeneyes, stiftails, etc. There are two pages on domestic and feral waterfowl, and another two pages on parrots and parakeets, but he does not belabor introduced exotics. My personal favorite plate title is Hot and Cold Terns, containing illustrations of Alaskan and tropical terns. Kaufman includes some rare sandpipers and rare northern plovers, but he avoids inclusion of extreme North American rarities. Extinct birds, including Ivory-billed Woodpecker and Eskimo Curlew, are omitted.

With a focus of making this a guide that will encourage beginners to use it, there are not many photographs devoted to intermediate or age plumages, the significant exceptions being shorebirds, gulls, terns, and some raptors. There are good photographs of sexual differences in species, and a few photos of fall warblers. More detailed information is left to the reader for further pursuit. While a leaner book was desired, it also saves money, since more and larger pages, with more color illustrations, greatly increase production cost. Thus, the price of the book is a very affordable \$20, another encouragement to beginners to buy it.

Because of its size and shape, it is small, pleasant, and easy to carry and use. Being about the same size as RTP4 or Birds of North America by Robbins, et al., this book manages to cover all of North America and still fits easily into an ordinary pocket. It can be carried anywhere, which is the point, and has, as its ultimate purpose, to facilitate, rather than confound, the identification of birds. The extensive introduction is a short tutorial on birds and birding, and is worth the read. It is pleasant and instructive, and avoids the technical scientific jargon that can deter a novice.

I do not mean to imply that this guide is too elementary. It is not. The text is what you would expect from a birder of Kaufman's pedigree — it is superbly concise and accurate, hitting the highlights necessary to enable the user to immediately summarize the bird on that page and compare it to what he/she had in their binoculars. The text is well-blended to augment the illustrations with notations concerning habitat and behavior, with only a very limited mention of vocalizations.

If the cause of bird conservation is going to progress, new birders are necessary to raise the level of advocacy for birds and the conservation of their habitats. Birding is one of the most rapidly growing recreational past times in North America, and new birders have needed a friendly path to lead them into it, teach them about it, and stimulate them to promote the welfare of the birds. This book is it.

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