

*The Auk* 112(3):811, 1995

**A Century of Avifaunal Change in Western North America.**—Joseph R. Jehl, Jr., and Ned K. Johnson, Eds. 1994. Cooper Ornithological Society, Studies in Avian Biology No. 15. vi + 348 pp., 2 color plates, many text figures. ISBN 0-935868-72-0. \$40.00.—A most timely subject for a Cooper Ornithological Society centennial volume is the idea of avifaunal change in western North America. As pointed out by the editors in the introductory "Overview," members of the Society were key in the early systematic documentation of the western North American avifauna, and the region is a rich mosaic of different communities and ecosystems that can be used as a laboratory for the study of changes occurring for both natural and human-caused reasons.

The authors of this volume took a variety of approaches to assessing avifaunal change in western North America, on both regional and taxonomic bases. For regional studies, elegant standouts include the chapter on natural avian range expansions by Ned Johnson, that on the early ornithological exploration of the Hawaiian Islands by Storrs Olson and Helen James, and that on saline lake avifaunas by Joseph Jehl. Each of these and others discuss and demonstrate the dimensions of change in geographic distributions of birds in particular regions by using as much historical information as was available.

The other approach taken is that of assessing dimensions of changes in certain taxonomic groups. Groups treated include raptors, Song Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, Marbled Murrelets, Spotted Owls, and Brown-headed Cowbirds. Among these, the chapter by Joe Marshall and Kent Dedrick on the disappearance of the well-marked salt-marsh forms of Song Sparrows and Common Yellowthroats is fascinating, and Stephen Rothstein's chapter on cowbirds is frightening. Of course, the balance of increasing versus decreasing species is heavily tipped in favor of those that are decreasing.

Additional approaches to the study of avifaunal change are available, but not employed in this volume—that of comparing avifaunas present at single sites between historical and recent surveys. This approach would be fascinating for this region, owing to the numerous early surveys carried out and documented in detail by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology crew, especially Grinnell, Miller, and their students. Sites that would be potentially fruitful include the San Jacinto Mountains, parts of Joshua Tree National Monument, and many of the isolated mountain ranges in Death Valley, among others. I used this approach in studies of the avifauna of a remote mountain range in southern California to show apparent appearances and disappearances of several species in the local avifauna (Peterson, 1990, *Western Birds* 21: 127–135). Exploration of its utility elsewhere in west-

ern North America and in tropical ecosystems potentially would yield many fascinating insights into "molecular-level" changes within or at the edges of species' distributions (e.g. Goodman and Ingle, 1993, *Oryx* 27:174–180). Studies based on geographic information systems also are not included, though they offer potentially important inferential tools where information available is incomplete.

All in all, this volume is interesting reading, and is well edited and attractively published. It suffers from a few confusions (e.g. the inclusion of Hawaii in "western North America"), and scattered chapters are not up to the interest and quality of the rest. Nevertheless, the volume as a whole is well worth reading, and can serve as a reference for future efforts in the same or other regions. I certainly recommend it for all ornithologists' libraries, because this material is the stuff of the future for all of us—ecologists, systematists, conservation biologists—everyone.—A TOWNSEND PETERSON, *Natural History Museum, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045 USA.*

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**Birds of Europe with North Africa and the Middle East**—Lars Jonsson. 1992. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 559 pp., 300+ color plates, numerous text figures. ISBN 0-691-03326-9. \$39.50.—This new field guide by Swedish author and artist Lars Jonsson is the best field guide to European birds yet produced. It provides a comprehensive guide to the birds of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, and describes more than 400 species that breed or winter in the region, or that occur there as vagrants. The guide had its origins in a five-volume series entitled *Fåglar i Naturen (Birds in the Wild)* published between 1976 and 1980, and it was originally intended that this book would condense the material from these volumes into a single guide. However, expanded descriptions and new information, coupled with 140 entirely new and 40 revised plates, make this a new book.

The guide begins with a useful 27-page Introduction that discusses bird identification, defines terminology, and outlines such topics as molt, migration, distribution, and behavior. The remainder of the book is comprised of the individual species descriptions, plates, and distribution maps. In the earlier series of books, species were grouped on the basis of habitat affinities, an arrangement that prompted some criticism. Jonsson avoids that problem here by largely following Vouss's 1977 List of Holarctic bird species, but he also incorporates some recent taxonomic