

southern British Columbia and the three Pacific states. Wood Duck numbers reached perilously low levels near the turn of the century. The passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918, low bag limits through the 1930s, and post-war building of more than 100 000 nest boxes, have all contributed to the recovery of this attractive duck. Nevertheless, about 95% still nest in natural tree hollows and snags. According to Shurtleff, Minnesota now has the greatest population of any state.

Co-author Christopher Savage has studied the Mandarin in his native Great Britain and in eastern Asia, where it holds an important place in art and literature. Sadly, due to hunting and continuing habitat loss, the Mandarin is a threatened species. Prime habitat in the forests of Ussuriland, the eastern tongue of Siberia that extends down along the Sea of Japan to Vladivostok, are being clear-cut at a frightening rate; each year fewer snags are left for nesting in old-growth forest. Few Mandarins have survived the human pressures in eastern China. Only in Japan is it reasonably well protected.

Shurtleff quotes Aldo Leopold's "stern note of caution" that attempted introduction of species to different continents results most often in failure. Yet

the Mandarin's best hope for longterm survival may be in Britain. Early in this century local groupings of 300 Mandarins were kept by the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire, soon followed by another group belonging to the famous ornithologist, Lord Grey of Fallodon, in Northumberland. Nevertheless, the current wild population of these exotics derives mainly from the 45 given in 1931 by the famous waterfowl biologist, Jean Delacour, to Alfred Ezra for his estate in Surrey. The Mandarin was admitted officially to the British and Irish List in 1971; there are now between seven and thirteen thousand birds in the wild. Throughout Britain, as elsewhere, they use natural tree cavities and man-made nest boxes, and the clutch size of fourteen is larger than in their normal haunts.

This book is beautifully produced, well-written, and contains seven helpful pages of instructions for building and caring for duck nest boxes. It would be a tasteful addition to the coffee table of any duck hunter, waterfowl biologist, or wildlife photographer.

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Ontario Birds: A Field Guide to 125 Common Birds of Ontario

Chris Fisher. 1996. Lone Pine Publishing, Edmonton. 159 pp., illus. \$17.95

Upon first opening this book, one is met with a well-organized series of bird descriptions. Each page is set aside for one species, complete with an illustration, general description, and fact listing for each. The fact listing includes identification tips, nesting and feeding details, and miscellaneous notes. A useful chart at the bottom of each page gives the reader an instantaneous impression of abundance and seasonal distribution with a highlighted area outlining the breeding period.

The author brings out many interesting facts that many experienced birders will find new. This is somewhat of an accomplishment as the book is directed at beginners. Environmental issues (past and present, failures and successes) as they relate to several species are addressed.

The newest name revisions are used (e.g., Baltimore Oriole) and a particularly interesting feature is that the author translates the long scientific names for many of the species. The author's sense of humour comes out successfully many times through the book.

What is it though, that compels people to misname their books? *Ontario Birds* is misnamed as it unapologetically only treats the 125 common birds of *southern* Ontario (or is it 126 species as is contradictorily stated in the introduction). As such, three

species (American Tree Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbill) are listed as nonbreeders, even though they are known to nest in Ontario (albeit north of the Golden Horseshoe).

Approximately half of each page is allotted to a general description of each bird. However, for several species (e.g., Broad-winged Hawk, Virginia Rail, Common Tern) this text lends itself more towards a description of the broader taxonomic group, not the individual species. Perhaps there should have been a page devoted to each group as well as individual species accounts.

The order in which the birds are presented is akin to the Audubon style rather than the more conventional taxonomic style. This was done as an aid to the beginning birders. As such, "ground feeders" are all together (grouse, doves, lark) as are aerial feeders (nightjars, chimney swift, kingfisher (?) but interestingly, not swallows). "Colourful songbirds" is another category with obvious omissions. Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak are there, but not Eastern Meadowlark or Baltimore Oriole (which are placed in their taxonomic grouping of blackbirds). Behaviours of the birds are often eloquently described, "Like a taut bowstring, the heron tenses before it fires" and "like large swallows, Black Terns dip and spin... as though to defy the laws of flight that restrict most other birds." However, referring to the courship dance of a Goldeneye as being

"Nature's most entertaining slapstick routine" is disrespectful to the ritual and the birds.

Two artists did the vast majority of the illustrations (three others contributed 19 of the illustrations), most of which are good, some extremely nice. There are a few cases in which salient features outlined in the text cannot be seen in the drawings, and a few have outright errors (the purple head on the Common Goldeneye comes to mind).

Text and illustration should work together to help people identify a bird. As such, comparing radically differently shaped birds to get a feel for size is not useful. For instance, the author tells us that Whip-poor-wills are robin-sized. I don't find this useful because the two birds are radically different in shape. Saying that the meadowlark is robin-sized will be useful to beginners. Taking this one step for the worse, the author refers to several birds as being smaller or larger than a hawk. Which hawk?

The final section of the book outlines a seasonal

approach to birding and supplies many useful tips on equipment and getting started in this hobby. The different types of optics and their uses are introduced quite well. The reader will also find the standard bird diagram in this section, with markers pointing out the pertinent topographic features. Unfortunately, this diagram is poorly labelled — "primary feathers" points to secondary feathers while "secondary feathers" points to greater coverts. The markers for "breast, flank and, belly" point to three neighbouring spots which cannot give a novice an understanding of these *regions*.

This book has a lot of potential. I would not recommend this book in its current state, though a second edition, properly edited (and titled) would be a joy for any southern Ontario birder to own.

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Landscape Approaches in Mammalian Ecology and Conservation

Edited by William Z. Lidicker Jr. 1995. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. ix + 215 pp., illus. U.S. \$35.95.

The association between wildlife and habitat typically has been studied and interpreted at two scales, the regional (or continental) and the stand (or individual) scale. Regional scale associations relate animal and plant distributions over very large areas, such as from the equator to the Arctic, or from the boreal forest biome to the temperate forest. However, the predominant scale of study in wildlife ecology has been at what is often termed the stand scale; locations of individuals are related to immediate surroundings of vegetative cover, to the amount of food, proximity to water, or other parameters, then averaged and compared to the amount of that habitat available in the area. In the mid-1980s, the role of the landscape emerged as a valid and distinct scale in which wildlife distributions could be related to much larger processes. For example, adjacent populations are known to act as sources and sinks within a larger "metapopulation", replenishing or receiving individuals from neighbouring populations, dependent, in part, on the barriers and conduits existing within the landscape. This book, *Landscape Approaches in Mammalian Ecology and Conservation* is one of the best compilations to date of the landscape influence on mammals.

The book, organized into nine chapters, is written by a series of noted authors on landscape ecology and mammalogy, selected principally from their involvement in a 1991 international conference in Australia. And although the authors discuss ideas and projects

from numerous regions (i.e., Canada, United States, Australia, and several European countries) and species (microtine rodents, weasels, marsupials, and marten) the similarity in the interpretations of how animals respond at this scale gives an indication of the coalescence of the landscape concept.

The first of three parts outlines the concept, its development, and its potential application to wildlife science and conservation. Most of the book is dedicated to the second part where five chapters provide the data and evidence for theories on how patch heterogeneity and configuration influences animal movement, and how the effect of predation varies by prey density in patches adjacent to the one they utilize. The chapter on weasels and rodents in Norway is particularly worthwhile because the 10-year data set provides the longer period necessary for understanding the dynamics of population change. The third part of the book presents two experimental manipulations of rodent populations in fragmented and patchy landscapes. As shown in these papers, one advantage of working on small rodents can be the increased opportunity for controlling the design and heterogeneity of their landscape.

There are only a few significant drawbacks to the book worth mentioning. The book's size is one. At only 213 small-sized pages, the reader is left hoping for more information. Similarly, the book focuses on small-sized species, and species generally not at the top of that landscape's trophic hierarchy. As such, this book does not provide much information on the landscape-level relationships of large carnivores and their prey. Nevertheless, because of the quality of the



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