

BOOK REVIEWS

BRITISH WARBLERS

Eric Simms. 1985. New Naturalist Library series, William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd.; distributed by Penguin Books, 40 W. 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010. Six color plates by Ian Wallace; 177 black-and-white photographs and line drawings, including sonagrams. Bibliography. Index. 432 p. Paperback, \$27.95.

In many respects *British Warblers* resembles Hal H. Harrison's *Wood Warbler's World*, which treats the wood warblers of North America (for review, see Chat 51:64). Although Simms provides some very pleasant first-hand accounts of field experiences with the Old World warblers, his book includes many details that will appeal more to advanced bird students than to relatively inexperienced ones. The numerous sonagrams, graphs, tables, and maps of nesting territories combine to give the book an appearance of being far more technical than it actually is, but some passages (e.g. several pages on the song of a single species) may try the patience of even a dedicated reader. Simms' work provides a valuable summary of what is known about the Old World warblers that occur in Britain, and the work should attract a wide readership in Europe. Even though many American bird students may purchase *British Warblers* as a reference book, very few will feel compelled to read it all the way through.—Eloise F. Potter

ERIC HOSKING'S BIRDS OF PREY OF THE WORLD

Eric and David Hosking with Jim Flegg. 1987. Republished 1988 by The Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, Massachusetts; distributed by Penguin Books, 40 W. 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010. Illus. in color. Index. 176 p. Hardcover, \$19.95

Those who take pleasure in owning *Eric Hosking's Owls* (Pelham, 1982) will rush to the bookstore for this new work on the diurnal birds of prey. Many of the photographs by the Hoskings, father and son, are spectacular. The large-format book is beautifully designed, and the quality of the printing is excellent. One minor design flaw is that small-sized black type printed over relatively dark color plates is very difficult to read.

Although the authors carefully explain the discrepancies between British and American usage regarding such confusing terms as "buzzard," "hawk," and "sparrowhawk," the main text fails to note the adoption of American Kestrel instead of Sparrow Hawk as the common name for *Falco sparverius* in North America. The species list gives the new name for the American Kestrel but does not follow the current A.O.U. *Check-list* on the Black-shouldered Kite (formerly White-tailed Kite). Problems such as these are typical of books that treat families of birds on a worldwide basis. Fortunately, no one expects a book full of breath-taking photographs to be an authoritative reference on nomenclature.

The best parts of the text, in my opinion, are the Osprey account and the chapters on conservation and falconry. Many readers will be surprised by the authors' tolerant attitude toward falconers ("at the forefront of avian captive-breeding techniques"), but not by their condemnation of gamekeepers who routinely slaughter birds of prey.—Eloise F. Potter

THE COLLINS FIELD GUIDE TO THE MAMMALS OF AFRICA INCLUDING MADAGASCAR

Theodore Haltenorth and Helmut Diller. 1980. Republished 1988 by The Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, Massachusetts; distributed by Viking Penguin Inc., 40 W. 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010. Illus. Hardcover. 400 p. \$19.95.

The large mammal fauna of the African continent has fascinated Europeans throughout recorded history. Haltenorth's and Diller's field guide, translated from the original German by Robert Hayman and originally published by William Collins Sons & Co., Ltd. is now available for Americans. While it does not allow one to identify all the species of small mammals such as the multitude of shrews and mice, it does an excellent job of allowing the conscientious observer to name the larger species that one is likely (or unlikely) to encounter on a typical African safari. My one quibble is the tendency to use English names in the illustrations for the many sub-specific forms of some mammals such as giraffes and zebras. Without reading the text carefully, one could be misled into believing that these were different species of animals rather than different forms of a widespread species.

An uncommon feature for field guides is an attempt in the introduction to describe the history of the continent and its mammalian fauna. This necessarily requires a heavy recitation of the fossil evidence that has a particularly soporific effect on most of us, but can be particularly illuminating if you persist.

Even if you are not planning an expedition to the wilds of Africa, this guide can be a real help on any visit to a sizable zoological park. Most of these institutions are now attempting to simulate wild conditions for the display of their collected mammals, maintaining mixed herds in open fields. There are never handy signs and pictures enabling you to tell which ones are the Greater Kudu and which ones are the Wildebeestes. Now you can travel prepared and really impress the people around you by knowing the difference between a Grevy's Zebra and a Grant's Zebra —H. T. Hendrickson