

around the Chesapeake Bay. These are the populations surrounded by some of the densest populations of humans, who have access to some of the most effective means of public communication ever devised.

The future for Ospreys looks bright. Although humans continue to modify the natural habitats in ways that are detrimental to many species, Ospreys continue to exhibit a range of adaptability that promises to keep them with us into the foreseeable future.

## COLLINS HANDGUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

Martin Woodcock. 1980. Republished 1989 by The Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, Massachusetts; distributed by Viking Penguin Inc., 40 W. 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010. Illus. 176 pp. \$11.95.

Here is a book designed for the casual tourist to the Indian sub-continent. Of the approximately 1250 species of birds recorded from the region, the most common (or more interesting) 273 are illustrated in color. Woodcock's paintings, based on my limited experience with several of the species in the field, are certainly acceptable. They are good clear drawings that demonstrate the appropriate markings of the species. An additional 272 species are described briefly (and some are illustrated in black and white) in a synopsis of families at the back of the book.

Clearly, the biggest drawback to the Handguide is that it only covers about 43% of the known birds (and only half of those are covered thoroughly). The alternative is to invest in the ten volume Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan by Ali and Ripley which is not exactly portable and will cost you considerably more than the modest asking price of this volume.

My guess is that the casual visitor who wants to identify the birds most commonly encountered will be more than satisfied with this aid.

## NOCTURNAL FLIGHT CALLS OF MIGRATING THRUSHES

Bill Evans. 1990. Sound Tracker, P.O. Box 46, Mecklenburg, NY 14863. Forty-eight minute cassette with liner notes. \$10.00 postpaid.

Bill Evans' cassette opens up a whole new world for average birders by giving us an excellent tutorial on how to identify five common species of North American thrush by their nocturnal flight call-notes. Side A begins with short sequences of the nocturnal flight notes of Gray-cheeked Thrush, each preceded by an identifying announcement. This summary, located right at the beginning of the tape, is obviously designed for use in the field, as we struggle to associate the squeaks and chips we hear in the pre-dawn spring of fall sky with the tutorial on the tape.

The summary is followed by the tutorial proper. Evans goes over each species in turn, giving several long cuts of their nocturnal flight calls. He then compares the nocturnal calls to the species; diurnal calls, and contrasts each species with the

other thrush species that you might confuse it with. Side A finishes with a brief discussion of other calls that you might confuse with nocturnal thrush calls, such as the call of the Bobolink, giving cuts of those calls. Evans even admits that there are some calls he cannot yet identify, and gives examples of them. Finally Side A ends with three practice sequences, which mix and match various species' calls. (Answers are given on the cassette's liner notes.)

Side B consists of four long cuts, unedited, from nocturnal recording sessions. You hear thrush notes against typical night sound backgrounds—insect noises, owls, cows lowing, distant trains and airplanes. In each case the thrush notes are faint at first, then gradually increase in volume as the birds descend from migration at dawn. You find yourself saying, "Hey, there's a Gray-cheek", or, if you listen from a comfortable couch, you fall fast asleep. In either case the effect is fantastic.—Robin Carter.

## COLLINS GUIDE TO TROPICAL PLANTS

W. Lötschert and G. Beese. William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., London. 1981 (reprinted 1988 by the Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, Massachusetts; distributed by Viking Penguin Inc., 40 W. 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010). ISBN 0 00 2191121.

This introduction to tropical plants will prove a good companion for the traveler first visiting the tropics or tropical botanical gardens. Although the book purports to address both professional and amateur botanists, the amateur will find it much more useful as a colorful introduction to the diversity of tropical ornamental and economic plants. These are the plants that the tourist is most likely to encounter on a visit to the tropics. The plates and brief descriptions vividly portray the plants most commonly seen in markets and streets in many tropical countries. For these reasons this book could serve as an interesting memoir of a vacation. As a guide, it will provide an instructive companion for a visit to one of this country's tropical botanical gardens, such as Fairchild Tropical Garden (Miami) or Waimea Falls Park (Oahu, Hawaii). Timber trees and medicinal plants have been excluded from the book, which is just as well considering the enormous number of plants in these two categories and the infrequency that they are seen by the amateur botanist.

The book is divided into three main sections: Introduction, Ornamental Plants, and Economic Plants. In addition, there are 274 color photographs that fill just under one third of the pages. The first section introduces the reader to the general features of the tropics and of tropical plants. Sections on tropical plants in mythology, art and stamps are included. Each of the other sections consists solely of descriptions of individual plants, keyed to their photographs. In addition to a non-technical description of each species, information is provided on flowering time, origin, distribution, and ecological requirements.

Unfortunately, no key is provided, making it difficult to identify unknown plants despite the authors' protestations to the contrary. Despite this shortcoming, Collins Guide to Tropical Plants can serve as a stimulating introduction to the diversity of tropical ornamental and economic plants.—Bruce K. Kirchoff