

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

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Raptors of Western North America by Brian K. Wheeler. Maps by John M. Economidy [2003]. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 08540. (US \$71.00). *Reviewed by Chris Siddle.*

This large identification manual (544 pages) covers all 33 regularly occurring hawks, eagles, falcons, kites, harrier, osprey, and vultures from Texas, north to Manitoba, and westward across the continent including the Rio Grande specialities. An obvious strength of this volume is the large number of photos for each species. The various ages, sexes, and colour morphs are well covered for Golden Eagle (17 images), Swainson's Hawk (44 images), Red-tailed Hawk (83 images), Merlin (16 images), and Sharp-shinned Hawk (22 images). These are sharply focused photos of birds in flight and at rest, of which only four have appeared in the earlier publication, *A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors* (Academic Press, 1995). Extensive captions draw attention to each picture's notable details for identifying each raptor. The date and location of each photo is usually given for each image.

The text covers moult, subspecies' ranges, colour morphs, sizes, species' traits, detailed plumage descriptions, abnormal plumages, and brief statements on feeding, flight, voice, status, distribution, nesting, conservation, similar species, and other less known popular and local names. Species accounts range in length from 13.5 pages for Northern Goshawk to 17.5 pages for Bald Eagle. Summaries of recent range expansions are particularly useful such as the expansion of Broad-winged Hawk into central and northern British Columbia. The distribution maps are splendidly detailed and are the best available for North American species. In some cases subspecies have their own maps.

Raptors of Western North America is a must-have publication for all bird of prey enthusiasts and serious birders. It is well worth the price.

Wildlife Issues in a Changing World by Michael P. Moulton and James Sanderson [1999]. Available from CRC Press. Boca Raton, FL. 33431-9868 (US \$79.95).

This best-selling volume focuses on the causes of wildlife issues such as overpopulation, habitat fragmentation and loss, introduced species, and chains of extinctions. Case studies are global in nature and provide perspective for

problems in different countries. This definitive work is the standard reference for students studying conservation.

Flight Calls of Migratory Eastern North American Landbirds by William R. Evans and Michael O' Brien [2002]. (US \$54.00). *Reviewed by Chris Charlesworth.*

Unlike a decade ago, birders and biologists today are fortunate to have a wide variety of identification aids at their disposal. There are numerous audio guides to bird songs on the market, but until now, none have been able to assist with identifying bird calls in flight. This CD-ROM covers 211 species of migratory landbirds in eastern North America and uses audio recordings and a spectrographic portrayal of calls to provide information on migration and calling behaviour. Although identification of flight calls is a concept beyond some field naturalists, those interested in the topic will find this CD-ROM useful and challenging. It requires a computer with CD-ROM capabilities.

The California Condor: A Saga of Natural History and Conservation by Noel Snyder and Helen Snyder. Academic Press. San Diego, CA. 92101 [2000]. (US \$49.00). *Reviewed by Richard Mooney.*

There are few natural history books that can be read time and time again, but this is one of them. A wealth of information is presented in a clear and concise fashion that allows the reader to journey with the authors on a epic quest to find the answer to the question "*What happened to the California Condor?*" Noel and Helen Snyder have compiled the most complete, comprehensive, and accurate account on this species ever published. Eighteen chapters cover conservation, biology, breeding behaviour, mortality, and population decline. The authors enable the reader to experience the highs and lows, the frustrations and controversy, and the anger and joy that accompany each stage of the heroic effort to save one of the most magnificent birds ever to grace our skies. Readers interested in birds, conservation, natural history, or endangered species will find that this book grabs their attention and holds on to it from start to finish. The book contains over 100 quality colour photographs, as well as numerous figures and tables. Even if it is not read in full, it would be a superb addition to any ornithological reference library.