

BIRDS OF THE TRANSBOUNDARY GRENADINES—Juliana Coffey and Alison Ollivierre. 2019. *Birds of the Grenadines*. Publishers, Carriacou, Grenada. 142 pp. ISBN 978-1-9994585-0-8. \$30.00.

If awards were given for the greatest diversity of field guides across a region, surely the Caribbean would be in a position to win! The past 5–10 yr have seen a burst in the publishing of fine bird guides for small islands or island-groups, including guides for Dominica (James *et al.* 2005), Anguilla (Holliday *et al.* 2007), the Bahama Islands (Wardle *et al.* 2014), and Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao (Wells and Wells 2017), to name a few. Some of this publishing activity was due to a popular grant program sponsored by Herb Raffaele's Division of International Conservation at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But the beat goes on!

The diversity of Caribbean guides is now nicely augmented by a handsome little guide to the birds of more than 50 islands, islets, and cays—only 9 of which are inhabited! In *Birds of the Transboundary Grenadines*, these islands—which are shared between the eastern Caribbean countries of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada—are given a level of coverage not previously imagined. Although mostly small, uninhabited, and lacking tourists, the islands are internationally recognized as ecologically significant for their diversity of habitats, important coral reefs and mangrove stands, and especially for their breeding colonies of seabirds.

These scattered—even remote—islands may seem an unlikely subject for a modern field guide, considering the difficulty of covering them adequately. But Coffey and Ollivierre have very successfully conceived, researched, and executed an engaging guide to the birds of these many small islands, and that in itself is a tremendously exciting accomplishment!

The guide opens with general descriptions of the islands and their importance to birds, including discussions of internationally recognized protected areas and Important Bird Areas. Included here is a very valuable and well-executed 16-page set of maps showing islands and island-groups, which will be a great boon to those of us unfamiliar with the majority of these islands.

After some general tips for bird identification, short and concise species accounts are provided for 117 species. English and scientific names are followed by their four-letter codes (a useful inclusion) and up to five local names, which are always interesting (and sometimes mystifying!). Species accounts relate general information about the bird, a physical description for identification purposes, a unique or interesting characteristic of the species, and local knowledge or the distribution of sightings in the transboundary Grenadines.

Species accounts are limited to < 100 words, so descriptions are necessarily spare. But accounts are also aided by small icons that express species status (breeding, non-breeding, or mi-

grant), diet (using 13 different categories ranging from amphibians to zooplankton), and habitat (with up to 8 unique habitats, including the seldom-specified urban area). I suppose the use of these icons is more familiar to younger users of field guides, as they have a certain kinship with screen shots and video games. I personally find them somewhat annoying, since one must divine their intention or memorize each symbol.

Of course, the heart of a field guide is its illustrations. Coffey and Ollivierre rely on a single photograph for each species. I know some users prefer photographs over paintings, but in my opinion, the photographs are this guide's only real weakness; they vary in quality, with some marred by odd postures, poor lighting, obscured identifying characteristics, or portions that are not in focus. In addition, although the authors provide brief descriptions of alternate plumages, only one plumage can be illustrated with a single photograph. Nonetheless, I expect they largely serve their purpose well.

But the authors save the best of the book for last. In a 20-page section on "People and Birds," *Birds of the Transboundary Grenadines* demonstrates why these little regional guides are so utterly appealing. Clearly drawing on their own extensive experience in studies of anthropology and local knowledge, Coffey and Ollivierre present a fascinating, locally-based account of birds in both the historic Amerindian and the present-day culture and economy, exploring the role of birds in such diverse fields as art, meteorology, navigation, fisheries, and as a food source.

Birds of the Transboundary Grenadines presents a well-thought-out, colorful, and easy-to-use guide to the birds of these islands. The pocket-sized guide does a good job of introducing one to the birds of the islands, but it is the details found in the local names, history, culture, and folklore which impart real depth to the book. I would recommend it, of course, to anyone living on or visiting these islands—but I would also suggest the book to anyone who appreciates birds, people, history, or culture, and who would treasure the beauty and diversity represented in the book.

Literature Cited

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