

AVES ACUÁTICAS EN LOS HUMEDALES DE CUBA (WATERBIRDS IN THE WETLANDS OF CUBA).—Lourdes Mugica Valdés, Dennis Denis Ávila, Martín Acosta Cruz, Ariam Jiménez Reyes, and Antonio Rodríguez Suárez. 2006. Editorial Científico-Técnica, La Habana, Cuba. 193 pp. ISBN: 959-05-0407-8. \$30.00; Available from Natural History Book Service (www.nhbs.com).

Caribbean wetlands are vitally important habitats, providing food, water and shelter to many resident and migratory birds and other biodiversity, and essential resources and ecosystem services (e.g., lessening flood damage) to human populations. Unfortunately, and of grave concern, wetlands are also one of our region's most endangered habitats. Threatened by agriculture, filling and dredging, coastal developments, and a variety of pollutants, wetlands are under widespread attack. In what promises to be a new generation of bird-themed books, a quintet of Cuban authors led by Lourdes Mugica offer us a beautiful book on the birds of the wetlands of Cuba. While most recent bird books from the Caribbean have been field guides dedicated to the veteran birdwatcher, or introductions to common birds for schoolchildren and other beginners, this book is an in-depth treatment of the ecology and conservation of wetland birds. Presumably intended for upper level students and conservation professionals, the book does an admirable job of summarizing the state of knowledge on the ecology of wetland birds, the threats that they face in Cuba, and the opportunities for conservation of the birds and their wetlands.

Written in Spanish, *Aves Acuáticas en los Humedales de Cuba* begins with an overview of wetlands, their value and function, and the different types of wetlands in Cuba. Following is a description of the key species of plants and animals in wetland ecosystems, and a survey of wetland birds, their adaptations to allow a life in aquatic habitats, and a summary of their importance in maintaining the ecosystems. The heart of the book is devoted to birds in each of the principle wetland habitats of Cuba: diverse coastal wetlands, mangroves, freshwater wetlands, and rice fields. Each of these chapters elaborates on the ecology and behavior of the birds occurring in these habitats, often including notes from the most recent research in Cuba on relative abundance, habitat partitioning, morphological adaptations, reproductive behavior, reproductive success, growth rates of nestlings, the role of migratory birds in wetland communities, and both posi-

tive and negative interactions with humans.

Perhaps most interesting to me was the extensive treatment of bird use of rice fields. More than anyone else, the Cubans have spearheaded studies to understand the importance of rice fields to birds, and have promoted their value in the conservation of aquatic birds. In *Aves Acuáticas en los Humedales de Cuba*, the importance of rice fields as alternative habitat for a wide variety of birds is made clear through a description of the rice cultivation cycle, the variation in the bird community using the rice fields throughout the annual cycle, food sources for birds and the aquatic animal communities that occur in rice fields, and a consideration of the impact of birds on the rice harvest. Clearly the Cubans understand the importance of finding ways to allow agriculture and birds to coexist, and this chapter on rice production highlights that issue nicely. One question that remained in my mind though was that of the role of pesticides in rice culture. Perhaps I am misinformed or perhaps Cuba is unique, but I had always understood rice cultivation to be extremely dependent on chemical inputs, and thus a detriment and a danger to aquatic birds. A note on this issue would fill out the chapter nicely.

Finally, the book concludes with considerations on the conservation of aquatic birds and wetland habitats. The list of threats to wetlands is long and familiar, but of interest here is the in-depth analysis of the situation in Cuba. Included are data on introduced species that threaten wetland ecosystems, egg collection, illegal hunting, and habitat conversion. Groups that are actively involved or support wetland conservation are highlighted here, and while the West Indian Whistling-Duck Working Group is highlighted, I was surprised that there is little mention of the SCSCB. The book concludes with a checklist of species, a comprehensive index, glossary, and an appendix of removable pages that can be collated to form a 12-page pocket guide to aquatic birds of Cuban wetlands, and 4 full-page posters by the renowned Cuban artists Nils Navarro and Rolando Rodríguez that might be used to promote the conservation of these birds and their habitats. These are both unique and creative additions to the book, but I have to wonder who would damage such a beautiful book by removing these plates, as lovely as they are?

Not only is the treatment of ecological questions representative of a new generation of bird books for the Caribbean, but it is also reflected in the layout of *Aves Acuáticas en los Humedales de Cuba*. Full of colorful graphics, photographs, graphs, and infor-

mative sidebars and boxes, the book invites perusal. On nearly every page the browser will find an inviting note of interest. Each page is topped with a prominent header that instantly sets the reader into the subject of the chapter, but even more surprising is that each chapter is printed on a different colored, high-quality paper, from light lilac, to lemon yellow, to a warm light blue. This technique adds to the beauty of the book, but also makes locating a particular chapter remarkably easy. While I admit some initial unease in the overall pattern of the layout, which somehow resembles a webpage design, once accustomed to its feel, I found it very useful and inviting. But I also think that it will instantly appeal more to the youngest generation of conservationists who have been raised on the internet and textbooks—which also seem to be populated by sidebars and boxes rather than the long chapters and minimal graphics of previous generations.

I have very few negative criticisms of this book. As it is packed with information, at times the sidebars or boxes can have such small fonts that they really are a strain to see. In particular, throughout the book are scattered small, species identification cards which have unfortunately been overly reduced. Although bibliographies are included in each chapter, they are limited in scope and could be broadened to allow readers to access more detailed original data. But other than these minor flaws, I think the Cuban team of ornithologists is to be commended for producing such a beautiful and informative book. It should serve as a model for other such efforts to help translate research results into conservation practice, and to inform and inspire a new generation of avian conservation biologists.—STEVEN C. LATTA, *Department of Conservation and Field Research, National Aviary, Allegheny Commons West, Pittsburgh, PA 15212, USA; e-mail: steven.latta@aviary.org.*

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ORNITHOLOGY IN THE WEST INDIES.—James W. Wiley. 2000. Proceedings of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Volume 7. 817 pp. ISSN: 0511-7550. \$42.50; available from the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, CA 93012, USA.

Occasionally a book appears that one instantly understands is a landmark achievement. This *Bibliography of Ornithology in the West Indies* is not a page turner, nor even particularly attractive, but it is monumental in scope and will impact the work of ornithologists and conservationists in the West Indies for decades to come. Jim Wiley has assembled here a staggering 11,648 entries of published papers, reports—including considerable numbers of publications considered “gray literature,” theses, newspaper stories, and proposals, 97.3% of which were seen personally by Wiley. Even obscure titles that only the historian and collector would find of value are listed. Each entry is followed by a short description of the contents of the paper, and sometimes a quite extended abstract is presented for the more important works.

This tremendous collection of citations is complemented and made far more useful by the provision of cross-referenced indices. Index 1 is a list of all

bibliographic references according to taxonomic names of all bird species mentioned in the bibliography, so that one might find, for example, all publications which mention *Amazona ventralis*. Index 2 is a list of all bibliographic references divided by geographic names so that one might locate, for example, all works relevant to the Dominican Republic. An index of references sorted by key words is included, but this should be used in conjunction with a following appendix that lists subject key words stratified by categories and subcategories, as some of the lists of references can become quite lengthy and the desired subject may be better addressed in one of the many subcategories. The bibliography concludes with a list of serial or journal titles, a list of serials or journals organized by country of publication, a taxonomic list of species with common and Latin names, a key to geographic place names organized by island group, and a list of libraries and other key sources of information incorporated into the bibliography.

While the frontispiece seems to caution the reviewer with this note attributed to a G. F. Mees, “Bibliography is a most unrewarding occupation, because one tends to get blamed for what one has overlooked, rather than praised for what one has accomplished,” as a reviewer I felt obligated to find at least one missed citation. It took five years of use, but I finally did it—or rather Storrs Olson did it for