

SEABIRD BREEDING ATLAS OF THE LESSER ANTILLES.—Katharine Lowrie, David Lowrie, and Natalia Collier. 2012. Environmental Protection in the Caribbean, Riviera Beach, FL. 221 pp. ISBN: none.

The crystal clear seas of the Caribbean are dotted with small islands that provide ideal nesting sites for seabirds, but because many are remote, rugged, and fraught with hazards, they are seldom visited by ornithologists. In recent decades there have been three major attempts to compile information on the breeding seabirds of the region (van Halewyn and Norton 1984, Schreiber and Lee 2000, Bradley and Norton 2009). This new book ups the ante in the Lesser Antilles, where intrepid explorers and conservationists David and Katharine Lowrie—who recently ran the length of South America from icy Tierra del Fuego to a Caribbean beach in Venezuela—used the clean and sustainable power of wind to sail 5856 km among more than 200 islands to document the composition of species and the imminent threats at each seabird colony during 2009–2010.

The book, which is attractively designed and amply illustrated, commences with abstracts in English, French, and Spanish, followed by introductory chapters describing the book's layout, definitions, and survey methods.

A section of species accounts briefly summarizes the breeding biology, survey methods, and status of breeding colonies depicted on a map, for each of 18 seabird species. More detailed data for each species can be found in the following section of island accounts.

The island accounts, compiled for each of 16 major island groups, provide descriptions of the islands and breeding colonies, survey methods, results, threats, observations of seabirds outside of the breeding colonies, and a discussion. These sections are often augmented with detailed maps and tables of data. Most of the colonies were visited twice, providing comparative information during different periods of the breeding season.

It is sobering to read descriptions of the many anthropogenic threats to nesting seabirds, which are sprinkled throughout the island accounts. To give a few anecdotal examples from the Grenadines, the Lowries witnessed men with buckets collecting eggs on Dove Cay, unleashed dogs flushing nesting seabirds at Tobago Cays, dead seabirds hanging from traps in trees on Battooia, and carcasses on the beach at Baliceaux where local islanders prepare the birds for cooking. They even reported rumors of

shoot-outs between rival fishermen who collect eggs on Petit Canouan. Clearly the attitudes of islanders toward nesting seabirds must change if we hope to preserve them.

The final section discusses the significance of the Lesser Antilles for breeding seabird species, as well as the most important nations or territories, the most important individual islands, species of special concern, recently colonizing species, various threats including humans and invasive species, and a plea for further research and conservation.

Several appendices augment previous sections by defining acronyms and terms, summarizing atlas data at country or territory, regional, and global scales, geographic coordinates for study sites, and maps of survey plots in a few large colonies.

The Lowries deserve accolades for the tremendous amount of time, effort, and expense devoted to their surveys, often in inhospitable and hazardous conditions, and in compiling their data for publication, which may have been an even more difficult task. Natalia Collier of Environmental Protection in the Caribbean also merits commendation for partnering with the Lowries in producing such a fine book, which significantly advances our knowledge of breeding seabirds in the Caribbean.

Seabird researchers will find in this book an indispensable treasure trove of up-to-date information on the status of seabirds in the region. Conservationists will find the book equally indispensable for its insights on the relative importance and conservation value of various seabird colonies, as well as the accompanying threats which are identified and should be targeted for elimination.—FLOYD E. HAYES, *Department of Biology, Pacific Union College, Angwin, CA 94508, USA*; e-mail: *floyd_hayes@yahoo.com*.

LITERATURE CITED

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