far inland. I would be surprised if this pack-ice loving beast would go up fresh water rivers.

Birds of the Saskatoon Area


During my second encounter with the late J. Bernard Gollop in Regina some time between 1968 and 1970, the late Margaret Belcher and her sister, Mary Houston, mentioned that his planned book on the birds of the Saskatoon area would probably be the next of the esteemed Saskatchewan Natural History Society special publications to appear. Unfortunately, Bernie did not live to see it in print, but 77 authors and six editors finally brought his 1965-1988 efforts to fruition. The long gestation period produced an outstanding addition to Saskatchewan’s ornithological literature.

This largest book in the series to date is also the first to be co-published [by the Saskatchewan Nature Society] and is the fifth in the Manley Callin series on birds of specific areas of the province. It is jammed with information, with even the covers and fold-outs from the covers containing information [an area map, a Landsat image of the study area and a few tables]. Introductory material covers the first 68 pages of text, including publication blurbs, tables of contents, drawings, maps and photographs, a dedication to Bernie Gollop, a preface, a foreword by Farley Mowat, a poem, acknowledgments, chapters on birding aids, histories of birding in the area and of the project, a detailed chapter on habitats and other ecological influences on the local avifauna, a detailed chapter on “hot spots” [essentially a bird-finding guide], a list of “unpublished” sources [including published seasonal compilations] consulted, a list of abbreviations, a topography and a glossary. These are well illustrated with figures, maps and drawings. The bulk of the text consists of 340 species accounts in taxonomic order except for one [Prairie Warbler] that was added while the book was in late stages of production. Eight appendices, a list of references cited and indices to English and French bird names close the book.

The species accounts are preceded by a two-page introduction, explaining their contents and definitions used for seasonal occurrence, status in the area, abundance, tables of arrival and departure dates and other general information. Species accounts range in length from two paragraphs to two and a quarter pages, depending on regularity of occurrence in the area, amount of knowledge of the species’ life history features in the area, numbers banded in the area, and other factors, such as change in status, locally, provincially, and/or generally. If migratory, earliest and median spring arrival and latest and median fall departure dates are included. If banded, numbers of the species banded in the area are listed, as are numbers (if any) recovered inside and/or outside the Saskatoon bird area. If known to nest, data are included on whatever details of nesting biology, chronology, habitat and/or success are available. Remarks on population changes and their believed causes are also included if appropriate. Drawings accompany several species accounts. Current English, French and scientific names and one or more four-letter species code(s) are indicated for each species. Former English names are also indicated for several. Nineteen nesting species are listed as hosts of Brown-headed Cowbird documented in the Saskatoon area in both the cowbird and the host species accounts. Several miscellaneous observations of biological, historical or population trend interest are also mentioned, often in a “side bar” or box.

The book ends with a series of eight appendices (on annual Christmas, May Day and fall counts, local Breeding Bird Surveys, numbers of each of 79 species banded in the area, numbers of birds banded by each bander who has banded in the area, nest-box dimensions and requirements for 12 species and a list of 12 theses based on birds studied within the area), a list of references cited and indices in English and French to the first page of each species account.

This volume continues the trend of improving on the already high quality of earlier contributions in this series, using as many sources of published and unpublished sources as possible. Although some variability in style is inevitable in a book with so many authors and editors, the quality of writing and accuracy of information are high throughout. I noted a few minor grammatical deviations, but few errors or omissions of substance. The statement (page 284) that Dickcissels “continue to breed” in southern Manitoba implies regular occurrence there. While they occasionally nest there, rarely in fairly large numbers, their occurrence is irregular, often with several years between sightings (Davis et al. 2003). Minor errors include the omission of the hyphen from screech-owl (page 68), reference to Townsend’s Solitaires as “thrush-sized” (page 232), implying that they are not thrushes and a few instances of species names in lower case. The vocalization of Baltimore Oriole referred as a “call” (page 291) ap-
Book Review Editor's note: In a brainstorming session between the Editor, Francis Cook and myself, on future directions, we agreed I would investigate suitable websites and, if appropriate, include their reviews. I proposed we use Brian Coad’s site as a test case, hence the following review. If others know of similar suitable sites [Cornel University, USDA and USGS come to mind] please e-mail me [r.john@ rogers.com] with your suggestions.

Brian Coad's Ichthyology Site


By Brian Coad. 2008.

Unlike books, websites are not static. This is the case with Coad’s site, which is defined as a work in progress. What it currently contains is sections on Projects, Fishes of Canada: Annotated Checklist, Dictionary of Ichthyology, Freshwater Fishes of Iran, Fishes of Canada’s National Capital Region and Freshwater Fishes of Iran.

The first section lists the author's eight current projects, with a few sentences of explanation. The checklist of Canadian Fish is a straightforward list of scientific and common names in both languages, plus occasionally a few comments. The dictionary, co-authored by the late Don E. McAllister, defines terms specifically used in the study of fish and includes some generally used common words.

The Freshwater Fishes of Iran has individual species accounts arranged by genera. These start with an introduction to the genus. Each detailed account has sections on the Common name in English and Farsi with the phonetic pronunciation, Systematics, Key characters, Morphology, Sexual dimorphism, Colour Size, Distribution, Zoogeography, Habitat, Age and growth, Food, Reproduction, Parasites and predators, Economic importance, Conservation, Further work and Sources.