

Sind woodpecker *Dendrocopos assimilis*.

All previous literature is extensively summarized and referenced. Introductory chapters deal with zoogeography, ecological zones, the history of ornithology in the country and interactions between birds and man. There are useful maps showing localities, topography, vegetation and climate. Eight colour plates, painted by the author, illustrate 104 species; the one depicting the 12 woodpeckers is the most successful to my mind. There are also some undistinguished black-and-white plates and many line drawings.

There are a surprising number of typographical errors and the author propounds some strange or, in some cases, erroneous taxonomic ideas but these do not detract from the overall usefulness of the work. A must for all birdwatchers visiting Pakistan and a useful addition to any bird library. *Tim Inskipp.*

**Cyprinid Fishes: Systematics, Biology and Exploitation**

*Edited by I. J. Winfield and J. S. Nelson*

Chapman and Hall, Fish and Fisheries Series 3, 1991, 667 pp., ISBN 0 412 34920 5, £60

This book is a noble attempt to provide a balanced global survey of the most speciose family of freshwater fish. The first few chapters provide an overview of extant and extinct cyprinids, an analysis of the validity of the characters used to distinguish species and a survey of sub-cellular features and their value.

The next five chapters are, to most people, the *raison d'être* of the work. Each of the major land masses or their faunistic divisions is discussed with ref-

erence to the whys and wherefores of its cyprinid fishes. It is a sad reflection on how mankind has deleteriously altered the world that a whole chapter is devoted to the cyprinids of Australasia. All Australasian cyprinids have been introduced. The rest of the book covers aspects of physiology, behaviour and human usage of this important group of fishes.

The intelligibility of the chapters varies widely. In some the information is accessible to all. Others are written by specialists for specialists who probably know what is contained therein. This is a pity as it diminishes the overall value of the book to a wider readership. There are gaps; for example, conservation is dealt with in some chapters but a synthetic chapter on this topic, including species rarity, would have been of value to conservationists and wildlife managers.

Possibly the greatest and most useful attribute of this volume is the extensive bibliography that follows each chapter. It is a most important reference work. It is a pity it is so expensive as that limits the wide readership it deserves. *Keith Banister.*

**Conserving Migratory Birds. ICBP Technical Publication No. 12**

*T. Salathé (editor)*  
ICBP, 1991, 393 pp., ISBN 0 946888 20 5, SB £19.50, available from ICBP Publications, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, UK

Christoph Imboden, Director-General of ICBP, in his foreword to this book, presses for international action to treat the causes—unsustainable use of resources, poverty, the north-south divide, Third-

World debt, population growth—rather than simply the symptoms, of environmental problems. In the case of migratory birds for example, land-use practices in the wintering areas are a factor in determining population levels. Treating the symptom involves establishing protected areas for resting and wintering migrants—a relatively simple task. Treating the causes is far more difficult: it would involve developing international trade policies that allow truly sustainable agricultural practices. Imboden points out that no one yet has assessed in detail how the new international GATT treaties will affect land-use practices and conservation of critical ecosystems.

While few migratory species are listed as 'globally threatened', most have declined in the past 20 years. This erosion of the abundance and range of numerous 'common' and widespread species is a greatly neglected aspect of the loss of biodiversity.

The book is in four parts. Part I discusses the ICBP's conservation programme for migrants, Part II describes, in four chapters, the problems facing migratory birds, Part III is devoted to nine case studies and four regional overviews, while Part IV contains five chapters under the heading 'Future directions'.

The chapter 'Conservation and sustainable development' emphasizes that conservation of migratory birds in sub-Saharan Africa can be achieved only through a broad-based approach to management of the natural habitats on which they depend so that they continue to support birds while also meeting human needs. The final chapter is a Forward Plan for the ICBP Migratory Birds Programme 1991-1994. *Editor.*