

what are now tram-lined streets of Bournemouth' were Montagu's not hen harriers. The biological chapters would have been immeasurably enhanced had it been possible to include the results of two important Scottish studies of hen harriers, whose publication is awaited—the late Eddie Balfour's in Orkney and Nick Picozzi's in Kincardineshire. An analysis of British Trust for Ornithology nest record cards would also have been valuable.

The author's own study on south-west Scotland (Part II of the book) is of great interest, covering as it does a period when extensive afforestation of moorland occurred and young forests began to mature. Overall, young were fledged from significantly more forest than moorland nests, probably due to lack of persecution in the former; complete failure was commonest on grouse moors. This is a book for every raptor enthusiast, and ought to find a much wider audience.

Lea MacNally's book is essentially a description of personal experiences, in which he shares his enthusiasm for golden eagles and particularly for the four pairs he has studied since 1957 in the Scottish Central Highlands. Of the three general chapters, I found the one on prey the most interesting, even though anecdotal. Valuable appendices record breeding success, eaglet weights and prey species of his study pairs. Only 33 eaglets were reared by four pairs in 80 'eagle/years'. Shooting of females at nests contributed to early failure, though, happily, persecution ceased after 1962 (with an isolated exception in 1973). Pesticides may also have been responsible for failures. Nevertheless, a low rate of reproduction is likely to be normal in such a long lived-bird and emphasises its vulnerability to external influences.

COLIN R. TUBBS

Bird Books in Brief

Two check-lists of the birds of the world were reviewed in *Oryx*, July 1976, p. 396, but much better than either for the serious ornithologist is the *Reference List of the Birds of the World*, by John J. Morony Jr., Walter J. Bock and John Ferrand Jr. (Dept. of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY 10024, USA \$6). It is compiled by professionals who have used the obvious source, Peters's *Birds of the World* as amended by various major taxonomic papers, and is therefore complete. It is, however, no more than a list, without even distributional data.

Bird Observatories in Britain and Ireland, edited by Roger Durman (Poyser, Berkhamsted, £5) is an invaluable guide, by 17 authors, to the seven English, two Scottish, two Welsh, one Manx, and two Irish bird observatories, indicating what the visitor may hope to see when he gets there, and much other useful information.

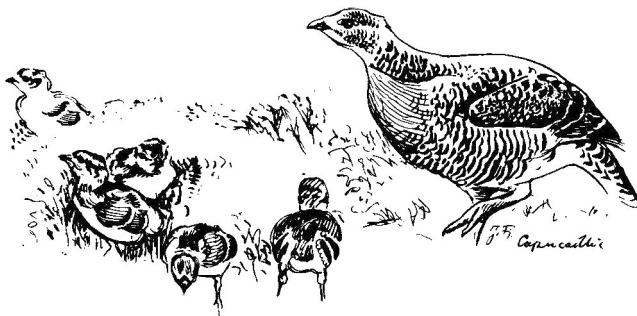
Jon Field's *Guide to the Young of European Precocial Birds* (£20 from Nature Publications, Strandgården, Godhavnvej 4, DK-3220 Tisville, Denmark) is the kind of specialist publication that can only be published because of the enormous number of active field ornithologists nowadays. Precocial birds are those whose young normally leave the nest before they can fly, such as ducks, gamebirds, rails, waders and gulls. The

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excellent text, drawings and plates, by the author himself one of which is reproduced, will greatly simplify the identification of young found without their parents.

The Atlas of Breeding Birds of the London Area, edited by David J. Montier for the London Natural History Society (Batsford, £12.50), is an offspring of the atlas for the whole of Britain, reviewed in the last *Oryx*. The chief difference is that, dealing with a smaller area, each dot on the map represents a 2-km instead of a 10-km square. It will be invaluable to the birdwatchers of the area (a 20-mile radius from St Paul's Cathedral) and of great interest to all students of bird distribution. Its one weakness is the apparent omission of a small part of Essex, which appears as a blank on all maps, but can surely not be the ornithological desert that this implies.

A Field Guide to the Birds of West Africa, by William Serle and Gerard J. Morel (Collins, £5.95), completes Collins field guide series for Africa, and is particularly useful since the standard work is Bannerman's majestic multi-volume work, which even condensed occupies two substantial tomes. Wolfgang Hartwig's plates, mainly in colour, are of a high standard.

The Birds of Malawi (formerly Nyasaland), by C. W. and F. M. Benson, has only two illustrations, but their lack is much outweighed by the value of having a detailed account of the habitat and distribution of all the birds of this hitherto neglected part of southern Africa. Generously sponsored by D. W. K. Macpherson, it costs £3.50 from the Hon. Secretary, National Fauna Preservation Society, Box 5135, Limbe, Malawi.

A Guide to the Birds of Panama, by Robert S. Ridgely (Princeton UP, NJ, \$15), with excellent illustrations, many in colour, by John A. Gwynne Jr., is the first complete book on the subject. Most useful for visiting ornithologists is the short section on where to look for birds.

Another edition, this time the tenth, of Salim Ali's invaluable field guide (nobody called it that in 1941) *The Book of Indian Birds* (Bombay NHS, Hornbill House, Bombay 400023, Rs. 45) is always welcome. Several new plates bring the birds dealt with up to 280, as many as most quick-trippers are likely to see.

A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago, by Richard ffrench (Harrowood Books, Valley Forge, Pa, USA, \$15) has excellent colour plates by Don Eckelberry and now appears in a revised edition. It was originally reviewed in *Oryx*, November 1974, p. 608.

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