

1990

## Books

North American Bird Bander

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**OMISSION.....** The article, "Comparative Age and Sex Ratios in Gambel's White-Crowned Sparrows in Relation to Year and Latitude," by C.D. Barrentine, M.W. Lincoln, L.R. Mewaldt, C.E. Cochran and P.M. Walters, appearing in *North American Bird Bander*, 15(2):57-60, was Contribution No. 3 of the Coyote Creek Riparian Station. The NABB Editorial staff apologizes for this oversight.

## Books

**Sonoran Desert Summer.** John Alcock. 1990. University of Arizona Press, Tucson. 187 pp. Hardcover, \$19.95.

Summer in the desert brings to mind images of furnace heat, blistering sun, and a dead landscape inhabited only by prickly cactus and dry shrubs. No animals seem to move through the hostile environment. John Alcock knows that these images are incorrect. The desert is full of life, especially in the summer. If one has a keen eye and is active in the early morning and late evening, dozens of natural history stories unfold. Alcock relates many of these stories in 38 short essays collected in this volume.

Sonoran Desert Summer, together with Alcock's earlier volume, Sonoran Desert Spring, describes moments in the natural history of many desert birds, including Common Poorwills (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*), Phainopeplas (*Phainopepla nitens*), Elf Owls (*Micrathene whitneyi*), and Black-chinned Hummingbirds (*Archilochus alexandri*). The essays are not limited to bird-related topics, however, since desert dwellers such as Gila monsters, digger wasps, and saguaro cacti are also featured. Alcock's apparent goal in these essays is to capture the mood of life in the desert. He accomplishes this goal quite successfully. In addition, he accurately describes the process by which the stories of the desert are investigated scientifically. Taken as a whole, the essays are a painless

introduction to the scientific method, the generation and testing of predictions to support a hypothesis, and the questioning with which scientists approach their studies. Bird banding projects are not mentioned explicitly, although several studies that used banded birds are included. An example of the latter is Jim Bednarz's studies of breeding in the Harris' Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*).

The essays are organized into five groups--one for each of the summer months from May through September. A short reference list at the back of the book provides an additional reading list that would allow the reader to explore one of the subjects in greater detail. The text is nicely illustrated by the drawings of Marilyn Hoff Stewart. I particularly liked the portrait of an Elf Owl being mobbed by a pair of Black-tailed Gnatcatchers (*Polioptila melanura*).

Alcock captures the subtle beauty and activity of the desert in the summer. Some potential research projects for banders are described. I suspect, however, that most banders will put this book in their banding gear, not for the research tips, but rather for pleasant reading during the quiet moments in the morning between runs to check the nets.

John B. Dunning, Jr.

## Recent Literature

### Banding Equipment and Techniques

**Experimental design and data analysis for telemetry projects.** V.J. Meretsky (Ed.). 1987. *J. Raptor Res.* 21:125-146. The following eight papers summarize the results of a workshop on telemetry, dubbed by W.W. Cochran as "super bird bands" (p. 143). Although in a raptor journal, all but two of the papers apply to birds generally, and much of the material therein applies to banding generally, and especially to color banding. Most of the papers list several references to more detailed accounts of specific aspects of each topic. Address

enquiries for purchase of the entire issue to Jim Fitzpatrick, Treasurer, Raptor Research Foundation, 12805 St. Croix Trail, Hastings, MN 55033. Abstracts of individual papers follow:

**Applications and considerations for wildlife telemetry.** M.R. Fuller. pp. 126-128. -U.S. Fish & Wildl. Serv., Patuxent Wildl. Res. Center, Laurel, MD 20708 -(General summary of applications of telemetry, different types of attachment, and advantages and problems with each, as well as a list of suppliers and several useful references.)