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## Fifty Common Birds of the Upper Midwest

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through banding and telemetry equipment influenced forestry practices in Arizona and showed that yearling turkeys do not nest in some populations, but do in others. Radio telemetry not only greatly increased the sample size of nestsites, but also shifted our perception of them, as most sites located earlier were those that were easiest to find, often by stumbling across them, whereas the proportion of better concealed nests found was less than the proportion in the population.

The informal style of the book will probably irritate some more technically oriented readers, but will increase its appeal to many others. Most of the errors are minor grammatical points, such as split infinitives. Most biologists regard the terms "subspecies" and "race" as synonymous, rather than restricting the latter to humans (p. 17). Shaw's use of the term "racial hybrids" (p. 39) may be less technically desirable than "intergrade," but provides a nice, concise definition. Nomenclature and classification of birds in North America is determined by a committee of the American Ornithologists' Union, not an International Ornithologists' Union (p.23), although the A.O.U. committee is working increasingly with similar committees on other continents. Shaw uses at least two long outdated English species names (Hungarian for Gray Partridge; English for House Sparrow) and refers to Great Auks as Greater Auks and Steller's Jays as Stellar Jays. Great Auks and Dodos were not merely extirpated (p. 131), but exterminated (became extinct). These criticisms are minor quibbles that did not detract from my overall enjoyment of Shaw's interesting account.

In short, Shaw has provided an entertaining and informative account of Merriam's race of Wild Turkey, plenty of detail on banding and radio-telemetry techniques and results and the challenges and evolution of wildlife management, primarily in Arizona, but applicable to

much of North America. Most modern biologists and ecologists would concur with Shaw's assertion that each species or subspecies does not merely live within a given habitat, but is also a component of that habitat.

## LITERATURE CITED

Braun, C. E. 2004. Wild Turkeys and biologist tales. *Prairie Nat.* 36:193-194.

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**FIFTY COMMON BIRDS OF THE UPPER  
MIDWEST.** By Dana Gardner and Nancy Overcott. 2006. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, IA. 50 watercolors. 107 pp. \$9.95.

What is the definition of "common" and how can the book be limited to just "fifty" species? These were two serious questions that Gardner (the illustrator) and Overcott (the writer) had in selecting the species for this book. The authors "solved" these questions by concentrating on inhabitants of the forests and grasslands near their common home in southeastern Minnesota. Even though the book includes at least one representative of most bird families from waterfowl through finches (including nocturnal species), it also excludes, by the limitation of 50, many "common" species.

The primary purpose of the book is "...to present a sketch of each bird that will give you a feeling for its personality and the way it lives its life..." Overcott achieved this by portraying each species as it progresses through life stages from egg to breeding bird and by including habits and habitats, food and foraging behavior, vocalizations, migration and distribution. Overcott's accounts are pleasurable to read and Gardner's bright, full-page water colors make this an attractive coffee-table book.

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