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## The Carolina Parakeet: Glimpses of a Vanished Bird

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minimum and maximum for each type of measurement. The "browse by species" section includes data by specimen, including island, banding site, habitat, band number, age, gender and whichever morphometric data were collected on each specimen.

This compilation should prove useful to all ornithologists whose research involves biometrics of Caribbean-resident birds and Nearctic-breeding birds that migrate through and/or winter in the Caribbean. I was delighted to see the data from a joint Canadian-Cuban four-year project included, but disappointed that those from an earlier two-year training project were missing [judging from the list of banders and collectors listed in the acknowledgements and from the list of locations]. As noted by the authors, data from numerous other brief projects are undoubtedly also missing. I hope that this publication will stimulate participants in other projects to contribute their data to the data base for possible future editions. I also felt that far too many of the references cited were missing from the literature cited list for such a short publication (Banks 1970, Blueweiss et al. 1978, Collins and Atwood 1981, Johnson and Marten 1992, Jung and Mees 1958, Lundberg et al. 1981, Olson 1984, Ricklefs 1969, Ridway 1907, and possibly Hayes et al. in press, although I suspect that the latter refers to Hayes et al. 2004) and some (e.g. Seutin et al. 1993 and 1994) are listed considerably out of order. "Traill's" Flycatcher is also cited incorrectly as Trail's in the title of a paper by Winker in which the spelling is correct in the original. These omissions and correction suggest rushed or superficial proof-reading, but detract only slightly from the overall quality and usefulness of this publication. It can be ordered from WFVZ by check/cheque or money order at 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, CA 93012.

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**THE CAROLINA PARAKEET [:] GLIMPSES OF A VANISHED BIRD.** By Noel F. R. Snyder. 2004. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. and Oxford, U.K. xiv+153 pp. \$29.95.

This book brings the previously published scientific literature on Carolina Parakeets, newspaper,

magazine and other informal published accounts and previously unpublished anecdotes of currently or recently living residents of areas inhabited by Carolina Parakeets together to present a thorough account of known details of its life history and decline to extinction. Since the range and habitat of this species overlapped the range and habitat of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, the book also documents some details of the habitat and decline of that extinct or nearly extinct species.

An unnumbered introduction notes the abundance of this species when Europeans first began to settle North America, the influence of its bright plumage and noisy behavior in stimulating early descriptions of the bird and various aspects of its behavior and natural history, as well as the precipitous nature of its decline to extinction, paralleling the declines of Passenger Pigeons and bison, both of which were also abundant species. Possible reasons for its extinction are also summarized briefly. Eleven numbered chapters follow, the first covering physical characteristics, verified and potential range, vocalizations, nomenclature and taxonomic relationships. The next two chapters document the decline of the parakeet and review in considerable detail the plausibility or otherwise of several previously published and unpublished reports considerably later than the last confirmed sightings. Several records include sufficient detail of plumage and/or behavior to suggest that at least a few individuals and small flocks persisted beyond positively verified dates. Snyder's interviews with several non-naturalists who lived within the range of the parakeets also revealed some aspects of their natural history that had not been documented previously, such as roosting in barns, or that seemed to be more significant than thought previously, such as the extent of sandspurs and cockleburs in their diets. Snyder is careful to consider consistency of details among observers in sorting out the probable degree of accuracy or inaccuracy of reported sightings at specific locations and of specific behaviors. The next three chapters summarize what is known or suspected about several aspects of the natural history of this species (habitat and requirements, food, feeding behavior, movements, breeding habits and characteristics), each in comparison with related species, if known. Although Snyder agrees that most documented nests were in cavities, he

believes that there are enough independent reports of open twig nests to suggest that an early much-dismissed report by Brewster of such nests may have been valid. On the other hand, Snyder includes suggestions that Carolina Parakeets may have hibernated and/or migrated, but expresses doubt for either. The final four chapters consider the possible and probably roles of various human and natural factors in the extinction of Carolina Parakeets, the possibility that the fondness of these parakeets for cocklebur fruit (highly toxic to most species) may have made the parakeets toxic to potential predators, lessons that can be learned from the human failure to conserve this species, especially in relation to saving other parrot species from extinction, the significance of various types of historical data, the future of Florida and the overall influence that cockleburs may have had on this species.

As Snyder does not mention banding and no detailed study of its biology was conducted before the Carolina Parakeet became extinct, few if any were likely banded. However, banders will be interested in the sections on plumage and banding of closely related parrot species would aid research on some of the biological questions discussed.

This book is written well with few grammatical or factual errors. Reference (p. 84) to Imperial Ivory-billed Woodpecker does not match the currently accepted taxonomy of the American Ornithologists' Union (American Ornithologists' Union 1998), but could suggest that Snyder supports the "lumping" of Imperial and Ivory-billed woodpeckers. However, none of the four check-list supplements published between 1998 and 2004 announced such a decision. Reference to "animals and birds" (caption to Fig. 34) implies that birds are not animals. The hyphen is missing from *Bird-Lore* in a reference by Baker. The book is entertainingly written and should be of interest to any researchers of small parrots, to all naturalists interested in extinction and causes of declines and to all historians of natural history. Its many biographical notes apparently include some details of the career of Ludlow Griscom that were not covered in the thorough account of his life by Davis (1994). Coverage of the details of the life history of this species is more thorough than was possible in its *Birds of North America* account (Snyder and Russell 2002).

## LITERATURE CITED

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**BIRDS OF THE WORLD RECOMMENDED ENGLISH NAMES.** By Frank Gill and Minturn Wright on behalf of the International Ornithological Congress. 2006. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton and Oxford. xii + 260 pp. + CD. \$19.95.

This book amounts to a progress report on an approximate 20-year attempt to standardize the English names of all bird species. Globalization of bird-seeking travel and of environmental threats to birds have both led to an increased interest in standardizing names for better communication. The increased pace in revising avian taxonomy has also increased the chances of confusion as to exactly what species are being observed and/or discussed.

After the usual publisher's pages and a table of contents, the text of the book consists of a brief (11-page) introduction, a list of all species recognized by the committee at the time of compilation (pp. 12-211) and an index. The introduction covers the need for more standardization, the history of the project, the process of generating the list and process followed, a section on spelling [including capitalization, single vs. compound names, uses of hyphens, British vs. U.S. spelling, nouns vs. adjectives in names based on geographical terms, single vs. compound names, etc.), a section on ranges, and several other very brief sections. The species list is arranged by order, family and species. Each