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Review of *The Avian Brood Parasites: Deception at the Nest* by Paul A. Johnsgard; Oxford University Press, 1997

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BOOK REVIEW ...

The Avian Brood Parasites: Deception at the Nest, by Paul A. Johnsgard. Oxford University Press, New York. 1997. 409 p. Hardcover, $75.00 ISBN0-19-511042-0.

Paul Johnsgard's *The Avian Brood Parasites* is a major contribution from one of the nation's most prolific writers of ornithological books. This book is typical of many of his previous works in that it condenses vast amounts of literature into accessible chunks, allowing ready reference to individual species, quick access to zoogeographical information, and graphics that can be easily turned into teaching materials. From the parasitologist's perspective, *The Avian Brood Parasites* is a rather remarkable book. Following chapters on Eco-morphology and Interspecific Mimicry, Behavioral and Reproductive Ecology, Breeding Behavior, and Host Retaliation, are separate chapters on Waterfowl, Honeyguides, Old World and American cuckoos, African parasitic finches, and Cowbirds. For each species, Johnsgard gives scientific and vernacular names, distributions, sizes, identifying marks (including those of both host and parasite nestlings), habitats, host species, egg characteristics, breeding season, breeding biology, population dynamics, and host–parasite relations. The glossary is very helpful, as are the list of common and scientific names mentioned and the extensive bibliography. What make this particular book a "must have," however, are Johnsgard's drawings. He has translated a large and diverse set of photographs and sketches into page after page of elegant pen and inks, showing host–parasite relationships such as feeding behavior, mimic morphology, eggs, postures, host egg removal, parasite developmental stages, and gape patterns. Although these pictures reveal how little most of us know about brood parasitism, they also provide a ready source of material that can be easily incorporated into a classroom presentation, especially when combined with the well-organized text.

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