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Review of *Oklahoma Bird Life* by F. M. and A. M. Baumgartner

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Oklahoma Bird Life. F. M. and A. M. Baumgartner. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992. vii + 443 pp. Maps, tables, photos, paintings, and references. \$49.95.

This long-awaited book lives up to its advanced billing. Quarto size, it is bound in durable blue cloth, and the paper is of high quality. The layout is uncrowded, and the print is quite legible. Spelling and grammatical errors are comparatively rare. There are 159 black-and-white photographs, three maps, and 26 tables. Preliminary sections give background and explanatory information, including a checklist of Oklahoma birds (through 1987) that follows the latest AOU edition (1983). Seasonal and regional statuses for each of the 447 species are listed, plus a color plate number where each is illustrated in the center of the book.

Part I begins with a comprehensive historical account of ornithological investigations in the state. Next comes a brief listing of the 83 year-round residents, 98 summer residents, 69 winter residents, 85 migrants, and 19 visitors of regular occurrence in the state. Together with the 93 species listed in Appendix A (stragglers) and the five in Appendix B (extirpated species), the overall number of species known for Oklahoma is 452. By region, 231 species are found statewide, 59 primarily in the east, 40 west, and 24 in the far western Black Mesa country.

A strong point of this book is the 20-page section that treats the ecology of Oklahoma's avifauna. Tables, maps, and 20 photographs supplement short discussions of the physical and biological factors characterizing the nine biotic associations of the state. The map illustrating these should be consulted before the book is explored further. Tables of typical nesting species in each of these areas are helpful. The following segment explains how birds can be attracted through careful selection of plantings by region (Table 7) and foods preferred by various species (Table 8). In the next sections, economics, conservation, and educational aspects of birds are considered, as well as the whys and wherefores of banding.

Part II, covering 357 pages, constitutes the bulk of the book. A brief discussion of each of the 51 families occurring in Oklahoma is preceded by a small line drawing of a representative species by Wallace Hughes. The geographic (eight regions), numerical (seven categories), and seasonal (five time periods) status is given for each species, together with comments on behavior, preferred habitats, history, and conservation. Also included are population and nesting data gleaned from Breeding Bird Surveys, Breeding Bird Censuses, and Christmas Bird Counts. This section updates through 1986 records in *Oklahoma Birds* (Sutton 1967) and Sutton's 1974 *Checklist of Oklahoma Birds*. The authors have done an admirable job of collating information from a variety of sources and this scientifically valuable part of the book is remarkably thorough. Many useful supplementary tables and drawings are strategically placed throughout.

The centerpiece of the book consists of 51 color plates by Wallace Hughes depicting 257 species of regular occurrence in Oklahoma. The general quality of these paintings is quite good, particularly the owls and cuckoos shown on Plates 21 through 23, the picids on Plate 25, the grosbeaks on Plate 40, and the gallinaceous birds on Plate 14.

The Literature Cited section has omitted many references cited in the species accounts and in Appendix A, and there is a good deal of wasted space in this volume. For instance, on page xxvii, only seven lines are used at the

top; pages xxiv and 6 are blank; pages 5, 42, 48, 416, 422, and 425 are also extravagantly spacious. Conversely, Appendix E on page 423 is badly in need of more space between the lines.

Taken altogether, *Oklahoma Bird Life* is an impressive work. It represents the end product of a very long labor of love by the authors and will be the standard reference for both laymen and scientists for many years to come. **Jack D. Tyler**, *Department of Biological Sciences, Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma.*