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Review of *Ospreys: The Revival of a Global Raptor*, by Alan F. Poole. 2019.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Ospreys: The Revival of a Global Raptor. By Alan F. Poole. 2019. Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, MD, USA. 220 pp. 24 figures, 128 color plates, literature cited, and index. ISBN 978-1-42142-715-7. Hardcover, \$39.95 USD.

For the past three decades, Alan Poole's (1989) *Ospreys: A Natural and Unnatural History* has provided a solid foundation for those seeking a primer on the basic biology and ecology of Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*). Poole's summary of knowledge about Ospreys was written at a time when these amazing birds were recovering from their DDT-induced population crash, but this important book has long been out of print. In the intervening decades, much has been learned regarding Ospreys. In his new book, *Ospreys: The Revival of a Global Raptor*, Poole guides the reader through a tour of Ospreys' worldwide distribution and population status followed by an overview of many aspects of Osprey ecology that were previously unknown.

Poole's latest book starts with a brief anecdote about a morning capturing Ospreys in New England (Northeast USA), setting the tone for what to expect in the pages to come, both in terms of the eloquent writing and first-person-focused content. Chapters 1 and 2 provide the reader with a brief introduction to Ospreys, including such important topics as evolution and identification. Chapter 3 provides a world tour of Osprey populations, progressing from Japan and Australia westward around the globe to the Americas, then circling back to cover Europe. Of particular interest is the discussion of the Caribbean Osprey (*P. h. ridgwayi*), a nonmigratory subspecies that is relatively unstudied, as Poole is the foremost expert on this fascinating subspecies of Ospreys.

The prose is written in a storytelling voice, almost poetic in many places. If you are familiar with Poole's first book on Ospreys, this will be familiar and comforting. The factual descriptions are interspersed with brief accounts, humorous stories, and passionate descriptions. This sets the book up toward making science, and more specifically what is known about the natural history of Ospreys, accessible to the layperson. There is a strong emphasis throughout the book on the power of citizen science, a contemporary and interesting theme.

The next three chapters describe Osprey natural history, beginning with foraging (Chapter 4). This includes a vivid description of an Osprey diving for fish paired with illustrative photographs as well as an explanation of how the advent of satellite transmitters has greatly expanded

our understanding of Osprey foraging. Chapter 5 focuses on Osprey reproduction and nesting studies, highlighting examples mostly from the author's research in New England about nest building, finding a mate, and provisioning of nestlings. In Chapter 6, the discussion of migration exposes the reader to the merits of bird banding data and satellite telemetry, and also allows us to better understand this previously little-known aspect of Osprey life history. Studying the migration ecology of a bird that breeds on one continent but winters on a completely different continent can be challenging, but interesting, as Poole suggests.

Poole follows this helpful in-depth description of Osprey natural history with a discussion of various conflicts between humans and Ospreys (Chapter 7), including topics such as vehicle collisions, problems associated with energy infrastructure, and contaminants. These are complicated, and sometimes political, issues that make them difficult to distill into the few pages each were granted. This section highlights our concern over the lack of direct citations and heavy reliance on personal anecdotes. For example, the paragraph in which Poole discusses management actions used to reduce Osprey-aircraft collisions could be interpreted as derogatory to wildlife professionals responsible for human safety at and near airports. In our opinion, the author regularly slides into his personal experience, and the reader can be challenged to determine if presented information is derived from published scientific research or the author's opinion and personal observations. This potential for misinterpretation could have been avoided with direct citations and a more thorough bibliography and suggested reading list.

The book concludes with Poole providing a look toward the future—speculating how Ospreys might continue to adapt to a changing world. To benefit contemporary and future raptor researchers, the author presents potential research and management opportunities that will guide the thinking of those who follow in his footsteps. However, we found the penultimate paragraph of the book, which discusses potential negative effects of transmitters on Ospreys, to be a missed opportunity. Poole begins by acknowledging that the data regarding the impacts of transmitters on Ospreys have yet to be thoroughly analyzed and then he presents examples of high mortality rates of Ospreys affixed with transmitters in the United States. This is a very real concern for many Osprey researchers, and warrants discussion, but we found it out of place in the book's conclusion. We wish he had used this anecdotal evidence to inspire others to research the causes and invest in the study of emerging technologies to solve the problem. We hope readers of *Ospreys: The Revival of a Global Raptor* will

use Poole's comments on this and other quandaries as a pathway to achieve comprehensive scientific analysis and peer-reviewed scientific studies regarding many topics discussed in this book.

We found the short "highlights" of selected Osprey researchers from throughout the world particularly interesting. Arguably, an entire book (which would certainly be entertaining!) could be written on this topic, as the five scientists introduced in this book are representative of many Osprey experts. We enjoyed learning the backgrounds of other Osprey experts; inclusion of their photos provided personal connections.

Visually, this book is beautiful and was clearly crafted by an ecologist who understands what might interest and captivate the layperson and the professional reader alike. The plethora of color photographs and six gorgeous watercolors by renowned wildlife artist Julie Zickefoose are truly a visual feast for the eye. We respectfully feel it was a disservice not to provide photo credits on or near the images. To find out who donated the wonderful artistic pieces, we had to search the preface or acknowledgements to identify the photographers.

Without question, *Ospreys: The Revival of a Global Raptor* will be greatly appreciated by the growing legions of laypeople intrigued by one of the world's most iconic raptors. This book contains tantalizing information regarding Osprey populations from around the world with

stunning colorful photographs and graphics throughout. Initially, we found the dust-jacket description misleading, which negatively influenced our first reading. Upon a second reading, with proper understanding of what Poole is trying to achieve, we found it to be a truly enjoyable read.

As researchers involved with raptors, we believe that this volume on the world's Ospreys would be a favorable addition to most professional ornithologists' personal library—not because it is a deep dive into the science—but simply due to the majestic and inspiring nature of Poole's eloquent prose, his infectious enthusiasm for such an amazing bird, and the thoughts presented by someone we respect who has spent his career studying Ospreys.—**Lisa Fields (email address: Lisa.Fields@parks.ca.gov), California State Parks, 2797 Truxtun Road, San Diego, CA, 92106 USA, and Brian E. Washburn (email address: brian.e.washburn@usda.gov), USDA, APHIS, Wildlife Services, National Wildlife Research Center, 6100 Columbus Avenue, Sandusky, OH, 44870 USA.**

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