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ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

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BIRDS OF THE SOUTHWEST. By John H. Rappole. Texas A&M Univ. Press, College Station, Texas. 2000: 329 pp., 457 color photographs, 457 range maps, 45 numbered figures. \$36.95 (cloth), \$17.95 (paper).—The area covered by the book is New Mexico, Arizona, southern California, and the southern tip of Nevada. This is neither a field guide nor an exhaustive distributional analysis. There is a color photograph, range map, and species description for each of 457 species. The quality of the color photographs generally is good to excellent. Most of the birds were photographed in breeding plumage, but there are some cases of winter plumages. One error that slipped past proofing is that after species number 246 (Northern Flicker, *Colaptes auratus*), the picture numbers no longer coincide with the numbers on the species accounts. The range maps denote the distribution and seasons of occurrence, but they are small and provide no detail. Each species account is brief, half a page or less. The accounts contain information on general description, vocalizations, similar species, habitat, abundance, distribution, where to find (in the Southwest), and range (in North America). Another error that got past proofing is that some of the locations listed for a species in the “Where to Find” section are outside the species’ distribution given in the range map.

The introduction contains material on landforms, climate, and habitat. These sections should be especially useful to those not familiar with the Southwest. The section “Using this Guide” ends with an admonition on preparing for a birding trip to remote areas of the Southwest. For those who live or have lived there, the precautions are obvious and automatic. To residents of more moist and benign climates, this advise needs to be followed; a bit of common sense and safety precautions interjected into a birding guide. The last section of the book is a list of birding sites by state, with detailed instruction on how to get to each site and which species one can expect to see. This list includes many of the locations I have frequented and some with which I am

not familiar. There also are several popular birding locations that are not listed. Overall, it is a good starting list for someone new to the area.

This book will be useful to anyone wanting to visit the region, especially those who are unfamiliar with it. The advantage of this volume is that it summarizes the information of several more exhaustive, but geographically restricted, guides for the Southwest. I highly recommend the book as a single volume for people traveling to the Southwest to bird.—
ROBERT C. BEASON.