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Review of *Birds of Nebraska: Their Distribution and
Temporal Occurrence* by Roger S. Sharpe, W. Ross
Silcock, and Joel G. Jorgensen

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Birds of Nebraska: Their Distribution and Temporal Occurrence. Roger S. Sharpe, W. Ross Silcock, and Joel G. Jorgensen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. xiv+483 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$69.95 cloth.

Several books regarding the status and distribution of the birds of Nebraska have appeared since 1980, including annotated checklists (Paul Johnsgard, *A Preliminary List of the Birds of Nebraska and Adjacent Great Plains States* [1980]; Johnsgard, *The Birds of Nebraska and Adjacent Plains States* [1997]; T. E. Bray et al., *The Birds of Nebraska: A Critically Evaluated List* [1986]) and treatments of breeding birds (James E. Ducey and Johnsgard, *Nebraska Birds: Breeding Status and Distribution* [1988]), but none of these is a truly comprehensive account of the state's avifauna. The current volume is aimed at just such a niche and does a fine job of filling it. Like most books in this genre, *Birds of Nebraska* contains pertinent introductory material, but the bulk of the book is comprised of individual species accounts. The introductory chapters cover geology, climate, habitats (accompanied by a photographic gallery), and a history of Nebraska ornithology. Color maps of native and current vegetation, geographic regions, and counties are also provided. The treatments of habitats and ornithological history are more extensive than is typical for such volumes and provide some engaging reading. Concluding material includes an excellent and wide-ranging bibliography relating to Nebraska birds and a gazetteer with brief descriptions of the locations listed in the species accounts.

The species accounts themselves are divided into several sections: status, documentation, taxonomy, distribution and ecology, comments, and finding. These provide a useful and detailed review of the status and distribution of the birds of the state. Two devices used in these species accounts, however, detract slightly from their usefulness. First, the authors have expanded the status statements to include information regarding both frequency of occurrence and abundance of the species in question. For example, Henslow's sparrow is a "rare casual migrant." They did this, they state, to "minimize confusion among readers who are not field birders." Field birders, however, probably compose the majority of the audience for this book, and as a field birder myself, I found these status statements redundant and actually more confusing than the typical statements that combine frequency of occurrence and abundance information. Another shortcoming is the absence of distribution maps in the species accounts. The distribution information is provided in painstaking detail in the species

accounts, but those readers not intimately familiar with Nebraska will find themselves paging back and forth between the species accounts and the maps in the introduction on a regular basis.

These are minor flaws, however. Overall, this is an excellent and complete treatment of Nebraska's birds. As a South Dakota birder and ornithologist, I found much of interest here. Nebraska and South Dakota share, to some degree, the ornithological dilemma of most Great Plains states—relatively few birders and large areas. Gaps in state ornithological knowledge, therefore, still exist. I found several interesting differences in the status and distribution of birds between Nebraska and South Dakota. Among these were Hammond's flycatcher and Cassin's vireo, both of which are rare fall migrants in western Nebraska, but have not been recorded in South Dakota. Similar finds await anyone else interested in the ornithology of the Great Plains because the authors have done an outstanding job of summarizing regional patterns of occurrence for most species. A wealth of information is included in this book, and those interested in the birds of the Great Plains will do well to have it on their shelves. **David L. Swanson**, *Department of Biology, University of South Dakota.*