

To my eye, the mice and vole illustrations are just a bit too cute, and the carnivores look like they've been drawn from mounted specimens...they're somewhat stiff in appearance. With some of the particularly difficult species, illustrations of some bony material accompanies the main image; the opportunity to use this information would likely be restricted to taxonomists or biologists studying carnivore diets. I question the value of, for instance, including chipmunk genital bones in a field guide. This type of material is more apt for specialty publications.

There are a few editorial problems that appear. I found the maps too small and they do not contain the boundary that distinguishes Nunavut from the Northwest Territories. The very odd *Aplodontia rufa* is listed with the common name of Sewellel; the older name of Mountain Beaver is not mentioned, which makes

their statement, "Poorly named, this primitive rodent is neither aquatic nor fond of mountains..." seem rather out of place. The Gaspé Shrew range is incomplete, as it is known to occur in Nova Scotia as well. *Pappogeomys* is listed in the introduction to a plate, but no such genus is mentioned further on, *Cratogeomys* is used instead. Although the taxonomy of these pocket gophers is in turmoil, this book should have adopted one genus or the other for these rodents.

Overall, this is a very good field guide; with the editorial glitches cleaned up in a second edition, this will be a great field guide.

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The Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife

By Hadoram Shirihai. 2003. Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford. 510 pages. U.S. \$49.50.

The ecotraveller to the southern ocean will rejoice at having a single book that covers all the normally occurring birds and mammals of that region. Indeed, this book is much more than a simple field guide. It starts with a synopsis of the region and it ends with detailed descriptions of the major locations of interest, with the species accounts sandwiched in between. This additional material occupies a third of the book, so it contains a substantial amount of information. Included are accounts of geology, geography, habitats, human history and conservation. The regional descriptions explain where the key locations they are situated, what they are like and how to get there. They also explain the birds and mammals most likely to be found, with specific instructions for the difficult-to-locate species.

Ice is a major factor in the lives of all the region's inhabitants. Shirihai has written a handy little section on surface ice, its forms and formation and its features. It took me several weeks of research to collect similar information a few years ago. He does not mention the subsurface ice (which very few people see) that also has many profound effects (damping currents, shielding UV rays, scouring the sea bed, etc.).

The author also does a good job of explaining the ecology and history of the regions. The human history section is a scant seven pages, so it only skips the surface of many remarkable tales. But then this is not a history book.

The Species accounts are well organized and well written. There is a good description of each animal, with a notation about the possible species that could cause confusion in the field. The author also adds a short note on conservation, distribution and biology. A 7 × 7 cm range map accompanies most of the species accounts. To avoid the problems of defining the tax-

onomy of some difficult-to-resolve species, the author has treated all forms as species, while noting the alternative taxonomic ideas. This neatly sidesteps the issue for birds that may be split and means the book will not go out of date for a long time. It does make it more difficult to use the index as; for example, Yellow-nosed Albatross is entered as Indian Yellow-nosed and Atlantic Yellow-nose in the albatross section. (That is under I and A and not Y). It does less well for birds that have been lumped. For example; the author lists *Buteo polyosoma* as Red-backed Hawk. This has been lumped in the more recent texts with Puna Hawk as Variable Hawk (*Buteo poecilochrous*), so you have to know the alternative, older taxonomy when using the index.

A good example of a species account is the one for Black-browed Albatross. The descriptions are clear and accurate covering adult, juvenile and two ages of immature. There is a description of voice and biometrics. The note on similar forms includes the Campbell Albatross, a split of the tiny Campbell Island population. Apart from the plate containing three depictions there are five photographs – three different ages in flight, a pair displaying and an adult with a fuzzy chick (there are two other photographs in the section on the Falkland Islands). There is a short account of the biology and an accurate current account of the serious conservation issue facing this graceful bird.

There is only one English name given for each species. Those not used to scientific names may have some confusion where the names vary from earlier texts. Many older texts refer to the Pale-faced and Black-faced Sheathbill as American (or Greater) and Lesser Sheathbill, respectively. There is also a poetic and historical loss too. The Striated Caracara is widely, affectionately and historically known as "Johnny Rook." In addition, the author continues to use some of the old English names such as Light-mantled Sooty Albatross over the newer and simpler Light-mantled Albatross.

The species accounts contain plates by Brett Jarrett. These are extremely well done. They are as good as the very best of Roger Tory Peterson's work. I did wonder briefly about the accuracy of the South Polar Skua painting, but quickly remembered I have a photograph of several of these skuas that show a range of plumage colours. This level of excellence is carried through the birds, seals and whales.

In addition, there are at least two photographs per page, occupying a quarter to a third of the space. With a few exceptions the quality of these photographs is stupendous. Not only are they good portraits of the individual species, but also they frequently capture an insight above and beyond a mere representation. These photographs were taken by a large number of photographers, although a good proportion is by Shirihai himself. Sadly the only members of the beaked/toothed whale group with photographs are Blainville's and Cuvier's Beaked Whales – a testament to how elusive these creatures are.

I work in a domain where the meaning of each word is important and is often argued over for long periods. So I was taken aback by the book's formal title: *The Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife*. It is not complete nor does it deal with all wildlife, for it only covers two classes from one kingdom. Although many members of other kingdoms are mentioned in the text there are only species accounts for birds and marine mammals. The index lists the mammals and birds only. The book is not confined to the Antarctic but includes

New Zealand, Southern Australia, Southern Africa and South America. The books subtitle is "Birds and Marine Mammals of the Antarctic Continent and the Southern Ocean", which is much more accurate. The second title would better justify Shirihai leaving out the region's land mammals (rats and reindeer for example).

There are some other odd errors in this book. The index has six of the plates mixed up and some of the non-bird-marine mammal wildlife is not included. The first figure, a map of the entire region covered, has the island of South Georgia about 3 degrees too far east.

I was a surprised to see the geographic distribution of the Sub-Antarctic Fur Seal included Macquarie Island, off New Zealand. This species' normal range is the Atlantic and Indian Oceans off South Africa. But the text revealed that this mammal has recently become established on Macquarie – a long, but not impossible voyage for a seal.

If you plan to visit the southern oceans then this is the best single, portable book for you to take. Although be warned, this book weighs about twice as much as books of a similar size, as it has very high quality silky paper (that has a wonderful feel). Once you are in your cabin (the only way to visit these islands is by ship), then you can ignore the weight and enjoy the astounding quality.

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Reptiles and Amphibians of Algonquin Provincial Park

By Ronald J. Brooks, Dan Strickland, and Russell J. Rutter. 2003. The Friends of Algonquin Park, P.O. Box 248, Whitney, Ontario. 49 pages. \$2.95.

The first edition of *The Reptiles and Amphibians of Algonquin Park* was published in 1976, authored by Dan Strickland and Russell J. Rutter, long-time naturalists at Algonquin. Its success led to revision and reprinting in 1978, 1986, and further reprintings in 1992 and 2000. The 2003 edition is 48 pages, magazine format (29.7 × 21.0 cm), with tightly-packed text featuring extensive new portions by Ronald J. Brooks, University of Guelph. The latter are for the turtles, all snakes except the Common Gartersnake, and most of the Yellow-spotted Salamander, Green Frog, Mink Frog, and Bullfrog accounts. All of these species, save the snakes, have been focused on in the intensive research of Brooks and his many graduate students in Algonquin Park over three decades. Their enthusiasm for promoting increased awareness of the place of, and threats to, amphibians and reptiles is palatable throughout.

An introductory section defines amphibians and reptiles and the problems of being "cold-blooded" and discusses environmental, behavioural, and physiological adaptations such as "How to Beat the Cold Under-

water" and "How to beat the Cold on Land". Species accounts are grouped and these are prefaced by introductory material. Accounts deal briefly with recognition and distribution within the park but the bulk of the text of each is graphic and vivid word pictures of life history and behaviour.

A typical example of Brooks' distinctive style, from the Snapping Turtle account, concerns the difficulties of saving individuals which have wandered on highways. After advising avoidance of the jaws and claws, it continues with additional caution of supplementary defensive measures. "When upset, Snapping Turtles exude a foul-smelling liquid from the bridge between the carapace (top shell) and plastron (bottom shell). This liquid looks like maple syrup but is rather less delightful and imparts an odour that the researcher comes to associate with Algonquin. The rank smell of reptilian rage on one's hands will last 2 to 3 hours. But the bites, scratches and stench are all worth it when one sees the ungrateful recipient of one's compassion stagger awkwardly into a fetid bog, safe from the speeding giants of Highway 60."

Or the description of post egg-laying behaviour: "Slowly, the mother begins to pull earth back into the nest, carefully pressing it around the eggs. Each hind