

The Birding Sites of Nova Scotia

By B. Maybank. 2005. Nimbus Publishing Ltd., 3731 Mackintosh St., Box 9166, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5M8 Canada. 654 pages, \$35.

There is a path that runs from a popular beach in southern Nova Scotia. If you know exactly where, you can leave this path and cross several hundred metres to the start of a more secret path. This second path runs through a spruce grove along a cliff. If you know exactly which spruce to slip behind, you will find a hidden rope that will allow you to drop several metres down a cliff face. You will be in a very secluded cove with a golden beach and blue water, sheltered from any cold wind. This secret spot must be the only place in Nova Scotia that Blake Maybank has not visited! His new book is an incredibly detailed set of directions to (almost) every tiny nook of this beautiful province.

The main purpose of this book is to give sufficient directions for the visitor or native Nova Scotian to find the numerous coves and special places that dot the province. This is not as easy as it sounds as some of the roads and tracks are obscure and hard to distinguish. For example, I know native-born people who did not know of the track to Cherry Hill Beach, even though they had driven past it many times. This is because it is tucked between houses and looks like a driveway. Very sensibly Maybank has given the GPS coordinates of this location and others where someone might have trouble.

At each locality the author describes the habitat and comments on the birds typically to be found there. He also includes cultural highlights such as churches, lighthouses, museums and other tourist attractions. Although the title suggests this book is only about birds, Maybank includes similar information on mammals, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians. Where noticeable he comments on the wildflowers but this is not a focus. Each section has icons representing the types of birds, plants or mammals found and other key features like washrooms to be found on the site.

Giving directions can, of necessity, be dry reading even (or especially?) when they are given in great detail.

The Complete Fauna of Iran

By Eskandar Firouz. 2005. I. B. Tauris. London, New York. xiv + 322 pages. US \$90.

This book covers the vertebrate fauna of Iran, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and freshwater fishes. It is a revised, English language version of a 2000 publication by the same author in Farsi (reviewed by Coad and Keivany 2002). Those fluent in Farsi might prefer that version at the bargain price of \$5.63!

Iran is a country that often appears in the political news for its great economic and strategic geographical importance. This is mirrored in its vertebrate

The writer's style is much more upbeat and entertaining in the other sections. I was amused to read (Meat Cove) is "beyond the radar ... its delights are shared by a privileged minority" (Meat Cove, despite its name, is indeed a beautiful place of seabirds, orchids and gorgeous scenery; naturalists should certainly go there). Maybank does not give a detailed account of all the birds likely to be seen at a given locality. He uses generic terms such as gulls, shorebirds and warblers. However he has set up a website where you can access bird lists and information on the key localities. I assume he plans to keep this site current, so it is much more useful then putting a list in the book (which would soon be dated).

There are a few items that I think need changing. Page 243B has lost part of its text, an obvious printing problem. The author states "There are no deer ticks ... hence no Lyme disease." It is not this simple. Dog ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*) also carry the Lyme disease bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi* (technically they are "infected", but maybe not "infective"). Whether or not the *D. variabilis* tick transmits Lyme disease is not yet resolved, suggesting caution. I was dismayed to see he did not mention Grassy Island (and hence Roseate Terns) in his account of Pearl Island (perhaps the last pair has been extirpated). The book has no index, meaning you will need a map to get you oriented. (Find the county you want and use the index to get you to the correct chapter.)

Any traveler who has gone to the expense of traveling to Nova Scotia needs this book; it will be invaluable. They will get to more places and see things they would have missed. Nova Scotians will also benefit. I doubt if anyone has traveled so widely and could provide such a precise record as Maybank. I will be using this book for my upcoming trip to Ile Madame in Cape Breton. As my last trip was in winter, I look forward to more informed and interesting birding this time.

ROY JOHN

2193 Emard Crescent, Beacon Hill North, Ottawa, Ontario
K1J 6K5 Canada

fauna, which includes such famous economic species as the caviar-bearing sturgeons and many diverse species of interest to naturalists close to its location at the intersection of the Palaearctic, Ethiopian and Oriental realms.

The Introductory sections of the book are particularly valuable for readers not familiar with this part of the world, and encompass 48 pages. A transliteration system is explained for the Farsi common names of organisms (a local language name list is always useful as scientific names may be more of a barrier than a