

refers to the bold white “T” pattern which is characteristic of many members of the genus. Its Russian name, Kamenka, refers to the stony habitat they so love; their ability to cope with extreme conditions is witnessed by the fact for some 160 000 square kilometres in the Sahara the White-crowned Black Wheatear is the only breeding passerine, and the fact that the Northern Wheatear has successfully colonized arctic tundra. Given the lack of culinary choice their dietary habits are pretty well catch as catch can; recorded food items include scorpions and bumblebees.

The Northern Wheatear, the only member of the genus in North America, is remarkable. Each year birds from Alaska, in the words of the author, “stubbornly make for their remote African homeland”, an epic voyage that would exhaust an Arctic Tern. Birds nesting in Eastern Canada head in the opposite direction, and are the only Canadian passerine that winters in Africa. Being found in places where lots of ornithologists live; the Northern Wheatear is one of the better known members of the group. From these studies, we know that they maintain a frenetic lifestyle during the breeding season that can, in the far north, involve a 24/7 routine of zealously patrolling its borders while attending the needs of two females in widely separated territories. According to Panov, Wheatears are highly aggressive with a “low threshold for territorial aggression”.

## BOTANY

### Giant Trees of Western America and the World

By Al Carder. 2006. Harbour Publishing Co., Madeira Park, British Columbia. 138 pages. \$18.05.

Al Carder has been researching giant trees for a lot of his long career, collecting stories of large trees in the Pacific forest of North America, his home and main study area. This book is a sequel to his earlier work trying to record the dimensions of many of the world’s largest trees now including more facts and more tree species. The book is ordered by continents and tree families to give the reader perspective of the variety of trees which have achieved huge dimensions, but many of which have disappeared in the past century.

A short anecdotal essay at the beginning puts Carder’s agenda forward quickly. He has always been awestruck by the beauty and perspective of being among the largest trees and wants to preserve the memory of those trees for future ages. Sadly the largest specimens of any tree species are gone from our world due to commercial logging in the last two centuries and when single giant trees survived the logging, these succumbed to windstorms, having been left without the surrounding forests which protected and supported their growth over the centuries. In North America, Australia and New Zealand, the story of logging is the history of large trees and our most impressive forests, a history

To communicate with one another they have three different song groups and a remarkably varied repertoire of physical signals involving different postures and movements. The author also usefully informs us that they have an unpleasant taste, evidenced by experiments in which hornets were offered wheatear “meat”.

It is disappointing that the author, demonstrably a competent illustrator and photographer, did not choose to include a series of systemic plates illustrating the various taxa and their variations. Another disappointment is that the author focused the species accounts on Eurasian taxa; one suspects that this reflects the author’s research interests but also the fact that African taxa are relatively less well known. In the review copy the hatching on many of the maps was blurry, making them hard to figure out. Nonetheless, there are few errors in the book, although the fact that the title contains a grammatical error did not inspire much up front confidence.

This book is a scientific monograph primarily aimed at ornithologists. It poses, and proposes answers to a number of interesting ecological and behavioural questions and will be of great interest to anyone intrigued by evolutionary biology.

MARK GAWN

Permanent Mission of Canada, 5 avenue de l’Ariana, Geneva, Switzerland

which has more to do with destruction of forests than the story of humans interacting with their environment.

The book is short with only one hundred and thirty pages devoted to describing the trees. Each tree description has an accompanying page with a diagram of the tree at its largest reported size and shape, each species being unique in shape. Fifty of those pages are devoted to the trees of North America with the other pages listing and describing the outstanding trees of other continents. North America is obviously Carder’s first priority but his love of trees encompasses the entire world.

Many trees in England and Europe have been available for study to written history over the centuries and Carder has researched these written accounts to give us historical anecdotes from their long life. A Tule tree in Mexico with an opening in the trunk large enough to accommodate twelve horsemen when reported 375 years ago, and the Sweet Chestnut in Sicily whose spread of branches sheltered the Queen of Aragon and her escort of 100 horsemen over 600 years ago are two of the anecdotes which describe trees still standing. Whether the tree has records of growing to over 400 feet as the Douglas Fir or whether its claim is to have lived over 5000 years as the English Yew, the grandeur of the trees is given to us by Carder to

be considered, enjoyed and lamented as phenomena which have existed but sometimes passed us by.

I enjoyed reading about present and past giant trees and was entertained different times looking for interesting facts and diagrams. It is not a book to be read at one sitting, even though short, because the tree species stand alone and reading several is like reading a list which can go on too long. A short reading of one or two tree descriptions at each visit is sufficient with another few minutes reading the next descriptions at

another time. Soon the book becomes a reference for tree species and musings of how much we have missed and what we might visit. I have shown it to my students and they spent time with it as a picture and description book to browse and marvel. Al Carder has given us a little gem of knowledge and history for entertainment based on good science and research.

JIM O'NEILL

28718 Five Mile Road, Livonia, Michigan, 48154 USA

## ENVIRONMENT

### **Fire and Avian Ecology in North America – Studies in Avian Biology Number 30**

Edited by Victoria A. Saab and Hugh D.W. Powell. 2005. Cooper Ornithological Society. 193 pages.

This technical work is a collection of 11 papers, ten of which address the role and effect of fire in one or more ecosystems (e.g., Boreal Forest, Oak Woodlands, Interior Chaparral); the first chapter is a cogent summary of the ten others.

The chapters more or less follow a logical pattern in their layout. Each paper shows a map of the distribution of the habitat(s) discussed, and normally one or two other figures. A table of pertinent literature is presented in each chapter, which also includes responses to fire of a number of bird species. The papers describe historic fire regimes, including the use of fire by aboriginals, as well as the effect of fire suppression on

birds (and by default, the plants making up the habitat for them); sections on conservation strategies, including the use of prescribed burns and withholding of fire suppression end each chapter.

The only irritant to me was lumping all the references at the end of the book; normally, each paper should be concluded with its own collection of references. Should someone want to photocopy one chapter, they would have to photocopy the entire compilation of references, instead of just the pertinent ones. None-the-less, it is a solid work.

RANDY LAUFF

St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 2W5 Canada

### **Fisheries Assessment and Management in Data-Limited Situations**

Edited by G. H. Kruse, V. F. Gallucci, D. E. Hay, R. I. Perry, R. M. Peterman, T. C. Shirley, P. D. Spencer, B. Wilson, and, D. Woodby. 2005. Alaska Sea Grant, Fairbanks, Alaska. Publication Number: AK-SG-05-02. 958 pages. Price: \$50.00 US, ISBN:156612-093-4.

Maintaining sustainable fisheries resources requires the combined efforts of scientists, fisheries managers and policy makers. Balancing fisheries growth and conservation is a difficult task, particularly in situations where available information is limited. Data-limited fisheries are often plagued by a lack of long-term data on the basic biology, ecology and productivity of the species that are relevant to these resources. A number of successful fisheries have been developed by combining a scientific background with robust policy management to successfully develop sustainable fisheries, even in situations where data is limited. However, newly developing and small-scale fisheries often operate without sufficient data to develop production models, assessment techniques and sustainable management strategies.

To address these challenges, a symposium entitled "Assessment and Management of New and Developed Fisheries in Data-limited Situations" was held in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2003. The purpose of this symposium was to share knowledge, research and manage-

ment strategies for newly developing and small-scale fisheries by bringing together fisheries scientists, managers and policy makers from all over the world. The result is a proceedings book titled "Fisheries Assessment and Management in Data-limited Situations." Specifically, this book is a collection of forty-six peer-reviewed research papers that provide case studies and management considerations for fisheries with limited data. The book is divided into seven sections: (1) case studies of fishery failures and successes; (2) indicators of stock health and productivity from limited sampling programs; (3) involvement of fishermen and use of local knowledge; (4) multi-species and ecosystem indicators and models; (5) precautionary management approaches; (6) stock assessment models; and (7) stock assessment surveys and applications. The first two sections focus on science-based assessments of fishery case studies while the final five sections identify and discuss management and assessment strategies. Throughout many of the case studies in this book, several key management themes emerge that are highly relevant to fisheries managers in data-limited situations.

Section one provides insight into the failures and successes of the world's fisheries. Several case studies on a variety of species are described, and management implications are discussed. A key paper in this sec-