

growing status of this project. As each new volume is produced it adds to the benchmark status of the existing volumes as a primary source of information on the world's birds. The format has remained stable for the last several volumes, which makes it easy to use and compare. The photos are top rate despite the small and obscure nature of these species. I know how difficult

it is to get **any** photographs of such little and active sprites, let alone artistic ones of birds singing or displaying. *Handbook of the Birds of the World* has now reached biblical reference status.

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Conservation of the Black-tailed Prairie Dog: Saving North America's Western Grasslands

Edited by John Hoogland. 2006. Island Press, Washington, DC. 350 pages paperback U.S. \$35.

It is amazing how the conservation of an animal as interesting and entertaining as the Black-tailed Prairie Dog can be so controversial. But controversial it has been in the last few decades as environmental interests have woken up to the fact that the campaign of Prairie Dog poisoning and habitat loss has resulted in a range contraction to less than 2% of the historical geographic distribution. To this day many ranchers actively dislike Prairie Dogs for their competition with livestock for rangeland resources. In contrast, some conservation practitioners think that enough other species rely on the habitat created on Prairie Dog colonies that Prairie Dogs should be considered a keystone species. In my own practice as a biologist at Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan, I have frequently been taken aback by how polarized the opinions on Prairie Dogs can be between individuals and groups that often share many similar core values.

The book, *Conservation of the Black-tailed Prairie Dog: Saving North America's Western Grasslands* is the brain child of Dr. John Hoogland who has researched the behaviour of Prairie Dogs at Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota since the mid-1970s. Dr. Hoogland felt that there was a need to summarize the extensive scientific literature on the Black-tailed Prairie Dog in a non-technical format designed to highlight the information's relevance to conservation. To accomplish this Dr. Hoogland engaged 30 other specialists and challenged them to draw out the lessons for conservation from their areas of specialty. These lessons are explored through 18 chapters on topics such

as natural history, social behaviour, competition with livestock, keystone species, human attitudes, and how to establish new colonies of Prairie Dogs. The chapter authors are all respected specialists and do an excellent job of relating their topic area to the central theme of the book: the conservation of Black-tail Prairie Dogs.

The only significant criticism I have is that Dr. Hoogland repeatedly states in Chapter 2 that Black-tailed Prairie Dogs do not hibernate. This is odd because published studies have shown that Black-tailed Prairie Dogs use facultative torpor (Lehmer et al. 2001). In fact, in southwestern Saskatchewan, at the northern edge of their distribution, Black-tailed Prairie Dogs spend as much as 95 days a year in winter torpor bouts lasting 7.6 to 13.6 days with minimum core body temperatures ranging from 7.1 to 11.6°C (Gummer 2005). Clearly, this behaviour deserved to be recognized and discussed as to how it might relate to efforts to conserve this species. Despite this small failing, I fully recommend this book to anyone interested in the conservation of this fascinating social rodent or who wants to become better informed on conservation issues on the Great Plains.

Literature Cited

- Gummer, D. L. 2005. Geographic variation in torpor patterns: The northernmost populations of prairie dogs and kangaroo rats. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta. 210 pages.
Lehmer, E. M., B. Van Horne, B. Kulbartz, and G. L. Florant. 2001. Facultative torpor in free-ranging black-tailed prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*). *Journal of Mammology*, 82(2): 551–557.

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Migrating Raptors of the World: Their Ecology and Conservation

By Keith L. Bildstein. Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 East State Street, Ithaca, New York 14850 USA. 332 pages. U.S.\$35.00 Cloth.

Raptors and bird migration both hold great fascination throughout the world, so the combination of the two topics makes for an irresistible book. Bildstein is a foremost world authority. Based at Hawk Mountain, the world's first site dedicated to the conservation of hawks and the watching of their migration, he is the Sarkis Acopian Director of Conservation Science. Bildstein tells us that "a bad day at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary is better than a good day anywhere else."

His wide knowledge derives in part from his travels to each of the world's main hawk-watching sites. Figure 1 displays the five major hawk pathways throughout the world and Figure 7 shows the 12 locations where 100 000 or more raptors pass by. In addition to studies at Hawk Mountain, banding of thousands of raptors has occurred at Cedar Grove, Wisconsin; Cape May, New Jersey; Hawk Ridge on Lake Superior, Minnesota; the Goshute Mountains, Nevada; the Manzano Mountains, New Mexico, and Golden Gate Observatory, California. Notable Old World banding sites are Chokpak Pass, Kazakhstan, and Elat, Israel. Switching