

This guide brings British Columbia herpetology effectively into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as to be expected from the distinguished authors. It is a must for any west coast naturalist's bookshelf and/or field jacket with an out-sized pocket.

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### Blue Grouse: Their Biology and Natural History

By Fred C. Zwickel, and James F. Bendell. 2004. National Research Council of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. 284 pages. \$69.95 Paper.

This monograph is the culmination of two lifetimes devoted to studying Blue Grouse population biology and behaviour, both in the field and in aviaries, predominantly in coastal British Columbia. One of the advantages of a lengthy monograph is that the authors were able to synthesize much unpublished data and "gray" literature in addition to published references, making it the most comprehensive reference on this species group that is currently available. As such, it is not a book for the general reader of natural history (the colour and black-and-white photographs scattered throughout are quite small), but a scientific reference full of tables and graphs and lots of detail (there are 12 pages each of references and results of statistical tests).

Unfortunately, only two years after Zwickel and Bendell's monograph was published, the American Ornithologists' Union (Banks et al. 2006) re-split Blue Grouse into two taxa, *Dendragapus obscurus* in the Pacific Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada, and *D. fuliginosus* in the Rocky Mountains. These two taxa had originally been considered two species (Brooks 1929), but were conspecific for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The re-split resulted from the recent DNA-based work of Barrowclough et al. (2004), who also found that the New Mexico populations of Dusky Grouse were perplexingly different, but not enough to consider them separate species. Populations in the northern parts of the range (i.e., north of the Chilcotin in central B.C., through to Alaska) were not included in the Barrowclough et al. study, but the separation into coastal and inland species is assumed to hold true. Unfortunately, the AOU split makes the monograph more difficult to use, but in their favour, Zwickel and Bendell use the scientific names, often with full trinomial reference

to the eight accepted races at the time of publication, throughout, as well as referring to "coastal" and "interior" subspecies analogous to the new split. I recommend that the serious reader really study the chapter on taxonomy and distribution with Barrowclough's paper (available on the internet) in hand.

As a serious naturalist, I found the chapters on historical review, physical environment, integument (plumage especially), behaviour, habitat use and movement, population parameters, predators and disease the most interesting. The seven chapters on form and function – integument, morphology, reproduction, growth and development, food and nutrition, energetics and genetics – will be of interest mostly to serious students of Blue Grouse.

Although Zwickel and Bendell refer to studies from other parts of Blue Grouse range, they admit that the strong focus on the coastal species (*D. fuliginosus*) is unfortunate because there are a number of characteristics, such as vocalizations, that are clearly different between the two species. The authors hint at a future publication that will explore the population ecology of Blue Grouse, and it is to be hoped that they are able to overcome this geographical disparity.

#### Literature Cited

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- Barrowclough, G. F., J. G. Groth, L. A. Mertz, and R. J. Gutierrez. 2004. Phylogeographic structure, gene flow and species status in Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*). *Molecular Ecology* 13: 1911-1922.
- Brooks, A. 1929. On *Dendragapus obscurus obscurus*. *Auk* 46: 111-113.

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### Birds of Peru

By Thomas S. Schulenberg, Douglas F. Stotz, Daniel F. Lane, John P. O'Neill, and Theodore A. Parker III. 2007. Princeton University Press. 656 pages. U.S. \$49.50 Cloth.

In 2001 I was delighted to find *Birds of Peru*, by J. Clements and N. Shany. It was a good modern field guide and proved its worth in Peru. However, there were a few times when I needed to borrow a more comprehensive text to be certain of my identification. Now

we have a new guide by Schulenberg et al. and the obvious question is whether it is an improvement.

The first difference is that the new guide has range maps. This means I do not have to struggle with phrases such as "on the east bank of the Rio Utacamba at the south end of Cordillera de Colon." [Marvelous Spatule-tail] Now I can look at the map and have an immediate understanding. The range maps are conveniently set