

not differentiate the species of fur seals. There are three mentions of Weddel Seal. The first does not look like a Weddel and the second time implies the Weddells and Elephant seals consort and call together. They do not and the footage shows only Elephants. The first shot of a Crabeater Seal is not identified while a later one is shown as the "first" sighting.

There are some comments on the historical significance of some sites, but these are not made in any context. For example, during the footage on Elephant Island the narrator comments on Shackleton's experience. It is left to the viewer to know or find out about Shackleton's expedition. Similarly the hut at Hope Bay (near the Esperanza Research Base) is identified only as Swedish from 1902. It is one of three huts from the Swedish South Polar Expedition led by Otto Norden-skjold. The base of another hut (on Paulet Island) is shown, but not identified. It was built by the survivors of the wrecked vessel "Antarctic" under Captain

C. A. Larsen, who were also members of the Swedish South Polar Expedition.

Visitors must remember that this is a springtime movie and some of the bird distributions will change noticeably as the season advances. Also the snow and ice cover will be diminished by January–February. However, whenever you go, you should see all of the species depicted within the same general area. This is a very good video for people who plan to visit or have visited this area. It gives an excellent sense of the stark but fascinating nature of this unforgiving wild land and its inhabitants. The footage of the penguins alone is quite delightful.

ROY JOHN

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

Shorebirds of the Yellow Sea: Importance, Threats and Conservation Status

By M. A. Barter. 2002. Wetlands International Global Series 9, International Wader Studies 12, Canberra, Australia. 104 pp. Available free on internet, www.wetlands.org. 2.5 Mbt Word or 3.5 Mbt pdf.

This book is done and supported by individuals who went way beyond the horizon and came back with fame and appreciation; they just followed the birds. The East Asian Australasian Flyway (EAAF) is gigantic. This flyway not only presents tongue-breaking location names, it also connects the Australian and Asian wintering grounds with the breeding grounds in the Russian Arctic and even Alaska. Many of the huge mudflats with their shorebirds are still unknown and await their investigation. Australia and its well-known shorebird enthusiasts ("shorebird-aholics") present the powerful "engine" to further such investigations on shorebirds along the EAAF. These individuals set a great example to be followed worldwide. Besides its unique and endemic birds, this flyway also offers great opportunities to evaluate findings from flyways elsewhere in the world. The author summarizes efficiently in 9 chapters over 10 years of field work in the Yellow Sea. This region presents over 36 shorebird species and is a key location for the EAAF during the migration and non-breeding seasons. Each of the 36 species is described well in the Species Accounts, which provide the international audience with official flyway estimates, important coastal regions of occurrences and many other details such as counting results for the migration seasons and literature references. In addition, a description (e.g., area, coordinates, protection status, threats, etc.) is given for 27 of the most relevant

shorebird migration sites in the Yellow Sea, known to date. Two chapters are devoted to shorebird threats, and conservation of shorebirds and their habitat. This topic cannot be emphasized strongly enough since the Yellow Sea harbours not only a high biodiversity but also globally threatened species such as the Spotted Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*) and Spoon-billed Sandpiper (*Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*), as well as near-threatened species like Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascarensis*) and Asian Dowitcher (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*). For six of the shorebird species the region carries, during northward migration, almost the entire breeding population of the flyway.

The text of this technical publication is written very well and efficiently, and the tables and black-and-white maps serve their purpose nicely. Summaries of the text in Korean and Chinese are provided, too. One should keep in mind that 12 major Asian rivers drain into the Yellow Sea; plenty of mudflats and estuaries to survey. Therefore, the publication raises the issue of how to survey migratory shorebirds efficiently in quantitative terms and for such a huge area? This book provides first answers, but leaves also some topics unanswered. For instance, how big is the underestimation of shorebirds at specific sites due to high turn-over rates? How many species get overlooked; e.g., for the rare birds such as Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Spotted Greenshanks (with an estimated global population of 1000 individuals). Predictive Modelling of shorebird populations and abundance still awaits its application. Birds need habitat, and the author outlines well which conservation policies work best to protect and

conserve (migratory) shorebirds in the Yellow Sea region. At least the classical concepts might not work well, and RAMSAR agreements and other full-blown international political tool boxes are weak and soft; e.g., due to lack of enforcements and binding. Of interest is the progressive coastal ecoregion approach presented in Chapter 7, which allows one to characterise shorebird habitat with a variety of multidisciplinary habitat data. Much more of such work is needed in order to provide quantified results for shorebirds as well as their habitat.

Although major countries like China, North and South Korea are currently not well known for their efforts to conserve shorebirds and their habitat, this

publication will hopefully help to improve the current situation and force the governments eventually to take (coastal) environment issues seriously. The author can be congratulated for his tremendous effort providing the international community with such a splendid report on shorebird conservation and crucial baseline data.

FALK HUETTMANN

Department of Geography–Earth Science, Calgary University,
2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4 Canada
Present address: Biology and Wildlife Department, Institute
of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska
99775-700 USA

Birds of the World: A Checklist

By James F. Clements. 2000. Ibis Publishing Company,
Vista, California. 867 pp.

Let's be clear about one thing, this is not a field checklist. It's a massive, door-stopping tome. But what a tome it is: all serious birders and ornithologists will want to own their own copy of this long-awaited and authoritative work. For over a decade successive editions of "Clements" have been the authority when it comes to questions on what counts, and what doesn't: the American Birding Association has long used it as its global listing standard. The latest edition will not disappoint.

The bulk of the book consists of a comprehensive listing of all the species of birds of the world. Species names and taxonomy largely follow decisions of the American Ornithologists Union and the British Ornithologists Union; where the author varies from this appropriate references are provided. Each entry has the English name of the species in bold print, followed by the Latin name in italics. In a major improvement over earlier editions, this is followed by a listing of all acknowledged subspecies, albeit in Latin only. This is an exceedingly useful feature, particularly given the pace of taxonomic change in which today's subspecies could be tomorrow's species. Beside each subspecies entry is a short description of its global range. Each species has a handy tick box for those hard-core listers out there and a space to enter information on your own sightings. That's it; no text, no photos, no maps.

There is a short introduction, a helpful list of abbreviations ("Tas." stands for Tasmania), another helpful list of orders and families, and a shamefully long list of extinct species (almost all from islands). There is also a list of major family references for those who want to get into the details or argue about specific decisions, as well as an extensive bibliography. A gazetteer provides geographic reference points for places cited in the text. Listers – and biogeographers – will find the lists of endemic bird species by country, and the dis-

tribution of bird species by country, highly useful. Rounding out the picture are separate indices of scientific and English names. The front piece has a colourful map showing the distribution of bird species by country, the end piece a similar map showing endemic species, also by country.

The approach taken by Clements is unflinchingly anchored in the biological species concept; a species is considered valid when it is reproductively isolated. This is in contrast to a phylogenetic approach which looks for clusters of shared characteristics. This may disappoint some, as is the decision to not recognize as discrete species many insular forms. Nonetheless, the number of recognized species has exploded from 8600 to 9700, largely based on increased knowledge, including the growing use of DNA analysis. Few global travellers will fail to see their bird list grow by a careful analysis of the revised listing, and many Canadian subspecies have been elevated to full species.

One of the most exciting aspects of this work is its evergreen character; inevitably a book of this nature is out of date almost as soon as it is published. To counter this the author has made it a living work by periodically posting updates to the publisher's web page: serious birders will add "www.ibispub.com" to their internet bookmarks and visit regularly to keep track of the latest lumps and splits. At the time this review was written there have been several updates. For example, in December, 2002, American Herring Gull, *Larus smithsonianus*, was elevated to full species level. Not surprisingly, there is also a software companion (at an extra cost) to help you keep track of sightings electronically, and the "Clements" list is already the standard in competing software out there.

Are there flaws? It would be impossible for a few not to creep in, and a careful perusal will quickly turn up several, starting on page one, where the line to enter your comments is missing for Northern Cassowary. Also, and despite being a great birding destination, Jamaica has "only" 27 endemics, not the 200-300 one