

Whose Bird?

By Bo Boelens and M. Watkins. 2004. Yale University Press, P.O. Box 209040, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-9040 USA. x + 400 pages U.S.\$35 paper.

Have you ever been curious as to who was the Bonaparte of Bonaparte's Gull fame? Was it really the feared Corsican tyrant? Now you can get a book that will answer that question and many more. The authors have researched about 1400 people who have, at one time or another, given their names to bird species. There is a cameo biography for each individual. As the book gives the accepted English names, there is a very slight bias to the coverage. European and American naturalists dominate the list, but to be fair Professor Ijima (Ijima's Warbler, *Phylloscopus ijimai*) gets his credit. Montezuma does not fare as well. He gets a single sentence biography stating he was Emperor of the Aztecs. Actually, Montezuma I, Emperor of Mexico, was a remarkable man. He was a victorious general before he succeeded his uncle as emperor in 1436. He is only recognized for his Quail, with no mention of his strikingly handsome Oropendola. In contrast, Californian Alberto Treganza's – now Great Blue – Heron gets almost a whole page.

Many of the names have fallen by the wayside. The Bancroft's Night Heron is now called by the more descriptive name of Yellow-crowned Night Heron. The loss of some names is a benefit. I would have trouble spelling and pronouncing Sjöstedt (Sjöstedt's Owllet, now Barred Owllet). No disrespect to Mr. Helmut Sick (Sick's Manakin), but I think the Golden-crowned Manikin would prefer its new name. However, I am sad to see Lear's Macaw is now an Indigo Macaw. Edward Lear, mostly known for his nonsense poems, was a remarkable Victorian bird artist who deserves a memorial. William MacGillivray's name lives on as

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmia*) but his son's bird, MacGillivray's Petrel, is now the Fiji Petrel, but scientifically is *Pseudobulwaria macgillivrayi* (The generic name honours the Reverend James Bulwer.).

Some of these names are still current. Thekla Lark, named after the dying daughter of a German naturalist is still a Thekla Lark. Of the 17 species named for the pioneering Dutch ornithologist Coenraad Temmink, six still remain. I am delighted that the Adélie Penguin's name remains intact as it really suits this charming bird. Be thankful that Admiral Jules-Sebastien-César Dumont D'Urville named it for his wife and not himself.

There are some odd stories in the book. I was particularly titivated by the tale of Colonel George Montagu (Montagu's Harrier) who was cashiered from the British army for "provocative marital skirmishing" and thereby took up the study of science. I will never look at the harrier the same way again!

There are some names that are conspicuously absent. Roger Tory Peterson, Peter Scott (Scott's Oriole is named for Winfield Scott) and James Fisher were probably born too late in history. Linneus or Linné, who invented the nomenclature system, was alive in the right era, but remains un-honoured.

As well as the cameos, the authors have collected together those people who shared a characteristic in common, such as diplomats, Germans or those who died of gunshot. Many of the entries have a black-and-white portrait of the person featured. For those of you who love trivia or are keen naturalists preferably both, this is a fun book.

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Forest Dynamics and Disturbance Regimes: Studies from Temperate Evergreen-Deciduous Forests

By Lee E. Frelich. 2002. Cambridge University Press, 40 West 20th Street, New York, New York 10011-4221 USA. 266 pages. GBP50 (U.S.\$80).

Disturbance is ubiquitous in forest ecosystems. Forested landscapes are best viewed as an integration of climatic, biotic, edaphic and geomorphic processes that determine the character of disturbance events occurring over a wide range of temporal and spatial scales. Disturbed by the extremes of either catastrophic, stand-replacing events that may include fire, insect outbreak, and extensive windthrow, or periodic, small-scale gap processes mediated by fungal pathogens, forests are in constant flux when viewed from a landscape perspective. Such a wide range in the periodicity, intensity and scale of disturbance events, and the diversity of bio-edaphic interactions create a complex, fluid, heterogeneous landscape.

Lee Frelich, founder and director of the University of Minnesota Center for Hardwood Ecology, introduces the reader to the significant disturbances that have shaped, and continue to shape, the hemlock-hardwood forests of the northern regions of the Lake States (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan). For the past two decades Dr. Frelich has dedicated himself to understanding the stand- and forest-level dynamics of these deciduous-to-boreal transition forests. He forms part of a long tradition of university and government (United States Forest Service) forest ecology research, much of which is scattered in scientific journals and government reports. *Forest Dynamics and Disturbance Regimes* provides for the first time, in an engaging, well-illustrated, and synthetic format, the fruit of this rich research legacy.