

Notes and Book notices

New collar effective in reducing predation of birds by domestic cats. In Britain alone there are between 7 and 8 million domestic cats which may kill up to 50 million birds a year. These cats are mostly fed by their owners and do not need to hunt for food but are still capable of severely depleting local bird populations. On a global basis how many birds are unnecessarily lost? There is a significant problem in parts of the world where rare species occur and cats have been introduced by man. The British Trust for Ornithology have reported on the success of the Mark II CatAlert, a battery-operated cat collar which emits a bleep every 7 seconds so alerting birds to the presence of a predator. Cats which caught on average one bird a week without a collar killed only one every 2.5 weeks if the collar was operating. An annual kill of 50 million in the UK could be reduced to around 20 million. There was little effect on small mammal catch and most cats accepted the collar without a problem.

CatAlert is available from *Willana Lifesciences, Technology House, Lisaddel Street, Salford, M6 6AP, U.K.* Price £18.21 (reduction on order of more than one).

<http://www.willana-lifesciences.co.uk>

Ecology and evolution of Darwin's Finches. GRANT, P.R. (1999). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 492 pages, \$22.95, £14.40.

A reprint of this classic of evolutionary biology first published in 1986. There is a new preface, which summarizes new findings in two pages, and a longer afterword, which presents new work, chapter by chapter, in more detail, especially discoveries made possible by the development of techniques in molecular genetics.

Ecology and conservation of grassland birds of the Western Hemisphere. VICKERY, P.D. and HERKERT, J.R. (eds.) (1999) Camarillo, CA: Cooper Ornithological Society. 299 pages, \$39.50 hb, \$25.00 pb.

Contains the proceedings of a conference held in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1995 and published as *Studies in Avian Biology* No. 19. It consists of 34 papers, all but seven of which relate to North America. Papers on ecology, conservation and habitat management are included in this comprehensive collection.

Important bird areas in Kenya. BENNUN, L. and NJOROGE, P. (1999) Nairobi, Kenya: Nature Kenya. 318 pages, £18.

Deals with 60 IBAs in the country. Valuable introductory chapters cover general information on the country, legislation and conservation management, priorities for action and an overview of the IBA approach. The bulk of the book deals in detail with the individual IBAs and a few potential IBA sites. Included for each area are a map, site description, information on key bird species and other wildlife and an examination of conservation issues. The bibliography is a valuable introduction to

what has been written on Kenya's birds. While primarily published to promote conservation efforts in the country, the book will also be invaluable to birdwatching visitors, for many of these birdrich sites are very little known and watched. It should encourage further exploration and ecotourism to lesser known sites, which can only encourage their protection. Great value for money.

The birds of Pennsylvania. McWILLIAMS, G.M. and BRAUNING, D.W. (2000) Ithaca, USA: Colmstock Publishing Associates. 479 pages, £30.50.

The first checklist of the state's birds for more than a century, this book deals with 249 species, some 200 of which have bred. An introductory chapter describes the history of birding in the state, its physiographic regions, and gives a map of major sites for birds. The species accounts include a general description of status and habitats in North America, and seasonal status within Pennsylvania, with additional information on the history of the species within the state. There are relative abundance maps for some breeding species.

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