

## Book notice

STOTZ, D. F., FITZPATRICK, J. W., PARKER, T. A. and MOSKOVITS, D. K. (1996).

*Neotropical birds: ecology and conservation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 502 pp Cloth US\$100, £79.95; paper US\$37.50, £29.95.

*Bird Conservation International* has not previously reviewed or noted recently published books but this magnificent volume provides an exception, offering as it does the basis for the future conservation of the neotropical avifauna.

The book has four parts. Part 1 (six chapters) describes vegetation as habitat for birds, with individual chapters on humid forests, dry forests, grasslands and wetlands. Threats to these habitats and their birds are identified.

Part 2 (two chapters) considers Nearctic migrants and intratropical migration. The authors are of the opinion that declines in North American migrants are caused mainly by factors operating on their breeding grounds, not losses of Neotropical habitat. Conservation priorities, they argue, should be based on the needs of resident species, not migrants from the north.

Part 3 (two chapters) sets out the principles for conserving birds in the Neotropics and determines which regions and ecosystems require most urgent conservation action.

More than 300 pages are devoted to Part 4, consisting of nine databases on Neotropical birds. These deal with zoogeographical and ecological attributes of breeding birds, distribution, Nearctic migrants, Austral migrants, non-breeding seabirds, partial migrants and indicator species. A wealth of valuable information is provided in tabular form.

*Neotropical Birds* will become *the* essential handbook for researchers and conservationists of the birds of the region while the visiting birdwatcher will gain much from studying the opening chapters.

C. F. Mason