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Birds of Thailand

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Source: The Auk, 121(4) : 1299-1300

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: https://doi.org/10.1642/0004-8038(2004)121[1299:BOT]2.0.CO;2

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readable, with jargon usually limited to the requisite minimum; only occasionally does more arcane language creep in, and those chapters will be accessible to (if sometimes challenging for) upper-level undergraduates. The examples are rich enough that more experienced readers will also find much of interest here, and my own review copy has a number of dog-eared corners indicating topics or citations I want to explore more deeply.

I was less engrossed by the three preceding chapters (History of Interest in Genetic Variation; Molecular Techniques; Philosophies and Methods of Molecular Data Analysis) that survey the history and composition of the molecular toolbox. Those sections are essentially retrospective, an understandable slant for the history chapter but a less positive attribute of the techniques chapters. There is detailed coverage, often with full-page figures, of many methods that are no longer in broad use, such as gradient centrifugation for purifying mitochondrial DNA, RFLP techniques for assaying mtDNA variation, and the UPGMA (unweighted pair-group method with arithmatic mean) tree-reconstruction algorithm. At the same time, there is surprisingly sparse coverage of some high-profile newer techniques that are more likely to be used by current and future students, such as single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) markers and Bayesian phylogenetics, each of which is allocated only a single short and not very informative paragraph with no figures and few citations to other sources of information. This backwards focus in the methods-oriented chapters is especially unfortunate, given Avise's oft-demonstrated knack for quickly adopting new methods and seeing before most of his peers how they can be applied in novel ways; his take on the current crop of new techniques would have been interesting to hear.

This retrospective orientation is not carried forward into the later natural-history chapters, in which classic references are given alongside an impressive array of very recent citations. As befitting a maturing discipline, the bibliography in the second edition has roughly twice the number of citations included in the first edition. In a number of cases, I learned of an interesting forthcoming paper from Avise's bibliography substantially before the paper came out in print—an indication of the contemporary nature of the book's citation base.

An additional strength of this volume is its taxonomic breadth: it covers examples ranging from clonality in bdelloid rotifers to the (not very challenging) forensics of identifying the origin of the blood on O. J. Simpson's famous glove. Given Avise's long-term research program, it is not surprising that many examples are drawn from fish; but if there is a bias, it is one that ornithological readers will approve of: birds are the most-cited organismal group by a substantial margin.

One drawback of the book is its low-quality binding. At present, this second edition is available only in paper covers, and these are not durable—with any sort of regular use, pages begin to detach. This book is likely to be adopted in seminar-level courses, and the poor binding may be a strategy to avoid resale on the used textbook market. If so, it is unfortunate that a hard-cover edition is not available for long-term users, including libraries.

In summary, this is an impressive reworking of a book that was certainly worth updating. This volume is not a detailed review of a particular topic or theory or a thorough users' guide to a set of techniques, but rather an unusual combination of the two with substantial hybrid vigor. At heart, Avise's book is an inspiring reminder of how field and laboratory perspectives can be combined to answer profound biological questions, and of how fun it is to become immersed in these explorations of molecular natural history.—Irby J. Lovette, *Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York, 14850, USA. E-mail: ijl2@cornell.edu*

The Auk 121(4):1299–1300, 2004

Birds of Thailand.—Craig Robson. 2002. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 272 pp., 128 color plates, ~965 maps. ISBN 0-691-00700-4. Paper, $24.95. Cloth, $49.50.—This field guide is a condensed version of Robson's *A Field Guide to the Birds of Southeast Asia* (2000) and uses most of the same illustrations, taxonomy, and nomenclature. At the same time, this

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guide adds ~50 species, recorded in Thailand between 1991 and 2001, to those in Lekagul and Round's (1991) *A Guide to the Birds of Thailand*, which is now out of print and difficult to find. Robson's *Birds of Thailand* represents a welcome update to a region where distribution records are constantly being revised as professional ornithologists from Thailand and abroad, along with amateur enthusiasts, explore the country in ever-increasing detail. These 10 years have also added additional details to distribution maps, initially developed by the "ground-breaking" efforts of Philip D. Round, as noted by Robson in his introduction. The illustrations are generally of high quality and (in this reviewer's opinion) generally more useful in the field than those of Lekagul and Round, because of color reproduction problems in the latter authors' guide.

However, a few omissions and additions to the Thailand guide may cause confusion, particularly for local birders and former users of Lekagul and Round, who may have never purchased the bulky and relatively expensive 2000 field guide. In particular, the Thai *Lophura* subspecies *lineata* and *crawfurdi* have been lumped with the Silver Pheasant superspecies *L. nycthemera* on the basis of plumage variation following McGowan and Panchen (1994), which appears to have been somewhat premature, given their relatively distinct ecology. The previous arrangement used in Lekagul and Round is now supported by DNA evidence that puts the subspecies in question clearly back with the Kalij superspecies *L. leucomelanos* (Moulin et al. 2003). Also, in both of Robson's texts, Deignan's Babbler (*Stachyris rodolphei*) is considered synonymous with Rufous-fronted Babbler (*S. rufifrons*), whereas Black-browed Fulvetta (*Alcippe grotei*) has been split out from Mountain Fulvetta (*A. peracensis*). Although those two revisions seem less controversial than those imposed on the Thai pheasants, they have not been formally described. Moreover, although all three of those changes were carefully noted in the 2000 text, they are not mentioned in the Thailand guide. Similarly, although both of Robson's field guides make use of other important taxonomic revisions to groups, such as the minivets (*Pericrocotus* spp.) and *Phylloscopus*—as well as changes to common names since Lekagul and Round was published—and although pointing out all the revisions may have been impractical, a few notes here and there to indicate synonyms would have been useful. The Thailand guide is, however, definitely more portable and cheaper than previous guides to the region, particularly now that it is available in paperback, though the paperback version is missing the useful quick-reference pictorial gazetteer in the inside front cover as well as the map of Thailand in the inside back cover.

Finally, two other shortcomings of an otherwise useful field guide are noted here, in the hope that they can be addressed in future revisions. First, as pointed out elsewhere (Round 2003), instead of labeling the illustrations with names, the book uses numbered illustrations to save space, which forces the reader to hunt the text for the descriptions that match the illustrations. The second drawback is that there is no index of names in Thai, as was done in Lekagul and Round. I have found on more than one occasion that a Thai index would have greatly facilitated discussion on a wide variety of topics related to ranges, behavior, nesting, etc. between foreign and local birders. I also think that such an index would make the book more accessible to the growing number of Thai birders, particularly the younger generation, who are in desperate need of education about their country's outstanding biological diversity. Despite these inconveniences, this book should be considered essential to have in the field in Thailand.—George A. Gale, *King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, School of Bioresources and Technology, 83 Moo. 8 Thakham, Bangkhuntien, Bangkok 10150, Thailand. E-mail: george.and@kmutt.ac.th*

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