



Trogon and Quetzals of the World

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photographs. ISBN 1-56098-388-4. Cloth, \$49.95.—This book follows nearly 40 other books by the author. The format is similar to his other books on groups of birds; an introductory section followed by detailed species accounts, illustrations from a variety of sources, extensive references, and several appendices including derivations of the scientific names, a dichotomous key, a glossary, and an index. The combination of the introductory chapters and the glossary make the detailed sections of the book accessible to any industrious reader with an interest in birds. The species accounts and references will be useful for specialists.

Part 1, entitled “Comparative Biology,” includes sections on evolutionary relationships, anatomy, behavior, ecology, and breeding biology. This part serves as a refresher course on Trogonidae but readers should be wary of over-generalizations. For example, the species of subgenus *Trogonurus* “tend to be low-altitude” compared to subgenera *Trogon* and *Curucujus* is not supported by the data shown in Figures 4 and 5. This section is also loaded with adaptationist explanations. The discussion on the function of the heterodactyl toe arrangement, summarized with the statement “presumably trogons use this adaptation for digging or scooping during nest excavation” is not very helpful in the absence of any direct evidence. Similarly, the explanation that rictal bristles “probably serve as a funnel for catching insects” is unlikely in a group that rarely catches insects in flight (and is also unlikely to be the function in birds that do catch insects in flight). Those already familiar with the family or specifically interested in measurements and descriptions can safely skip this section and move directly to the species accounts.

The bulk of the book is composed of the species accounts in Part 2. The African, New World, and Asian species are described in separate sections, each of which starts with a short summary of the habitats and state of the deforestation in each region. The characteristics of each tribe, genus, and subgenus are described before the species in each group. The accounts range from two to seven pages and include a range map and sketch for each species. Topics covered include alternative common names, geographic range, subspecies and geographic variation, measurements, detailed descriptions of all ages and sexes, habitat, diet, behavior, vocalizations, nest sites and breeding biology, and notes on conservation. All the headings are listed for each species whether information is available or not, which makes it easy to see which species lack certain information. It is clear that the Asian trogons are poorly known compared with the New World species.

Some of the range maps are incorrect. For example, maps 5 and 6, each showing two species, are nearly identical (including the bird sketches) except for the addition of eastern Panama to the range of *Pharomachrus auriceps*. Whereas the geographic range of *P.*

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Trogons and Quetzals of the World.—Paul A. Johnsgard. 2000. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. xii + 223 pp., 40 color plates, 20 figures, 35 range maps, several line drawings and

auriceps is similar to that of *P. antisianus*, making either map 5 or 6 acceptable for either species, the range shown for *P. pavonius* on map 6 is completely wrong. In map 28, the distribution of *Harpactes diardii* indicated for Borneo is actually the area where the species does not occur. Map 35 apparently does not include the occurrence of *H. wardi* in south China. Aside from the range maps, I found very few other mistakes. On page 15, "quality" should be "qualify," and on pages 69 and 217 "Oriki" should be "Oniki."

Sections after the species accounts include appendices, a key to genera and species, a glossary of the technical terms, references, and an index to scientific and common names. Derivations of scientific and vernacular names of many of the species are included in Appendix 1. Those that are not included can be deduced from the explanations of the specific epithets. The key is modified from previously published keys. The index is derived in part from Johnsgard's previous books and needs to be updated (for example, the terms nuptial and nonnuptial plumage are used instead of basic and alternate plumage).

Overall, the book does a fine job of summarizing the available information on trogons and quetzals but the work is somewhat uneven. Part 1 is an amalgam of information, some of which appears to have been included because it was available rather than because it supported a particular point. In a way, this unevenness serves well to illustrate the author's implied purpose of stimulating research on poorly known species. On the other hand, some of the unevenness is because some information is presented out of context or selectively. For example, for each New World species, the level of sensitivity to disturbance listed by Stotz et al. (1996) is noted without any explanation of what the levels of sensitivity mean. Curiously, the level of research priority for each species also given in Stotz et al. (1996) was not included here, perhaps because none were rated highest priority. In that regard, the book needs a section outlining specific research needs for this group of birds. Such a section would have helped tie together the introductory section with the species accounts. After going through all the literature and compiling all the available information on the group,

surely Johnsgard has questions that he would like answered.

The unevenness is most evident in the color plates. Seven artists contributed illustrations and the variation in style makes these plates not very useful for identification. Thus, they serve more as an accompaniment rather than an integral part of the book. Most of the plates (33 of 40) are from John Gould's 1858–1875 *A monograph of the Trogonidae or family of Trogons*. As is typical of nineteenth century illustrations, the Gould plates and one additional plate from the same era are fine artwork but not necessarily reliable for identification, ecology, or behavior. The remaining six plates by five artists are more recent and birds are shown in more life-like poses. The lack of comparative plates is made up for to some extent by sketches of under-tail patterns for males of all species.

Much of the same material is covered in *Handbook of the Birds of the World, Volume 6* (Collar 2001), although the taxonomic treatment differs somewhat. *Handbook of the Birds of the World* also includes color illustrations of many subspecies that are described but not illustrated in Johnsgard. The main advantages of *Trogons and Quetzals of the World*, however, are the level of detail in the species accounts not found in *Handbook of the Birds of the World*, the more accessible references, and the more visible font size. Therefore, this book should be included in any research library. Also, despite the lack of standardized color illustrations, collectors of the books on families of birds will enjoy this book as well, because the trogons and quetzals are an inherently interesting group.—DAN WENNY, *Illinois Natural History Survey, 3159 Crim Drive, Savanna, Illinois 61074, USA. E-mail: dwenny@inhs.uiuc.edu*

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