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Pigeons and Doves: A Guide to the Pigeons and Doves of the World.

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Pigeons and Doves: A Guide to the Pigeons and Doves of the World.—David Gibbs, Eustace Barnes, and John Cox. 2001. Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut. 615 pp., 76 color plates, 310 text figures. ISBN 0-300-07886-2. Cloth, $60.00.—After waiting nearly three decades, a decent book now exists that describes and illustrates all living species of Columbidae. The text is by freelance ecologist and naturalist David Gibbs and wildlife artist and birdtour leader Eustace Barnes. The color plates are by Eustace Barnes and John Cox. The plates are very nice, although showing each and every species in flight might be overkill, especially for pigeons and doves not known to fly anymore (if ever), such as *Microgoura meeki* (plate 44).

Pigeons and Doves is loaded with identification-related information, most of which, as far as I can tell, is accurate. Inaccuracies include repeating the botched story of the extinct Reunion Solitaire (''*Raphus*'' *solitarius,* p. 173), which Gibbs et al. say was a columbid even though Mourer-Chauviré et al. (Smithsonian Contributions to Paleobiology 89:1–38) have shown that this insular endemic was an ibis (*Threskiornis solitarius*), not a pigeon. Resurrecting *Caloenas maculata* (pp. 394, 395, plate 44), a doubtfully valid species based on an eighteenth-century, juvenile specimen of unknown locality in the Merseyside County Museum, seems a stretch for a book aimed to please birdwatchers. Gibbs et al. speculate that *C. maculata* might be ''the bird that cried '*titi*' on Tahiti'' (great name for a cheap movie, huh?). This is unlikely because ''titi'' is an onomatopoetic name throughout East Polynesia for procellariids, especially shearwaters. The authors also repeat (although unreferenced) the old but untrue adage that *Didunculus* is a primitive, relictual genus perhaps related to *Raphus* or to parrots (p. 584).

Picky mistakes, such as misspellings of island names, can be found regularly but are easy to excuse. Errors of omission are more common than those of commission. Targeting ~30 species of Neotropical and Oceanic columbids that I know fairly well, I found errors of one sort or another in about half of the accounts, such as omitting the West Indies in the range map of *Geotrygon montana* (p. 389), or saying that *Ptilinopus perousii* is ''not often found near human habitation'' (p. 479) when in fact this fig-specialist lives in villages as long as fruiting fig trees are present (Steadman, Pacific Science 52:14–34).

The book has 585 pages of text, covering 319 species in a popular family of birds that has fascinated people since long before we were literate, but has only 7.7 pages of literature citations. Barry Taylor's recent (1998), similarly formatted, and highly informative book *Rails,* for example, covers 145 more poorly studied species with 557 pages of text followed by 34.8 pages of literature citations. This 10-fold difference (0.024 citation-pages per species in *Pigeons and Doves* vs. 0.24 in *Rails*) undermines the scholarship in the former and therefore limits its utility to scientists. Related to that is Gibbs et al.'s exceedingly brief introduction (pp. 13–15).

Selfishly I note that, from 1980 to 1999, I published 45 journal articles or chapters in books that dealt substantially or exclusively with columbids, especially on islands. Gibbs et al. cite none of them, even though much of what they mention about extinction of Polynesian columbids (pp. 13, 14, 413, 543) is derived from those papers. Ignoring my papers also results in inaccurate range maps for Polynesian columbids, whether you consider just the modern range or the combined modern and prehistoric range, the latter being most useful to biogeographers. Should I feel bad that Gibbs et al. opted not to cite any of my papers? If the book were meant to be a superficial skimming once-over the columbids, the answer would be no. Given the comprehensive and authoritative intent of this work (see p. 16 as well as the dust jacket and advertisements), however, they should have given credit where it is due. How, for example, could they have failed to cite Baptista et al. (*Handbook of Birds of the World,* 4:60–243), the only other place where all living species of columbids are illustrated in color?

Gibbs et al. state their indebtedness to Nigel Collar for ''meticulous and dedicated editing of the entire text'' (p. 12). British conservationists are aware of, and their work benefits from, my and other overlooked research (published in journals such as *Conservation Biology*), but they are disinclined to cite it because we are evil museum scientists who occasionally collect birds. A ''holier than thou'' attitude pervades many bird books written in Britain these days. (*Pigeons and Doves* was produced at Pica Press in Britain; it is sold in the colonies by Yale University Press.)

Pigeons and Doves is important for providing modern color plates, range maps, and descriptions of plumages, including subspecies, of columbids world-wide. Other aspects of columbid biology (systematics, evolution, biogeography, behavior, foraging ecology, breeding biology, etc.) are poorly covered. On average, birdwatchers will like it more than ornithologists. This is what we have come to expect nowadays from university presses, who realize that birdwatchers make up a larger market than scientists.—David W. Steadman, *Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, P.O. Box 117800,*

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