

Texas Bobwhites: A Guide to their Foods and Habitat Management

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The published literature on ornithology in the region is vast, spanning almost three centuries and recording over 1,200 species of birds. Aasheesh Pittie points out that as early as 1713–1750, about 15 books relating to South Asian ornithology had been published; this number had soared to over 1,700 by the end of 2009!

In this bibliography, a comprehensive list of books that contain information on the birds of South Asia is provided. Scholarly, popular, as well as relatively obscure texts, are included to present a complete as possible picture of ornithological publications on South Asia. Taxonomic texts dealing with the classification and nomenclature of birds, travelogues, picture books, field guides, works published as monographs within journals, bibliographies, biographies, autobiographies, country handbooks, regional avifaunas, multi-volume ornithological works, art folios, catalogues of museum collections, and simple checklists are all included.

The books are mainly in English, except for certain period literature that is in German, French, Latin, etc. A few works in Indian languages (Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, etc) are also included, though the author states that these may not comprise a complete representation of existing work in regional languages.

The general arrangement of the works is alphabetical by author and chronological by year, under author.

Three indices are provided, facilitating easy access to the entries. The first is a general index of places, subjects, and taxa; the second, an index of new names proposed by authors; and the third an index of co-authors and or co-editors.

Twenty-one pages of introduction detail a fascinating chronology of books published on South Asian ornithology and is complemented by an interesting timeline of books from 1713 to 2009 listing the dates of key works.

This bibliography provides a window on a massive bank of scientific and popular knowledge that is invaluable to contemporary ornithologists, both amateur and professional. It is a landmark publication of South Asian ornithology and belongs in all university and museum libraries and in those of anyone with a keen interest in birds in the region.—CAROL INSKIPP, *I Hermeside, Welney, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 9SB, United Kingdom; e-mail: inskipp@btinternet.com.*

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Texas Bobwhites: A Guide to Their Foods and Habitat Management.—Jon A. Larson, Timothy E. Fulbright, Leonard A. Brennan, Fidel Hernandez, and Fred C. Bryant. 2010. University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas. 280 pp., 567 color plates, 4 text figures, 2 tables. ISBN 978-0-292-72278-1. Paperback, \$24.95.—For the quail hunter or quail biologist, crop contents provide a snapshot into the life of that bird on an area of land that day. A quail foraging in a habitat is essentially providing an assay of the energy and nutritional value of a habitat at a given point in time. So, more than just fulfilling a natural curiosity to know more about species we manage, food habitats provide important information on

the energy balance of a bird's life from season to season and year to year. *Texas Bobwhites* is a resource for hunters, managers, and biologists to identify quail diet and to help them build an understanding or appreciation of how diets may change with time and management actions.

Texas Bobwhites is an attractive field guide to seeds commonly eaten by bobwhites in Texas as well as providing some management information. The guide is targeted for the hunting audience and, therefore, spends no effort with taxonomic keys for identifying seeds or illustrations to explain what a spikelet, spine, or striation is. However, with 185 species identified, this guide is one of the most comprehensive currently available for any part of the bobwhites' range, and although not exhaustive, provides information on most of the seeds that would be found in quail and dove crops in Texas and much of the southwestern United States.

The book is well thought out, attractive, and appropriately sized for the office or in the field. The authors begin with a brief introduction on the diet and nutritional needs of bobwhite that summarizes much of the key early nutritional research by Dr. Robert Robel, among others. This quick overview of nutrition provides the reader with a basic understanding of the quail's seasonal nutritional and energy needs as well as a perspective on the important habitat needs throughout the year.

The guide is organized by broad classifications beginning with seeds of rushes and grasses, forbs, and finally woody vines, trees and shrubs. Two full pages are devoted to each plant species, which makes room for a range map of its occurrence in Texas, as well as information on the frequency that the species has been reported in quail crops from published diet studies. In addition, there is a basic description of the plant to aid in its identification and the habitat the plant is most often found in. The authors wisely avoided attempting to rank each species value to bobwhites because the opportunistic diet of quail, which varies temporally and spatially, would make any ranking difficult to validate. Although the text is valuable, the true hallmark of this book is the quality of the photographs. Each species has three associated photos, one showing the plant in flower in its typical environment, and two showing the seeds themselves. The images are crisp, high-resolution photographs that clearly depict the seeds in detail and color. I appreciated the way they used a coin as well as a scale that allowed me to quickly gauge the size, color, and texture of the seeds in the context of a known item—perfect for the hunter or biologist not adept at using plant keys that wishes to identify seeds. Readers can pull this book out and, armed with a magnifying glass, compare the seed in question to the pictures in this book. Including cultural management recommendations for producing each of these species—such as response to burning, grazing, disking, fertilization, and planting depth—would have been a nice addition to this volume.

Following the seed guide, *Texas Bobwhites* provides a brief chapter on quail management. This information provides a synopsis of that provided in comprehensive works such as *Bobwhites in the Rio Grande Plains of Texas*, *Texas Quails: Ecology and Management*, and *Beef, Brush and Bobwhites: Quail Management in Cattle County*. The authors point out that they are attempting to peak the readers interest in hopes they will jump off into more quail management literature and to that end they achieved their goal with this section. The final chapter on exotic grasses is a valuable addition to the overall effort and provides specific

recommendations on dealing with converting exotic pastures to native grasses as well as avoiding their continued spread that often ruins native habitats. The appendices include a list of some 229 species of plants also found in quail crops but not included in the guide. The next appendix is an important one in my mind because it lists other species of wildlife that use the same habitat as bobwhites. This is important because more landowners and managers are managing for multiple species goals but also because good stewardship of grasslands helps a number of declining species.

The authors of *Texas Bobwhites* have decades of experience with bobwhite research and management in Texas. As normal for this group of authors, they have produced a high-quality product that will help hunters and biologists identify seeds that they find in quail crops but also help the quail enthusiast, manager, and hunter better understand the habitat needs of quail throughout the year. I highly recommend this book to anyone that wishes to improve their seed identification skills and feel confident that it would be a useful addition to any quail hunter or biologist's library in or outside of Texas.—WILLIAM E. PALMER, *Tall Timbers Research Station, 13093 Henry Beadel Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32312 USA; e-mail: bill@ttrs.org.*

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Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming.—Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway. 2010. Bloomsbury Press, New York, New York. 355 pp. ISBN 978-1-59691-610-4. Hard, \$27.00.—Arguably the most compelling environmental exposé since *Silent Spring*, *Merchants of Doubt* captivated me, almost like a thriller, as it revealed why scientists and environmentalists are often outgunned, and in some circles, reviled. It's a must-read for environmental teachers and writers as well as anyone who cares about the environment and the future of birds.

The book builds on voluminous documents revealed using freedom-of-access laws during litigation of U.S. tobacco companies. Appropriately, Chapter One details how company executives cozied up to scientists like S. Fred Seitz—a former president of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences who established his scientific credentials developing the atomic bomb in WW II—and exploited an ideological willingness to seed doubt about the science behind health effects of smoking. The ensuing “Tobacco Strategy” was brilliantly successful because the tobacco industry knew by 1953

that cigarette smoking caused cancer, but the U.S. Congress delayed authorizing the Federal Drug Administration to regulate tobacco as an addictive drug until 2009!

Seitz and other prominent physicists (Fred Singer, Robert Jastrow, and William Nierenberg) proceeded to apply the Tobacco Strategy to market doubt about the science that should have quickly resolved many controversies of our time: Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (“Star Wars”), acid rain, the ozone hole, second-hand smoking, climate change, and DDT (each case study the focus of a chapter).

How could prominent scientists—on the wrong side of the scientific consensus on all these controversies—become such pit bulls against inconvenient science? Oreskes and Conway make a strong case for the Cold War as the initial ideological incubator for these scientists' hatred of socialism, and by extension, government regulation generally. Coincidentally, industries like big tobacco were fighting government regulation. It is not hard to imagine how Seitz could be influenced by big tobacco's deep pockets. Increasingly, he rubbed shoulders with heads of corporate America, flew with his wife to Bermuda compliments of R. J. Reynolds Company (whose largesse he also showered on Rockefeller University while president), and awarded over \$43.4 million in research grants (by 1979) to other scientists sympathetic to big tobacco. Seitz helped produce *Bad Science: a Resource Book*—a field guide for “fact-fighters, providing example after example of successful strategies for undermining science, and a list of experts with scientific credentials available to comment on any issue about which a think tank or corporation needed a negative sound bite” (p. 6).

Three chapters in *Merchants of Doubt* will particularly interest ornithologists. The book's final chapter is devoted to Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, and the heuristically rich story of DDT's effects on bird populations, external costs of human economic activities, and how viciously the chemical industry attacked Carson. Despite the attacks, her work was validated scientifically by bipartisan federal government panels, leading to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 1972 ban on the use of DDT in the U.S. Given such validation, recent demonization of Carson as a mass-murderer (e.g., the Competitive Enterprise Institute, [CEI]: rachelwaswrong.org/) begs explanation. Oreskes and Conway systematically dismantle the purported case against Carson and argue convincingly that CEI—and the Heartland Institute, Dixie Lee Ray, Bjorn Lomborg, Steve Milloy, and many others—are trying to revise the history about Carson precisely because her work prevailed against a powerful industry: “Accepting that by-products of industrial civilization were irreparably damaging the global environment was to accept the reality of market failure. It was to acknowledge the limits of free market capitalism” (p. 238). All seven case studies in the book document failures of the marketplace to regulate itself, the need for government regulations to protect us and the environment, and the ideological backlash against such efforts.

Chapter 7 is also valuable to ornithologists by treating efforts to regulate acid rain, which is scientifically linked to forest declines, lake effects relevant to fishing birds (Nierzwicki-Bauer et al. 2010), and to a variety of problems for songbirds (e.g., Graveyard 1998, Kowalik et al. 2007, Hames et al. 2002). The book does not even mention mercury contamination of remote aquatic ecosystems, a health and environmental cost of coal combustion.