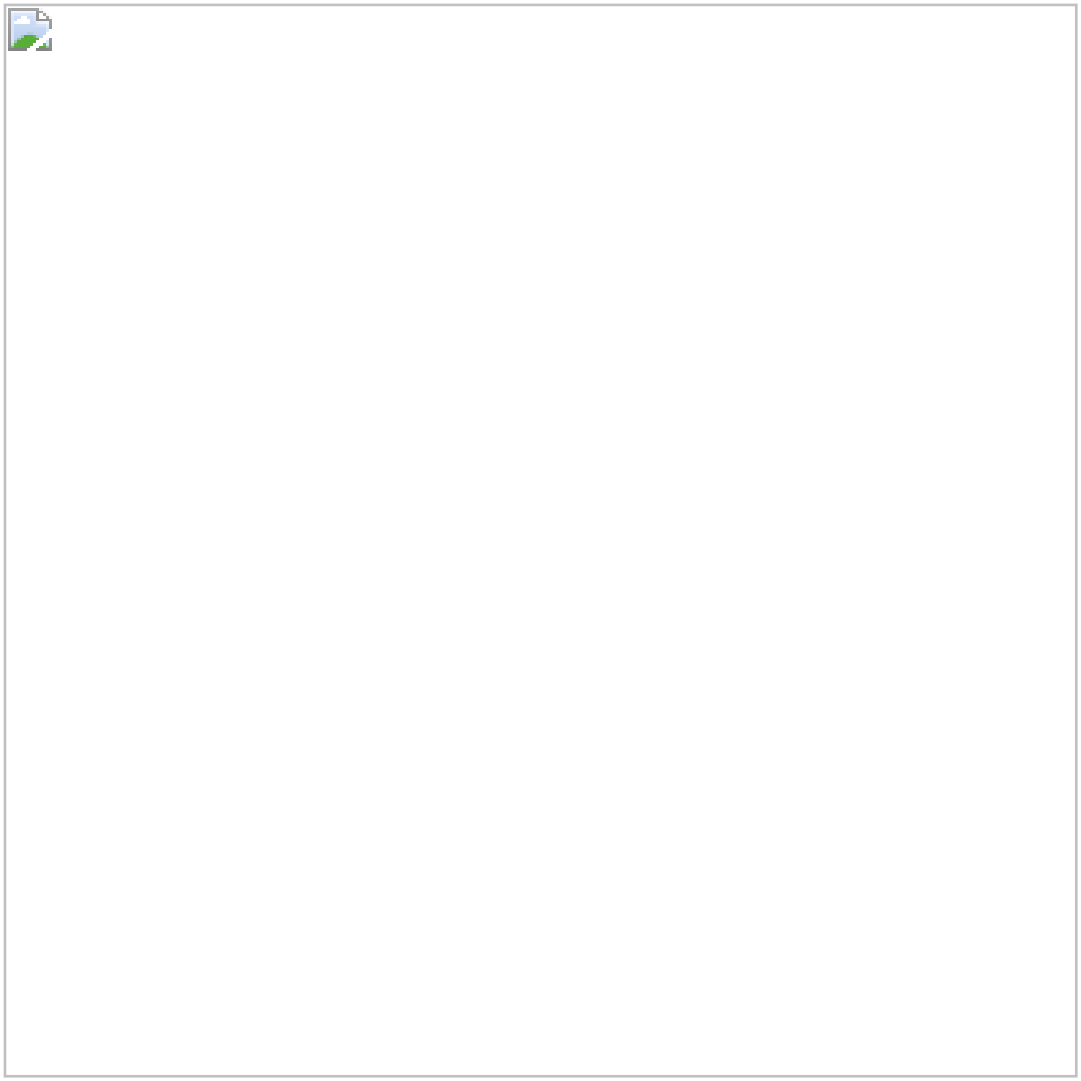

The Man Who Saved the Whooping Crane: The Robert Porter Allen Story

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Source: The Auk, 130(1) : 198-199

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: https://doi.org/10.1525/auk.2013.130.1.198

postures of puffins are delightfully illustrated with monochrome sketches.

Chapter 9, "Food and feeding," is extremely detailed, covering everything from nutritional value of different prey species to size of fish taken to size of bill loads to long-term trends in diet at the Isle of May. The record number of items in a bill load now stands at 82! The importance of prey size as well as energy density in determining optimal prey is more clearly demonstrated here than I have seen anywhere else. The steady long-term decline in length of prey at two U.K. colonies is well illustrated. Much new material on diving behavior (surprisingly rapid and shallow) and feeding areas is enabled by the new miniaturized instruments available in the past few years that have revolutionized studies of seabirds at sea.

"Predators, pirates, parasites and competitors" are covered in Chapter 10, which includes interesting discussions of both predation and klepto-parasitism by gulls, illustrating that the impact of gulls on puffins depends very much on the relative densities of the species. Possible effects of parasites and diseases remain little studied, but the available evidence suggests that they have little impact on puffins in general.

Chapter 11, "Survival of puffins and the Isle of May population," is full of rich detail and shows the benefits of rigorous recording of survival as well as productivity in long-lived seabirds; on the Isle of May, adult survival, like breeding success (chapter 7), has declined over the 35 years of study, from an extraordinary (albatross-like) figure of 98–99% in the 1970s to 90–91% 30 years later. This study has continued long enough to allow senescence to be clearly demonstrated (Figure 11.4), and examples are given of individuals known to have lived more than 40 years. The chapter concludes with a convincing case for attributing the recent crash in this colony to reduced survival in both adults and immatures, and a summary of inter-colony movements of Isle of May birds.

Chapter 12, "Puffins away from the colony," compares European information from the two traditional sources—band encounters and at-sea surveys—with exciting new data from geolocators and satellite tags; previously unsuspected wintering areas of European puffins have been discovered this way. It is telling that in the Northwest Atlantic we have very little information to compare with telemetry data.

In Chapter 13, "Puffins and people," the various ways in which people have exploited puffins over the centuries are explored, ending on a sunny note with the economic contributions that puffins now make through tourism and the success of Steve Kress's reestablishment of puffin colonies in the Gulf of Maine (as well as the failures of some less well-advised restoration attempts in Europe).

Chapter 14, "Other threats to puffins," is a mixed bag, covering everything from pollutants to industrial fishing, but not climate change, which is instead addressed in Chapter 15, "Overview and the bigger picture." The rapid warming evident in North Atlantic marine ecosystems is spectacular, with the 10°C isotherm moving north at 22 km year^{-1} since the 1960s. The progressive decline in feeding conditions, breeding success, and survival at the Isle of May is attributed in large part to warming of the ocean coinciding with changes in plankton from cool-temperate to warm-temperate species, with that trend likely to continue and shift puffin distribution some 180 km northward by the end of this century. Efforts to combat global warming by deploying farms of wind turbines, often in the areas where puffins like to feed, may pose yet another threat to the future of puffin populations; as the book concludes, "seeing a thriving puffin colony in 50–100 years time may involve travelling much further north than the Isle of May."

This magnificent book belongs on the shelves of every university library, every government library (are there any left?), and every seabird biologist.—Tony Diamond, *University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5A3, Canada. E-mail: diamond@unb.ca.*

The Auk 130(1):198–199, 2013

The Man Who Saved the Whooping Crane: The Robert Porter Allen Story.—Kathleen Kaska. 2012. University Press of Florida. 235 pp., 18 black-and-white illustrations. ISBN 0813040248. Hardback, $26.95.—Before Earth Day, before the Endangered Species Act, before *Silent Spring*, the National Audubon Society was perhaps the primary face and force of bird and other environmental conservation in North America. In the early to mid-20th century, the Society sent biologists to study birds with declining populations, and Robert Porter Allen (1905–1963) worked with some of the long-legged wading birds: American Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), Roseate Spoonbills (*Platalea ajaja*), and Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*). In 1942, according to this book, the number of Whooping Cranes in the wild was 15 (*fifteen*); no wonder that some biologists at the time considered the species doomed and not worth a major conservation effort (p. 36).

Kathleen Kaska, "writer of fiction, nonfiction, travel articles, and stage plays," had access to Allen's journals and correspondence, which allowed her to populate this biography with detailed accounts of activities down to the hour. Some of those hours were hair-raising, for Allen endured great privation and danger, especially in the search for the crane's nesting area in northern Canada, unknown until 1954 and most difficult to find in the vast boreal plains.

Kaska has done a good job with Allen's life, creating a compelling personal story and introducing the reader to the larger world of ornithology at the time, as Allen, an AOU Fellow (elected 1955), was a collaborator and colleague of a pantheon of ornithologists from that era (e.g., Roger Tory Peterson, Olin Sewall Pettingill, Frank Chapman). Alexander Sprunt IV contributed a memoriam to Allen in *The Auk* (1969, 86:26–34). Allen was awarded the AOU's Brewster Medal for ornithological achievement in 1957 and the John Burroughs Medal for distinguished natural history writing in 1958. Kaska fills around these dry details with a narrative occasionally tedious, but sometimes worthy of an adventure novel; an epilogue summarizes Whooping Crane conservation since Allen's death, including the brilliant use of ultralight aircraft to train the artificially reared

Eastern Migratory Flock to migrate from Wisconsin to Florida. There is a thorough bibliography of Allen's and other pertinent works.—Robert L. Crawford, *208 Junius Street, Thomasville, Georgia 31792, USA. E-mail: rlcrawfd@rose.net*

The Auk 130(1):199–200, 2013

Roberts Geographic Variation of Southern African Birds.—Hugh Chittenden, David Allan, and Ingrid Weiersbye. 2012. John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, Cape Town, South Africa. 284 pp., 105 color plates, 4 maps. ISBN 9781920602000. Vinyl-bound, $48.—This field guide describes and illustrates geographic variation among bird subspecies in southern Africa, the region that extends from Namibia, Botswana, and the Zambezi River from Zimbabwe and central Mozambique southward through South Africa. Subspecies are characterized as "discrete geographical populations of a species that differ consistently from other populations of that species in one or more morphological aspects, usually in the colour or patterning of plumage…" and as "morphologically and geographically defined populations or 'races' within a species." Color plates show 613 of the 870 subspecies in 224 species. Southern Africa is diverse in topography and habitat, and this ecogeographic variation is reflected in its birds.

The text includes common and scientific names (with authorship), seasonal status, a description of key features, and habitat. A glossary explains ornithological terms, and some are labeled in diagrams. Size (total length and body mass) is indicated for the species. The color plates by Ingrid Weiersbye are large and attractive images of adults, males in particular. The geographic variations in nightjars (*Caprimulgus* spp.), wood-hoopoes (Phoeniculidae), boubous (*Laniarius* spp.), penduline tits (*Anthoscopus* spp.), cisticolas and other African warblers (Cisticolidae, Megaluridae, and crombecs *Sylvietta* in Macrosphenidae), and larks (Alaudidae) are notably well illustrated. Three appendices (18 pages) list the museum specimens used as models for the color plates, the etymology of subspecies names, and 99 additional polytypic species ("having two or more subspecies") that are not included in the text or color plates. An index lists the genera, species, subspecies, and common names of the birds that are described and figured in the book.

The introduction outlines a history of the study of geographic variation in southern Africa. Maps show political boundaries and towns, regional elevation, rainfall, and regional habitats. Biographic sketches are included for three ornithologists who were based in museums in southern Africa and had a primary interest in geographic variation: Austin Roberts, Peter Clancey, and Michael Irwin. A few birds with geographic variation in plumage and bill color are suggested as candidates for species splits in future taxonomic work. The list of references has 14 items, six being taxonomic works by Clancey; one is the source of his comment, quoted in the first line of the introduction in the book, "Species evolve from races or subspecies." This comment provides an incentive to consider geographic variation in birds, as is the idea that the birds called subspecies today may be recognized as distinct species tomorrow by systematists, in an ornithological variant of cultural evolution.

As noted by the authors, a popular regional interest in geographic variation in birds had its origin in the field guide of Roberts (1940), which included subspecies and covered the same geographic region. In revised editions of "Roberts" from 1957 onward through the fifth (1984), descriptions of geographic variation and subspecies names were retained and updated to include recently described forms, but these names were deleted in the sixth edition (1993) and then included again in the seventh, no longer a field guide, the comprehensive reference book (Hockey et al. 2005, generally known as "Roberts VII"). In the present book, most common and scientific names are those in Roberts VII, but some differ; and some included subspecies are not in Roberts VII.

Most taxa in the guide are resident breeding birds in southern Africa. The maps show the distribution of breeding and nonbreeding subspecies; the colors show their distribution, not their seasonal status. For example, one subspecies of Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus minutus*) in the region is a nonbreeding migrant from the Palearctic, and the other, *I. m. payesii*, is a breeding resident and partial local migrant in southern Africa. In some species, two or more subspecies of nonbreeding Palearctic and other migrants that winter in the region are shown, including petrels, cuckoos, rollers, and warblers. On the other hand, several species with conspicuous geographic variation in plumage and recognized as subspecies in Roberts VII are not included; for example, the African Quailfinch (*Ortygospiza atricollis*), Blue Waxbill (*Uraeginthis angolensis*), and Melba Finch (*Pytilia melba*). Also, variation in plumage is not always best described simply in terms of subspecies. In one such case, three geographic variations of Jacobin Cuckoos (*Clamator jacobinus*) occur in southern Africa, but only white-bellied birds are illustrated. These birds are distinguished more in size than in plumage; size differences are not mentioned. The black plumage morph of *C. j. serratus* (originally described as a distinct species) is the one seen most often in southern KwaZulu Natal and the coastal Eastern Cape in South Africa. Contrary to the text, *C. j. serratus* is the only subspecies of Jacobin Cuckoo with a black morph; these black birds are occasionally seen in their nonbreeding season as far north as west-central and east Africa, but do not breed there and are intra-African migrants. Both the buff morph and the olive morph of the Olive Bushshrike (*Chlorophoneus olivaceus*) are described, but only the buff morph is illustrated; the olive morph is the common one in the Western and Eastern Cape. For both these species, the two plumage morphs are illustrated in standard field guides of southern African birds. The book is generally accurate, and I noted few errors—on page 50, in the map for the African Goshawk (*Accipiter tachiro*), the blue and green areas should be transposed; and in the color plate on page 185, the subspecies names of the Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*) should be transposed.

The book is useful in its depiction of geographic variation in plumage in southern African birds. It does not allow the identification and separation of all similar species in the region; for that purpose a standard field guide is needed. It does not include size differences among subspecies, perhaps because size is not useful in field identification. The book does not mention behavior and song of birds; nevertheless, these behaviors may differ