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Holarctic Avian Speciation Atlas

The purpose of this atlas is to map, with commentaries, the breeding distributions of the 2014 biological bird species of different biogeographical elements and origins which breed regularly entirely or partly within the Holarctic faunal area (the Palaearctic and Nearctic Regions of classical zoogeographers combined) from the arctic regions south to mid-Sahara, Arabia, Himalayas, west China, south Mexico with the Atlantic Islands and the ecological "islands" of the high montane areas of Taiwan and Chiapas/Guatemala. The atlas is intended as a contribution to better understanding of species evolution and the conservation of environments and gene "pools".

The model for HASA is the two-volumed atlas of speciation in African birds (Hall & Moreau 1970, Snow (ed.) 1978) published by the British Museum (Natural History). Whilst the various "national", "state" and "provincial" bird atlases of western Europe and North America are pure "gridded" distributional atlases without reference to relationships and evolutions of the taxa dealt with, HASA will not only map species by shading symbols, but will also comment upon the ecologies and relationships of the species included and consider these in context of current understanding of the climatic and vegetational changes known to have been caused by the advances and retreats of the several Pleistocene glaciations. Morphologically distinct isolated populations are of paramount importance as these could represent stages in the speciation process.

As it is intended that this atlas should incorporate, as far as possible, the most recent data from museum and field studies with these obtained as efficiently as possible, the preparation work is split between data gathering from museum material, field records and published literature on the one hand and the actual map preparation with commentaries on the other hand. To facilitate data gathering, the entire Holarctic avifaunal area is divided into 306 areas grouped into three categories based upon the extent of ornithological knowledge available for each area. The data so gathered is passed on to specialists in different taxonomic groups who prepare the maps and write the accompanying commentaries.

Recruitment, on a voluntary basis, of area data collection organizers for areas and of taxonomic group specialists is now in progress; ten years work is envisaged to complete the maps and commentaries ready for publication by an academic or institutional publisher. This ten years' work will be an international effort with ornithologists taking part as ornithologists and not as representatives of institutions or organizations. An advisory committee guides and advises the Organizer/Editor who will work with an executive committee. HASA was formally launched in a round table discussion held on 19 August 1982 in Moscow during the XVIII International Ornithological Congress. HASA is independent of any other institution or organization except the Yorkshire Museum, York, England, which is supporting the expenditure involved in great amount of correspondence and stationery, but offers of funding participants' work will be welcomed and much appreciated.

All offers of participation and funding together with requests for further details should be addressed to: D. T. Lees-Smith, Organizer/Editor HASA, 134 The Avenue, Starbeck, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 4QF, England.

Curators who would like extra copies of this synopsis for distribution to local naturalists should also contact Mr. Lees-Smith at the above address.

November 1982

Also available is a publicity leaflet aimed at intelligent members of the general public worried about nature conservation and bird protection. This leaflet is for distribution in bulk to organizations such as natural history societies, museums etc, for distribution to their members and to museum visitors. BCG.

B.C.G. members wishing to have supplies for their museums to distribute to the public at their publications counter should send direct to the Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens, York YO1 2DR, enclosing £4 per 100 copies required.

WE STILL DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHERE OUR BIRDS ARE!



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SUPPORTED BY
THE YORKSHIRE MUSEUM, YORK
AND
MANY ORNITHOLOGISTS THROUGHOUT THE
HOLARCTIC AREA

Do you wish to take part in our work?
If yes, fill in below and send to us:-

NAME (Dr. Mr. Ms. Mrs. Miss)

TEN YEARS is a short time for preparation of the Holarctic Avian Speciation Atlas, but FOREVER is the duration of extinction. Already within our area we have lost 12 species - Pallas Cormorant, Labrador Duck, Crested Shelduck, Heath Hen, Great Auk, Bonin Woodpigeon, Jouy's Woodpigeon, Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet, Bonin Ground Thrush, Bonin Grosbeak and Slender-billed Grackle. The Thick-billed Parrot has not been reliably seen for many years. Seriously endangered are California Condor, Siberian Crane, Whooping Crane, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Noguchi's Woodpecker and Lidth's Jay.

TOO MANY of our bird species are only known as specimens like Vaurie's Warbler, a few...