Ex Libris

Pat Sutherland, Charlene Beane

Abstract


Here is a superb study of the kingfisher (Alcedo atthis ispida) published by the Blandford Press and distributed in the United States by Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. This lovely book (even bound in shades of “kingfisher blue”) is the result of David Boag’s seven years of field research on this species, which regularly nests in the British Isles. During this time he not only studied the birds but perfected methods of photographing them as well. Sixty-six of the author’s beautiful color photographs illustrate the species in its complete life-cycle, including series of the birds nesting in their riverbank excavations and another of the birds catching fish underwater.

The text itself is excellent, too. In style, completeness and accuracy, the book reminds me of Alexander Skutch’s classic study of hummingbirds. Boag details the bird’s habitat, strong territorial instincts, courtship behavior, nestbuilding, hatching and rearing of the young, feeding habits and food preferences, even its mortality. There is also a chapter on the kingfisher in myths and legends. A bonus for wildlife photographers is an appendix describing the techniques employed to produce the unique photographs which adorn the book.

Boag’s book will certainly improve the aviculture of exotic, fish-eating kingfishers. Indeed, he corrects information on this species reported in the Encyclopedia of Aviculture (Vol. 3). He also describes his successful handrearing and eventual release of a kingfisher brood which he rescued from flooded waters. Birders will want to read the book and compare notes on our Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) which can be seen in much of the U.S. and parts of Canada and the Green and Ringed Kingfishers which frequent Texas. Thus, anyone interested in kingfishers will welcome this splendid book. I recommend it highly.

Full Text:

PDF

Refbacks

- There are currently no refbacks.