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## Pheasants of the World . . . Again

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## PHEASANTS OF THE WORLD... AGAIN

*The Pheasants of the World: Biology and Natural History, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* Paul A. Johnsgard. 1999. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. 398 pages. \$50.00 (cloth).

The newest edition of Johnsgard's overview of the pheasants of the world is arranged in two parts, as was the first edition. Part One is entitled Comparative Biology and is divided into eight chapters: relationships and classification, hybridization and zoogeographic patterns, growth and behavioral development, general and social behavior, ecology and population biology, comparative mating systems and social signaling devices, reproductive biology, and aviculture and conservation. Part Two, Taxonomic Keys and Species Accounts, forms the bulk of the text. Part Two begins with keys to subfamilies, tribes, and the 16 genera. An account for each species follows the generic key. The species accounts include distributions of the subspecies (including range maps), measurements, narrative descriptions to aid in identification, ecology and general biology, reproduction, and a section on status and conservation outlook.

As with any work of this magnitude, detail is sacrificed for breadth. Part One exemplifies this problem. I found the section on mortality and survival rates in Chapter 5 to be especially disappointing and overly simplified. Another minor criticism of Part One is that the tables often contain redundant information or data that some would consider trivial.

Part Two is likely more useful to the average reader. The consistent layout of the accounts allows for easy comparison among species. The range maps, which have been updated from the first edition, are easy to interpret but would be much more appealing had they been done in color (as would the habitat maps in Part One). As they are, the maps are adequate and descriptive, but nothing more. Conversely, Johnsgard's illustrations of display postures and the portraits that accompany the range maps complement the text within the species accounts. The book also contains nearly 50 color plates, most of which are excellent color photographs, as opposed to the watercolors by Major Henry Jones that graced the first edition. Other changes from the first edition include the addition of many new drawings and the deletion of the checklist of Phasianinae and the plumage descriptions for each species. These changes can only be considered improvements. Obviously, the revision incorporates a considerable amount of new information, particularly from recent work in Asia, but there still are considerable voids in our knowledge for some species. The lack of information is troubling but serves to illustrate how little is known about some of these birds. Too often, the only information available is for birds held in captivity.

In many aspects, this work is a non-technical review. A reader looking for specific or in-depth information on a particular species will not always find the

information needed but should find a comprehensive list of primary sources in the bibliography. Nonetheless, the book is a useful and relatively easy-to-read introduction to the pheasants of the world. Behaviorists, in particular, will likely enjoy Johnsgard's descriptions of breeding biology. Utilizing more than 500 references (versus about 300 in the first edition), Johnsgard provides a thorough, but not exhaustive, review of the available literature. The extended bibliography, illustrations, and splendid color plates make this a worthwhile addition to any ornithologist's library.—*Brent E. Jamison, U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Jamestown, ND 58401.*