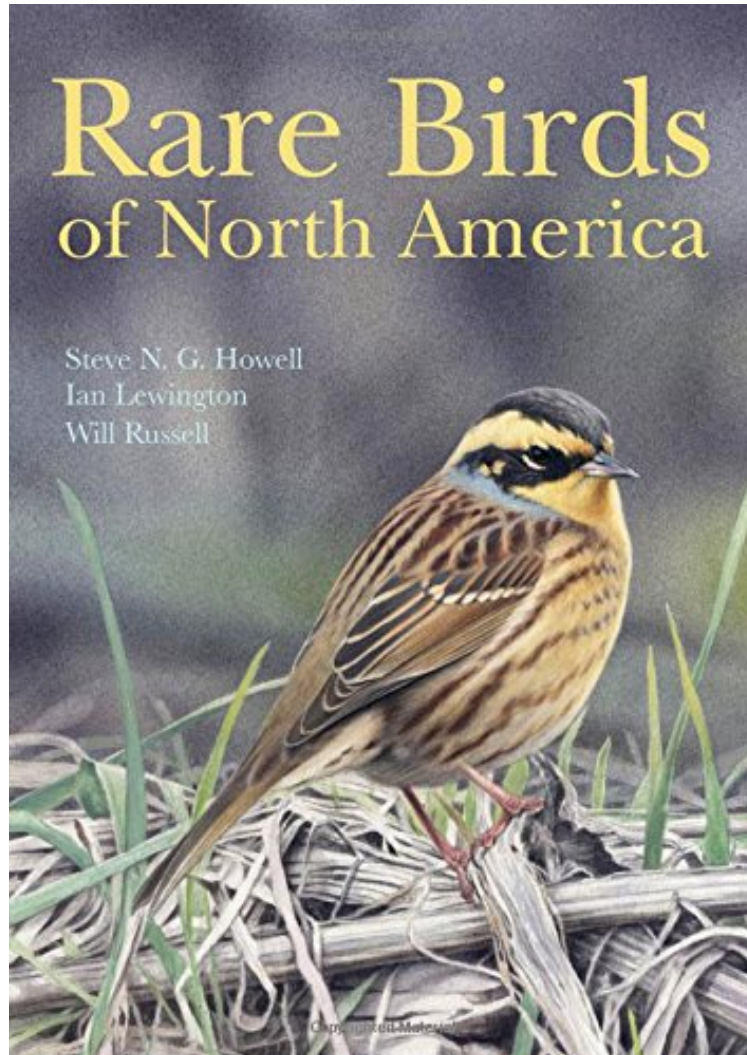


(Mobile ebook) Rare Birds of North America

Rare Birds of North America

Steve N. G. Howell, Ian Lewington, Will Russell
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Steve N. G. Howell, Ian Lewington, Will Russell : Rare Birds of North America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rare Birds of North America:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Top quality illustrations text fill a passionate birding niche By Jack Holloway BASICS: hardcover; a thick reference book with multiple high-quality illustrations for each of 262 "ultra" rare vagrants in the US and Canada; text for each bird covers normal distribution ranges, historical sightings and trends in North America, detailed field identification to include similar species as well as age and sex, and, notes on habitat and behavior THE REVIEW This relatively large book (10x7x1.5 inches) is an exceptional, first-of-its-kind resource for a niche of birding not well covered. This book will be greatly appreciated - and eagerly studied - by avid

birders and twitchers who've jumped in a car (or plane) to see that nemesis rarity; or, by the travelling birder trekking to Arizona and Texas in search of those borderline rarities. However, the detailed nature of the material along with historical records might be a little dry (and overwhelming) to some people that gain sufficient pleasure and excitement from the local birds coming into the backyard feeders. Also, the book does not, and could not, tell one where to go find those rarities that are truly random. There are four things that define the scope of this book...One: It is an identification guide but definitely not a field guide due to the book's size and weight; and, to the large amount of information in the book not related to identification in the field. Two: A summary is provided of when and where the rarities were seen along with notes on the bird's status. Additional resources are also given for further research. Three: A plethora of multi-decade experience of identifying these birds is given (in writing and illustrations) to any eager birder who wants to learn about rare birds that are more often seen in dreams than in the field. Four: The book illustrates what I call "ultra" rare birds recorded since 1950. The authors define "rare" as five (5) or fewer sightings per year. This limit (frequency and time frame) helps to keep this a one-book project versus a multi-volume effort. This book definitely is the best source for top-quality illustrations of the North American ultra-rarities. The artwork by Ian Lewington is, as usual, excellent. His skills are some of the best in any bird book. The birds are shown with near-perfect proportions, coloring, and intricate detail. These illustrations are additionally bolstered by the inclusion of seasonal variations, plumage differences of age and sex, and - for some - comparisons to similar common species. Many of the birds also have ID tips with the illustrations, helping to point out the key features to be noticed. Nearly all species are shown with 3-5 illustrations. Some, such as the Kelp Gull, Steller's Sea Eagle, or Western Marsh Harrier, have 9-11 illustrations. Within this book, you will see the most up-to-date use of taxonomic changes and trends. The authors refer to both the IOC and AOU for naming conventions and for referencing the many subspecies and probable future splits. Their research into the taxonomy informs the reader of the 40 subspecies of Bananaquit that probably make up multiple species; or, Eastern Blue Bunting (of Texas note) that is probably distinct from the Western Blue Bunting. Other newer trends are the inclusion of the Hen Harrier (split from Northern Harrier), Mexican Yellow Grosbeak (from Southern Yellow Grosbeak), and Mexican Tufted Flycatcher (from South American). One bird I was curious to see how it would be addressed was the "Stonechat". The newer and at-large handling of the multiple subspecies can include distinct species of European, Siberian, African, and Stejneger's. Apparently, all North American sightings (west and east) are of the Siberian. If you're wondering what rarities are not included in this book, some examples are Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Bar-tailed Godwit, Shiny Cowbird, and Clay-colored Thrush. While rare, those are found with greater frequency in the US, if not even being routine. Other species not included are Worthen's Sparrow and Bumblebee Hummingbird, which are very, very old records. Darn. Those are some of the first birds I looked up. Their records from the US are mystical to me and I see so little written or illustrated about those birds. Another group of birds not included are vagrant European subspecies that may constitute distinct species, some of which are already considered as such by the IOC. Some examples include the Eurasian (Green-winged) Teal, Cayenne (Sandwich) Tern, Asian and the European Whimbrels, Common (Mew) Gull, and Eurasian (Barn) Swallow. There is very little in this book that warrants critique. Only two petty things come to mind. One, is the species are arranged a little awkwardly. Instead of a pure taxonomic order, they're arranged by "Larger Land Birds" or by "Aerial Landbirds" and then further by Old and New World. This creates a few odd assortments such as swifts being found before and after the hummingbirds; the Eurasian Jackdaw shown before the doves; or, the Common House-Martin separated from fellow swallows by both the swifts and the hummingbirds. The thrushes are broken apart the most, being separated by 63 pages of Old World warblers, wagtails, pipits, buntings, finches, and flycatchers. Another nitpick is the random layout of how each bird's account begins, which can be anywhere on the page. To the extreme, the Citrine Wagtail and Aztec Thrush have their illustrations and text spread across two pages except for the bird's name and a few beginning lines. These are found on the preceding page, tucked in the bottom right corner. Okay, that's minor; but, I find my eyes continually darting across the pages as I look for the beginning of each bird's account. Should you get this book? If you are an avid birder excited by searching for a rarity; or, if you embrace the challenge of learning those necessary identification features; or, if you are intrigued by the historical presence of a particular rarity, then you must get this book. There is no better compilation of rarities with such quality illustrations, completeness of researched records, and experienced identification. (written by Jack at Avian Review with sample pages, February 2014) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Mind blowing! By Customer Absolutely spectacular! I think this book is a must for anyone how is interested in or serious about learning to identify and find the rare birds that have been found in North America! The paintings a world-class, as usual from the unparalleled Ian Lewington! They go to describe the migration pattern and rarity occurrence pattern of each species, giving you the most information on where the species is most likely to occur and when! It's full of invaluable information! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful Guide By Aleene Jones You never know when you may see a rare/vagrant bird that is not included in your field guide. This book gives date and place when the vagrant/rare bird had occurred and the state where it was seen. It, also, shows male, females, and juveniles of the rarities/vagrants. I feel this book is a must for any serious birder and a good addition to a beginner's birding library. I highly recommend "Rare Birds of North America".

Rare Birds of North America is the first comprehensive illustrated guide to the vagrant birds that occur throughout the United States and Canada. Featuring 275 stunning color plates, this book covers 262 species originating from three very different regions--the Old World, the New World tropics, and the world's oceans. It explains the causes of avian vagrancy and breaks down patterns of occurrence by region and season, enabling readers to see where, when, and why each species occurs in North America. Detailed species accounts describe key identification features, taxonomy, age, sex, distribution, and status. Rare Birds of North America provides unparalleled insights into vagrancy and avian migration, and will enrich the birding experience of anyone interested in finding and observing rare birds. Covers 262 species of vagrant birds found in the United States and Canada Features 275 stunning color plates that depict every species Explains patterns of occurrence by region and season Provides an invaluable overview of vagrancy patterns and migration Includes detailed species accounts and cutting-edge identification tips

One of The Seattle Times 8 Books to Put under a Bird-Lovers Tree 2014 One of the StarTribune/Lifestyles Best Birding Books of 2014 One of the Birders Library Best Bird Books of 2014 One of the Birdbooker Report's Best Bird Books of 2014 "Birders thrill to see rarities. This superb book covers 262 rare species, featuring Ian Lewington's unsurpassed artistry in 275 color plates. Species accounts discuss patterns of vagrancy, identification, seasons, regions, and migration."--Library Journal starred review "If you're a serious birder, there should already be a slot for this book on your shelf, since no other guide has ever filled this niche. . . . With the help of this book, I might grab 15 minutes of fame for finding the next great rarity."--Kirby Adams, National Parks Traveler "[A] pleasure to read."--Matt Merritt, Birdwatching Magazine "This book is . . . a guaranteed winner and not just for a North American readership. Put together by a superbly qualified team, it is both authoritative and attractive. For the lister, identification enthusiast, migration student and general birdwatcher, it brings to life a whole continent of avian excitement. Birds are always amazing and surprising us, pushing the boundaries of what we thought possible and exploding the myths and stories we so carefully create about them. This book is a fitting tribute to their continuing capacity to inspire and confound."--Andy Stoddart, Rare Bird Alert "All bird identification books should be this good."--Jim Williams, Minneapolis Star Tribune "The authors' sifting of bird-sighting records for a period covering some six decades is impressive. Detailed accounts of 262 species comprise the bulk of the book. Lewington's lovely color illustrations are supported by the sort of information one expects to find in bird guides (e.g., key identification features, taxonomy, distribution, similar species, behaviors, etc.). . . . That we are enjoying a 'golden age of bird [book] publishing,' as another reviewer in these pages has said, is clearly exemplified by this work. The birding hobby's growing popularity means that its fervent fringe of 'life-listers' is growing, too, and for them, or anyone with an eye for the unusual, this book will surely tantalize."--Robert Eagan, Library Journal "This was the book my birding friends, in fact all North American birders who are fascinated by vagrants, have been waiting for. It is a book that embraces identification and analysis of avian rarities and vagrancy patterns throughout the United States and Canada with an enthusiasm and devotion to statistical, geographic, and ornithological detail that will both delight and challenge birders. . . . Rare Birds of North America is a significant addition to our birding literature."--Donna Schulman, 10,000 Birds "I don't use this language often but this really is a 'must-have' book if you're one of those birders that chases, wants to chase, or just wait on the edge of your seat for the next rarity to show up on the Aleutians or St. Paul."--Cory Gregory, See You At Sunrise "If you have a hankering for understanding, or finding out more about some of the rarities that we profile on a monthly basis, Rare Birds of North America is the book for you. This is a unique and beautifully illustrated guide. . . . As a primer for understanding vagrancy and migration, the introduction is remarkable. . . . Rare Birds of North America should enrich the field experience of those interested in finding and observing rare birds, and it should serve as an encouragement to all."--Birding Community E-Bulletin "This work pays homage to the books that have covered the same ground for the rarities in Europe and has been long overdue in North America. Rare Birds of North America is worth every cent of its price tag and deserves to find its way on the bookshelves of every North American birder plus a few other bookshelves elsewhere in the world."--Urban Birder "Rare Birds of North America provides unparalleled insights into vagrancy and avian migration, and will enrich the birding experience of anyone interested in finding and observing rare birds."--Carrie Laben, Nature Travel Network "This book fills a much needed niche. A lot of field guides have 'Accidental' species and that is what we have relied on in the past for identification of these birds. But now there is a comprehensive treatise on vagrants in North America and I recommend it for your library."--William Saur, Passionate Birder "A technical tour de force."--Gabriel Thoumi, Mongabay.com "Beautifully printed and illustrated. Rare Birds of North America is a useful, if highly selective, book that will certainly appeal to serious North American birders that enjoy chasing rarities or to the armchair ornithologist that dreams about chasing rarities."--Colin Talcroft, Sonoma County Bird Watching Spots "The first of its kind: a comprehensive and illustrated guide to the vagrant birds who make an appearance in the United States and Canada."--Lee and J.J. MacFadden, Bristol Herald Courier "These experienced and widely traveled birders illustrate and provide information about 262 avian species that should be on all our search lists."--Gerry Rising, Buffalo News "[E]ssential reading . . . significant. . . [T]he detailed treatment here is not only valuable, but in some cases the best available anywhere. . . . [N]othing short of exceptional . . . this book has everything to recommend it."--Dominic Mitchell, Birdwatch Magazine "Fascinating . . . browsing this book

presents a perfect opportunity for armchair birders to daydream about rare birds and about traveling to where the birds might be found."--Dan Tallman's Bird Blog

"No North American lister should be without this book. The beautiful illustrations alone would make it a joy to own. But it would be the first port of call if you turned up something not in the North American guides. Here you will find solid information to help you identify the bird and judge the likelihood that it is what you think it is. The frequency and geographical pattern of rarity occurrences is invaluable in this respect. Nicely written and beautifully produced to Princeton's normal high standard."--Fatbirder

"The book provides an excellent overview of birds rare to North America and serves as a worthy partner to your favorite North American field guide."--Steve Shultz, CBC Newsletter

"How about, just once, a field guide that focuses on these rare and vagrant birds that make birders' hearts, and then their cars, race? A guide for those incurable hopefuls looking for birds that aren't supposed to be there. A guide like *Rare Birds of North America*. . . Anyone who regularly birds one of the states where vagrants routinely show up--Florida, Texas, Arizona, California, or Alaska--absolutely should have *Rare Birds of North America* handy at all times. But I'd urge any birder in North America who chases rarities or, especially, wants to find one themselves to have this book and study it. It will make you a better, more attuned birder."--Grant McCreary, Birder's Library

"[T]his is a very interesting book especially for those who want to take their birding to a whole new level of challenge by seeking out rare and vagrant birds."--GrrlScientist

"If you take your birds rare, don't miss out on this impressive testament to the study of vagrancy in North American birds."--Matthew Bettelheim, (bio)accumulation

"A masterclass in identification from two of America's finest field birders. . . [Ian Lewington's] brushstrokes breathe life into birds like no other illustrator, distilling the very essence of what makes one species different from another no matter how similar they look to even the most discerning of observers."--Stuart Winter, Sunday Express

"This is a very nice book, which serious birders will own."--Choice

"Arizona birders will not want to be without *Rare Birds*. Not only does the book prepare us to identify the next vagrant that wafts our way, but it provides the reader with new ways to think about where our birds come from and why. And the only thing more fun than birding is thinking about it all."--Rick Wright, Vermilion Flycatcher

"This volume is sure to be a revered resource in any birder's library for the wealth of information it contains as well as the beauty of Lewington's paintings."--USA Today

"[An] impressive work. . . The 275 plates by Ian Lewington are outstandingly clear. . . A combination of thorough research and beauty."--Keith Betton, Bird Watching Magazine

"The identification texts here are probably the most advanced ever produced in a North American guide. This is an invaluable reference. . . The book's value is not limited to American birders. There's a lot of great information here for the European audience, too. The informative comparisons between the Common Moorhen and Common Gallinule, Gray and Great Blue Herons, and Common and Wilson's Snipe are probably better than in any European guide. . . Howell, Lewington, and Russell have done a fantastic job with this book. The illustrations, the detailed identification texts, and the original thought presented here make *Rare Birds of North America* a 'must-have' for the discerning birder."--Graham Etherington, Birding, ABA

"The book provides unparalleled insights into vagrancy and avian migration. . . Serious birders will want a copy of *Rare Birds of North America*."--Frederic H. Brock, Wildlife Activist

"This will doubtless prove to be one of the most important birding books of 2014. It is a pleasure to browse through, an endless source of curious and surprising information and a key reference in the identification literature. So, a hearty approval from me. A wonderful book!"--Curious Naturalist

"Clearly this is a must buy book for the passionate list keepers, particularly those who are strongly competitive. But there are good reasons for the rest of us owning this book. . . It is an education of field observation just to read this book. It is great value for the price and a highly recommended purchase for all birders."--Roy John, Canadian Field Naturalist

"This book is a must-buy for anyone visiting the vagrant traps of North America and should appeal to any birder with an interest in vagrancy or simply with a desire to increase their knowledge or identification skills."--David Hodkinson, BTO News

"[S]ome of the identification texts here are probably the most advanced ever produced in a North American guide. . . These illustrations, the detailed texts, and the original thought the authors present all make *Rare Birds of North America* a must have for the discerning birder."--Graham Etherington, Birding

"It was with great anticipation that I waited to receive this book. I had been aware of its existence for a while, as I knew that Ian was working on the plates. But this book is more than just a showcase for Ian's work, it is a class act. The text is very well written, succinct and with the insight of great familiarity, and this book is a great addition to any birder's library."--Brian Small, British Birds

"This is an excellent text. It does a superb job of summarizing where and when to look for vagrants, and provides a valuable resource for identifying these rare birds. . . *Rare Birds of North America* makes an excellent companion to contemporary field guides to the US and Canada and is highly recommended for anyone interested in North American vagrants and patterns of vagrancy."--Christopher J. Butler, IBIS

From the Back Cover

"*Rare Birds of North America* is splendid. There is warmth and humor in the prose, and the color plates are stunning and will ensure a strong audience for many years to come. Such a book is long overdue for North American readers."--Edward S. Brinkley, editor of *North American Birds*

"An excellent treatment of a fascinating topic."--Paul Lehman, field guide consultant and bird tour leader

About the Author

Steve N. G. Howell is a research associate at PRBO Conservation Science and a staff leader with WINGS, an international bird tour company. His books include *Petrels, Albatrosses, and Storm-Petrels of North America* (Princeton). Ian Lewington is one of the world's finest bird illustrators. His books include *Rare Birds of Britain and Europe*. Will Russell is cofounder and managing director of

WINGS.