

Fünfstück HJ, Ebert A, Weiss I (2010). Taschenlexikon der Vögel Deutschlands. 684 pp., Quelle & Meyer Verlag GmbH & Co., Wiebelsheim, ISBN 978-3-494-01471-5; 24,95 €.

For many birdwatchers buying a field guide is the first step into field ornithology. After identifying their first birds, prospective birdwatchers might wish to learn more about the species they just recognized. Reaching this goal is the aim of the work at hand which tries to inform in a compact format suitable for carrying in a rucksack about all bird species occurring in Germany. This lexicon is basically a summary of the „Kompendium der Vögel Mitteleuropas“. It contains short chapters on taxonomy, origin of German and scientific names, occurrence, status, habitat, and breeding and feeding biology of all species found in Germany. These are complemented by short descriptions of appearance, voice, body masses and peculiarities. Each species is presented with a distribution map and photographs of almost always-good quality, completed by diagrams on phenology and moult. Even species that are rarely photographed in field guides of birds from Germany like Black Lark, Siberian Thrush or Northern Parula are depicted in this book. Generally, the proximity to the “Kompendium” provides reliability and timeliness of information. Nevertheless the lexicon is not error-free: Right in the beginning the explanatory distribution map is incorrect, as the light blue areas of migration periods and point occurrences are missing. The distribution area of the Green Willow Warbler has been displaced to Fennoscandia and Alaska, and superspecies are not always handled with care, e.g. for the Eastern black-eared Wheatear, Pied and Cyprus Pied Wheatear are missing as further members of the superspecies.

Furthermore, many topics are left out that can be found yet in the “Kompendium”, for example information on population changes, behaviour, moult and conservation measures. A general preface and introductions to the families are nonexistent. Species are presented in alphabetical order of the German names, so that possibly longer lasting thumbing through the book could be necessary if for example looking up different species of a superspecies or genus, particularly since there is no register available. Searching for scientific names is hence impossible. Readers should be familiar with current taxonomic findings and changes of names, as species like Cory’s Shearwater, Yellow Wagtail and Black-eared Wheatear are provided with



new German names (“Sepiasturmtaucher”, “Wiesenschafstelze”, “Mauren- and Balkansteinschmätzer”).

On the whole the lexicon is well suited for an entry into bird watching and can be recommended to everyone who is looking for a supplement to mere field guides. Wishing to seriously deal with field ornithology, though, requires purchasing additional books, such as the more costly but also more detailed three volumes of “Kompendium der Vögel Mitteleuropas”.

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