
BOOK REVIEWS

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of each chapter. In addition to highlighting the personal stories of leading researchers, these short autobiographies show remarkable commonalities. Most researchers reflect on their early interest in birds or nature, and several mention the expectation that they would pursue a career in medicine. Nearly all describe the importance of mentors, and many cite their good fortune. These autobiographies largely omit the importance of hard work, but several emphasize the importance of asking good questions. They also reveal modesty and gratitude and a deep-seated excitement for understanding nature that these researchers continue to harbor. Some are touching and inspirational.

Following the topic-based chapters, the Afterword describes how ornithology has progressed as a discipline since the mid-19th century and examines its development into a mature science with a focus on hypothesis-driven research and experimentation. The authors attribute the rise of ornithology to four factors: people, education, funding, and technology, in this order. While the book admirably selects and discusses the most influential topics in ornithology, I think the authors could have aimed higher in the Afterword. To their credit, they painstakingly researched each topic and its major contributors, and from this close examination they extract some general observations from our discipline's history. For example, they attempt to identify the traits that make a great scientist. They note that Darwin attributed his own success to a love of natural science, a desire to explain observed phenomena, and open-