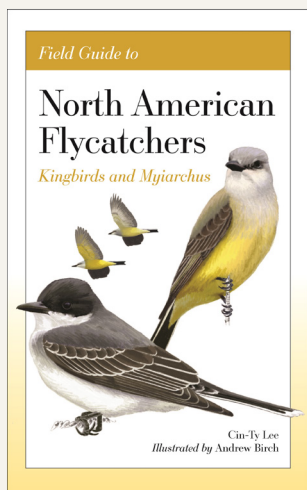


RARITY hunters on this side of the Atlantic have long understood the extreme difficulties of identifying American flycatchers. This tyrannid identification crisis only gets much deeper once you're in North America, where often several very similar species are possible at one site, particularly during migration.

The first volume of Cin-Ty Lee's forensic series dealt with the confusing near-identical species of the genus *Empidonax* and their doppelgangers (see *Birdwatch* 377: 57-59). This new guide deals with the larger kingbirds and *Myiarchus* flycatchers and is just as welcome and useful as the first.

Readers of the 'empid' guide will find a familiar format in its pages: a helpful contents page allowing quick reference to comparable species; an introduction and phylogeny (their closest relatives are the far more striking kiskadees and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher);

Flummoxed by flycatchers



in-depth details of plumage, tail- and wing-pattern variations, and moult; and smart sections on behaviour, habitat and migration strategies.

The sections on the different species are well illustrated with watercolour and pencil

depictions, and begin with extensive comparisons between all similar forms, wading through everything from general size, shape and structure to crown shape, primary projection, plumage contrast, and undertail, wing-bar and wing-panel patterns. Each species is dealt with in similar detail, with annotated lifelike paintings of all ages and plumages, extensive sonograms and range maps with local detail that drills down into regional movements with seasonal graphs, including vagrancy potential.

While only Eastern Kingbird has occurred so far in the Western Palearctic, several other species have vagrancy potential and this could be a useful reference when that Great Crested Flycatcher pops up on a stunted tree in the Outer Hebrides. However, visitors to the US and Canada

will find this an invaluable resource when trying to separate, for example, Tropical and Couch's Kingbirds in Texas, or Great Crested and Brown-crested Flycatchers as accidentals in California.

Although not well suited to the casual birder, this slim volume – packed with data and nuanced criteria – assists with the identification of all larger Nearctic flycatchers and will be a fine addition to any ringer's or rarity hunter's library.

David Callahan

More info

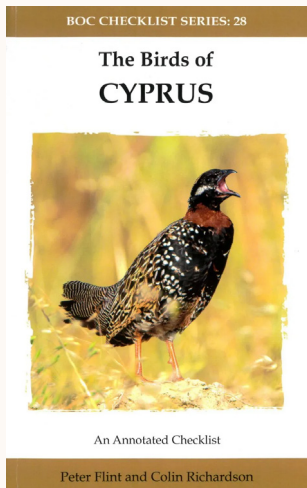
- *Field Guide to North American Flycatchers: Kingbirds and Myiarchus* by Cin-Ty Lee and Andrew Birch (Princeton University Press, 2024).
- 192 pages, 56 colour and 18 black-and-white illustrations, 17 maps, 56 sonograms.
- ISBN: 9780691240640. Pbk, £16.99.

Bookshop from £14.99

WHEN I arrived in Cyprus in 1985, I purchased a copy of the first edition of *The Birds of Cyprus: An Annotated Checklist* by Peter Flint and Peter Stewart that had been published in 1981. It quickly became my go-to book to consult regarding what I was likely to see on the island. The second edition came out in 1992 and, for so many local birders and conservation organisations, this became an indispensable reference.

More than 30 years later, an update of the 'bible' of Cypriot ornithology was much needed. Those years had seen an increase of available data on the status of the species recorded on the island, much of which has come from regular observations from local birders and organised surveys from both conservation and academic organisations island-wide. A lot has changed and new species have been added to the Cypriot list, which now numbers more than 400 species. So, on hearing that Peter Flint would be revising his 1992 edition together with the experienced Colin Richardson, who has been Cypriot-based since the start of the century and served as the BirdLife Cyprus Recorder for several years, I was very keen to see the

Cypriot avifauna in depth



results of their work.

The third edition has been published in paperback and is an impressive 524 pages (compared to the 234 of the second edition). The amount of work that has gone into the book is obvious just from the first pages, where the authors list their acknowledgments – the index of names is a who's who of current and past ornithology in Cyprus. As expected, the book is painstakingly researched and fully referenced.

For each species recorded

“No stone has been left unturned to ensure that the species accounts are accurate”

on the island, the local names are listed and are followed by recorded subspecies, with discussion of its status including historical records and details of any museum specimens. The three breeding endemics – Cyprus Warbler, Cyprus Wheatear and Cyprus Scops Owl – rightly merit the largest write-ups. No stone has been left unturned to ensure that the species accounts are accurate, including arranging for a check of a specimen identified as the first record of Dusky Warbler, which was collected in the 1960s and is now kept in the United States National Museum Collections.

Other sections include a history of Cypriot ornithology, environmental and status changes, descriptions of 125 important locations for birds, and 64 colour plates of both

locations and species.

This is not a field guide and is not intended to be used as one. Nonetheless, it will give anyone interested in Cypriot or eastern Mediterranean avifauna a well-researched and documented resource to consult while at home. Understandably given the effort put in, the book is not cheap and is therefore unlikely to appeal to the casual enthusiast.

Cyprus's location on one of the flyways between Europe and Africa means that it has a fantastic selection of both European and Middle Eastern species as well as the occasional African, Asian and American vagrant. Locals always say that anything can turn up and this book gives proof of that. **Jane Stylianou**

More info

- *The Birds of Cyprus: An Annotated Checklist* by Peter Flint and Colin Richardson (British Ornithologists' Club, 2024).
- 524 pages, 32 colour plates, three black-and-white illustrations, 13 tables.
- ISBN: 9780952288695. Pbk, £45.

Bookshop from £39