



A Waterfowl Work

Few people have heard of a Madagascar pochard let alone seen one. It is the rarest waterfowl species in the world, with only 74 wild birds known to exist on a remote mountain lake in Madagascar. Yet *Shooting Sportsman* Editor at Large Gary Kramer was able to not only check the species off his life list but also get up-close photos of the ducks for his new book *Waterfowl of the World*.

As the title suggests, Kramer's latest work is a paean to the planet's waterfowl, but it also is a testament to the Herculean efforts that Kramer went to in his three-plus-year quest to photograph all 167 species of the Earth's ducks, geese and swans. In pursuing his goal, Kramer visited more than 40 countries—logging more than 300,000 miles by commercial aircraft and thousands more in small planes, cars and on foot.

Anyone who has seen Kramer's work in the pages of *SSM* or the myriad other publications and books he's contributed to knows the quality of material he produces. Which is why it's no surprise that the images—all 1,299 of them—in *Waterfowl of the World* are stunning.

Equally impressive is the well-researched text by Kramer and fellow bi-

ologist John "Greg" Mensik. In separate chapters dedicated to each species, Kramer and Mensik have distilled information from hundreds of scientific articles, documents and books into species accounts that cover everything from plumage, physical characteristics and vocalizations to breeding biology, diet and habitat use. Also included are range maps, population estimates and, when applicable, details on the conservation of the species.

Kramer, who has bachelor's and Master of Science degrees in wildlife management, worked for 26 years as a wildlife biologist and refuge manager for the US Fish and Wildlife Service before retiring to pursue writing and photography full-time. His goal with this book, as he writes in the preface, "is to educate and focus awareness on waterfowl so that people are compelled to conserve these species and the habitats on which they depend for generations to come."

Anyone not so compelled by this book should hang up his waders.

Signed standard editions of the 540-page hardcover are available for \$99, and numbered and signed limited editions start at \$250. Portions of the proceeds are being donated to support wetland and waterfowl conservation organizations. For more information, visit garykramer.net. —RALPH STUART