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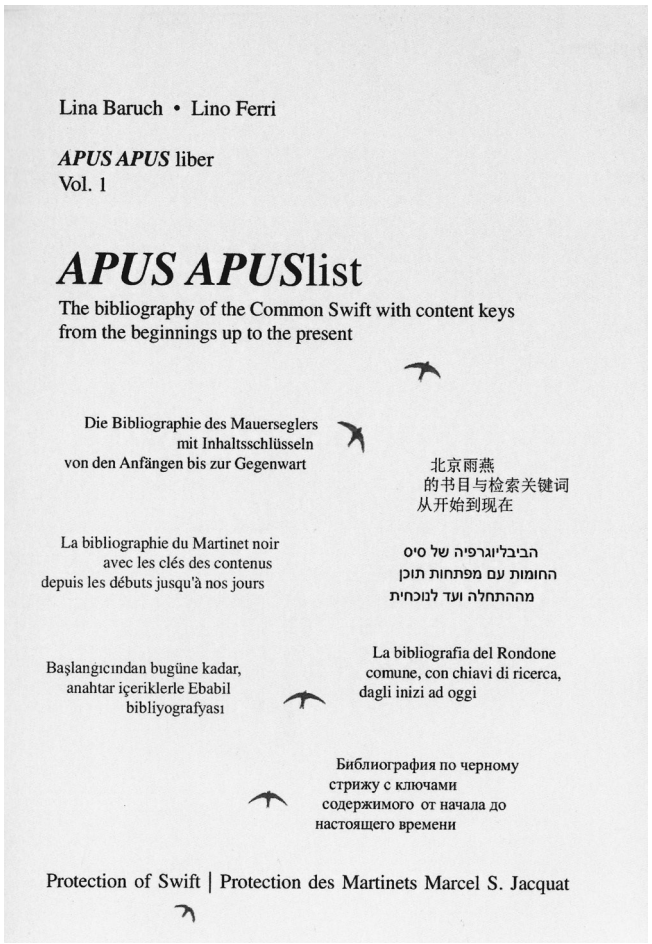
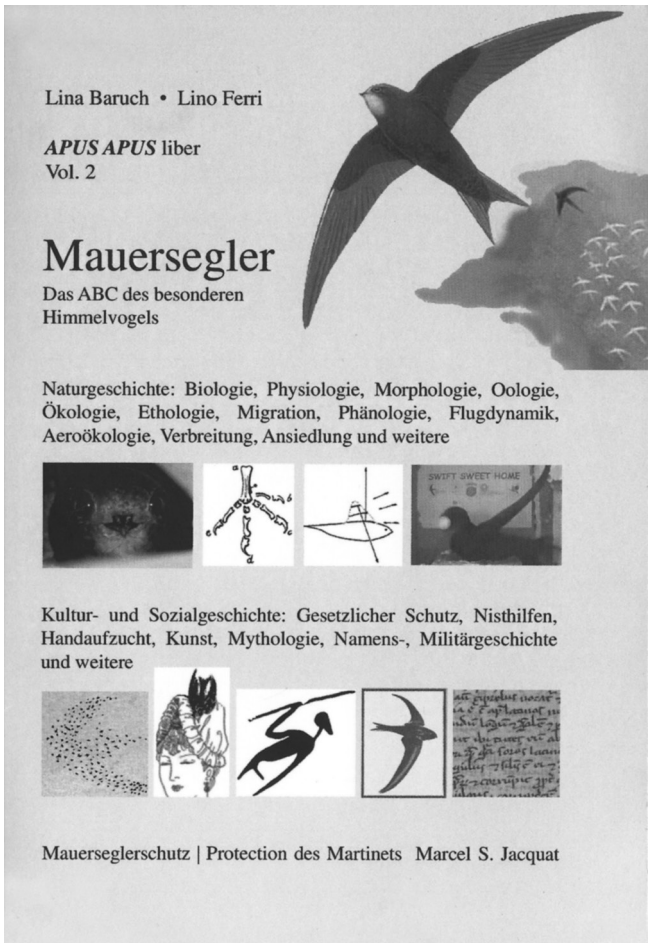
Book review





APUS APUS liber, vol. 1. *APUS APUS*list: The bibliography of the Common Swift with content keys from the beginnings up to the present

Lina Baruch & Lino Ferri

513 pages, 15 x 24 cm
ISBN: 978-3757549718

APUS APUS liber, vol. 2. Mauersegler: Das ABC des besonderen Himmelvogels

Lina Baruch & Lino Ferri

644 pages, 15 x 24 cm
ISBN: 978-3757549732

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These are two substantial volumes entirely dedicated to the Common Swift (*Apus apus*), published by authors who probably sign with a pseudonym. The two volumes are monographic, but the second is interconnected with the first, forming a single, vast, and complex work. This work is the result of meticulous research, cataloging, and

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analysis that the forewords suggest has been carried out over decades and updated to 2022.

Clearly, this work, especially the bibliographic part, is linked to the well known website <http://www.commonswift.org/APUSlist.html>.

As is already evident from the title, the first volume is a comprehensive international bibliography on this species, introduced by an extensive description in English, with key indices available in many different languages. It consists of a collection of titles of scientific works, each accompanied by explanatory "keys." To be precise, it contains as many as 8,684 titles from all over the world, from the earliest times (indeed, it's appropriate to say from the origins) to the present day. To appreciate the meticulousness of this bibliographic collection, one need only consider that the oldest references date back approximately 2500 years.

Alongside the classic bibliographic references, there are numerical links that refer to 84 keys grouped into 10 topics related to aspects of morphology, phenology, flight, nesting, breeding, weather effects, circadian activity, dangers (including parasites and predators), protection, social behavior, survival, food, and others.

The explanation of these keys is provided in the initial pages in eight different languages (English, German, Russian, Chinese, Italian, French, Turkish, and Hebrew).

In the age of online resources, this volume represents a valuable testimony to the importance of the work involved in collection and cataloging, typical of a physical library, supported by a filing system. In fact, this Volume 1 functions as a sort of index for exploring a library that, according to the forewords, is increasingly accessible online, but strengthened through this work.

Of course, even though each research and commentary effort is inevitably shaped by THE personal perspectives of the Authors; the sheer quantity of titles collected and the keys used imply a rigorous effort of research and analysis. This places the authors on a level of inquiry aimed at maximum objectivity and, above all, universality through sharing this meticulous work. As evidenced by the forewords pages and the keys to the topics, this volume is a fundamental reference work for the physical library of any researcher.

Designed as a single work, its structure actually emphasizes the material contained in Volume 1, a bibliography on swifts so extensive and broad that it can rightfully be considered without any true equivalent or counterpart. This extensive bibliography is perfectly connected to Volume 2, which is an encyclopedic summary dedicated to swifts ("The Common Swift, the ABC of the Wonderful Sky Bird").

The second volume offers a comprehensive overview of the biology and cultural history of the swift, supported by evidence spanning 3,500 years. It provides information on natural history, biology, population dynamics, migration, and phenology, as well as on cultural history, art, research, science, military history, and nomenclature.

The book addresses questions such as: How do swifts live and what do they do? What do they communicate and discuss? How do they behave before and during mating, and during and after rearing their young? Where do they reside in summer and winter? What roles do swifts play in human life? How do people feel when they see and hear swifts? How can we preserve swifts as co-inhabitants of cities?

Answers to these and many other questions are provided in 1,118 articles, accompanied by 44 tables and 464 black & white illustrations, spread across 644 pages.

Unfortunately for many of us, this second volume is write in german, however considering the mine of information, interested non-german speakers will be able to take advantage of the ever-increasing possibilities offered by online translators and AI.