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BOOK REVIEW

Oystercatchers and their estuarine food supplies *Ardea* 84A: 1–538, 1996

Anne-Marie Blomert, Bruno J. Ens, John D. Goss-Custard, Jan B. Hulscher and Leo Zwarts (eds)

The Netherlands Ornithologist's Union has published a special edition of their journal *Ardea* presenting 34 papers covering all aspects of recent European research on Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus*. It is concluded in the forward to this publication that the Oystercatcher is now one of the best studied species of bird but it would be wrong to conclude that we now know all about it.

The text is well edited with clear easy-to-read diagrams and tables with black and white photographs of Oystercatchers and habitats interspersed at the end of papers. All papers are published in English with a Dutch summary at the end of the paper.

Subjects covered in the papers include;

- **Methodology;** ageing, sexing, weight, statistical analysis and food intake.
- **Detailed studies on foraging behaviour;** prey choice and search speed, differences between male and female feeding, search behaviour and diet, seasonal changes in diet, intake rates, energy consumption, daily energy requirements and time and energy budgets.

- **Adaptation:** conflicting demands; seasonal and annual variation in body weight, sex ratio, population structures and temporal variation in social rank.
- **Numbers in relation to food supply;** predicting seasonal and annual fluctuations, effect of Oystercatchers on shellfish populations and winter mortality: the effect of severe weather.
- **Experimental manipulations of the available food supply;** effect of created mussel beds, feeding behaviour during tidal manipulation and distribution of Oystercatchers in relation to main prey species.

I found all the papers interesting and easy to read, and I would recommend this publication to all serious wader workers in Australasia. It will serve as a model for future broad scope studies on wader species.

A copy of this publication is available in the ABSA Library held by Birds Australia, Southern New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory Group, Sydney Office. Copies can be purchased from the IBN. To this end, advance payment should be made by giro transfer of the price of 55 Dutch guilders to post account 948540 of the DLO Institute for Forestry and Nature Research, P.O. Box 23, 6700 AA Wageningen, The Netherlands. Specify Oystercatcher *Ardea*.

Alan J. Leishman
7 Belford Street
Ingleburn, New South Wales 2565