
REVIEWS

Shorebirds in Australia. B. Lane, 1987. Nelson, Melbourne, Australia. 187pp including 16 colour plates. rrp \$A49.95.

From 1981 to 1985, the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union organised a national study, involving more than 700 volunteer bird watchers, to determine the distribution, abundance and migration routes of waders in Australia. Apart from regular visits to easily accessible beaches, mudflats, lakes and swamps, expeditions were organised to survey remote coastlines and inland wetlands. *Shorebirds in Australia* presents a comprehensive discussion of the organisation aspects and results of this study and a complete resumé of our present knowledge on the biology of wading birds in Australia.

The book is divided into eight chapters which discuss distribution; feeding behaviour; ecology; migration and movements; species accounts; regional accounts and conservation issues. The text and distribution maps, within the 45 detailed accounts of resident and commonly observed migrant species, provide valuable up-to-date data on description, breeding range, Asian range, status and distribution in Australia, movements in Australia, feeding and conservation. In addition, descriptions of a further 26 rarely recorded species are provided in a separate chapter and 16 of these are illustrated in the colour plates. Jeff Davies' colour paintings, which are all grouped together in 16 glossy colour plates toward the middle of the book, accurately portray several plumage phases of most of the species illustrated.

Unfortunately, I do have a number of criticisms relating to this book's presentation and its ridiculously high price. In my view, the book is much too large (290×215 mm) and there is far too much unused paper. Presumably this was done to pad-out the book and thus move it into the coffee table class and justify the high price. I do not accept that this publication warrants such a classification. There is no adjoining caption for each of the colour portraits. The reader must undertake a "test" each time he chooses to examine illustrations and then check that the identification has been correct by referring to the key illustrations which appear in a five-page section following the colour portraits. Of course, the author intended that the reader identify the illustrated birds from the descriptions in the text. I rather doubt that such a novelty should be included in a \$50 reference book.

A considerable amount of information is documented in this book and it therefore will serve as a valuable reference. However, it is my view that the book could and should have been published as a field guide to the waders of Australia and at a price which would warrant its purchase.

J. W. Hardy, Winmalee, NSW

Australian Lorikeets. S. Sindel, 1986. Singil Press, Sydney, Australia. 104pp. \$A30.

Stan Sindel is among Australia's most respected parrot aviculturists and is at the forefront of developments which have led to a significant leap in lorikeet husbandry and management (loriculture?). *Australian Lorikeets*, the first of a proposed series of six books covering the Australian Psittaciformes, documents the author's personal experiences in field and aviary.

The preliminary chapters discuss the housing, diets, management and diseases of lorikeets in the aviary. The chapter on diseases was written by avian veterinarian James Gill. Each of the seven Australian lorikeets is dealt with in separate chapters in which such matters as classification, earliest reports, range, habitat, breeding in the wild, aviculture, diet, sexing, display, nest boxes, nesting and mutations are discussed. The species accounts include distribution maps and numerous colour photographs.

This book is the first monographic treatment of Australian lorikeets and is, no doubt, destined to be the standard reference for aviculturists. However, a wealth of information has been collected which will be of interest and value to anyone seeking to learn more of the habits and biology of Australian lorikeets. I commend this book and look forward to the publication of the other five books planned in the series.

Unfortunately, this is a limited production book which is not available through retail bookshops. Copies have been distributed to the larger avicultural societies for sale to members, but copies may be purchased from Mr J. Gill, Canley Heights Veterinary Clinic, Shop 6, Haden Street, Canley Heights, NSW 2166.

J. W. Hardy, Winmalee, NSW

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