

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank Gabriel Crowley, Pat and Penny Sutton, Shirley Gray, Linda and Max Lucas and Ted Peers for assistance in the field, Gabriel Crowley for critical comments on the manuscript, and the Commonwealth Department of Transport for transport.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Beginner's Guide to Australian Birds. R. Balmford, 1990. Penguin Books. 268 pp. rrp \$A12.99.

This book is the fully revised edition of Rosemary Balmford's popular 'Learning about Australia Birds' which was originally published in 1980. The objective of the book is to provide a single reference for a 'new' bird watcher to seek clear and concise information on all aspects of bird watching and to provide an insight into the more advanced areas of ornithology that his/her new found interest may lead.

The first six chapters deal with the basics of bird watching, such as where and when to look at birds, choosing binoculars and field guides, planning field outings, field identification and what to record. These are followed by explanations of the techniques used in field studies and how the reader might become involved in research such as censusing and banding, writing up the results of research and presenting talks. The last few chapters briefly discuss the classification and naming of birds, avian evolution and fossils. Appendices

list the names and addresses of relevant organizations and authorities mentioned in the text (the ABSA and *Corella* were mentioned on numerous occasions) and, finally, Rosemary has provided a comprehensive list of references for further reading. These are arranged under logical subheadings to assist the reader who wishes to further explore an area of particular interest.

I don't believe that I am a 'beginner' and had I not been asked to review this book I doubt that I would have ever picked it up in a book shop. There are probably many other amateur ornithologists and bird watchers who would also ignore the book because of what I believe is an unfortunate name — the original title may have been better. I found the book to be most interesting and informative and I'm glad that I was asked to review it. 'The Beginner's Guide to Australian Birds' most capably occupies a very special niche in the Australian ornithological literature and I commend it to everyone with an interest in birds.

J. W. Hardy,
Lisarow, NSW