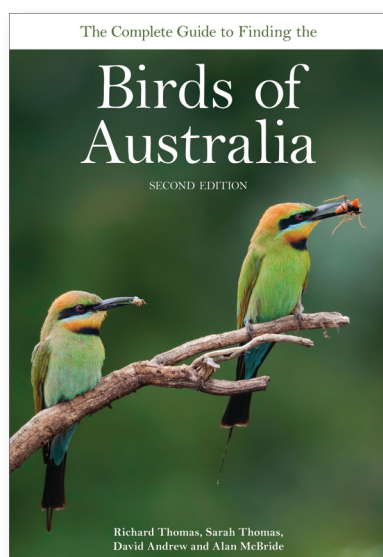


## Book Reviews



### **The Complete Guide to Finding the Birds of Australia: 2nd edition.**

Richard Thomas, Sarah Thomas, David Andrew and Alan McBride 2011. CSIRO Publishing. Paperback, 480 pp, colored photographs. ISBN 9780643097858. RRP \$49.95.

The highly anticipated second edition of *The Complete Guide to Finding the Birds of Australia* is finally here! This latest bible for Australian bird watching commonly referred to as 'Thomas & Thomas' or simply 'T&T' was published in early 2011 and comes 17 years after the first edition was initially published by Richard and Sarah Thomas. This time round two additional authors have joined the team, they are Alan McBride and David Andrew, two birding legends who are no strangers to fame with life lists most mere mortal birdwatchers can only dream about.

The first edition of 'T&T' has been out of print for some time so it was a relief when CSIRO got on board to publish the second edition. It is almost certain that once again, 'T&T' will form a staple for both domestic and international connoisseurs of Australian birding.

Often referred to as "the most complete birdwatchers guide ever produced", Thomas & Thomas stormed onto the scene in 1994 when the Australian 'birdwatchers guide' market was dominated by the informative but seven years out-of-date *Where to Find Birds in Australia* by John Bransbury. The ground breaking feature that set the first edition of 'T&T' a head above the rest was their detailed *Bird finder guide*, a chapter that lists all the resident and regular migrant bird species which occur in Australia and exactly where birdwatchers can go to encounter them.

In a nutshell the *Bird finder guide* in the new edition reads like an encyclopaedia, complete with a short description about each bird and the site locations where each species is known to occur. These locations are all discussed in detail within the

*States and Territories* section of the book. But don't be fooled by the name of this section for not only is every mainland state and territory covered by detailed birding site descriptions, most significant offshore islands are too! Birders can now find the best birding spots on Lord Howe, Norfolk, Christmas, Cocos, Macquarie and Heard Islands along with Ashmore Reef, the islands in Torres Strait and Antarctic territories.

The seabirds are also well catered for in the second edition of 'T&T' with a chapter on pelagic birding that includes detailed descriptions of nine significant Australian pelagic routes and countless land-based sea-watching sites from all around Australia.

A series of detailed appendices at the back of the book list all vagrant bird species recorded on Australian soil to date, all resident introduced species, a trip planning/information directory and even a detailed glossary of vegetation and landscape terms. After all how many recreational birdwatchers truly know the difference between mallee and mulga, *Casuarina* and *Callitris*?

In amongst the extraordinary wealth of information, over 60 high-quality coloured photographs of unique Australian birds grace the cover and pages of the guide. Readers must be warned that viewing such images may induce a strong desire to drop everything for a caravan and a 6-month trip around Australia to chase down the big 700. However, with a copy of *The Complete Guide to Finding the Birds of Australia* (2nd edition) this dream can become reality because the knowledge of where to find over 700 Australian species will be at their disposal!

This 480-page book is unbelievably compact and at 21.5 x 14.8 centimetres is smaller than most field guides. It is certainly small enough to take into the field and, at the astonishingly low retail price this book is a necessity for all Australian birdwatchers and researchers alike.

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