

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Compiled by D. Purchase.

This section is compiled from journals which are often not available to non-professional ornithologists in Australia. The following criteria are used to select papers for review:

- They relate to species which occur in Australia and its Territories;
- They provide details of techniques and equipment that may be of use in Australia;
- They provide details of studies that may be of general interest to Australian ornithologists.

**Journals perused:** *Ardea* 79(2); *Birding in Southern Africa* 43(3); *L'Oiseau RFO* 61(1, 3); *Malayan Naturalist* 44(1, 2, 3); *N. Amer. Bird Bander* 15(4), 16(1, 2, 3); *Notornis* 37(3, 4), 38(1, 2); *Observer* Nos. 90, 91; *Ornis Beob.* 88(1, 2, 3); *Ornis Fennica* 68(2); *Ornis. Svecia* 1(1); *Ostrich* 62(1, 2); *World Birdwatch* 12(4), 13(1, 2, 3).

### GENERAL INTEREST

**Territory economics and population stability — can populations be socially regulated?** von Schantz, T. (1991) *Ornis Svecia* 1: 29–37. (The author examines the importance of social behaviour (e.g. territoriality) in population regulation from an individual selectionist point of view and concludes that the importance of social regulation is highly exaggerated.)

**[Identification of behavioural and ecological factors important for the protection of species and habitats.]** Richner, H. (1991). *Ornis. Beob.* 88: 243–252. (The need for long-term studies if the conservation of bird populations is to be effective. In German.)

**Rich but troubled.** Andrew, D. (1990) *World Birdwatch* 12(4): 8–9. (A brief background to bird conservation in Australia.)

**Birds under threat.** Garnett, S. (1990). *World Birdwatch* 12(4): 10. (Describes the species in Australia now under greatest threat.)

**Cats: a heavy toll on songbirds. A reversible catastrophe.** Stallcup, R. (1991). *Observer* No. 91: 8–9. (A discussion on the number of songbirds killed by cats in the USA — an estimated 4.4 million each day!)

### AUSTRALIAN SPECIES

**Birds of 'Ata and Late, and additional notes on the avifauna of Niuafu'ou, Kingdom of Tonga.** Rinke, D. R. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 131–151. (Includes several species that occur in Australia.)

**Diet of the White-faced Heron on Manawatu pastures.** Lo, P. L. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 63–71. (The details and seasonal variation of 34 357 prey items are recorded.)

**A White-faced Heron reacts to a cat.** Battley, P. F. and Jowett, C. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 80. (The heron approached to 2–3 m and followed the cat.)

**[An unusual feeding behaviour of the Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*.]** Voisin, C. and Robert, D. (1991). *L'Oiseau RFO* 61: 51–52. (Used its wings to shadow the area in front of it. In French.)

**Bitterns using mangroves.** Miller, P. and Miller, K. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 79. (Seen at low tide, presumably feeding on crabs, shrimps and other small mangrove-dwelling animals.)

**Northern Shovellers near Wanganui.** Battley, P. F. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 48–50. (Descriptions of a male and female seen in August 1989).

**[Black Kite hunting a bat].** Entress, W. (1991). *Ornis. Beob.* 88: 338. (The bat escaped. In German.)

**Comparisons and functions of sky-dancing displays of *Circus* harriers: untangling the Marsh Harrier complex.** Simmons, R. (1991). *Ostrich* 62: 45–51. (The display of the African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* resembles that of the Australasian Marsh Harrier more than it does the European Marsh Harrier.)

**[Rearing of young Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* by a male of Montagu's Harrier *C. pygargus*.]** Bougnol, O. (1991). *L'Oiseau RFO* 61: 150–151. (The young Marsh Harriers were removed to the edge of a field during harvesting and fed by a male Montagu's Harrier who drove off the adult Marsh Harriers. In French.)

**Harrier attacking Black-billed Gull.** Cooper, W. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 72. (A failed attempt to take a gull on water by a Marsh Harrier.)

**Harrier attacks dabchick and Welcome Swallows attack falcon.** Shaw, W. B. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 86. (A failed attempt by a Marsh Harrier to take a New Zealand Dabchick on the wing, and Welcome Swallows mobbing a New Zealand Falcon.)

**Breeding density and nest site characteristics of the Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus minor* in the Southwestern Cape, South Africa.** Pepler, D., Van Hensbergen, H. J. and Martin, R. (1991). *Ostrich* 62: 23–28. (The population is higher than previously thought and it seems no special conservation measures need to be taken other than the enforcement of current legal protection.)

**[Distribution, population size and long-term changes in population size of wintering waterfowl in Sweden.]** Nilsson, L. (1991). *Ornis Svecia* 1: 11–28. (Midwinter counts have been undertaken in Sweden since 1967. Increasing trends were found for five species whereas Eurasian Coots increased markedly over the first years to 'crash' after the 1978/79 hard winter. In Swedish with English summary.)

**[New data on the breeding of the Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) in Senegal.]** Baillon, F. and Sylla, S. I. (1991). *L'Oiseau RFO* 61: 62–65. (Its sensitivity to weather conditions and human disturbance is discussed. In French.)

**Distribution, reproductive success, and population trend in the Dunlin *Calidris alpina schinzii* on the Swedish west coast.** Blomqvist, D. and Johansson, C. C. (1991). *Ornis Svecia* 1: 39–46. (The number of breeding pairs has declined during the 1980s to an estimated maximum of 44 pairs. The causes of the decline are examined as is the future of the population.)

The collapse of a local population of Spotted Doves (*Streptopelia chinensis*) in southern California. McClure, H. E. (1991). *N. Amer. Bird Bander* 16: 34-36. (No explanation could be found for the collapse.)

New species for the Auckland Islands. McClelland, P. J. and Moore, P. J. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 80. (Includes Shining Bronze-Cuckoo.)

Behaviour of New Zealand Kingfishers feeding chicks. Hayes, L. M. (1991). *Notornis* 38: 73-79. (Chicks were fed by both parents, predominantly on lizards, crabs and insects.)

The survival rate of Australian passerines. Yom-Tov, Y., McCleery, R. and Purchase, D. (1992). *Ibis* 134: 374-379. (The survival rates of 35 species were calculated. Overall, the survival rate of Australian passerines is at least 1.2 greater than that of equal-sized British passerines. There was no difference between the "old endemics" and "new invaders". However, it is suggested that the survival rates of birds younger than one year is different between the two groups.)

[Four successful broods of a Blackbird in the same nest.] Camici, M. (1991). *Ornis. Beob.* 88: 74. (All were in the same season. In German.)

Use of resources and play back experiments in the genus *Acrocephalus* in a marsh area of Piedmont. Palestrini, C. and Rolando, A. (1991). *L'Oiseau RFO* 61: 27-38. (Etho-ecological aspects of the coexistence among three species, including the Great Reed-Warbler. In French.)

Preference for nest site height in the Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* — an experiment with nest boxes. Svensson, S. (1991). *Ornis Svecia* 1: 59-61. (Boxes were placed at 1.5 m, 3.0 m and 4.5 m. There was a preference for the higher boxes. Breeding success was also greater in these boxes.)

Breeding, mass and primary moult of European Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* at Dassen Island, South Africa. Cooper, J. and Underhill, L. G. (1991). *Ostrich* 62: 1-7 (Fifty nestlings, 181 juveniles, and 445 adults were banded; 224 recaptures were recorded. Totals of 682 primary moult scores and 434 masses were obtained. Twenty-eight nests were examined.)

#### TECHNIQUES AND ANALYSES

Band opening and removal by House Finches. Stedman, S. J. (1990). *N. Amer. Bird Bander* 15: 136-138. (Of 230 birds recaptured within 90 days of being banded, one was without its band and 72 had bands that had been partly opened.)

[Evaluation of the consequences of ringing on a breeding population of Swifts (*Apus apus* L.).] Gory, G. (1991). *L'Oiseau RFO* 61: 91-100. (It is recommended that adults be captured on the nest during the short period preceding chick fledging. In French.)

A simple, effective net for capturing cavity roosting birds. Jackson, J. A. and Parris, S. D. (1991). *N. Amer. Bird Bander* 16: 30-31. (A hand-held net made from the frame of a fisherman's landing net, an embroidery hoop, and a clear plastic bag.)

Techniques for locating and capturing nesting female Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*). Leasure, S. M. and Holt, D. W. (1991). *N. Amer. Bird Bander* 16: 32-33. (A method using a mist net held horizontally between two people that may be of use for capturing other ground nesting birds.)

An alternative method of netting shorebirds in the Canadian Subarctic. Otnes, G. L. (1990). *N. Amer. Bird Bander* 15: 139-140. (A mist net was held horizontally between two people, who were positioned between two flocks. As birds moved between the flocks they were caught by swiftly elevating the net to a vertical position.)

[Space utilization by the Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius*: usefulness of radio-tracking.] Villard, P. (1991). *L'Oiseau RFO* 61: 101-110. (The territory size is smaller during the breeding season than it is during the non-breeding season. The usefulness of radio-telemetry in this type of study is clearly demonstrated by the results. In French.)

Footpad dimorphism as a possible means to determine sex of adult and juvenile Northern Spotted Owls (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). Fleming, T. L., Buchanan, J. B. and Irwin, L. L. (1991). *N. Amer. Bird Bander* 16: 66-68. (Adult birds could be sexed on the basis of the length of the footpad from the tip of the middle toe to tip of the hallux with an overlap of 12.5 per cent. Its possible use for sexing juvenile owls is discussed.)

[A new method of evaluating owl densities and their habitat use.] Verheyden, C. (1991). *L'Oiseau RFO* 61: 17-26. (A spotlight version of the point counts census technique. In French.)

The value of atlassing: local seasonal movements. Harrison, J. and Oatley, T. (1991). *Birding in Southern Africa* 43: 66-68. (The use of reporting rate to show local movements.)

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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The Birds of Sydney 1770-1989 2nd Edition  
E. S. Hoskin (K. A. Hindwood and A. R. McGill), 1991.  
Surrey Beatty & Sons Pty Limited, Chipping Norton, NSW  
2170. 292 pp., map, line drawings and colour plates; 150 x  
225 mm. Retail outlets or publisher. \$39.00 plus postage.

For those who remember the County of Cumberland when Bush Thick-knees *Burhinus magurostris* could be found relatively easily but Galahs *Cacatua roseicapilla* were uncommon, Ern Hoskin's updating of Hindwood and McGill's 'The Birds of Sydney', (published by the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales in 1958), is an historic review and nostalgic reminder of the changes in the avifauna of the county over the last 30 years.

The present volume is the result of Hoskin's loyalty to Hindwood, demonstrated by his faithful maintenance of Hindwood's records since the latter's death in 1971, and by the zealous research required to keep up those files, referred to by Hoskin as the 'Keith Hindwood Bird Recording Service' or the 'Memorial Bird Recording Service'.