

Eight accidental or introduced species have been included. These are the Grey Heron (historical record), Mute Swan, Yellow Bittern, Northern Shoveler, Garganey, Malay Banded Crake, Corncrake and the Mallard. The Grey Heron is a bird of Europe, Asia and Africa. It has been recorded in Australia in the interior of SA in 1839 by John Gould, upon whose reputation the record rests. Five unconfirmed sightings of this species in the Australasian region are all before 1910. Gould also sighted the Northern Shoveler in NSW in 1839; the occasional occurrence of the species in Australia was confirmed in 1975 and subsequently there have followed further sightings.

The Mute Swan and Mallard were introduced to Australia last century. The Mallard is well established in a semi-domesticated state in and around cities and towns; some small colonies of the Mute Swan have become established in WA and Tasmania. Photographs of these accidentals have been included in the text with the exception of the Malay Banded Crake. As some of the photographs for those species have been taken in Europe, it seems odd that one could not have been procured for this species also. As it stands this volume is left incomplete.

Common English names for Australian birds in any publication at present is a source of controversy for ornithologists and a confusion for everyone. It is stated in this book that the common names used are based on *An Index of Australian Bird Names* published by CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research in 1969. Other common names encountered for each species are included in the text. In reality, many of the names used are those from the "List of Recommended English Names" which supercedes the 1969 list and which are at variance with it. The latest popular publications on birds e.g. the RAOU's *Atlas of Australian Birds* (1984) and Simpson and Day's *The Birds of Australia* (1985) both use names exclusively from the "List of Recommended English Names". Earlier references used names from the 1969 index. Thus, this publication is not consistent with any of the recent popular works available on birds. Laymen are almost certainly going to be confused by encountering Australian Shelduck in some references and Mountain Duck in others.

These are minor problems which detract little from the quality of the book. It fulfills its aims remarkably well and is outstanding at a time when picture books on wildlife and birds in particular are abundant. Publications of this kind, which address and inspire the general public are vital at a time when the conservation of many species is in the hands of the general Australian public. It is a pity therefore, that its purchase price puts it beyond the reach of much of the audience for whom it was written.

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Wildlife Identikit. Peter King and Garry O'Neill; **Plant Identikit.** (Ed) Peter King. Published by The Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory. Each volume comprise 64 pp. and retails at \$3.00.

The Conservation Commission Northern Territory has recently produced a publication entitled *Wildlife Identikit — Common Animals of Central and Arid Australia*, written by Peter King and Garry O'Neill. This is a

companion to a booklet published two years ago *Plant Identikit — Common Plants of Central Australia*, edited by Peter King. Both are pocket sized publications containing 64 pages of high standard printing and reproduction of coloured photographs.

Wildlife Identikit will help you to identify 100 common animals to be seen in the Territory. Beside each illustration both the common and scientific names identify the species whilst notes on general information, breeding, food and identification provides adequate coverage of the birds, snakes and lizards, mammals, frogs, fish, insects and spiders depicted. The booklet includes a section on Tracks and Traces which I find a very interesting innovation. Each group of animals is colour coded for quick reference. Bush Hints and First Aid gives good advice to travellers. Unfortunately, as with many publications, small errors slip through unnoticed. In this instance the Mulga Parrot's general notes are accompanied by a photograph of Red-rumped Parrots. However, this criticism is in no way intended to belittle the quality of the booklet.

Plant Identikit covers 41 common plants of Central Australia. Each page is colour coded by utilizing the flower colour. Common and scientific names are given to each illustration. The flower, flowering season, leaf, seed pod and general appearance of the plant can be quickly seen. A blue code colour given to a group of three tables provides easy reference to identify "Plant Form", "Plant Community" and "Plant Environment". On the opposite page identification hints are listed with space for the reader to make his/her own field notes.

Both publications are recommended; each a compact booklet which give a quick means to identifying animals and plants, many of which are common not only in Central Australia but are found throughout many parts of the continent. The concept is ideal to encourage and an interest in natural history. They are available from all offices of the Conservation Commission throughout the Northern Territory and newsagents.

Beryl Marchant, Turrumurra, N.S.W.

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