

Hints of Ageing and Sexing Throughout the Year. Bob Spencer and Chris Mead. 1978. *Ringers' Bulletin* 5: 38-42.

Use of cloacal protrubences and brood patches for sexing birds during the breeding season is briefly discussed. A calendar of when various aging and sexing techniques can be reliably used for eight species is given.

MISCELLANEOUS

Gyrfalcons Nesting Behavior from Hatching to Fledging. M. Alan Jenkins. 1978. *Auk* 95: 122-127.

The post-hatching behaviour of two pairs of Gyrfalcons *Falco rusticolus* was observed and different components quantified. The varying roles of each sex are described.

Plumages of the Least Tern. 1978. Barbara W. Massey and Jonathan L. Atwood. *Bird-Banding* 49: 360-371.

Descriptions and field identification of the plumage phases from juvenile through to adult of the Least Tern (Little Tern in Australia) *Sterna albifrons* are given. Birds have been observed breeding at two years. No breeding has been recorded in sub-adult plumaged birds.

The Status of the Black Sparrowhawk in Transvaal. 1978. Warwick Tarboton, Mark Lewis and Alan Kemp. *Bokmakierie* 30: 56-59.

A considerable increase in population numbers of the Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucos* has been observed. This has been due to an increase of potential nesting sites in planted eucalypts and other exotics and an increase in doves, a major food source. Nesting success was 1.5-1.8 young fledged per pair per annum.

Seasonal Differences in Bird Counts in Forests near Reefton, South Island, New Zealand. 1978. D. G. Dawson, P. J. Dilks, P. D. Gaze, J. G. R. McBurney and P. R. Wilson. *Notornis* 25: 257-278.

In order to determine habitat preferences and factors affecting numbers of birds counted, four forest areas were censused every second month for a year. Seasonal changes were observed for most species. Differences in population sizes between areas and seasons were large compared with those between individual observers. Seasonal changes in habitat preferences were noted for some species.

Seabird Observations Between New Zealand and Fiji. 1978. T. G. Lovegrove. *Notornis* 25: 291-298.

An annotated list of seabirds observed during a return trip from New Zealand to Fiji is given. Field characteristics of *Pterodroma* petrels and storm-petrels are illustrated.

Status of the Pied Tit (*Petroica macrocephala toitoi*) in the Waitakers Range, Auckland. Interim Report. 1978. Jean F. Skinner. *Notornis* 25: 299-302.

The Pied Tit remains territorial throughout the year. The distribution of this species is closely related to distribution of vegetation and it is absent from areas which have been burnt for farming. The study located 117 territories averaging about 2.5 hectares.

Some Recent Observations on Seabirds Breeding in Fiji. 1978. M. K. Tarburton. *Notornis* 25: 303-316.

Various islands in the Fijian group were visited from 1974 to 1976. Twelve species of seabirds were found nesting. Distribution within islands, banding data and details of nesting are given.

Behaviour of Woodland Kingfishers in Ghana. 1978. P. W. Greig-Smith. *Ostrich* 49: 67-75.

Non-social, social and breeding behaviour were studied in the Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* during the breeding season. A variety of postures were evident during non-social activities such as feeding and nesting. Breeding territories were defended by vocal and visual displays and attacks on intruders. Courtship displays and timing of breeding activities are described.

Moult Seasons of some Anatidae in the Western Transvaal. 1978. W. R. J. Dean. *Ostrich* 49: 76-84.

Moult and breeding seasons were studied for eight species of waterfowl. Duration of flightlessness is related to the size of the bird, being longer for large and longer-winged species.

Review

Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds by William T. Cooper. Text by Joseph M. Forshaw and William T. Cooper. Collins, Sydney, 1977. 304 pp (including index), 62 plates, many text drawings. Price \$100.

This eagerly-awaited volume is in large format which all Cooper enthusiasts will treasure and enjoy. The price is perhaps not too inconsistent with modern values, although one might have expected a larger edition.

The large format size 280 x 404 mm, is fully justified to accommodate the brilliant colour-plates of these fascinating and unique birds. The paintings are twice described on the jacket-advertisement as 'magnificent'. What else can one call them? Some of the subjects I think, are more successful in one way or another in attitude, colour, composition and detail but the best are very good indeed and I find that foregrounds such as that in the *Parotia lawesi* study are highly evocative for us old New Guinea hands, exquisite, and as accurate in detail as the plumage and the always-difficult feet. All recognised species, most females if different and one or two distinctive subspecies are illustrated. Hybrids, a feature of the group, are not.

The accompanying text also benefits from the large page size. It is spacious and clean, enlivened by many black and white sketches, mostly from life, of birds, bowers and interesting details; these are often delightfully complementary to the painted portraits and the main text. The written word is necessarily colourless by contrast but had the difficult task of following so soon an exhaustive textbook in Gilliard's *Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds*.

Forshaw has done a creditable job of avoiding repetition by providing much of the information in a

different style and incorporating the many new fragments of information on these birds which have been published since Gilliard's manuscript was prepared. More than half of the references listed were published after Gilliard's death. In addition to this information, many other minor items are cited in the text, along with the artist's anecdotal, often enlightening, field notes.

That Forshaw's information is not simply a repetition of Gilliard's is shown by the measurements cited, evidently made by himself, 'of at least five specimens as far as possible'; these are generally similar to, but rarely the same as those of Gilliard. Perhaps a proper statistical treatment of measurements is out of place in such a work. However, there is surely every reason to discuss the numerous discrepancies, and by giving measurements only for species, and not subspecies, Forshaw has left much unsaid that is worth saying. Among other things there is an interesting east-west size increase among the races of *Chlamydera nuchalis*, but Forshaw's measurements are on the low side even for the smaller race. Again, the disjunct race, of *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* are very different in size (as might be expected) and Forshaw cannot have included any northern specimens in his sample.

The main defect in the text, common in many bird books, is in the maps. The location map is rendered fuzzy by stippling, which bears only a general relationship to the real relief, at least in New Guinea. The range maps are an improvement on those of Gilliard in appearance, but are hardly more accurate in detail, and less so in places. As a single example of many, *Ptiloris m. magnificus* is shown with wide gaps between the nominate race and the eastern race *intercedens*, far greater than indicated in the text itself, and nowhere approaching Diamond's localities Karimui and Soliabeda (both mentioned in the species account), or Lake Kutubu, where Schodde and Hitchcock (and I) have recorded the species.

There are few typographical errors that I could find, but at least two are very conspicuous in plate names. All plates are identified only by a scientific name, although many readers of this book will certainly prefer a vernacular of some sort. In taxonomy and both scientific and common names Gilliard is rigidly followed, for good or ill. In a spacious work of this kind, there was surely room to include other vernaculars, especially those which have been officially recommended in the various countries involved. There is certainly room to consider Dr Jared Diamond's interesting and highly-informed generic revision of the family, and views other than Gilliard's on species limits.

It is very easy to find minor points to criticise, and I must emphasise that these are very minor indeed in the work as a whole. They cannot seriously detract from the volume which has fulfilled and possibly exceeded this reviewer's high expectations.

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Birds of Prey: their Biology and Ecology, by Leslie Brown, illustrated by Ian Willis, Hamlyn, London, 1976. 256 pp, 48 colour and 50 monochrome photographs, 46 text figures, \$14.00 (Aust.).

This is yet another important book by an acknowledged authority in his field and a worthy companion

volume to his *Eagles of the World*. The author presents a highly informative and well-researched account of the world's raptors, divided under the following chapter headings: Classification and distribution; Habitats and their inhabitants; Anatomy, structure and way of life; Hunting and feeding methods; Migration and nomadism; Breeding biology; The ecology of predation; Conservation and protection.

In addition there are five appendices, presenting condensed information on: I. the living species of Falconiformes; II. species occurring in less favourable habitats; III. species occurring in the four richest habitats; IV. migrant and nomadic species; V. threatened species of birds of prey. Appendix I also includes condensed details on the level of knowledge of the breeding biology of each species. Known clutch size is presented, along with a knowledge rating A, B, C, D or E, which is fully defined in the relevant chapter. The only Australian species to rate B — very well known — is the Wedge-tailed Eagle. All other Australian species rate C, except for near-cosmopolitan species such as the Osprey, Black Kite, Marsh Harrier and Peregrine Falcon, which rate A or B because of work done outside Australia. Many other Australasian species, e.g. those of New Guinea and islands, rate E — unknown.

A reasonably comprehensive bibliography lists the important references for each chapter, and the text is thoroughly indexed. A slight African bias is evident, but this is because the author did most of his fieldwork there. Reference to Australian species is scanty, which reflects the general lack of good detailed studies on our raptors.

The text is written in an entertaining and readable style, the photographs are generally good, and the text figures are most helpful. The book amply illustrates gaps in existing knowledge, future research possibilities and the need for a co-ordinated research effort. It is highly recommended to anyone interested in raptors, and is essential reading for those engaged in raptor research.

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