

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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