

REVIEW

The Birds of South-east Queensland, by Gregory J. Roberts. Queensland Conservation Council, 1979. 50 pp. B & W figures and maps \$1.80 + Postage.

There will always be considerable interest among ornithologists for any carefully compiled record of the birdlife of a specified area. In this treatment of the birds of south-eastern Queensland the boundary limits are north to Bustard Bay, west to the western slopes of the Great Divide and south to the New South Wales border. The claim that with 427 species this is "almost certainly the richest region in Australia (in relation to size) for birdlife" may be debatable. For instance, the County of Cumberland list is now past the 400 mark and that occupies probably no more than one-tenth the size of south-eastern Queensland.

Nevertheless, it is clearly a rich avian area and, like the Sydney district, the numerical attainment is no doubt due to a goodly concentration of able observers over the years and a comprehensive recording system.

Although the text-matter is necessarily brief (423 species dealt within 43 pages) all known occurrences and references are detailed for vagrants, and localities are mostly summarized for rarities, which is very helpful for readers. After all, those are the ones generating the most interest as common species need little extra information beyond habitat preferences and resident/migratory status.

A few species are dealt with more fully when their inclusion is more historical, such as the Australian Bustard, Double-eyed Figparrot, Ground Parrot and Paradise Parrot. Three of these are now believed extinct in the region whilst the Ground Parrot is very localized and threatened. It was surprising to read that "the population at Cooloola represents the most important mainland stronghold for the species in Australia" which is endangered by a proposed *Pinus* plantation.

Although both the White-tailed and Little Kingfishers have been mist-netted at Eurimbula in 1975 it is surprising that there are no other confirmed sight observations within the area. The recent heavy 'lumping' of the *Pardalotus striatus* complex necessitates a discussion on the status of no less than four supposed races in the region concerned.

Careful checking of proofs is apparent, although "Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo" has crept in — how often has this bird's eponymous name been misspelt? A gazeteer is very helpful as well as a map, but our copy contains no index. This omission we understand is to be added to future copies. All proceeds from the sale of this valuable book will be donated to the Queensland Conservation Council, P.O. Box 238, North Quay, Qld., 4000.

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Working Bibliography of Owls of the World, by Richard J. Clark, Dwight G. Smith and Leon H. Kelso, 1978, Raptor Information Centre, National Wildlife Federation, Washington D.C. pp. 322. Price \$US9.00.

This bibliography lists 6590 references, an awesome number for any ornithological student undertaking a literature search on owls. However the authors have provided three indices which should allow rapid extraction of all listed references on any likely subject.

The references are indexed (i) within genus, (ii) within genus and geographical location, (iii) within category of information. The world has been divided into 104 geographical locations, the area of each being roughly inversely proportional to the number of associated references.

Eight information categories are used: Anatomy, Behaviour, Conservation, Distribution, Ecology, General, Physiology and Taxonomy.

Any bibliography, particularly one assembled from a world wide list of references, will have limitations. But this work, which took 11 years to compile, has been prepared with much forethought. Most important considerations such as the multiplicity of common names used for a single species, particularly a species like the Barn Owl which has a wide geographic range, have been suitably handled. The authors have recognised such problems, providing a cross reference between scientific names and most common names used in 72 languages. Differing taxonomic standards are discussed and six current Checklists have been compared.

Other sections of this publication include a brief summary of all species of owl and their current taxonomic status.

To summarise, problems which are associated with the use of many bibliographies have been minimised. This bibliography is comprehensive in its subject, probably the best available on any subject and should prove a delight to use.

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