

*WHERE TO FIND BIRDS IN AUSTRALIA* by John Bransbury. 1987.

Melbourne, Victoria: Century Hutchinson Australia Pty. Ltd. xvi + 539 pages; 16 pages of color photos, 106 maps, 12-page bibliography; paperback \$35.

I am just back from my first trip to Australia, and I want to express my thanks to John Bransbury for his very thorough guide to Australia's outstanding birdwatching spots. Being a bookseller and nature tour guide, I am supposed to be current on this sort of book, but when I stepped off the plane in Cairns, all I had to go on were a couple of itineraries from bird tours and fifteen pages of photocopied bird lists. Fortunately, Cairns is blessed with two great bookstores, and so I found myself a short while later with Bransbury's guide clutched in one hand and the keys to my rental car jangling in the other. Three weeks and 350 birds later, I was grateful my first stop in Australia had been the local bookseller.

*Where to Find Birds in Australia* has all the right ingredients for a first-class bird-finding guide. The maps are large, clearly delineated, and numerous. Information on birds of particular interest to visiting naturalists, including both rare and common species, is blended remarkably well with various notes on geology, botany, and other natural history interests. Accounts are often spiced with historical matters, as well as precautionary words on biting insects (very few), potential weather risks, and trail conditions. A nice touch, and one which is all too often missing from this genre, is information on the suitability of certain tracks for the handicapped. Directions, for the most part, are clear, although those to Sherbrooke Park leave something to be desired. Still I did manage to find the Superb Lyrebird. Each state has its own chapter, introduced with a short list of useful addresses for the bird finder. The total pages of the text for each state is as follows: Victoria, 74; New South Wales, 70; Australian Capital Territory, 14; Queensland, 96; Tasmania, 44; South Australia, 56; Western Australia, 102; and Northern Territory, 40. My only real gripe with this book is its price, which at \$35 (even Australian dollars) is excessive for a paperback. It is widely available in Australia.

*THE SLATER FIELD GUIDE TO AUSTRALIAN BIRDS* by Peter, Pat, and Raoul Slater. 1986. Willoughby, New South Wales: Lansdowne-Rigby Publishers. 343 pages, 157 color plates, maps; paperback \$29.95.

"At last," it says on the book's back cover, "Australia has a truly portable field guide to all known bird species throughout the country." Not being a student of the history of Australian bird literature, I cannot speak to the "at last" issue, but I

can say that this guidebook is indeed truly portable--it will fit in the pocket of your jeans--and does cover all of Australia's birds, including the vagrants. The Slater gang does not waste any words in this book. There is a four-page introduction, and then you plunge right into the species accounts and plates. The color plates are superb, and, in my estimation, are the main selling point of the book. Peter Slater is a splendid artist, and his representations of Australian birds are the best available today. The plates tend not to be crowded, and Slater has taken pains to depict recognizable color phases and subspecies of many families, including parrots, owls, cuckoo-shrikes, warblers, thornbills, and pardalotes. The only plates that are not particularly good are a series of halftone, double-page pictures of birds in flight. The birds depicted suffer from poor contrast with the dark backgrounds, and sadly, represent many of the species most in need of clear, in-flight illustrations such as various seabirds, birds of prey, and shorebirds. The text is concise, ranging from five to fifteen lines, and discusses field marks of adults and immatures, voice, nesting, and range. Small black-and-white maps accompany the text, and both are directly across from the appropriate color plate. The text is much less exhaustive than that of the other standard Australian bird guide, Graham Pizzey's *A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*, and the binding is poor. The cover of my copy began to come loose after about six days of field use. Nonetheless, Slater's field guide is a better bet in the field, both for its much better illustrations and for its compactness. It is available in most Australian bookstores. (I would have brought back a dozen copies, but I had to use my money on souvenirs for my kids!)

**BRIAN CASSIE** leads nature tours to various destinations in North America and beyond. He is also a coordinator of the Massachusetts Butterfly Atlas Project.

---

## Cooperative Garage

(617) 923-0941

106 PLEASANT Street  
WATERTOWN, MA 02172  
(Convenient to MBTA)

### OUR SPECIALTIES:

**SAAB** The darling of engineers -  
sports car for grown-ups

**VOLVO** Solid conservative  
design - the family car

**AUDI-VOLKSWAGEN**  
Our own favorite for  
performance and economy



Check out where your birding friends get their cars serviced.  
Proprietors: Soheil Zende, Douglas Packard

---

# BIRD WATCHER'S GENERAL STORE

*"Cape Cod's Shop for Bird Lovers"*



*FEATURING: The Amazing "AVIARIUM" Birdfeeder*  
that brings birds right into your own home. The feeder is made of mirrored plexi-  
glass that allows you to watch the birds for hours, but they cannot see you.

**COME SEE IT IN ACTION!**

Other Bird Lover Items Include:

- Bird Mugs
- Bird Pillows
- Bird Tiles
- Bird Silkscreens
- Bird Thermometers
- Bird Towels
- Bird Placemats
- Bird Sun Catchers
- Bird Mobiles
- Bird Slates
- Bird Clocks
- Bird Wallets
- Bird Prints
- Bird Notecards
- Bird Switchplates
- Bird Stamps
- Bird Coat Racks
- Bird T-Shirts
- Bird Photos
- Bird Carving Kits
- Bird Key Chains
- Bird Jewelry
- Bird Recordings
- Bird Calls
- Bird Door Knockers
- Bird Baths
- Bird Paintings
- Bird Houses
- Bird Giftwrap
- Bird Posters
- Bird Calendars
- Bird Books
- Bird Field Guides
- Bird Glasses
- Bird Bath Heaters
- Bird Fountains
- Bird Telephone
- Bird Floor Mats
- Bird Bookmarks
- Bird Pot Holders

**Complete line of Binoculars, spotting scopes and tripods.**

PLUS over 50 different types of bird feeders including Bluejay and Squirrel-proof  
feeders that work, **GUARANTEED**. Plus ten different types of Bird Seed.

**GIFT CERTIFICATES & U.P.S. SHIPPING.**

## BIRD WATCHER'S GENERAL STORE

255-6974

37 Route 6A, Orleans (Across from Lobster Claw)

**OPEN YEAR ROUND**