

## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

AUSTRALIAN PARROTS. By Joseph M. Forshaw. Livingston Publ. Co., Wynnewood, Penna., 1969: 10 × 12 in., xiv + 306 pp., 72 color pls., 54 range maps, 8 figs., 1 map, 20 black and white photos. \$29.50.

This formidable tome describes, depicts, and discusses all species of Australian parrots. Parrot literature is profuse and widely scattered, and the author has done a good job of bringing together that which is pertinent to the Australian species. He also has added many notes from his own observations, primarily from field and aviary.

With the inclusion of the Red-fronted Parrot (*Cyanorhamphus novaezelandiae*) and the Kaka (*Nestor productus*), both from Norfolk Island, the splitting of the seven species of *Platycercus* of Peters (1937) into 10, and the lumping of Peters' four species of *Calyptorhynchus* into three, the number of species included is 54. These are arranged in a new classification that recognizes three parrot families, the Loriidae, Cacatuidae, and Psittacidae, with the Cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*) placed in a separate subfamily within the Cacatuidae, and the Kaka placed in a separate subfamily of the Psittacidae. *Eolophus* is the generic name used for the Galah (*E. roseicapillus*); *Eclectus* is used instead of *Lorius* for the Eclectus Parrot (*E. roratus*); *Barnardius* is the generic name used for the Mallee Ringneck (*B. barnardi*) and the Port Lincoln Parrot (*B. zonarius*); and Bourke's Parrot, *Northiella haematogaster* in Peters, is considered a species of *Psephotus*.

The introduction includes a brief, and in my opinion grossly oversimplified, discussion of Australia's zoogeographic regions, habitat descriptions with twelve good black and white photographs, an explanation of the format for the species accounts, and a brief section on keeping parrots in captivity. Two maps of the continent, one outlining three zoogeographic regions, the other delimiting the states and showing numerous localities, occupy full pages. The information they give could be assimilated more easily if presented on one map. The method used to depict the external anatomy of a parrot is poor. I doubt that one can understand the feather groupings of a bird's pectoral appendage by studying a diagram of a folded wing. The confusion that persists regarding the parts of the avian leg is furthered by labeling the ankle joint the thigh.

The families, subfamilies, and genera are briefly characterized, and the species accounts are arranged in systematic sequence. These accounts include plumage descriptions of all species and endemic subspecies, and measurements for the nominate or some endemic race. Distribution, including a range map, status, and habitat are given for each species. Behavioral observations are included under the headings habits, movements, flight, calls, feeding, and breeding. Lists of other common names and aviary notes complete the accounts.

Each species is illustrated by one, sometimes two (and in one case three) large color plates. Mostly these are excellent portrait photographs of captive individuals or occasionally pairs. Several of the photographs of wild birds are first rate. The five species for which color photographs do not exist are depicted in paintings by J. C. Yrizarry. Unfortunately, the color plates are not bound in with the text, but are glued in, and at the top only! Already several in my copy are partially unglued and others are dog-eared at their unattached bottom corners. Such construction also results in the book being thicker within than around the edges which means through the years dust will filter onto the pages and plates. Certainly when one pays \$30 for a book he expects better construction.

My major criticism of *Australian Parrots* pertains to another feature of its construction, the plethora of blank pages. In this dawning of an era of environmental awareness I shudder when I think of the trees that were killed and the waters that were polluted to produce paper on which nothing is printed. Even ignoring the bountiful margins, over 22 square feet of unprinted paper exists in this book. And the waste does not end once the book is finished because librarians will have to provide space for the tome forever after.—GLEN E. WOOLFENDEN.

BIRDS OF WEST CENTRAL AND WESTERN AFRICA. AFRICAN HANDBOOK OF BIRDS. SERIES III, VOLUME I. By C. W. Mackworth-Praed and C. H. B. Grant. Longman Group Ltd., London, 1970: 8¾ × 6 in., 671 pp., 45 col. pls., numerous range maps and text figures. £ 6. (\$14.40).

With the appearance of Volume I of Series III, on the birds of western Africa, the Handbook of African Birds approaches its completion. Series I and II covered eastern and northeastern, and the southern third of Africa respectively, and Series III completes the coverage of the whole of Africa south of the Sahara. The same arrangement is followed in each series, two volumes divided roughly between the non-passerine and passerine birds, and the format varies only slightly from series to series. Since these books have been only sparsely noticed in the North American literature, Series I only in the *Auk* (72: 307–308, 1955; 73: 297–298, 1956), and Series II not at all, this review may be considered as applying to the whole Handbook.\*

Each Series is opened with an introduction containing brief sections on taxonomy, identification, nomenclature, migration, molt and geography. The bulk of the volumes is occupied by the systematic list, and each has its own index. The list is divided by families, with the ordinal groupings ignored, and each family is headed by a dichotomous key to the species. The species accounts open with a full description, including plumage variations due to age, sex or time of year; in polytypic species one race is described first, followed by brief diagnoses of the other subspecies. The ranges of each species or subspecies are described and also shown on small outline maps on the margin of the page. Then, for the species as a whole, follow paragraphs on habits, nest and eggs, breeding records, food, calls, and the range of the species outside the area covered by that particular volume. The great majority of the species are illustrated by color plates, and for those not shown, there is usually a marginal sketch showing the diagnostic characters. Although many species are found throughout Africa, they are treated in full in each series, so that each of the latter is complete for its area.

As stated explicitly by the authors, these volumes are intended primarily for field use, to provide local residents and travelers with the sort of introduction to the bird life that was completely lacking when the authors themselves first visited Africa. As such they are both more and less than the typical Peterson field guide, more in that they provide much more of descriptions and life history notes, and less in that they cannot compare as ready means of identification. This last is inevitable because many African species are still known almost entirely from museum skins. This is particularly true in western and west-central Africa, and in the present volume the authors were unable to add the section of black and white photographs found in the previous ones because so

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\* Birds of Eastern and Northeastern Africa. African Handbook of Birds. Series I, Volumes I and II. By C. W. Mackworth-Praed and C. H. B. Grant. Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1952 and 1955. Birds of the Southern Third of Africa. African Handbook of Birds. Series II, Volumes I and II. By C. W. Mackworth-Praed and C. H. B. Grant. Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1962 and 1963.

few were available. Color plates, keys, descriptions, ranges, call notes and habitat must all be combined to produce reliable identifications, and in genera like the grass warblers, *Cisticola*, years of experience as well.

Now that the final volumes of the Handbook are being published, it is interesting to review their history and the place they occupy in African ornithology. According to the senior author, the African Handbook of Birds was started on 1 January 1933. From 1933 to 1951, a series of taxonomic revisions, primarily the work of Claude Grant, appeared in the *Ibis* and the *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists Club*, and in 1952 the first of the Handbook volumes was published. Grant died in 1958, but Mackworth-Praed has completed its publication. Considering the unfinished state of a number of other major handbooks and monographs, this is a major accomplishment and one reflecting great credit on the authors. As for its place in African ornithology, it is the only handbook or guide to large areas of the continent, such as the Congo (*pace* Schouteden who published in Flemish) and Angola, and the only one to cover the Ethiopian fauna as a whole. In fact Africa now has the distinction of being the only major faunal region to have its avifauna encompassed in a single handbook. For anyone studying African birds either in the field or the museum, these volumes are a must.—  
MELVIN A. TRAYLOR.

FINDING BIRDS IN MEXICO. By Ernest P. Edwards. Ernest P. Edwards, Sweet Briar, Virginia. 2nd ed., 1968:  $6\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$  in., xxi + 282 pp., 15 pls. (4 in color) and 7 maps. \$4.95 paperback, \$6.95 clothbound.

FINDING THE BIRDS IN WESTERN MEXICO, A GUIDE TO THE STATES OF SONORA, SINALOA AND NAYARIT. By Peter Alden. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1969:  $7 \times 10$  in., xiv + 138 pp., 9 col. pls., 10 habitat photos, and 17 maps. \$5.95 paperback, \$7.50 clothbound.

An ornithologist is faced with a dilemma when reviewing books written for bird watchers, especially when they cover geographic areas less well known than the continental United States. Should one review them as contributions to our knowledge of ornithology, or as to how well they fulfill the stated objectives; in this case in aiding those involved in avian bridgmanship or avian golfmanship, i.e., seeing the maximum number of kinds of birds? Suffice to say the books under review accomplish the latter mission in a satisfactory manner. Both books briefly describe subdivisions of the regions covered. Alden's "Western Mexico" comprises essentially the northern half of Edwards' "Pacific Lowland Region." Both authors include maps, small scale in Edwards, large scale with many local details in Alden, and both include lists of birds at major localities discussed in the texts. These lists are apparently complete in Alden, while they include only species most likely to be seen in Edwards. The plates help fill one of the gaps in the literature of the Mexican avifauna by providing illustrations of non-A.O.U. Check-list species. John O'Neill, who did the nine fine colored plates in Alden, had fewer species to illustrate than Edwards as well as the luxury of a slightly larger format. Thus his figures are considerably larger, less crowded and more detailed, although some color values, undoubtedly lost in the printing, are unfortunately poor in some plates (yellows tend to be greenish and browns too dark). The diagrammatic and rather amateurish illustrations in Edwards suffer by comparison, yet provide unique colored illustration of a number of species including Dwarf Vireo, Slaty Vireo and Sierra Madre Sparrow and the characteristic juvenal plumage of the Yucatan Jay.

A checklist of species is presented in each book, and Edwards adds a Spanish name (mostly never notated), coded range and a few words on calls or descriptions. Alden's English nomenclature is based on the A.O.U. Check-list and that in Eisenmann's "Species of Middle American Birds." Much of Edwards' nomenclature is his own; for example, "Green Woodpecker" for Bronze-winged Woodpecker; "Tucuchillo" for Ridgway's Whip-poor-will; "Laughing Creeper" for Ivory-billed Woodcreeper; and "Jungle Tanager" for the Red-throated (or Dusky-tailed) Ant-Tanager. Edwards lists as species (one suspects for the sake of the listers) many distinctive (but some not so in the field) subspecies. Thus he includes two Rough-winged Swallows, two Brown Jays, six House Wrens and seven species of *Junco* (Eisenmann lists only four of the latter for Mexico and there are probably only two biological species!).

Both books provide ornithologists with frustrations! Edwards personally has had more field experience with Mexican birds than the six authors of the three most frequently encountered books on the subject, yet little solid information can be gleaned from his book.

Ranges are occasionally given that differ from information now available, but without substantiating data; for example, the Eared Grebe is said to be a winter visitant in the "southern highlands," and the Least Bittern is found in "all" regions. I have confidence in these statements, but wish dates and localities were cited. Alden, covering a much smaller area, is able to provide complete locality lists with season or months often cited. Unfortunately the completeness of the lists does not indicate their degree of credibility and they will probably mislead beginners. Some examples (*vide* Allan Phillips): Black Swifts are not known even to migrate through Sinaloa; there are only two Sinaloa records for Cassin's Sparrow (thus hardly a species to point out to be looked for, p. 512); neither San Blas nor Green Jays range north of the San Blas region, nor does the White-lored Gnatcatcher occur north of Michoacan; Rufous-sided Towhees do not inhabit Cerro San Juan, near Tepic, and Baltimore Orioles and Purple Martins have not been definitely recorded at Tepic! Especially notable is the inclusion of a summary of "Christmas Bird Counts" for 4 years 1964-1967 at San Blas, Nayarit including apparently first state records for a number of species and including the only Pacific coastal records or southernmost records along the Pacific for the Double-crested Cormorant, Surf Scoter, Dunlin, Glaucous-winged Gull and Bonaparte's Gull among others. While some unbelievable records for San Blas and elsewhere too, distributed earlier in mimeograph form in the "Vermilion Flycatcher," have been deleted, still included are sight records of species that are not known to winter at San Blas such as Semipalmated Sandpipers (probably were Western), Wood Pewees, Philadelphia Vireo, and Virginia's Warbler, among others. There are no valid winter records for the Semipalmated Sandpiper from any place in Mexico! One wishes that someone along on each Christmas Count would ride shotgun! Alden is to be congratulated for listing difficult species only within complexes such as "*Empidonax*, light-breasted (White-throated, Dusky, Least and/or others)" and "*Myiarchus*, medium size (Nutting's and/or Ash-throated)" but apparently other confused species should also have been listed in this manner such as small sandpipers and "Orioles, medium sized, dull (Baltimore/Bullock's Oriole)."

In summary, ornithologists and bird watchers who have had no experience in Mexico will find Edwards' distributionally reliable book helpful, but the former will soon outgrow it. Alden's book is a useful gazetteer and gives lists of species by locality. We await being proved wrong in our judgment of some records by the production of well-documented specimens.—ROBERT W. DICKERMAN

SASKATOON WETLANDS SEMINAR. Canadian Wildlife Service Report Series—No. 6. The Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1969:  $8\frac{1}{4} \times 11$  in., 262 pp., illus., paperback. \$5.25.

The "Saskatoon Wetlands Seminar" is the sixth publication of a new series by the Canadian Wildlife Service. All of the previous numbers have been highly attractive publications; the present report continues this format with pleasing typography, imaginative layout and skillful editorial treatment. The opening of the Canadian Wildlife Service's Prairie Migratory Bird Research Centre in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, was the occasion of the above document. The size and scope of the report underscore the importance of prairie small water areas in the ecology of our continental waterfowl populations. As D. A. Munro indicates in his introductory remarks, nearly two-thirds of the most sought-after ducks are produced in the small wetlands of the prairie provinces. The opening of the new laboratory emphasizes the need for research and management in these wetland complexes if we are to cope with the continued disappearance of small prairie wetlands as intensified agriculture works them into crop or forage production.

The book is divided into four sections; Part I examines the significance of small wetlands in waterfowl production, beginning with an excellent statement of management goals by F. C. Cooch. Other papers in this section concern the agricultural uses of wetlands, engineering problems, legal considerations and the economic values of small wetlands. These papers present a broad sweep of viewpoints. Part II is a review of research progress and needs on prairie potholes; hydrology, soils and habitat classification make up the backbone of this section. Part III relates to waterfowl populations and the responses of these birds to small wetland ecology. Part IV is an excellent review of methods and problems of measuring waterfowl breeding populations by ground counts. L. R. Jahn presents summaries of each section which do much to pull the material together. The seminar concludes with a summary by J. B. Gollop of a day-long discussion which ranged freely over the various subjects presented earlier.

While there are many very interesting papers in this collection, two authors deserve special mention. W. F. Crissey sets forth a great many exciting ideas which need continued thought and study. Two papers by Alex Dzubin are also highly stimulating reading for anyone concerned with waterfowl biology.—DANIEL Q. THOMPSON

MEMOIRS OF A NATURALIST. By Herbert L. Stoddard, Sr. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1969:  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  in., xix + 303 pp., clothbound. \$6.95.

Most of us know Herbert L. Stoddard, Sr., for the monumental work "The Bobwhite Quail: Its Habits, Preservation, and Increase." Those who read this biography will perhaps be surprised to learn that Stoddard was first an ornithologist and, later, a pioneer in wildlife management.

The book is divided into three major sections which correspond to the author's experiences. The first section, "The Florida Years," suggests that Stoddard's strong affinity for the pinelands of the southeast had its roots in his early boyhood. These were rigorous but rewarding years before the turn of the century, when his family struggled to create a new life in the pine flatlands of east-central Florida. The author's recollections of these early years are remarkably detailed and offer valuable insights into the vast changes which have occurred in Florida in little more than 60 years.

The second section of the book, "The Museum Years," describes the author's growing interest in descriptive ornithology and museum work. This portion of the book will be of interest to those who wish to see the background of the modern museum. Many prominent scientists are mentioned in these chapters. The last section of the book, "The Georgia Years," describes the author's emergence as a wildlife ecologist. Stoddard's career in the Biological Survey and the organization of the Co-operative Quail Study Association are described. In this section, the history of what is now the field of wildlife management emerges. The author's relationships to the leaders in this growing field are interesting to pursue.

There is perhaps more detail in this work than the reader will wish to become immersed in; however, I was fascinated by the descriptions of institutions, scenes, and personalities now long gone. One is struck by the remarkable achievements of this self-made man who never had the opportunity to attend high school.—DANIEL Q. THOMPSON

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ASPCA GUIDE TO PET CARE. By Diana Henley. Taplinger Publishing Company, New York, 1970: 5 × 8 in., paper covered, x + 70 pp., many photos. \$1.25.

Devoted mostly to dogs, cats, and rodents, this book includes a few concise pages of practical advice on keeping parakeets and canaries. The author is the Head of Education for The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.—P.S.

AVES. Compiled by Carolyn Roberts and Dorothy Thelwall. The Zoological Record, Vol. 104, Section 18, 1967. The Zoological Society of London, 1970: 7¼ × 9¾ in., v + 264 pp. \$8.40.

This is the latest number of a most useful bibliographic reference, a catalog of ornithological literature published in 1967. Entries are listed in author, subject, and systematic indexes. The author index is 50 percent larger than that for the previous year, an indication of the mushrooming scientific literature. While many libraries receive the complete Zoological Record, many zoologists find it convenient to subscribe to the individual section for their own field.—P.S.

BIRDS IN WESTERN COLORADO. By William A. Davis. Prepared for the Colorado Field Ornithologists, 1969: 5½ × 8½ in., paper covered, 61 pp., 15 charts. \$1.75. Order from the Historical Museum and Institute of Western Colorado, 4th and Ute, Grand Junction, Colorado 81501.

Charts and text remarks summarize the seasonal and locality distributions of western Colorado birds. These are followed by detailed suggestions to help visiting birders—trips for bird finding in general, and ways to see special birds which are not seen in most parts of the country. This booklet is well prepared and should prove useful to birders in this region, where birding is difficult.—P.S.

This issue of *The Wilson Bulletin* was published on 30 March 1971