

- Edgar, A.T. 1978. Field study course, Bay of Plenty, January 1978. *Notornis* 25: 279-290.
- Falla, R.A. 1970. Grey ternlets in the Bay of Plenty. *Notornis* 17: 83-86.
- Heather, B.D.; Robertson, H.A. 1996. *Field guide to the birds of New Zealand*. Auckland, Viking.
- Hogg, M.J. 1962. Brown booby and grey noddy in Northland waters. *Notornis* 10: 238-239.
- Johnson, M.E. 1955. Birds in Northland waters. *Notornis* 6: 84.
- Tennyson, A.J.D.; Lock, J.W. (Compilers) 1998. Classified Summarised Notes, North Island 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997. *Notornis* 45: 279-309.
- Tennyson, A.J.D.; Lock, J.W. (Compilers) 2000. Classified Summarised Notes, North Island 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998. *Notornis* 47: 192-214.
- Turbott, E.G. (Convener). 1990. *Checklist of the birds of New Zealand and the Ross Dependency, Antarctica*. 3rd ed. Auckland, Random Century and the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.
- Waller, M. 1970. More sightings of grey ternlets. *Notornis* 17: 213.

**Keywords** grey ternlet; *Procelsterna cerulea albivitta*; New Zealand; Bay of Plenty; breeding



## Review

Ferguson-Lees, I. James; Christie, David A.; Franklin, Kim (Illustrator); Mead, David (Illustrator); Burton, Philip (Illustrator). 2001. *Raptors of the World*

Christopher Helm, London. ISBN 0-7136-8026-1.  
pp. 992, Hardcover, 112 colour plates. £49.00

The *Raptors of the World* has been 18 years in the making and was widely anticipated. I had eagerly awaited this newest addition to the Helm Identification series and was not disappointed. This book covers all 313 species in the old order Falconiformes. With the recent upheaval in avian taxonomy (Sibley & Ahlquist 1990; Sibley & Monroe 1990) that convenient group, the "diurnal raptors", has been spit into 4 orders; the Accipitriformes, Falconiformes, Sagittariiformes, and a small part of the Ciconiiformes. Whilst this is hardly a monophyletic assemblage, it is still a functional group for field ornithologists; it is this group that the book deals with.

Make no mistake this is **not** a field guide, the 992 page tome weighs in at a little over 2.5 kg! That is just a little too large for my back pocket. The 112 color plates illustrate c. 2,000 perched and flying birds and their adult, juvenile and selected immature plumages, as well as main geographical races and color morphs. The text accompanying the plates highlights the plumages shown and summarizes length, wingspan, male-to-female proportion, shape, flight, and habitat. The individual accounts detail distribution and movements, habitat, characters (perched and in flight, and including confusion species), voice, food, behaviour, breeding, population, geographical variation, and measurements.

The plates are excellent. The styles of the 3 artists do not clash. They are all very much in the British school of modern field-guide painting. It is rare today that a book is published without thousands of hours of research into both the text and paintings and this is no exception. The quality of the research is so good they have even gone to the effort of painting a saddleback in the talons of the New Zealand falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) in Plate 104. Mind you, it would be an unlucky saddleback that was eaten by a falcon in New Zealand today!

The New Zealand falcon text is short but thoroughly researched. The authors have taken the opportunity to reassess its conservation status and compare the population density of falcon using Nick Fox's data with those for the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) in Britain. They conclude that the "grassland" falcon maybe as common as it ever was in New Zealand and is not greatly reduced in numbers as some authors have previously stated.

The harrier (*Circus approximans*) text is also good, so far as it goes. The authors choose to use the name Australasian marsh harrier. It is another example of northern hemisphere authors trying to dictate common names for our birds. The current New Zealand checklist (Turbott 1990) uses the name Australasian harrier but Holdaway *et al.* (2001) could find no evi-

dence that *Circus approximans* was present in New Zealand before Polynesian settlement. Using this reasoning it could be argued that this species should be called Australian harrier. However, the unique Australian harrier is the spotted harrier (*Circus assimilis*). I would argue, therefore, for "swamp harrier", which is unique, it is the name preferred in Australia, and it is evocative. After all, the species is not even "ours" to name any more, and certainly it is out of place for a name to be pressed on it from afar. The harrier text has a few little hiccups as well; for example, the authors imply that the Kermadecs are a long way to the south of New Zealand.

The text acknowledges the presence of the Australian kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*) in New Zealand, but was probably written before our recent spate of black kites (*Milvus migrans*). Luckily, this volume accidentally (or perhaps deliberately) misses out the controversial black falcon (*Falco subniger*) records.

If you are interested in birding only in New Zealand, I could not recommend this book. After all, the raptors recorded in New Zealand take up only 7

pages! This is a book for birders who intend to travel, and for that task the book excels. Despite the flaws, most of which result from the compromises necessary to fit the contents into a single volume, I would thoroughly recommend it. My biggest problem is that I only borrowed this book to do the review — now I have to buy it! And at £49 it is not cheap (especially after the conversion to \$NZ).

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Holdaway, R.N.; Worthy, T.H.; Tennyson, A.J.D. 2001. A working list of breeding bird species of the New Zealand region at first human contact. *New Zealand journal of zoology* 28: 119-187.
- Sibley, C.G.; Ahlquist, J.E. 1990. *Phylogeny and classification of birds*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Sibley, C.G.; Monroe, B.L. 1990. *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the World*, New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Turbott, E.G. (Convener) 1990. *Checklist of the birds of New Zealand and the Ross Dependency, Antarctica*. 3rd. ed. Auckland, Random Century and the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

R. PAUL SCOFIELD

Canterbury Museum, Rolleston Avenue, Christchurch