

## REVIEWS

*Hawks in focus: A Study of Australia's Birds of Prey*, by Jack and Lindsay Cupper. 1981. Jaclin Enterprises, Mildura, Australia. pp. 208.

This book depicts, in a series of over 300 excellent colour photographs, all of Australia's diurnal birds of prey. Most remarkable, however, is the fact that Jack and Lindsay Cupper (father and son team) have obtained these photographs in the seven years between 1974 and 1981.

Birds of prey are among the most photogenic of birds, but are perhaps also some of the most difficult to work with because of their cautious behaviour, especially near the nest site. The authors have clearly used plenty of effort, patience and skill to assemble this portfolio.

Most photographs have been taken with a 6" x 7" format and the quality shows; the use of substantial tower hides was necessary for gaining access to many of the raptor nests.

The text consists largely of accounts of their activities in pursuit of birds of prey throughout Australia. Mixed with these accounts are interesting and valuable observations of raptor behaviour seldom to be found in field guides or handbooks. Some of their important observations, for example, notes on the interbreeding of Grey and Brown Goshawks (*Accipiter novaehollandiae* X *A. fasciatus*), are presented in separate chapters — fully illustrated, of course.

Each of the 24 species is covered well, and at the end of each species chapter are summaries dealing with alternative names, dimensions, distribution (with map), voice, prey, and details of nests and eggs.

John Fennel

*Aves Brasileiras*, by Johan Dalgas Frisch. 1981. Vol. I, 351 pp. with an addendum *Birds of Brazil, Identification Guide in the English Language*, 15 pp. Dalgas-Ecoltec-Ecologia Tecnica e Comercio Ltda, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Hearing the word "Brazil" any young bird lover or naturalist will turn his mind to this amazing country, which makes up more than half of the South American continent, and even more so to the Amazon valley and its unique vegetation and fantastic animal life. Johan Dalgas Frisch's book provides an adequate picture of the avifauna of Brazil.

Before I briefly discuss the book, its origin may be of some interest. Svend Frisch, Johan's father, a Danish-born engineer, spent a large part of his life drawing Brazilian birds. Early in this work Johan was hunting birds with his slingshot. Soon Svend persuaded his son to collect only birds that his father could use for his ambitious project of drawing all of Brazil's more than 2000 species. It wasn't

long before the boy became an observer and student of birds, eventually taking over his father's work and publishing it in the present form.

The death of Svend Frisch in 1969 prevented the illustration of species such as humming birds and terns, which are not included in Vol. I. Volume II will deal with various aspects of ornithology, such as migration patterns, bird feeding habits, the adaptation of Brazilian birds to European agriculture, and their ecology. At this stage Johan Dalgas Frisch is the premier ornithologist and conservationist of Brazil.

The *Aves Brasileiras* begins with a preface by Amador Aguiar, President of the Association for the Preservation of Nature. This is followed by an identification guide based on the classic work of R. M. de Schauensee (1966). The vernacular nomenclature presented even greater difficulties. Some of these names are in Portuguese but many others derive from Tupi, an Indian language. A further part of the text is devoted to the distribution of the various bird species, showing where each species is found in Brazil proper or on the boundaries of the neighbouring countries. Another chapter is devoted to the characteristics of the various bird groups.

Very important is the arrangement of the beautiful bird illustrations in colour by Svend Frisch. We find the bird illustrations on one page and on the page opposite the scientific and vernacular names and also their general Brazilian distribution.

The final chapter of this handsome book is devoted to field ornithology: choosing binoculars and their use in the field, bird photography and recording bird songs. An index of Portuguese vernacular bird names makes finding a particular bird species and its illustration easy.

The *Addendum* in English is important as it allows the study of *Aves Brasileiras* to those who have no knowledge of the Portuguese language.

Kazimierz Wodzicki

*The Phylogeny and Relationships of the Ratite Birds as Indicated by DNA-DNA Hybridization* by Charles G. Sibley and Jon E. Ahlquist. In: *Evolution Today*, G. G. E. Scudder & J. L. Reveal (eds). Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Systematic and Evolutionary Biology, pp. 301-335. 1981.

This paper begins with a useful general introduction, which reviews the various ideas that have been held, over the last century or so, on the relationships of the ratites — beginning with Huxley (1867), who believed that the family was monophyletic in origin and then Furbringer (1886) who considered it to be diphyletic. The ensuing controversy, which began by using comparative morphology, especially of the palate, has continued to the present day, using such disciplines as behaviour, genetics and biochemistry on the way.