

REVIEWS

Tasmanian bird atlas, by David Thomas. Fauna of Tasmania Handbook No. 2, University of Tasmania. 1979. Aust. \$4.50 (plus postage A\$1.10).

Anyone contemplating a 'birding' trip to Tasmania would find this book a useful companion to Slater's field guide. All species recorded from more than ten 10 000 m grid squares plus another of very restricted distribution but known to be regularly breeding are shown on individual maps, 138 in all. A very useful feature is a pair of removable transparent overlay maps of vegetation zones and rainfall zones. The introduction includes a section describing the various vegetation zones. Each map includes an inset showing the distribution for the whole of Australia, and the caption includes a coded key to status, habitat, food and foraging method(s). The book is available from 'Fauna of Tasmania' Office, University of Tasmania, Box 252C, G.P.O., Hobart, Tasmania, Australia 7001.

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An annotated checklist of the birds of South Australia, by S. A. Parker, H. J. Eckert, G. B. Ragless, J. B. Cox & N. C. H. Reid. Published by the South Australian Ornithological Association. 1979. Aust. \$3.50 (plus postage).

The checklists published separately for each Australian State are a valuable complement to that for Australia, apart from the fact that the Passerine volume of the latter has not yet been published. The minor disadvantages of differing treatments so far as taxonomy and nomenclature are concerned are outweighed by the more detailed treatment of status and distribution. The example under review is Part I of a new list, and covers Emus to Spoonbills, taking some 30 pages. A further 18 pages provide four maps, an excellent gazetteer and an index. The authors claim that the accounts of distribution have minimised tacit assumptions and stick as closely as possible to the known facts, a commendable idea which should encourage observers to fill in the gaps where possible. The only taxonomic changes likely to raise New Zealand eyebrows to any extent concern the prions. The forms *desolata*, *salvini* and *vittata* are treated as conspecific, as are *turtur* and *crassirostris*. It is no part of a reviewer's task to argue the merits of such debatable innovations, but I question the wisdom of including them in a checklist in advance of their publication. The taxonomic treatment in a checklist should reflect what is at least widely, if not universally, accepted. I look forward with relish to the wordy warfare that is bound to ensue from this one. The inclusion of *Egretta* in *Ardea*, on the other hand, seems to have much to recommend it. On the whole, this is an excellent checklist and I look forward to seeing subsequent volumes.

It is obtainable from the South Australian Ornithological Association, c/o South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia 5000, Australia.

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