

if some indication as to the location of appropriate photographs was added to the subtitles.

These are very minor faults and detract very little from the final product.

This book is an excellent photographic guide to our mainland birds and will provide a lot of pleasure and interest for the mere bird lover and ornithologist alike.

T. C. Dennison

The contributions of Cook's Third Voyage to the ornithology of the Hawaiian Islands, by David G. Medway. 1981. Pacific Science 35 (2): 105-173. Copy in OSNZ library.

This paper is an important contribution to the history of Hawaiian ornithology. Cook's brief visits in 1778 and 1779 provided the first European contact with the birds of the Hawaiian Islands. First descriptions of 11 species or subspecies were based on specimens collected, and 6-7 types still survive in British and European museums.

This is the first detailed account dealing specifically with ornithological observations made during the visits, including relevant journal accounts, the bird specimens obtained, and the descriptions later based on those specimens. The history and fate of the various specimens are traced and discussed in scholarly detail; original descriptions are reproduced in full, together with English translation if necessary, and there are eight black-and-white plates and one colour plate of first paintings.

B. D. Heather

Finding birds around the world, by P. Alden and J. Gooders. 1981. Andre Deutsch. 683 pp. NZ\$31.50.

This is clearly an American book written in American for the American tick collector. Just under half its pages are devoted to the American continent and about a third of the remaining localities discussed are large towns or capital cities: rarely centres from which an experienced birdwatcher would plan his excursions!

This sort of book is dangerous in that it is bound to increase the disturbance of bird habitats and, in easily accessible places, it can lead to their complete despoilment. Conversely, in countries such as our own, well away from centres of large populations of birdwatchers, making the whereabouts of good localities known is acceptable and may even do good in arousing public awareness. Roger Peterson, in the foreword to this book, illustrates where this has happened, even in the United States.

The book comprises simply an introduction, which is partly explanatory and partly advice to the novice traveller-cum-birdwatcher; 111 chapters, each discussing one area; and a bibliography and indexes. Chapter 111 deals with New Zealand and is the obvious place to start. Much as I endorse the complimentary sentiments expressed about our country, I cannot imagine anyone residing outside the Antarctic ice cap thinking that New Zealand provides "excellent birding," least of all those to whom this book would most appeal: one needs to work hard at that sport here. Apart from mentioning some of the more obvious

places, namely Miranda, Little Barrier and Kapiti Islands, and Tairoa Head, the rest of this 1½ page chapter is so superficial as to be almost useless, as is the scruffy sketch-map it includes. These comments could equally apply to most chapters on areas remote from North America.

The language, in common with much American writing, I find confusing. New Zealanders may well wonder exactly what species are meant by the Honeyeater, Red Knot, Red-breasted Plover, Pied Robin, New Zealand Grebe, or Boulder Wren and so will forgive the Poms' annoyance at their taking liberties with the terms *dotterel* and *shag*. A lovely piece of pseudo-scientific gobbledy-gook is the twice-mentioned "pelagic boat trip" which we are told is available here. One wonders what sort of boat trip the authors think we normally take? (Flying boats, perhaps, or some sort of submarine crawling about the sea bed.)

As for the rest of the world, I can only provide a miscellany of comments on the areas I know personally. The British Isles are dismissed in two chapters, one on the Shetlands (fair enough) and one on London. The latter actually covers an area of some 2000 square miles, and we are expected to believe that it is feasible to work the north Norfolk coast from London, a minimum of 3 hours' drive away on overcrowded English roads! Happily, all the localities mentioned are either well-controlled reserves or so crowded that an extra bus load or two would pass unnoticed, and the localities for rare breeding raptors, rare woodland and highland birds, and the vast wader habitats have all been omitted. Fortunately, owing to insufficient space for a more thorough treatment, similar remarks could be made about all the European countries dealt with, especially those of the far north, and the Near East. The visitor to Turkey, for example, is told only about Istanbul and has to find out for himself about the magnificent wetlands, the breeding grounds of vultures, flamingos, and ibises, and about rare mountain species. Other wetlands, alas, have not fared so well. The sections on the Neusiedler See and the Rhone and Guadalquivir deltas are accurate, and acceptable for the main areas where access is controlled by the authorities or by the terrain, but too much has been made of smaller localities nearby which are easily accessible and are much more sensitive to disturbance. Regarding the Coto Donana, the authors tell us a "monstrous new seaside resort" has sprung up along part of the coast and that now one may visit the reserve only under escort, in National Park Landrovers, and to selected habitats. Necessary, no doubt, but hardly consistent with the idea of what Guy Mountfort described in 1958 as "this wild paradise [where] half the bird species of Europe have been seen" and about which he explains "It is the express wish of the owners that it should be preserved as a sanctuary in the strict sense of the word and that it should not suffer the inevitable disturbance which occurs in so many nature reserves to which visitors are given access." Yet the authors are presumably quite happy to reconcile their profit motive with their part (by directing large numbers of the less informed type of visitor to these places) in aggravating this very sort of disturbance problem.

All the areas I have mentioned so far are well known, and so their bird lists are predictably accurate and complete. Yet 35-40%

of the bird names used are not the common names used by English speakers. However, if one cannot guess from the context, it is possible, by using both of the indexes, to discover, for example, that "Thick-billed Murre" is American for Brunnich's Guillemot; but what can the European with little English make of it when he is asked about "Gallinules," meaning Moorhens, and "Swamphens," meaning what are colloquially known as Gallinules? More silly, perhaps, is the liberal sprinkling of totally unnecessary adjectives added to normal vernacular names. For example, only the European Robin is listed for England, when the European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula rubecula*) in fact occurs only as a migrant, and the resident Robin is the subspecies *E. r. melophilus*. Sometimes they get things right, however: Augur Buzzard is given for East Africa and Jackal Buzzard for South Africa, the correct names for the two races of one species; which just leaves one wondering when (if ever) they mean to imply subspecies, and when not.

Moving on to more exotic places, the Gambia and Senegal are quite well known, and this chapter seems to serve its intended readers well. The bird list is not quite as up to date as the so-called check-list reviewed in Part 2 of last year's *Notornis* but is otherwise more correct, to my mind. The Nairobi chapter really deals with the whole of Kenya, but at least its comments are limited to the game parks and one or two better-known tourist spots, and the information is reliable. I cannot comment on the bird list as it combines birds from 14 large areas and numbers over 600 species, which looks about right. Kakamega forest is unique and deserves the separate treatment it gets. Normally I would not be happy about directing swarms of people there, but as it is being so quickly destroyed, it is one case where good could come from publicity. Its value can be judged from its list of 310 species, to which I could add at least another dozen. The Mombasa chapter unrealistically covers most of the accessible coast. I prefer the treatment here; the reader is simply pointed in the general direction of good localities, given a rough idea of what to expect and left to fend for himself; and, I am sure, will derive more real satisfaction from doing so. It is a pity the coast to the south of Mombasa is not mentioned as the forests here are also interesting, having their own bird specialities, and are in desperate need of the better protection that might come from more recognition. The three chapters on South Africa are, as far as I can tell, and as far as they go, correct, useful, and generally good value.

Except for Kakamega, I have not gone through any of the African bird lists thoroughly, the reason being that so many of the names have been changed that the task of working them out becomes formidable. One has to look up each mystery name in the alphabetic index, which refers in turn to up to three pages in the taxonomic index, and then wade through those pages until the scientific name is found. Then, if one is lucky, this name agrees with that in one of the standard works on African birds, from which a common name which makes some sense can be found. In fact, it would have been simpler if scientific names had been used throughout. What any African, black, white, or khaki, would make of "African Baza," for example, I cannot imagine. The term is not used in any standard work on African birds, or birds of prey. It is not Kiswaheli, Afrikaans,

or any other African language. Baza is, apparently, an alternative Australian name for Cuckoo-falcon!

The bibliography is perhaps the most useful part of this book, although one cannot determine whether a quoted source is in print or not. Had the authors devoted their efforts to compiling a complete world-wide bibliography of this sort for the non-specialist birdwatcher, a real service would have been done to the prospective ornithological traveller and less potential harm to the birds they seek.

To sum up then, although books of this kind are likely to injure many of the areas they discuss and the birds they contain, this book, due to the inevitably inadequate treatment of so wide an area, is likely to do less harm than might be feared. The most potentially damaging information is given about the well-known parts of North America and Europe, where one hopes the growing conservation lobby may have some control over quasi-ornithological excesses. Further afield, the information is less specific and, one hopes, likely to result in a more individual approach, to the benefit of the individual, the birds, and our knowledge of them. The book is of limited use to non-North Americans owing to the number of strange common names used. (I hope these names are indeed understood in North America and that the authors have not had the arrogance to invent their own nomenclature.) Europeans in North America could make sense of the bird lists, as they have many bird species in common and so much other literature is available. But elsewhere most readers will find few familiar birds and will have very real difficulty in reconciling bird names in this book with those in the books they will need for identification. The bird lists seem to be complete for well-documented areas and less so as information becomes more difficult to acquire. The maps vary from adequate to useless and maintain a consistently scruffy schoolboy's-geography-exercise-book standard throughout (even the scales are not straight, ruled lines); they do nothing for the appearance of the book. The indexes do little to improve the nomenclature problems. The bibliography is the most useful part.

J. E. Squire

Birds of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, by Dick Watling, illustrated by Chloe Talbot-Kelly. 1982. Millwood Press, Wellington. 176 pp; 15 colour plates; many other illustrations in colour and monochrome; distribution maps; 128 species fully documented.

It is difficult to decide whether this rather handsome publication was intended as a regional field guide or a 'coffee-table' reference. Personally, and also because of the increasing numbers of naturalists visiting the area, I would have preferred a more conventional pocket-sized field guide. Nevertheless it is a valuable addition to the Pacific literature.

The illustrations are of variable quality, I suspect partly because of the problem of relating painting from museum skins and specimens to the impression one gets in the field of the living bird; and this is often reflected in a lack of 'jizz.' While the (mainly) black and white illustrations of the seabirds, for example, show good recognition features, some of the waders are barely recognisable, especially the Banded Dotterel; also, the legs of the larger waders are too short relative to body size.