

REVIEW

The complete birds of the world by M. Walters. 1980. A. H. & A. W. Reed. 340 p. \$NZ35.00. *A complete checklist of the birds of the world* by R. Howard & A. Moore. 1980. 701 p. Oxford University Press. \$NZ62.25.

These two books are the latest in a small spate of one-volume world bird lists to have appeared in recent years.

The information given in each is rather different. Walters includes brief descriptions of all the families, lists the scientific and one vernacular name for each species, including extinct ones, and attempts to give information on habitat, distribution, type of nest, clutch size, incubation and nestling periods, even food. Subspecies are not covered. He has a 3-page bibliography (neither the OSNZ nor RAOU checklists feature here) with a few general references scattered through the text. There are indexes to scientific and English family names.

Howard & Moore devote 39 pages to key references for each family (both OSNZ and RAOU checklists included) and the rest of their book is, as titled, a checklist giving the scientific and one vernacular name for each species and the scientific names of the most generally accepted subspecies, together with a maximum of five words on distribution. There is a 58-page index to the scientific names of species.

I examined entries for penguins and petrels in both works. Walters' nomenclature and attempts to give information are very poor and patchy and often ignore work available 20 years ago, let alone up to 1977 when the MS was completed. Howard & Moore are usually more up-to-date, although their references virtually cease after 1975.

Not surprisingly, in attempting to cover some 8500 species, both works have plenty of errors. Walters gets the two giant petrels confused, *Pterodroma axillaris* is omitted, and his information on distribution is often faulty. For instance he gives that for the Wandering Albatross as 'Southern Ocean 30°-60°S,' for the Royal Albatross 'Southern Oceans b. Auckland Islands,' yet lists four breeding places for the Yellow-nosed Albatross. Some references in Howard & Moore are inaccurately cited and distributions are also often incomplete. They too list no New Zealand localities for the Wandering Albatross, and The Snares are stated to be where both the Snares Island Penguin (*Eudyptes robustus*) and a subspecies of the Victoria Penguin, *E. pachyrhynchus atratus*, occur! And what do you think of Howard & Moore's name for our Grey Warbler — 'The New Zealand Grey Flyeater'?

Of the two books, that of Howard & Moore seems likely to be the more useful, particularly as it has a good index and so the entry for any species is readily found — quite difficult with Walters. But few readers will think it worth \$62.

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