

REVIEWS

Edited by J.M. PENHALLURICK

A Symposium on African Predatory Birds, Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, 29 August - 1 September 1977. Pretoria: Northern Transvaal Ornithological Society, n.d. Pp 118, many b & w. photos, figs and tables. £10.75/R10.

The 1977 Pretoria symposium brought together most of the leading experts on the birds of prey of southern Africa. Although papers were presented on gulls, hornbills, cormorants and albatrosses, and by some overseas workers, the eleven major contributions reprinted in full dealt with African raptors.

The late Leslie Brown assessed the current knowledge on African birds of prey. He considered around thirty per cent of resident diurnal species to be well-known, but only fifteen per cent of migrant species and owls. He gave a pat on the back to southern African researchers on raptors, many of whom are amateurs with little financial support. Some have many keen helpers: Valerie Brown acknowledges no fewer than eighty-four people who assisted with her study of the Black Eagle in the Matopos.

Other major papers deal with a comparison of two terrestrial predators (Secretarybirds and ground hornbills); the biology of Long-crested Eagles and Mackinder's Eagle Owl in Zimbabwe; observations on two species of kestrel (Dickinson's in Zambia and the Greater in South Africa); and a comparison of four species of owls in the Transvaal. In addition, there is a review of the status of raptors in the Eastern Cape; a description of an operation to restore a malformed leg; and a most useful and detailed account of which measurements should be taken from live or freshly-killed raptors.

The papers are legibly reproduced by lithography directly from typed pages, and include nine pages of black and white photographs. I regret that other papers were not reproduced in full. Some were not even abstracted. It would, however, have been fascinating to hear more of the Bat Hawk in Zambia, which can catch and eat its daily food intake of seven bats in just eighteen minutes.

As some of the information contained in these proceedings is not, to my knowledge, available elsewhere, they make useful reading for anyone interested in raptor research and conservation. Copies are obtainable from the Northern Transvaal Ornithological Society, P.O. Box 4158, Pretoria for R10.

Michael Brooker

The Birds of Borneo by Bertram E. Smythies, 3rd edn revised by the Earl of Cranbrook, 1981. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Nature Society (Box 750, Kuala Lumpur) & Sabah Society (Box 547, Kota Kinabalu). Pp xiv + 473, col. pl 47, b. & w. pl 4, map 1. 160 × 240 mm. Malaysian \$40.

The great island of Borneo straddles the equator in a key position between the South-East Asian region and the interchange zone ('Wallacea') with the Australasian region. It had its own bird book as early as 1874 with the pioneer work (Ann. Mus. Civ. Genova, vol. 5) of Count Salvadori, a name familiar to students of New Guinea ornithology. Smythies went to Borneo just after the war in a resurgence of activity led by Tom

Harrison of the Sarawak Museum and was soon asked to produce a book along the lines of his *The Birds of Burma* (2nd edn, 1953). The first edition appeared in 1960, followed by the second in 1968. Now regarded as classics, both have long been out of print and in great demand. The book is available again, thanks to a joint venture by two Malaysian societies, supported by the editorial resources of the Earl of Cranbrook (formerly Lord Medway, who co-authored with D.R. Wells *The Birds of the Malay Peninsula*, vol. 5, see *Emu* 78:46).

With the approval of Mr Smythies, a "somewhat radical revision of the text" has been made and preliminary chapters plus 49 plates of photographs have been deleted. Also deleted is the appendix on the history of Bornean ornithology. The other important changes involve: the revision of English and scientific names to agree with *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia* (cf. *Emu* 77:92); amendments and/or footnotes to the reprinted 1968 text and the addition of several species, including the rare Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*; and a supplementary bibliography. The guide to place names and the list of Malay and Iban names have been retained. The original dustjacket has been reproduced on the cover boards of this solidly bound volume. For details of early records one still needs to refer to Smythies' annotated checklist (1957, *Sarawak Mus. J.* 7(24): 523-818, reviewed by Banks, 1961, *Bull. Raffles Mus.* 26: 197-203). The quality of reproduction of the colour plates in this edition is not as good as that in the first edition; however, for the number of plates involved, and their value for identification, the differences are quite negligible.

An interesting change is the elevation to species level of the montane form of the Serpent Eagle as *Spilornis kinabaluensis* (p 54). Probably similar changes will have to be made with other forms of this complex. Cranbrook has referred to S.A. Parker's study of the *Chrysococcyx 'malayanus'* group (p. 158) (1981, *Zool. Verh. Leiden*, no. 187:1-56) wherein it is shown that Borneo is inhabited by two sympatric species, *C. minutillus* and *C. russatus* (the name '*malayanus*' must be replaced by Parker's *C. minutillus peninsularis*). This is an aspect of the group not discussed by Ford in his study of their hybridization in Australia (1982, *Emu* 81: 209-222). One item I have noted is that in the hornbill monograph of Sanft (1960, *Das Tierreich* 76: 1-174), two new subspecies from Borneo are described, *Anthracoceros malayanus deminutus* (p 85) and *Rhyticeros undulatus aequabilis* (p. 115); but these are mentioned in neither the second nor the third editions (nor in the *Zoological Record*). Their current status requires further investigation.

Cranbrook has correctly reverted to the original spelling for the name of the Blue-banded Pitta, *Pitta arcuata* Gould 1871, not *P. arcuata* of the earlier editions, following Salvadori's emendation, supra p 241. (Mayr, in Peters vol. 8, used *arcuata* as it has been in universal usage for over 100 years). I have discussed the case with both Mayr and Cranbrook and have changed from supporting stability of usage for such an emendation to supporting the reestablishment of Gould's name. My research on other nomenclatural problems supports the latter approach here, although some might frown on upsetting stability unnecessarily; but with recent changes to the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, this is by no means an isolated case. I found only one major typographical error in the volume under review; on page 300, the Magpie Robin *Cop-*

sychus saularis is listed as the previous species, the Rufous-tailed Shama *C. pyropyga*.

The above remarks should not detract from this excellent book, which fills a very important gap in bird literature. It is the most comprehensive work available on any part of South-East Asia and, as such, deserves a place in ornithological libraries as an introduction to a remarkable and fascinating bird fauna.

Murray D. Bruce

World Inventory of Avian Skeletal Specimens, 1982 by D. Scott Wood, Richard L. Zusi, and Marion Anne Jenkinson.

Published by the American Ornithologists' Union and The Oklahoma Biological Survey. Cost of each inventory = \$25.00, including surface mail postage. For air mail, add \$5.00 (U.S.), \$5.50 (Canada, Alaska, Hawaii), \$9.00 (Mexico, Central America), \$15.50 (Europe, South America), \$22.00 (Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Africa). Make check or money order, in American dollars, payable to University of Oklahoma. Order from: Dr. Gary D. Schnell, Oklahoma Biological Survey, Sutton Hall, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019, U.S.A.

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