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**AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS
OF THE ORIENTAL REGION**

**by Tim Inskipp, Nigel Lindsey and William
Duckworth**

*1996. Oriental Bird Club, Bedfordshire, Pp. 294, 165 x
245 mm, soft cover, price unknown.*

This publication covers the region chosen by the Oriental Bird Club as its area of interest. This is based to a large degree on the zoogeographical Indomalayan region, with some flexibility concerning political boundaries. Notwithstanding the somewhat arbitrary nature of selection of the area deemed to be Oriental, any such decision to subdivide or group biogeographical regions may be maligned for a number of reasons. Hence, it is perhaps best simply to accept this publication's area of coverage, particularly as the Oriental Bird Club has been in existence since 1985. At the very least this book explains the decision to exclude Japan, North and South Korea, eastern Russia, and China north of the Chang Jiang river from its consideration.

The authors have set out to review the taxonomic data of the 2586 species recorded within the region, not

simply provide a checklist of names. I was surprised at the degree to which they conducted their task; certainly 'annotated' does not do justice to their efforts in the pursuit of stability in both taxonomy and nomenclature. The book begins with a list of contents and a map of the Oriental Bird Club Region. Both are useful, especially the contents should the reader be unfamiliar with the taxonomic reordering of Sibley & Monroe (1990). The introduction includes the aims, geographical coverage, methods, and, most importantly, explanations of the species concepts, taxonomic sequence and choice of English names used in the checklist. The criteria for the selection of a name and the use of hyphens and possessive apostrophes are clearly defined.

Immediately preceding the main body of the text, the systematic list, is an explanation of the symbols used, the guidelines for the alternative taxonomic limits for each species, and a reference list of the 'coded' authors, that is, the authors identified by one or two letter codes within the text. The systematic list itself is an exhaustive effort with exemplary attention to detail. Given the format chosen, the use of symbols to convey information is a necessary evil and should prove a difficulty only for the most cursory of readers. I am not con-

vinced, however, that the most appropriate, and easily recognised, choices for the symbols themselves have been made. At the very least the symbols designating status should have been printed more boldly.

While the authors have gone about their task with a degree of pedantry of which I approve, I cannot help but consider that their aims would have been better served through the production of two books: a checklist and a separate taxonomic review. Should I wish to use the book simply as a 'tickers' list, (and they have provided suitable, albeit small and poorly positioned, boxes), I would find much of the information superfluous and the use of symbols rather aggravating. Similarly, as a taxonomic review, less abbreviation within a more amenable format would be preferable. Nonetheless, it is an admirable work within its self-imposed constraints. To justify its purchase, however, I would consider it necessary to either reside in the region or its close proximity, to be a very frequent visitor, or be undertaking some study of an avifauna within the region.

Terry Reis
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Publications recently received

Edited by D. Jones

FAIRY-WRENS AND GRASSWRENS*

By Ian Rowley and Eleanor Russell

1997. Oxford University Press, Oxford. Pp 274, 255 x 198 mm. Colour plates 8, many line drawings, figures and maps. \$85.00 Hardback.

ZOOLOGICAL CATALOGUE OF AUSTRALIA 37.2 AVES (COLUMBIDAE TO CORACIIDAE)*

Edited by R. Schodde and I.J. Mason

1997. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne. Pp 440, 260 x 184 mm, Many line drawings. \$90.00 Hardback.

AVIAN EGGSHELLS: AN ATLAS OF SCANNING ELECTRON MICROGRAPHS*

By Konstantin E. Mikhailov

1997. British Ornithologist's Club, Tring. Pp 88, 305 x 215 mm. b&w photographic plates 16, 36 figures. £39.00 Hardback inc. p&p.

A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF WALLACIA *

By Brian J. Coates and K. David Bishop

1997. Dove Publications, Alderley. Pp 536, 228 x 150 mm. Colour plates 64, many line drawings, figures and maps. \$65.00 Hardback.

THE BEHAVIOUR, POPULATION BIOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF THE PETRELS *

By John Warham

1996. Academic Press, London. Pp 613, 251 x 175 mm. Many line drawings, figures and maps. £60.00 Hardback inc. p&p.

CURRENT ORNITHOLOGY VOL. 13*

Edited by Val Nolan and Ellen D. Ketterson

1996. Plenum Press, New York. Pp 359, 235 x 157 mm. Many line drawings and figures.

• To be reviewed in *Emu*