

LITERATURE

Edited by A. R. McEVEY

BOOKS

Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, together with those of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Ceylon by Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley, 1970. Sponsored by Bombay nat. Hist. Soc. Bomb. Lond. NY: OUP. Vol. 4, Frogmouths to Pittas. Pp xiii + 265, col. pll (paintings) 11, line drawings, maps, 253 × 180 mm. \$A21.

Volumes 1-3 have already been reviewed in these columns. Volume 4 covers the orders Caprimulgiformes, Apodiformes, Trogoniformes, Coraciiformes and Piciformes and the passerine families Eurylaimidae and Pittidae, producing a total of fifteen families of which eight (Hemiprocnidae, Trogonidae, Upupidae, Bucconidae, Capitonidae, Indicatoridae, Picidae, Eurylaimidae) have no representatives in Australia.

The family Podargidae is represented in the Indian sub-region by two species of the genus *Batrachostomus*. These are birds similar to the Australasian frogmouths *Podargus* in habits and build but differing at a glance by their conspicuous ear tufts.

In the Caprimulgidae only the genera *Caprimulgus* (6 spp) and *Eurostopodus* (1 sp) occur in the subregion, as in Australia; Africa and the Americas are the areas richest in genera and species of this family. Ali and Ripley rightly state that the eggs of *Caprimulgus indicus hazarae* are quite different from those of the two other Indian races of *C. indicus*, the Jungle Nightjar. Investigations by Captain C. R. S. Pitman and his colleagues into African species of *Caprimulgus* have suggested that, where the eggs of supposedly conspecific forms differ markedly, it may be an indication that the forms represent more than one species. *Hazarae* should be further studied with this in mind.

Ali and Ripley regard the tree swifts *Hemiproctes* as a subfamily of the Apodidae. R. K. Brooke, however (1970, *Durban Mus. Novit.* 9: 13-24), considers *Hemiproctes* as constituting a separate subfamily, Hemiproctidae. Elsewhere, Brooke (1969, *Bull. Br. Orn. Club* 89: 168-9) argues for the recognition of the Crested Tree-swift *H. coronata* as a species and not, as Ali and Ripley have it, as a race of *H. longipennis*. Other changes advocated by Brooke (1970, *op. cit.*) affecting the nomenclature used by Ali and Ripley are the separation of *Hirundapus* (*caudacuta*, *gigantea*) and *Zoonavena* (*sylvatica*) from *Chaetura*. These changes remove *Chaetura* from both Indian and Australian lists.

The Indian subregion possesses five species of swiftlets, *Collocalia*, compared with Australia's three. With our knowledge of the systematics of *Collocalia* still far from complete, there may be surprises in store even for Australia. For instance, Salomonsen (1963, *Vidensk. Meddr. dansk naturh. Foren.* 125: 509-512) described a new race of *C. whiteheadi nudatarsus*, from New Guinea. Somadikarta (1967, *Proc. U.S. natn. Mus.* 124: 1-8) considered *nudatarsus* to be a separate species. As *C. nudatarsus* has been taken on the south-eastern coast of New Guinea, it may turn up in Queensland with visiting flocks of *C. esculenta* and *vanikorensis*.

Twelve species of kingfisher occur in the Indian sub-region, of which the widespread White-collared or Mangrove Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris* is found also in

Australia, where, as in India, it frequents usually sea-coasts, mangroves and tidal creeks. The huge-billed and largely carnivorous Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*, with its raucous shrieking laugh, seems to be India's parallel to the Laughing Kookaburra.

Australia has only one species of bee-eater, *Merops ornatus*, compared with India's six. C. H. Fry (1968, *Ibis* 111: 557-592) considers *M. ornatus* to belong to the same species-group as *M. superciliosus* and *M. philippinus*, the last-named species occupying the greater part of the Indian subregion.

Of India's two rollers one, the Broad-billed Roller or Dollarbird, *Eurystomus orientalis*, occurs also in Australia. A minor race of this species, *E. o. irisi* of Ceylon, is believed by Ali and Ripley to be nearly extinct, the last record being of a breeding pair 'shot by an unspeakable museum collector' in 1950.

The hoopoes, hornbills, barbets and woodpeckers that throng India fail to reach Australian shores, though one hornbill, *Rhyticeros plicatus*, occurs in Melanesia. Absent from Australia too are the mysterious and little-known honeyguides. Indicatoridae, the last species of which to be described was the tiny *Indicator pumilio* Chapin, 1958. The holotype was captured in a butterfly net as it emerged from a beehive.

Volume 4 ends with the suboscine families Eurylaimidae (broadbills, 2 spp) and Pittidae (pittas or jewel-thrushes, 5 spp), the first absent from Australia, the second represented by four species.

A prerequisite to writing the taxonomic sections of the entire work was the evaluation and disposal in synonymy of subspecies proposed by the imaginative Walter Koetz, Indian ornithology's counterpart of Gregory Mathews.

To many readers the localities mentioned in the text will have little or no meaning, and one may be faced with having to wait until the appearance of Volume 10 for a map or gazetteer. A point I find irksome is the use of English names for subspecies. This practice has the psychological effect of investing subspecies with a distinction they may not otherwise possess, and also leads to such curious cases as that of the trogon *Harpactes fasciatus*: if the race *H. f. legerli* is the Central Indian Trogon, and *H. f. malabaricus* the Malabar Trogon, what then is the vernacular for plain *Harpactes fasciatus*? Fortunately this problem arises in Australian nomenclature only when forms are reduced in status from species to subspecies, e.g. *Chrysococcyx lucidus lucidus* and *C. l. plagosus*.

Textual errors appear to be absent, as one has come to expect of this work. A small point of nomenclature, however, needs to be reviewed. In 1840 T. Horsfield published a catalogue written by I. McClelland, which Horsfield had edited and revised. Ever since, the names proposed in this catalogue have been attributed to either Horsfield or McClelland. Miss R. L. M. Warren (1966, *Type-Specimens of Birds in the British Museum (Natural History)*, 1: vii) regards the correct citation as 'McClelland in Horsfield'. Such names in Volume 4 attributed solely to Horsfield are *Hirundo brevirostris* (in *Collocalia*), *Coracias affinis* and *Picus grantia* (in *Gecinulus*).

S.A.P.

Walkabouts and Birds by Hugh R. Officer, n.d. Melbourne. Pp 157, maps 11, 215 × 135 mm. \$A3.25.

One of the joys which an interest in ornithology brings for many people is that of travel to strange and remote places in search of birds. Records of such travels have their own niche in ornithological literature, although few have been published in Australia. Brigadier Officer's expeditions in the less visited parts of Australia have given great pleasure to him and to his various com-

panions. This book of their journeyings and some of their bird observations are recorded for readers of the future. It also reflects opportunity and travel available to a wandering observer in the 1960s and with its biographical snippets may possess some historical significance as time passes. The maps by Alex Stirling are clear and helpful, although it is unfortunate that it was not possible to show all places mentioned in the text.

R.A.B.

AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGY

A continuing and selected catalogue of papers

A complete list of the titles and authors of ornithological papers as found in the tables of contents of the journals listed below will be published here as a continuing catalogue. Notices and other such items will be excluded. The coverage will date from January 1972.

Reference to Australasian ornithology in other journals will be included as opportunity permits. It is believed that the value of the scheme, as a source of reference, will lie in the completeness of its coverage of titles in a selection of representative publications limited to the Australasian Region, in contrast to the arbitrary and incomplete medley resulting from the broader coverage attempted in the past. Readers are invited to express their opinions on the system during a trial period.

Publications covered: The Tasmanian Naturalist; The Australian Bird Watcher; The South Australian Ornithologist; The Western Australian Naturalist; The Sunbird; Birds; The Australian Bird Bander; The Australian Zoologist and Proceedings of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales; CSIRO Wildlife Research; Canberra Bird Notes; Notornis; and New Guinea Bird Society Newsletter.

Review Ed.

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