

Book reviews

PARROTS OF THE WORLD: AN IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

By Joseph M. Forshaw, illustrated by Frank Knight.
2006. Published by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 172 pp., 121 colour plates, numerous line drawings and maps. Hardback, \$US65, \$A105, ISBN 0-691-09251-6.

I have forgotten where I read that the world's parrots could not have chosen a better monographer and biographer than Joseph Forshaw. What I do recall is that the remark was in reference to Forshaw's magnificent 1973 book *Parrots of The World* co-produced with renowned wildlife artist and illustrator William T. Cooper. Some 33 years after that landmark work, Forshaw has teamed with another superb Australian wildlife artist, Frank Knight, to produce *Parrots of the World: An Identification Guide*.

The world's parrots have been the subject of a remarkable number of major reference works in recent years. Forshaw and Cooper have taken their original *Parrots of the World* to three editions and *Australian Parrots* to two editions. Tony Juniper and Mike Parr produced a monograph for Yale University Press in 1998 and Volume 4 of Lynx Edicions' astounding *Handbook of the Birds of the World* covered parrots in 1997. Volume 4 of *The Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds* covered parrots in 1999. That is just the non-avicultural literature! So one may well ask whether another book on parrots was needed. It seems that Forshaw and Knight have recognised a niche that needed filling and they have set out to do so. As a result, this latest tribute to this magnificent group of birds combines attributes of an identification guide and reference book. In the result I find little to object to and much to praise.

The Introduction briefly overviews topics we might expect in a book of this kind: systematics, physical attributes, and conservation (habitats, conflicts with agriculture, predation and disease, hunting, the international pet trade, importance of research). Concerning parrot systematics, it is unfortunate that this book was in press as exciting molecular results from several laboratories on parrot relationships were being published. I am confident that the perspectives that DNA is bringing to avian systematics will be of interest to readers of books like this. For example, four independent molecular studies, three of them formally published, have found a relationship between lorikeets and *Psittaculirostris* and *Cyclopsitta* fig-parrots and even the Budgerigar (see Christidis, L. *et al.* 1991, *Condor* **93**, 302–317; Astuti, D. *et al.* 2006, *Zoological Science* **23**, 191–198; de Kloet, R. and de Kloet, S., 2005, *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* **36**, 706–721; Wright, T. *et al.* 2005, Abstract No. 127, 123rd Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists Meeting, Santa Barbara). The root position of New Zealand *Strigops* and *Nestor* in the latter two studies as the closest relative of all other parrots is of especial interest. That finding in particular mirrors the basal position among passerine birds of the New Zealand acanthistid wrens. I do look forward to a robust picture of the molecular systematics of parrots being published by the time this book might be revised. On conservation, Forshaw stresses that all the research in the world, and he alludes to the upsurge that has taken place on parrots in the last 25 years, will be for

nought if we cannot conserve habitats. The book tries to contribute to this task.

The 139 pages of species-accounts cover physical description, other names, distribution, habitats and status, habits, calls, similar species and, innovatively, suggested localities for observing the world's parrots. Positioned in the middle of these pages, 121 magnificent colour plates by Frank Knight are on right-hand pages. These are accompanied by texts and distribution maps on facing left-hand pages. Text accounts are cross-referenced to plates but, surprisingly not *vice versa*, a minor annoyance.

The main species-accounts are succinct and useful compendia of parrot natural history and conservation. Structured and composed for field workers, their scope excludes some information to be found in Forshaw's and others' works such as egg dimensions. I suspect it is deceptively easy to underestimate the difficulty and skill, not to mention library leg work that it takes to write texts as useful as these. Texts accompanying the plates are the descriptive and taxonomic heart of the book although discussion of taxonomic and nomenclatural issues is minimal in keeping with the book's scope. Concerning the illustrations, I have long been an avid fan of Frank Knight's illustrations and here he has picked up the mantle of illustrating the world's parrots and done some beautiful work. Though incapable of drawing a stick man myself, I can appreciate that one paints a bird differently for field identification purposes than for a technical monograph. Knight's illustrations more than adequately find a middle ground between the two styles, as befits the nature of the book itself. This contrasts notably with some illustrations in recent reference books that would be out of place even in a crude field guide.

The plates begin with an un-numbered plate of extinct species. The text accompanying this first plate suggests three species with a remote possibility of still surviving; they are illustrated not here but with their relevant genera. These are the New Caledonian Lorikeet (*Charmosyna diadema*), the Paradise Parrot (*Psephotus pulcherrimus*), and the Glaucous Macaw (*Anodorhynchus glaucus*). I wonder whether such optimism for the latter two is warranted. Descriptive and identification details about geographical and age- and sex-related variation are to be found in maps, plates and text on these pages. This enables the main species-accounts to focus on natural history and locations for observations. Choice of material to be illustrated in the plates has shown great attention to detail. Good examples are the different head colour of breeding female Vasa Parrots (*Coracopsis vasa*), the partial melanism in the Papuan Lorikeet (*Charmosyna papou*) (why has intraspecific melanism cropped up in parrots apparently only in this bird?), adult and juvenal tail tips of Kakapo (*Strigops habroptilus*), and the extended nuchal ruff of the Hawk-headed Parrot (*Deroptryus accipitrinus*).

Innovative in the plates is the inclusion of dorsal and ventral in-flight views where relevant to identification. At least one geographical representative of the majority of species is so depicted. Some omissions in this adventurous goal are understandable; they even make good sense when one considers how infrequently some species might be seen either from above (e.g. some of the *Loriculus* hanging-parrots and *Pyrhura* parakeets)

or at all (e.g. the extinct Paradise Parrot). Less understandable are the omissions of in-flight depictions of some of the *Neophema* parrots such as the Orange-bellied and Rocks Parrots (*Neophema chrysogaster* and *N. petrophila* respectively), or the Gray Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*) and some *Poicephalus* parrots. Presumably, the latter two may have been omitted because they are likely unmistakable but then so too are Galahs (*Eolophus roseicapillus*), I would have thought, which get a guernsey for in-flight depiction. On the other hand, I raised an eyebrow over the inclusion at this stage of the Night Parrot (*Pezoporus occidentalis*) in flight.

A stand-out feature of the book is the work Forshaw and Knight have done in illustrating within-species geographical variation. No doubt this feature will attract many keen field observers to consider buying the book. Fine examples from the Australasian region are the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*), Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus* complex, two plates each for both Red-cheeked Parrots (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) and Eclectus Parrots (*Eclectus roratus*), Double-eyed Fig Parrot (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) and Crimson Rosella (*Platycercus elegans*) complex, although the last-named case had also been shown in the last edition of *Australian Parrots*. From elsewhere in the world, I would be remiss not to praise the illustrations of the taxa recognised in the South American parakeets so long subsumed under just two names, Painted Parakeet (*Pyrrhura picta*) and White-eared Parakeet (*P. leucotis*), and which have attracted my own attention in some recent work. The Yellow-crowned Amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*) complex is illustrated in three plates and the Philippine Hanging-Parrot (*Loriculus philippensis*) didn't miss out.

The maps are adequate. I only hope that electronic linkage of museum collections and even atlas data will soon be at the point where authors of this style of book can abandon blobs of colour or shading on maps and show distributions by specific localities.

One could not write a book like this and expect to please all when it comes to taxonomy. Joseph Forshaw has been around too long to be easily caught out here, I suspect! Although I'll mention a few issues, much detail would be tiresome and a polite phone call or email to the author would be better. Suffice it to say that I find little to take the author to task over here; where I do think some debate is warranted, the issues are sometimes truly thorny. An example is the nomenclature to apply to the eastern and western forms of the Regent Parrot (*Polytelis anthopeplus*). I am fortunate in that I can discuss these with the author over a cup of tea and that is the best place to take them up. I am less prepared to give ground on what seems the ever less tenable arrangement adopted in the book for the Australian ringneck parrots *Barnardius*. Thus the Cloncurry Parrot (*macgillivrayi*) is treated as more closely related to the Mallee Ringneck (*barnardi*) than to the Port Lincoln (*zonarius*) and Twenty-eight Parrots (*semitorquatus*). The writing has been on the wall for this one for at least 30 years since J. Ford and S. Parker's 1974 paper on south-west Queensland birds (*Emu* 74, 177–194); recent genetic data published while the book was in press make it even less tenable (*Emu* 106, 49–62). More importantly, I suggest that having so few taxonomic quibbles is a tribute to the author's scholarship and command of his subject.

What is left to be done in books on parrots? One challenge that comes to mind is illustrating for human eyes what the plumages of parrots look like in the ultraviolet spectra. I'll leave this one with Forshaw and Knight to ponder.

This is a fine, reasonably priced book. It belongs in ornithological reference libraries and anyone interested in parrots would not regret the purchase.

The world's parrots can still rest easy that their biographies are in good hands with Joseph Forshaw. What they should be worried about is that these not become obituaries. There is no room for complacency about the very survival of parrots and so much other wildlife. I am sure that Forshaw and Knight's book will enhance awareness and conservation of these magnificent birds.

Leo Joseph

Australian National Wildlife Collection, Canberra

PTILOCHRONOLOGY: FEATHER TIME AND THE BIOLOGY OF BIRDS

By Thomas C. Grubb, Jr

2006. Published by Oxford University Press, Oxford. 192 pp., 3 colour plates, 22 halftones, 47 line illustrations. Hardback, £55, \$US110, \$A185, ISBN 0-19-929550-6.

'Ptilochronology: Feather Time and the Biology of Birds' is the 15th book in the Oxford Ornithology Series from Oxford University Press. It describes the development of ptilochronology, an idea generated by the author some 20 years ago, and its evolution as a valuable research tool.

Ptilochronology, literally the study of feather time, is concerned with interpretation of feather growth rates. Feather vanes display a series of visible bars, each of which typically represents a 24-hour period of growth, analogous to the growth rings of a tree. The rate of growth affects the width of the resulting bar and reflects the availability of nutrients, with narrower width representing slower growth. Thus the width of growth bars can be used as an index of nutritional condition, and may reflect the relative fitness of an individual. The technique, therefore, has application in studies of avian ecology, evolution and conservation biology.

The book is divided into two sections, starting with the basis for the idea and its early application, and progresses through a series of chapters covering its increasing refinement and application. *Part I. Basic Ptilochronology*, comprising three chapters, focuses on conceptual issues and explains how the method works. Chapters 2 and 3 address the fundamental questions of whether reduced nutrition does in fact cause narrower growth bars and whether growth bar width reflects food intake alone or is influenced by other factors such as season, hormonal status and follicle history. This section also examines how growth bars compare with other traditional measures of nutritional condition such as fat and body mass indices. It is careful to examine underlying assumptions and attempts to address criticisms, shortcomings and limitations of the method and how these have been addressed experimentally and shaped development of the technique. It gives examples of cases where the technique is

invalid, for instance in large species like Canada geese where growth bars on remiges and retrices are virtually undetectable.

The second section, *Part II. Applied Ptilochronology*, outlines how the technique can be used to address ecological and evolutionary questions. It reviews studies that have applied ptilochronology to address questions of habitat quality, food caching, social behaviour, individual quality, reproductive effort, nestling condition and prolonged brood-care. A striking feature of the case studies presented is the variety of innovative ways in which the technique has been applied, providing data on the birds themselves or that of their environment, via measurement of the response of growth bars to environmental change. The final chapter 'taking stock and looking ahead' deals with the present state of knowledge and fundamental issues relating to its use. This is a must-read synthesis as it draws on information from across the book and deals with caveats of the method; for those wanting a quick overview of strengths and weaknesses of the technique this is the chapter to read. Importantly, some potentially confounding factors that relate to earlier chapters are dealt with here. One example is the need to control for body size, which is necessary because in general the larger the bird, the longer the feather and wider the growth bar. In an experiment detailed in Chapter 2, the ratio of induced to original feather growth rate was used to control for body size. Although the issue is revisited in Chapters 7 and 8, only in the final chapter are the flaws in this approach fully dealt with. There are two appendices: one detailing the hands-on method and the other listing the scientific names of bird species mentioned throughout the book. These are followed by a comprehensive reference list and topic index.

Most chapters consist of an introduction, an expanded body of text, usually organised in sub-sections, and finally a brief summary. This is a practical layout for anyone trying to gain a broad overview of the topic or for researchers seeking detail of previous work. Information is easily accessible and case studies are fully referenced. The sequence of chapters follows a logical progression in dealing with increasingly complex issues, and needs to be read in full if designing an experiment.

Despite these strengths, there are a number of minor irritating aspects of the layout. Although the content of the chapters is clear, the structure of a typical chapter with introduction, main text and summary is perhaps overly repetitive and could well use editing without loss of meaning. Perhaps this is an attempt to make complex ideas accessible to the lay reader, which may account for the photos in the text that add little in scientific terms (e.g. photos of a cage or freezer). There is no obvious reason to have the same photographs reproduced in colour and monochrome, in one instance only four pages apart. Other minor mistakes include photo captions that refer to two photos where only one is printed. Such shortcomings give the initial impression of a rushed and careless work in need of editing. However, read cover to cover the book is difficult to fault in terms of context and logical structure.

In summary, this is a practical manual as well as a conceptual framework for a valuable technique, and is highly recommended as a single volume reference to an important avian research tool. It is a useful addition to the Oxford Ornithology Series, and a timely coverage of a technique that has gained widespread use in Europe and North America, but has yet to gain broad recog-

nition in the southern hemisphere. For that reason alone it should appeal to the readers of *Emu – Austral Ornithology*, both amateur and professional.

Janet Gardner
School of Botany and Zoology,
Australian National University, Canberra

SEEKING THE SACRED RAVEN: POLITICS AND EXTINCTION ON A HAWAIIAN ISLAND

By Mark Jerome Walters

2006. Published by Island Press, Washington DC; distributed in Australia by CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne. 272 pp., 6 black and white figures. Hardback, \$US24.95, \$A49.95, ISBN 1-55963-090-6.

This is a well researched and written account of the, arguably avoidable, demise of the *Alalā* or Hawaiian Crow (*Corvus hawaiiensis*). In his *Prologue* the veterinarian and journalist author describes this Hawaiian endemic as being 'closer to the raven family than to the crow [family]', surely meaning that within the crow family it is closer to ravens than to more typical crows. This bird is significant to Hawaiian traditional culture in several ways: for example birds were believed to guide souls leaping into the afterlife. The species was found to be common, tame and curious by earlier observers, but by the early 1940s was sparse within but parts of its former range: by 1975 less than 15 individuals remained in the wild and by 1990 less than 12.

Six drawings illustrate the book: a map of Hawai'i Island and five diagrammatic 'family trees' showing the numbers of known deceased and living individual birds (the latter numbering 14 in May 1966, 11 in January 1997, 16 in March 1997, 18 in early January 1998, and but 8 in January 2000). At least one photograph of a live *Alalā* would have enhanced the book. Some 32 pages of *Notes* provide bibliographic reference to specific text content, and a 9 pp. *Index* paginates people and subjects.

The text makes largely depressing reading but in documenting a tragic history of introduced exotic plants, predators and disease; greed, self-interest, intolerance, resentment; scientific, bureaucratic and political incompetence; and expedience, intrigue, jealousy, buck passing and scapegoating, it provides salutary lessons. All of the above contributed to the failure to increase *Alalā* numbers to what might have become a viable wild population of suitably adapted individuals.

Given the recent *Alalā*'s tiny remnant range and population I was surprised to find no mention of techniques involved in the internationally acclaimed New Zealand recoveries of similarly endangered passerine species being discussed and considered by the biologists concerned with saving it. Surprising too is that seasonally first laid wild *Alalā* clutches were not removed (resulting in re-nesting and second clutches) for artificial incubation until too late in this prolonged fiasco. When this was finally implemented (1993), it greatly improved captive productivity as that in the wild sharply declined.

It appears doubtless that biologists (not all field ornithologists experienced with passerine reproductive biology let alone with that of corvids) directly caused several vital nesting attempts to fail. The question 'might the *Alalā* have done better

if left well alone' (as some protagonists argued), given its then grossly inadequate area of degraded habitat, is now a moot one. Despite repeated requests by biologists and conservation groups, authorities failed to ecologically improve existing degraded habitat or establish additional areas for captive bred crows to be released into. In reading this story it struck me that (a) landholders' rights (in any event questionable if gained by less than reasonable means, if not under duress) should not necessarily be held sacrosanct where a species faces extinction and (b) in the latter situation recovery efforts should not be left to a single supervising academic and his/her personal choice of field biologists but rather to a panel of appropriately qualified scientists who ensure field work is performed only by appropriately highly experienced biologists.

The *Alalā* is now extinct in the wild, the last sighting of one being on 14 June 2002. In 2006 some 50 birds were captive, with some breeding, but their limited gene pool and lack of wild cultural learning and experience limits chances of their establishing a viable wild population (where, among other pressures, the 'io or Hawaiian Hawk (*Buteo solitarius*) is a significant predator). Biologists, politicians, bureaucrats, landholders and members of the legal profession likely to be in any way involved with conservation of endangered species or habitats should take note of this sad story. But one cannot help cynically wondering if their doing so would change perceptions by parties with vested interest under similar circumstances.

For this small black and white book the price of \$A49.95 is high. Given that it exposes numerous shameful human failings in attempting to save a species from extinction, with the ultimately dire consequence, a cheap paperback edition is desirable and would hopefully further reward the author's dedicated valuable work.

Clifford B. Frith
Malanda, north Queensland

NEW HOLLAND FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA: THAILAND, PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, LAOS, MYANMAR

By Craig Robson

2005. Published by New Holland Publishers, London. 304 pp., 142 colour plates. Paperback, £19.99, \$A50, ISBN 1-84330-746-4.

With its huge, diverse and exciting avifauna, Southeast Asia is one of the great avifaunal hotspots. However, it has long been a challenging destination with difficult access and conditions, complex languages and cultures, and field guides that often left bird watchers frustrated. Even as logistical challenges linger, Craig Robson has produced meticulously crafted and inspiring guides that conveniently present the birds of mainland Southeast Asia on a platter. A flick through their plates, including many hornbills, woodpeckers, pittas, broadbills, sunbirds, etc., doubtlessly inspires thoughts of a trip to Southeast Asia.

Covering only the 'mainland' countries of Southeast Asia, listed in the subtitle, much of true Southeast Asia is excluded: in

particular the three bioregions of The Greater Sunda Islands, Wallacea, and the Philippine Archipelago. To include these would demand an impractically bulky volume(s) and, in any event, separate field guides serve these other avifaunas. Robson's guides competently replace King *et al.*'s (1975) 'A Field Guide to the Birds of Southeast Asia'. This area remains, however, highly significant to Australasian ornithology in being the geographical source of numerous annual migrants and an exponentially increasing number of reported vagrants to Australasia.

The present volume is a condensed edition of Robson's larger and admirable 'A Field Guide to the Birds of South-east Asia' (2000, reprinted 2002) that covered 1251 species with all but 13 illustrated. Despite being tightly written, the 2002 paperback reprint consisted of 504 pp., 104 colour plates, measured 24 × 16 × 2 cm and weighed just over a kilogram. This condensed edition, illustrating 1270 species, measures but 21 × 15 × 2 cm and weighs c. 650 g. It is protected by a glossy cover and a tight-fitting robust plastic sleeve good for humid areas. On the inside front cover tiny colour figures of a representative of each bird group provide quick reference to page number concerned. Two maps in the inside back cover show 'ornithological regions' and 'geographical features and political boundaries' of SE Asia; the latter map depicts altitudinal zones that are of little field value.

A single page *Introduction* notes that all species texts face the relevant plate and that (with but few exceptions, as detailed) taxonomy follows the first edition (i.e. Inskip *et al.*'s (1996) 'An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Oriental Region'). Thus the sequence follows Sibley and Monroe's (1990) 'Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World'; one perhaps less familiar to some in Australia where variations on the Wetmore (or Peters) system prevail. This is perhaps less of an issue for the passerines because most groups therein are barely represented in Australia. As this sequence may not always remain in vogue perhaps field guide authors should adopt practical classifications based upon combinations of morphology, ecology and taxonomy. Twenty-seven species and one subspecies are added to the illustrations in this edition, whereas two are omitted (Vega Gull and Saunder's Tern). The font is small and the text crammed, but it is reassuring to know that one is not carrying text superfluous to identification.

Robson wastes no pages, with only some 5% of them not describing/illustrating birds. The two-page table of contents is more useful than the one in the first edition, in providing reference to the first plate each group starts on, the usual point of entry for most users. There is a single page *Glossary* and another page shows three figures of avian topography. Some 35 logical space-saving text abbreviations/conventions are defined. The book concludes with a single page *Selected bibliography*, another listing *Bird study and conservation organizations* and a nine-page *Index* of common and scientific names.

The species accounts are concise and focused, skip detailed descriptions (that are left to the plates), and cut to the chase by detailing distinguishing field characters and brief mention of similar species. Sex, age and geographical variation are covered as well as possible in the abbreviated accounts. The phonetic *Voice* transcriptions appear well researched and written but are difficult to interpret, even compared to guides that have made less obvious effort in this department. Habitat and, where included, behaviour descriptions are inevitably brief and

general, but include altitudinal ranges. *Range* texts describe distribution within political boundaries, with the briefest indication of relative abundance and resident/visitor/breeding status. The *Nests* and *Eggs* texts provided for breeding species in the first edition are omitted.

It is the 142 plates that do the real job: crafted by 14 accomplished artists, they show great detail and accuracy. Illustrations from the first edition have been 'cut and pasted' to produce new, less crowded, plates not as overwhelming as those in the first edition. Between four and thirteen (averaging nine) species are illustrated per plate, sometimes involving over 30 illustrations. A range of subspecies and plumages are depicted for many species, though this varies greatly (e.g. 16 illustrations for White Wagtail versus two for Grey Wagtail). Keeping each species' image(s) and text horizontally aligned was not an option. The colour and sharpness of many plates differ very slightly from the 2002 reprint (for better or worse) but such differences are minimal and not detrimental to bird identification. For example, the prinias appear far darker and redder than previously. A remarkably fine job has been done in retaining overall consistency considering the great diversity of colours and considerable shuffling of images.

Many more figures on a plate (notably those of similar species) face the one direction than in first edition making comparisons easier, but this convention could have been still more widely applied. Some figures are reproduced smaller or larger than in the first edition. There are a few groups (including large raptors, thrushes, flycatchers and bulbuls), where potential candidates may spread across two or more plates but, considering the complexity of the avifauna, it is amazing that this is the exception rather than the rule.

Robson is an accomplished artist but did not contribute a single plate. Evidently he applied his artistic skills to guiding and controlling the quality and consistency of his artists. Not surprisingly, there are a few plates of slightly lower quality than the rest, the odd image where colours or details are not quite right, and a few inconsistencies.

Even if not used in Southeast Asia this guide is useful on Australian shores. In recent years, an explosion of Asian vagrants reported in northern Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories has heralded a new frontier in Australian ornithology. Rarities like Pond Herons, von Schrenck's Bittern, Oriental Honey-Buzzard, Grey-headed Lapwing, Large Hawk-Cuckoo, Grey Nightjar, Isabelline Wheatear, Rosy Starling, Blue and White Flycatcher, Red-throated Pipit, and at least nine subspecies of wagtails are a mere selection. Australian field guides may never again catch-up. Robson covers more of these vagrants and their potential contenders, and with greater expertise, than any other guide. It is certainly the most useful guide to have on Christmas or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and is an essential reference if one wants to know something about, for

example, that Purple-backed Starling that has just turned up tantalisingly close to home.

Beginners may struggle with this book at first, largely because of the sheer size and complexity of the avifauna and, for Australians, the unfamiliarity of many families. However, its reliability quickly grows on one. Ideally it would be wonderful to increase the size of some illustrations, reduce the number of images on some plates, and increase the size of the font. But reflecting upon the size of the avifauna covered and convenient size of this guide it is just about as perfect as could be achieved.

In an era when new bird field guides appear in flocks and second and third generation guides repeatedly raise benchmarks, it is rare to come across a guide that sweeps the field and stands above the pack. Robson's work ranks amongst the best of bird guides. This is a significant achievement considering how relatively little is known about much of the rich Southeast Asian avifauna. This much smaller and lighter 2005 edition is a great improvement for field workers and, if both can be carried to Southeast Asia, the ideal would be to have the condensed edition in the field and the more comprehensive first edition text back at camp. If not then certainly take the condensed edition. We raise our field glasses in saluting Craig Robson.

David J. James

Christmas Island, Western Australia

Clifford B. Frith

Malanda, north Queensland

Also received

THE NORTHERN GOSHAWK: A TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT OF ITS STATUS, ECOLOGY, AND MANAGEMENT

Edited by Michael L. Morrison

2006. Studies in Avian Biology No. 31. Published by the Cooper Ornithological Society. 369 pp., numerous maps, figures and tables. Paperback, \$US23 (including shipping and handling), ISBN 0-943610-68-0.

Forty-four authors have contributed to 20 papers on *Accipiter gentilis* over its entire range, divided into the three topics: *Regional Status*, *Ecology*, and *Management*. A combined bibliography lists *c.* 1,350 references. This is an important publication for students of goshawks in particular and raptors in general. Available from Cooper Ornithological Society, c/o Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San Pablo, Camarillo, CA 93012-8506, USA.