

THE BIRD WATCHER'S LIBRARY

By BRIAN GLOVER

Books about birds are legion, covering every conceivable aspect of the subject, and varying from excellent to decidedly indifferent. The aim of this paper is to suggest books from which the Australian bird observer can select a basic library of greatest value as an aid to identifying and studying birds. Such books come under a number of categories, the principal ones being Area Bird Lists, Field Guides, Handbooks, Bird Study and References to Literature.

As a further aid a list of books and publications in the S.A.O.A. library is appended. Most of these are available on loan to members.

I. AREA BIRD LISTS

A considerable number of these have been published, either as separate publications or in journals; here I do not go beyond the State or territory level. All States and Federal territories except Queensland have a published bird list.

THE OFFICIAL CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA, (2nd. Edn., 1926), (plus supplements published from time to time in *The Emu*). Published by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (R.A.O.U.), this is out of print and generally considered out of date, and few authors of books still adhere to it strictly. Bird names in the literature are becoming very confusing to the amateur and a new official checklist is urgently needed. The 1926 Checklist is at present being reprinted by the State Library of South Australia.

A FIELD LIST OF THE BIRDS OF CANBERRA AND DISTRICT (1966), compiled by the A.C.T. branch of the R.A.O.U. Species are listed in tabular form with keys to localities and habitat; there is a novel method of showing occurrence and abundance throughout the year.

A HANDLIST OF THE BIRDS OF NEW SOUTH WALES by Arnold R. McGill (N.S.W. Fauna Protection Panel, 1960). Species list with status, habitat and distribution.

A HANDLIST OF THE BIRDS OF VICTORIA by W. Roy Wheeler (Victorian

Ornithological Research Group, 1967). Species list with range, habitat, status and distribution map.

A HANDLIST OF THE BIRDS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA WITH ANNOTATIONS (1962) by H. T. Condon, with Supplement in *S. Aust. Ornith.* 24 pt. 4, 1965. Species list with taxonomy, status, distribution. Out of print; a second edition in preparation.

A SYSTEMATIC LIST OF THE BIRDS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA by Whittell and Serventy (Govt. Printer, Perth, 1948). Species list with taxonomy and range.

TASMANIAN BIRDS (3rd. Edn.) by Michael Sharland (Angus and Robertson, 1958). Actually a small handbook with brief descriptions and notes on status, distribution, food, nest, eggs, habits, etc.; a few illustrations (photographs).

LIST OF NORTHERN TERRITORY BIRDS by G. M. Storr (W.A. Museum, 1967). Species list with range, status, etc., and references to taxonomy.

FIELD GUIDES

Probably the ultimate in field guides are those of Roger Tory Peterson, of which his *Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, (revised edition) co-authored by Guy Mountford and P. A. D. Hollom (Collins, London, 1966) is a typical example. Every species is illustrated, mostly in colour, at rest and in flight where appropriate; all birds in a plate are in similar poses, with lines pointing to distinctive features, which are also listed on the page opposite the plate. The text gives field description, voice, habitat and map of European range.

There is no true field guide to the birds of Australia (although at least two are believed to be in preparation) or of any State or Territory, although there are very good field guides to the waders, hawks and ducks (see below). Most of the books used to identify birds in Australia are more in the nature of small handbooks, so it is appropriate to deal with both field guides and handbooks together, below.

HANDBOOKS

For an excellent example of handbook one can go no further than the five volume *Handbook of British Birds* by Witherby, Jourdain, Ticehurst and Tucker (Witherby, London, 1943). The distinguishing features of orders, families and genera are listed, then under each species is a complete coverage of taxonomy, habitat, field characters and general habits, voice, display and posturing, breeding, food, distribution, migration, distribution abroad, description (detailed, of all plumage phases of both sexes) and characters and allied forms. A coloured plate shows all plumage phases; there are drawings of special features and half-tone plates of related birds in flight where appropriate. A tremendous amount of information is packed into several pages of small type about each species — a life history study in miniature.

The only Australian bird books that give anything resembling this type of coverage would appear to be Immelmann's *Australian Finches* and Frith's *Waterfowl in Australia*, although a number of others give some of this information in very condensed form.

II. AUSTRALIAN FIELD GUIDES AND HANDBOOKS

A. Covering Australia, States, etc.

Such books as Gould's *The Birds of Australia* (1840-1869), North's *Nests and Eggs of Birds Found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania* (1890), Campbell's *Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds* (1901) and Mathews' *The Birds of Australia* (1910-1927), now expensive collector's items, contain a wealth of information on our birds and anyone undertaking a special study of a species or group would do well to visit one of the major libraries and study them. (North is in the S.A.O.A. library).

WHAT BIRD IS THAT? (4th Edn.) by Neville W. Cayley (Angus and Robertson, 1966). All Australian birds illustrated in colour, although often too small and too crowded. The birds are grouped under habitats which can cause some confusion. The text gives meanings of scientific names, distribution, nest, eggs and general notes.

AN AUSTRALIAN BIRD BOOK (9th Edn.) by J. A. Leach (Whitcombe and Tombs, 1958). Brief descriptions of all Australian species; very short notes on habitat, food, nesting, range, etc. Essays on the dif-

ferent orders, families, etc. Coloured and black and white illustrations and photographs do not cover all species.

Cayley and Leach are complementary to each other and are the only books generally available that deal with all Australian birds. Certain groups are inadequate from the field identification point of view — e.g., migratory waders, sea birds, etc., but these are covered by other publications.

A HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (3rd Edn.) by D. L. Serventy and H. M. Whittell (Paterson, Brokensha, Perth, 1962). The Kimberley Division is excluded. By far the best book of its type published in Australia. An excellent field description of each species, plus distribution, nesting and general notes. Although there are not many illustrations certain 'difficult' groups such as sea-birds and waders are very well described.

TASMANIAN BIRDS (3rd Edn., 1958) by Michael Sharland — see under Section I.

B. Covering Groups of Birds

BIRDS OF THE OCEAN (2nd Edn.) by W. B. Alexander (Putnam, 1955). First published in 1928 this is probably still the best book of its type for anyone undertaking an ocean voyage. There are notes on families, and individual species under Description, Range and Notes. Most species are illustrated by drawings and photographs.

SEA BIRDS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN by P. P. O. Harrison (H. G. Walters Ltd., Narbeth, Pembs., Wales, 1962). A useful companion to *Birds of the Ocean* for ocean travellers. Contains descriptions, notes on special identification features, range, general notes, etc., and 39 illustrations.

FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF NEW ZEALAND by Falla, Sibson and Turbott (Collins, 1966). Useful in Australia particularly for sea-birds and waders.

FIELD GUIDE TO THE WADERS (3rd Edn.) by H. T. Condon and A. R. McGill (Bird Observers Club, Melbourne, 1965). Small but excellent. All species illustrated (most in flight and at rest) and described.

WATERFOWL IN NEW SOUTH WALES by the C.S.I.R.O. and N.S.W. Fauna Protection Panel. See below.

AUSTRALIAN WATERFOWL by M. C. Downes and Ina Watson (Fisheries and Wild-

life Dept. of Victoria and I.C.I. of A. & N.Z. Ltd., 1960).

Both small but excellent field guides to the Anatiformes. All species illustrated in flight and at rest. Texts cover a range of information including identification.

WATERFOWL IN AUSTRALIA by H. J. Frith (Angus and Robertson, 1967). A comprehensive handbook of the Anatiformes.

FIELD GUIDE TO THE HAWKS (4th Edn.) by H. T. Condon (Bird Observers Club, Melbourne, 1966). Small but excellent. All species illustrated (wing patterns, some also perched) and described.

AUSTRALIAN PARROTS (1938) by Neville W. Cayley. Long out of print.

AUSTRALIAN PARROTS IN CAPTIVITY by Alan Lendon (The Agricultural Society, London, 1951). Contains some useful information for the field worker.

THE PARROTS OF AUSTRALIA by Eastman and Hunt (Angus and Robertson, 1966). An interesting format and fully illustrated but spoilt by the large number of inaccuracies, especially in the distribution maps.

THE FAIRY WRENS OF AUSTRALIA by Neville W. Cayley (Angus and Robertson, 1949). All species of *Malurus* and *Stipiturus* illustrated in colour. Text summarises much of published information. Distribution maps often inaccurate for S.A.

AUSTRALIAN HONEYEATERS by Hugh R. Officer (Bird Observers Club, Melbourne, 1964). Coloured illustrations of all species. Text brief, under Description, Field Identification, Distribution, Habits and Voice, Nesting Habits, and General.

AUSTRALIAN FINCHES IN BUSH AND AVIARY (1932) by Neville W. Cayley. Long out of print.

AUSTRALIAN FINCHES IN BUSH AND AVIARY by Klaus Immelmann (Angus and Robertson, 1965). Contains Cayley's colour plates from the 1932 book. By Australian standards a thorough study of the group.

BOWER BIRDS — THEIR DISPLAYS AND BREEDING CYCLES, by A. J. Marshall (Oxford, 1950). A comprehensive scientific study.

BIRDS OF PARADISE AND BOWER BIRDS (1950) by T. Iredale. Australian

and extra-Australian species, fully illustrated. A bulky collector's item.

Several books of the field guide type on various groups of birds are under preparation by the Bird Observers Club.

III. BIRD STUDY

The term bird study covers a very wide field and I do not intend to even attempt to list all of the large number of books that come into this category, or to deal with books on specialised subjects such as banding, photography, etc.

Books on bird study vary considerably in quality and value to the Australian bird observer. The good quality books range from the light but stimulating *A Guide to Bird Watching* by Joseph J. Hickey (Oxford, 1943) to very scientific works such as *A Laboratory and Field Guide to Ornithology* by Olin Sewell Pettingill Jr. (Burgess Publishing Co., Minneapolis, 1946). The following are some that the bird watcher could choose from:

ELEMENTARY BIRD STUDY by P. A. Bourke (Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1955). Australian, and covers the field as well as most.

A BIOLOGY OF BIRDS (1966) by B. D. Heather. See review this issue.

INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS, a five volume series from Museum Press, London, contains *Bird Biology* (1959) by J. D. Macdonald, *Bird Behaviour* (1961) by D. Goodwin, *Bird Migration* (1963) by R. Spencer, *Sea-birds* (1963) by Mary E. Gillham and *Birds' Nests and Eggs* (1964) by C. J. O. Harrison. Has much of value for older ornithologists also.

WATCHING BIRDS (1941) by James Fisher in the Pelican Series is small but valuable.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ORNITHOLOGY by Van Tyne and Berger (Wiley, 1961) is larger than the other books mentioned and covers a wide field.

The S.A.O.A. library list, below, contains a number of other titles on this subject.

Life History Studies

One special category of bird study that must be included is that of the life history study. Many foreign birds have been the subject of books about their life histories. Two classics in this field are:

STUDIES IN THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE SONG SPARROW by Margaret Morse Nice (Dover paper-back edition, 1964) probably the most complete scientific life history study of any species of bird.

LIFE OF THE ROBIN (4th Edn.) by David Lack (Witherby, 1965), scientific, but lighter reading.

The Collins New Naturalist series contains several life history studies, of which THE HOUSE SPARROW (1963) by J. D. Summers-Smith should be of local interest. A STUDY OF BLACKBIRDS by D. W. Snow (George Allen and Unwin, 1958), also deals with a species common in Australia.

Very few Australian birds have been the subject of a complete book. BUDGERIGARS IN BUSH AND AVIARY (1933) by N. W. Cayley is long out of print. There are several about the Lyrebird of which the most comprehensive is probably ROMANCE OF THE LYREBIRD by A. H. Chisholm (Angus and Robertson, 1960). The only true life history study in book form of an Australian bird appears to be THE MALLEE FOWL by H. J. Frith (Angus and Robertson, 1962).

IV. REFERENCES TO LITERATURE

Most bird books and articles in scientific journals contain references to the literature; most bird journals review new bird books; and *The Emu* often publishes items of interest from Australian and overseas bird journals.

For the library there are:

THE LITERATURE OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS by Hubert Massey Whittell (Pater-son Brokensha, 1954). It contains a history of Australian ornithology from 1618 to 1850, and a bibliography of Australian ornithology from 1618 to 1950, with biographies of authors, collectors and others.

SPECIES INDEX TO THE EMU Vols. 1 to 50 (1901-1951) (1953) and Vols. 51-60 (1951-1960) the latter a supplement to *The Emu*, Vol. 61 part 4 (1962), by Arnold R. McGill. (R.A.O.U.)

V. AUSTRALIAN BIRD JOURNALS

THE AUSTRALIAN BIRD BANDER, quarterly, by the Bird Banders' Association of Australia.

THE AUSTRALIAN BIRD WATCHER, bi-annually, by the Bird Observers Club.

THE BIRD OBSERVER, monthly, by the Bird Observers Club.

THE EMU, quarterly, by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union.

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ORNITHOLOGIST, bi-annually, by the South Australian Ornithological Association.

VI. CONSERVATION

Although actually beyond the scope of the present paper, the following deserve special mention.

SILENT SPRING (1962) by Rachel Carson, the book that alerted the world to the pesticide problem — a hazard to our wildlife too. Available as a paperback (Penguin, 1965).

THE GREAT EXTERMINATION edited by A. J. Marshall (Heinemann, 1966) and

A CONTINENT IN DANGER by Vincent Serventy (Andre Deutsch, 1966) two books about the Australian conservation scene.

WILDLIFE SERVICE, a quarterly journal issued free by the Fauna Protection Panel, N.S.W.

BOOKS IN THE S.A.O.A. LIBRARY

Abercrombie, Hickman and Johnson (1964), *A Dictionary of Biology*.

Alexander, W. B. (1955), *Birds of the Ocean*.

Armstrong, E. A. (1963), *A Study of Bird Song*.

Armstrong, E. E. (1965), *Bird Display and Behaviour*.

Austin, Oliver L. (1963), *Birds of the World*.

Berger, Andrew J. (1961), *Bird Study*.

Bourke, P. A. (1955), *Elementary Bird Study*.

Brown, Leslie (1959), *The Mystery of the Flamingoes*.

Brown, Philip (1964), *Birds of Prey*.

(1966), *Birds in the Balance*.

and George Waterston (1962), *The Return of the Osprey*.

Browning, T. O. (1963), *Animal Populations*.

Burnet, Sir Macfarlane (1966), *Biology and Appreciation of Life*.

Campbell, Bruce (1959), *Bird Watching for Beginners*.

Campbell, W. B. (1961), *Bird Watching as a Hobby*.

Carson, Rachel (1963), *Silent Spring*.

Christian, Garth (1962), *Down the Long Wind*.

Clarke, Peter (1965), *Bird Watching*.

Cloudsley, Thompson (1960), *Animal Behaviour*.

Condon, H. T. (1963), *Field Guide to the Hawks of Australia*.

and A. R. McGill (1965), *Field Guide to the Waders*.

C.S.I.R.O. and N.S.W. Fauna Protection Panel, *Waterfowl in New South Wales*.

Darling, Lois and Louis (1963), *Bird*.

Dasmann, R. F. (1962), *Environmental Conservation*.

(1963), *The Last Horizon*.

(1964), *Wildlife Biology*.

- Ede, D. A. (1964), *Bird Structure*.
 Elton, Charles (1960), *Animal Ecology*.
 (1963), *The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants*.
 Engelhardt, Wolfgang (Editor) (1962), *Survival of the Free*.
 Fisher, James and R. T. Peterson (1964), *The World of Birds*.
 Frith, H. J. (1962), *The Mallee Fowl*.
 Gabrielson, Ira N. (1959), *Wildlife Conservation*.
 George, J. C. and A. J. Berger (1966), *Avian Myology*.
 Gillham, Mary E. (1963), *Sea-Birds*. (Instructions to Young Ornithologists IV.)
 Goodwin, Derek (1961), *Bird Behaviour*. (Instructions to Young Ornithologists II.)
 Griffin, Donald R. (1965), *Bird Migration*.
 Grossman, M. L. and John Hamlet (1965), *Birds of Prey of the World*.
 Harrison, C. J. O. (1964), *Birds' Nests and Eggs*. (Instructions to Young Ornithologists V.)
 Harting, James Edmund (1965), *The Birds of Shakespeare*.
 Heather, B. D. (1966), *A Biology of Birds*.
 Hebditch, J. R. (1965), *Binoculars and Telescopes*.
 Hindwood, K. (1966), *Australian Birds in Colour*.
 Hosking, E. and C. Newberry (1961), *Bird Photography as a Hobby*.
The Technique of Photographing Birds.
 Lack, David (1956), *Swifts in a Tower*.
 (1965), *The Life of the Robin*.
 Lanyon, Wesley E. (1964), *Biology of Birds*.
 Linton, David (1965), *Photographing Nature*.
 Lockley, R. M. (1947), *Shearwaters*.
 Lorenz, Konrad (1952), *King Solomon's Ring*.
 MacDonald, J. D. (1959), *Bird Biology*. (Instructions to Young Ornithologists I.)
 Marshall, A. J. (1954), *Bower Birds*.
 (Editor) (1966), *The Great Extermination*.
 Mountford, Guy (1962), *Portrait of a River*.
 National Library of Canberra (1966), *Checklist to the Matthews Ornithological Collection*.
 Nice, Margaret Morse (1964), *Studies in the Life History of the Song Sparrow*, Vols. I & II.
 Nicholson, E. M. (1951), *Birds and Men*.
 North, A. J. (1890), *Nests and Eggs of Birds Found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania*.
 Officer, H. R. (1964), *Australian Honeyeaters*.
 Peterson, R. T. (1961), *A Field Guide to Western Birds*.
 (1964), *A Field Guide to the Birds*.
 (1964), *The Birds*.
 Guy Mountford and P. A. D. Hollom (1966), *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*.
 Pizzey, Graham (1958), *A Time to Look*.
 R.A.O.U. (1966), *A Field-List of the Birds of Canberra and District*.
 Richdale, L. E. (1951), *Sexual Behaviour of Penguins*.
 Scott, Peter (1961), *A Coloured Key to the Waterfowl of the World*.
 Serventy, Vincent (1966), *A Continent in Danger*.
 Sharland, Michael (1958), *Tasmanian Birds*.
 (1964), *A Territory of Birds*.
 Simkiss, K. (1963), *Bird Flight*.
 Simms, Eric (1957), *Voices of the Wild*.
 Snow, D. W. (1958), *A Study of Blackbirds*.
 Spencer, Robert (1963), *Bird Migration*. (Instructions to Young Ornithologists III).
 Storr, G. M. (1967), *List of Northern Territory Birds*.
 Summers-Smith, J. D. (1963), *The House Sparrow*.
 Thomson, A. Landsborough (Editor) (1964), *A New Dictionary of Birds*.
 Thorpe, W. H. (1961), *Bird Song*.
 (1963), *Learning and Instinct in Animals*.
 Tinbergen, Niko (1963), *The Herring Gulls' World*.
 (1966), *Social Behaviour in Animals*.
 Topholme, C. H. S., *Photographing Garden Birds*.
 Van Tyne, J. and A. J. Berger (1961), *Fundamentals of Ornithology*.
 Wakefield, John (1963), *The Strange World of Birds*.
 Wallace, George J. (1963), *An Introduction to Ornithology*.
 Warham, J., *The Technique of Bird Photography*.
 Wdowinski, Z. (1955), *Amidst Forests and Lakes*.
 Welty, J. C. (1964), *The Life of Birds*.
 Wheeler, W. Roy (1967), *A Handlist of the Birds of Victoria*.

JOURNALS, ETC., IN THE S.A.O.A. LIBRARY

Those of which reasonable numbers are held are:

- Acta Ornithologica*
Aquila
Auk, The
Australian Bird Bander, The
Australian Bird Banding Scheme, Annual Reports.
Australian Bird Watcher, The
Avicultural Magazine
Aviculture
Bird Observer, The
Bird Study
B.T.O. News
Bulletin (U.S. Dept. Agriculture)
Ceskoslovensky Ornitholog
Chesapeake Science
Cleveland Museum Publications
Condor, The
C.S.I.R.O. Wildlife Research
Die Giervalk, Le Gerfaut
Die Vogel der Heimat
Die Vogelwarte
Die Vogelwelt
Emu, The
Explorer, The
Fieldiana
Gerfaut, Le
International Council for Bird Protection, Annual Reports
Larus
Limosa
Memoirs of the National Museum
Memoirs of the Queensland Museum
North Queensland Naturalist, The
Notaki Ornithologiczne
Notornis
Notulae Naturae
Ornithologische Athandlungen
Ornithologische Mitteilungen
Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences
Proceedings of the California Academy of Science

Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania
Queensland Naturalist, The
Ring, The
Serie Zoologia
South Australian Naturalist, The
South Australian Ornithologist, The
Sterna
Sylvia
Tasmanian Naturalist, The

*Transactions of the Royal Society of South
Australia*
University of Queensland Papers
U.S. National Museum Bulletin
Var Fagelvarld
Victorian Naturalist, The
Western Australian Naturalist, The
Wildlife Service
Wilson Bulletin
Zoo Life