

LIST OF QUEENSLAND BIRDS, by G. M. Storr, 1973. Spec. Pubs. West. Aust. Mus. No. 5. Perth: Govt. Printer. Price \$8.

Although this is ostensibly a list of the birds of a single State, it is to my mind one of the most important works ever published on the distribution of Australian birds. Its value as a basis to systematics and as a source of problems for further investigation is enormous. In a nutshell, Dr. Storr has taken apart the literature pertaining to the distribution and taxonomy of the birds of *Queensland and put it* together again in a condensed and highly functional form. To this task he has brought his extensive knowledge of systematics and biogeography. The format is similar to that of his earlier *List of Northern Territory Birds* (1967), though he has here, in the interests of space, left out the bibliography and given in the gazetteer only those places mentioned in the text. Information on habitat preferences, breeding season (*i.e.*, months in which eggs are laid), and migration is summarised. For a few well-marked subspecies, notes on field-identification are offered.

As Storr states in the Introduction, he continues to take a hard view of subspecies and genera. In addition to those changes effected in his previous list, he has here included *Pelagodroma*, *Fregatta* and *Garrodia* in *Oceanites*, *Rallina* in *Eulabeornis*, *Amaurornis* in *Gallinula*, *Chlidonias* and *Gelochelidon* in *Sterna*, *Alisterus* in *Aprosmictus*, *Geoffroyus* in *Psittinus*, *Psephotus* in *Platycercus*, *Pteropodocys* in *Coracina*, *Peneoanthe* and *Tregellasia* in *Eopsaltria*, *Scenopoeetes* in *Ailuroedus*, *Prionodura* in *Amblyornis*, and *Sericulus* and *Chlamydera* in *Ptilonorhynchus*. I would agree with this approach. The retention of a genus is often defended by the argument that it is well-defined. All too often the reason for its homogeneity is simply that it is composed of a single superspecies or species-group. I believe that, as far as is consistent with the aims of phylogenetic systematics, generic names should be employed for *groups* of species, *groups* of superspecies and *groups* of species-groups; thus the duplication of the function of the generic name is avoided. Similar views have recently been expressed by Diamond (1972, *Publ. Nuttall Orn. Club* 12: 305-320) in a generic revision of the Paradisaeidae. However, although I support many of Storr's generic mergers (but not that of *Rallina* and *Eulabeornis*) I should like to have seen them introduced less baldly. Already one ornithologist has taken a toss over the unheralded sinking of *Fregatta* in *Oceanites* (Roberts 1973, *Sunbird* 4: 52-53).

The changes in nomenclature are many. The Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus notatus* is placed as a subspecies of *E. caeruleus* (see Parkes 1958, *Condor* 60: 139-140), the Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* as a subspecies of *C. aeruginosus* (see Brown and

Amadon 1968, *Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World* 1: 380-386), and the Stubble Quail *Coturnix pectoralis* as a subspecies of *C. novaezelandiae*. Under the Banded Land-Rail *Rallus philippensis* Storr regards *Hypotaenidia australis* Pelzeln as preoccupied by *Rallus australis* Sparrman (= *Gallirallus australis*), but by the Actuality Principle (Mayr 1969, *Principles of Systematic Zoology* : 365) this seems not to be so.

The Brown Pigeon *Macropygia phasianella* is regarded by Storr as a subspecies of *M. amboinensis*, though Goodwin (1967, *Pigeons and Doves of the World* : 147) advised caution here on the grounds that at least one case of sympatry was known between the five similar forms of this section of the genus. Harrison's (1969, *Emu* 69 : 66-71) proposal to treat the Peaceful Dove as a separate species *Geopelia placida* has not been followed by Storr. In the parrots Storr follows Holyoak (1970, *Emu* 70 : 198) in combining *Opositta* (fig parrots) and *Psittaculirostris*, but gives reasons for using *Cyclopsitta* for the resulting genus. Storr recognises no subspecies in the Red-backed Parrot *Platycercus haematonotus*, considering *P. h. caeruleus* (Condon), type locality Innamincka, South Australia, not separate from the nominate subspecies.

As in *List of Northern Territory Birds* Storr has called the Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* rather than *C. pyrrhophanus*. In the former list he referred to the Australian populations of the Grass Owl as *Tyto longimembris longimembris*. In the present one he has used *T. capensis longimembris*, though Holthuis & Mees (in Mees 1964, *Zool. Verhand.* 65 : 45-46) argued that the basionym of *Tyto capensis*, *Strix capensis* Smith, 1834, was a junior primary homonym of *Strix bubo capensis* Daudin, 1800, and that the Grass Owl should be called *T. longimembris* (Jerdon, 1839). One of the localities given by Storr for the Grass Owl is 'Gulf coast (near mouth of the Staaten)'. This record is based on specimens collected by the second phase of the Hall Expedition (of which I was a member) on grassy plains on Inkerman Station (not the Inkerman on the east coast). Though at first thought to be Grass Owls from their habitat, they proved on examination to be Barn Owls *T. alba*. Unfortunately this correction was not made in the notes of R. L. Pink, the Victorian member of the party, from whom Storr drew his information. Storr also lists records of Grass Owls from Richmond and east of Cloncurry, but in view of the fact that the grasslands of these areas are similar and more or less connected to those of the Barkly Tableland, where Barn Owls are often abundant, it is possible that these records are really of Barn Owls. Significantly, perhaps, nearly all other records of Grass Owls in Australia are from coastal and subcoastal wet grasslands and grassy swamps (but see McKean *et al.* 1969, *Aust. Bird Watcher* 3 : 196-198).

In the frogmouths, Mack (in Peters 1940, *Checklist of Birds of the World* 4 : 176-177) synonymized *Podargus plumiferus* Gould with *P. s. strigoides*, and *Cyphorhina plumifera neglecta* Mathews with *P. ocellatus marmoratus* of the Cape York Peninsula. Mathews was swift to react to this meddling (1941, *Emu* 40 : 425-427), stating that the type of *neglecta* had been collected in the scrub country of southern Queensland (which region he had already given in the original description), and that the collector had told him that the locality was near the Macpherson Range. Although specimens are few and the problem little-studied, modern opinion tends to recognise

plumiferus (with *neglecta* as a synonym) as a subspecies of *P. ocellatus*. In the present list, however, Storr mentions only *P. o. marmoratus*, omitting *P. o. plumiferus*, though apart from Mathews's specimen from near the Macpherson Range there are at least two other records of *plumiferus* from south-eastern Queensland that may be authentic (Marshall 1935, *Emu* 35 : 38; Wigan *et al.* 1938, *Emu* 37 : 253). A revision of the genus *Podargus* is long overdue.

Storr gives two localities for the Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica gutturalis*, Innisfail and Fraser Island, with dates late November to March. A synonym of this subspecies is *Hirundo fretensis* Gould, the type and only specimen of which was collected on October 18, 1860, in the Torres Strait by Rayner of H.M.S. *Herald*. I have been informed by the Hydrographer of the British Navy that in October, 1860, the *Herald* was in the area of Cook's Shoal, Cook's Reef and Proudfoot Shoal at the western entrance to Torres Strait.

Storr regards all records of the Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* as referable to *M. f. simillima*. However, the sole specimen from Queensland (from Bimbi on the Dawson River) and a second from the northern Northern Territory may actually be referable to *M. f. tschutschensis* (Mrs. B. P. Hall, in Crawford & Parker 1971, *Emu* 71 : 142).

The familial treatment of groups in the warbler-flycatcher-babbler-thrush assemblage is partly based on the ideas set out in an earlier paper (Storr 1958, *Emu* 58 : 277-83). Noteworthy is the placing of the Magpie-lark *Grallina* in a separate family Grallinidae next to the Cinclosomatidae (Quail-thrushes), and the bringing together of the thrushes and the typical flycatchers into a single family, the Turdidae. Storr retains the Falcunculidae of the 1926 Checklist for *Falcunculus*, *Oreoica* and *Psophodes* (including *Sphenostoma*); I think that the first two genera, together with *Eulacestoma* of New Guinea, may belong to the Pachycephalinae. Storr regards the two forms of wedgebill (Ford & Parker 1973, *Emu* 73 : 113-118) as conspecific; a critical area for the resolution of this problem is the Oodnadatta district, and studies should be carried out to see whether the two forms meet there and if so, how.

Storr tentatively recognises two species of ground-thrush, *Zoothera lunulata* occurring north at least to Mackay, and *Z. cuneata* of the Atherton Tableland. In addition to the three problematic records of ground-thrushes given by Storr, there is a fourth, perhaps more interesting. In a letter to Hartert dated March 10, 1899, A. S. Meek stated that he had sent Hartert a specimen of 'mountain thrush' from the Chester River (Parker 1966, *Emu* 66 : 122). Unfortunately I did not succeed in tracing this specimen, which appears to constitute the only record of *Zoothera* from the northern Cape York Peninsula.

In the whistlers Storr has taken the bull by the horns and used the correct binomen *Pachycephala caledonica* for the Golden Whistler instead of *P. pectoralis* (see Galbraith 1956, *Bull. Brit. Mus. Nat. Hist. (Zool.)* 4 (4) : 174 for a statement of this problem). Storr gives the range of *P. c. melanura* as the Gulf of Carpentaria coast north to the Staaten River, and islands in the Torres Strait and off the east coast of the Cape York Peninsula. In a paper not noted by Storr, Galbraith (1967, *Emu* 66 : 289-294) discusses two specimens of *melanura* from near Bowen and 22 miles north-west of Mackay, and argues for the recognition of this form as a separate species, the Mangrove Golden Whistler.

Storr remarks that the populations of the Rufous Shrike-thrush brought together under the name *Coluricincla megarhyncha rufogaster* urgently require revision, mentioning in particular the specimens collected by E. Olive on Mount Bellenden Ker and Mount Sapphire (probably Mount Sophia, 6½ miles north of Mount Bellenden Ker Centre Peak).

Storr treats the generic name *Monarcha* as masculine; Mees (1973, *Zool. Meded.* 46:181) has presented a compelling argument for its recognition as feminine. Under *Monarcha melanopsis*, the Black-faced Flycatcher, Storr suggests that *kurandi* Mathews may be a prior name for the subspecies *pallidus*, stating that the bird figured by Mathews as the type of *kurandi* is not a specimen of *Monarcha frater*. This is not so. Mathews (*The Birds of Australia* 9, text to plate 411) described *kurandi* as having black wing and tail feathers (characters of *M. frater*), and stated that the type was figured on the plate. On the same page he referred to the specimen of *M. melanopsis* as also being figured. On plate 411 the top figure is of *M. frater* and is presumably the type of *kurandi*, and the bottom figure is of *M. melanopsis*.

Incorporating information obtained recently by Julian Ford and myself in south-western Queensland, Storr has been able to give a satisfyingly extensive distribution for Hall's Babbler *Pomatostomus halli*. It is a comment on our knowledge of the birds of the interior of Queensland that this species, first described in 1964 from a single locality near Charleville, is now known to occupy a range of at least 88,000 square miles.

In the thornbills *Acanthiza* Storr has regarded the Mountain Thornbill *katherina*, the Brown Thornbill *pusilla* and the Broad-tailed Thornbill *apicalis* as conspecific, thereby placing the ball back in the court of those of us who think otherwise. In view of Storr's approach to the matter of generic limits I was surprised that he has not combined *Hylacola* with *Sericornis*; this move, which I consider was long overdue, has recently been made by Macdonald (1973, *Birds of Australia*: 340).

Until a few years ago, no grass-wrens were known from Queensland, which now claims the Slender-billed or Dusky, *Amytornis purnelli*, the Grey, *A. barbatus*, and the Striated, *A. striatus*. I strongly suspect that a fourth species, the Thick-billed, *A. textilis*, will eventually be found in southern Queensland (Parker 1973, *Emu* 73:162; see also Elliott's (*Emu* 38:48) record of a '*Hylacola*'? in lignum on the lower Moonie River, about 90 miles north of where Gould collected *A. textilis* on the lower Namoi River). In *Malurus* I would follow Storr in regarding *melanotus* as a subspecies of *M. splendens* and *assimilis* as a subspecies of *M. lamberti*; in view of Harrison's (1972, *Bull. Brit. Mus. Nat. Hist. (Zool.)* 21(8)) recent findings I would in fact go further and place *amabilis* (and *dulcis*) as subspecies of *M. lamberti* too.

In the Meliphagidae the generic classification follows that of Salomonsen (1967, *Check-list of Birds of the World* 12), except that Storr has resisted the sinking of *Grantiella* in *Conopophila* and *Acanthogenys* in *Anthochaera*. Without comment Storr has placed the Golden-backed Honeyeater *Melithreptus laetior* as a subspecies of the Black-chinned *M. gularis*; Salomonsen had kept them as two species but suggested that they interbred. The specimens that apparently give difficulty in separating the two forms include one from Buckingham, NSW (North, *Nests and Eggs* . . . 2:193) and the types of *Melithreptus*

gularis ingrami Mathews, from Inkerman near the mouth of the Burdekin River (Storr *in litt.*). I should prefer to retain *laetior* as a separate species while advocating a closer study of the problem. Apart from its much brighter back, it differs from *gularis* in having the bare orbital skin not blue but bright yellow. Storr gives the range of the White-streaked Honeyeater *Lichmera cockerelli* as south of the Archer River and Coen, omitting reference to the two specimens collected by D. P. Vernon at Shipton's Flat 22 miles south of Cooktown (Mack 1954, *Mem. Qd. Mus.* 13(1):36).

Storr places the chats (Ephthianuridae: *Ephthianura*, *Ashbyia*) next to the Meliphagidae (see Parker 1973, *Emu* 73:19-20). In the Oriolidae he regards all forms of *Sphecotheres* as belonging to a single species, *S. viridis*. Greenway (1962, *Check-list of Birds of the World* 15:136) had previously suggested that the two specimens from Mount Elliot near Townsville on which *Sphecotheres stalkerie* Ingram was based are hybrids between the Yellow Figbird *S. v. flaviventris* and the Southern Figbird *S. v. vieilloti*.

In the Paradisaeidae Storr uses *Ptiloris* for the riflebirds. Diamond (1972 *op. cit.*) combines *Ptiloris* with *Lophorina*, by which action the Magnificent Riflebird becomes *Lophorina alberti*.

Several species have been added to the Queensland list since the appearance of this work: *Puffinus bulleri* (Greensmith 1973, *Sunbird* 4:87-89), *P. griseus* (Robertson *ibid.*:56-57), *Stercorarius longicauda** (Corben *ibid.*:54-55), *Gygis alba* (Vernon *ibid.*:38-40) and almost certainly *Stipiturus malachurus* (Corben *ibid.*:5-7). In addition the listing of *Phoebetria palpebrata* has been confirmed (Roberts *ibid.*:53). I venture to suggest three more species that may eventually be found in Queensland. The Thick-billed Grass-wren *Amytornis textilis* has been mentioned above. The Grey Honeyeater *Conopophila whitei* may occur in the mulga associations of the centre and south-west. The Little Raven *Corvus mellori* may occur in the extreme south.

My only adverse criticism of this splendid work is that Storr does not always furnish us with the reasons behind his interpretation of a situation. Why, for instance, are the ranges of *Megapodius freycinet yorki* and *M. f. castanonotus* given as south to Emmagen Creek and north to Cape Tribulation respectively, when these localities are less than 10 miles apart with apparently no barrier between that might separate the two forms? Why are the range and status of the Black-throated and Fairy warblers given so certainly, when these matters constitute one of the chief disputes of Australian ornithology? What is the question regarding the identity of the species of *Erythrura* at Cooktown and Brisbane? Why is *Corvus orru salvadorii* used for the Australian Crow when the last reviser (Vaurie 1962, *Check-list of Birds of the World* 15:275-276) used *C. o. ceciliae* and synonymized *salvadorii* with *C. o. orru*?

List of Queensland Birds has already inspired several investigations of the problems it points up, and doubtless will inspire many more. The young Queensland Ornithological Society is particularly fortunate in having so lucid a statement of the distribution and status of the birds of its parish, and we may look forward to the appearance in the *Sunbird* of much supplementary information.

—S. A. PARKER.

* *Longicauda* is not an adjective but a noun in apposition, and as such its ending is unaffected by the gender of the genus in which it is placed.