

BOOK REVIEW

AUSTRALIAN PARROTS IN FIELD AND AVIARY, by Neville W. Cayley, revised by Alan H. Lendon, 1973. Published by Angus & Robertson, 1973; pp. xxx + 342, 13 col. pl., 60 maps, 3 figs. Price \$17.50.

Although advertised simply as a revision of Neville Cayley's 1938 work, Dr. Lendon has in this book also presented us with the results of many years of his own investigations. The avicultural data serves as a fine example of how aviculture and more scientific studies complement each other. For instance, details of head-scratching and bathing methods of the parrots are given. Information on these subjects is most easily derived from studies in captivity, and then it can be used to contribute to ideas concerning the birds' relationships.

The main text of the book takes the following form: introductory notes on each genus, followed by a treatment of the individual species of the genera which gives: a vernacular and a scientific name; a list of synonym vernaculars; a distribution map and a text dealing with "distribution," "description," "geographical variations," "field notes," and "aviary notes."

With scientific names: "the currently accepted binomial is given" (p. xxviii), although I would argue that the division of *Barnardius* into four species is well and truly outdated, even if the taxa concerned are easily recognisable in the field (see p. xxviii). Distribution maps are by nature very often somewhat tentative. In mapping the distribution of the parrots, Dr. Lendon has employed a grid system which demands great accuracy; but, to the best of my knowledge, a high standard has been kept. (It is therefore strange that he should not include the Great Victoria Desert in his map for the Purple-crowned Lorikeet *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*, despite mention of its occurrence there in the text). These maps are ably complemented by the text under "distribution."

The descriptions of the parrots are detailed, no doubt many of the finer points having been gleaned from avicultural specimens. The notes on "geographical variation" are concise; but I think that the work could have been enhanced as a revision if this subject had been dealt with in greater depth at the expense of some of the "field notes" (see below).

With the "field notes," the course taken has been to repeat Cayley's notes in an edited form, and supplement them with Dr. Lendon's own observations. These all too often begin with an account of Dr. Lendon's first encounter with the species concerned; a procedure which pro-

duces some very lifeless reading. Furthermore, these accounts give the present work too strong a similarity to Lendon's earlier work, *Australian Parrots in Captivity* (1951). However, some important information is presented, such as Dr. Lendon's observed overlap in range of the Yellow and Adelaide Rosellas (*Platycercus*). Also, one of several fine accounts which I found to be the most interesting parts of the book, was Dr. Lendon's superb five-and-a-half page documentation of various sightings and attempts at rediscovery of the Paradise Parrot (*Psephôtus pulcherrimus*). This particular account characterises the readable style of the work as a whole.

The "aviary notes" are more involved. For example, whereas Cayley gave a moderate-sized paragraph on the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus magnificus*, Dr. Lendon presents us with more than a page of data. Dr. Lendon has added an appendix on "keeping Australian parrots in captivity," which would be invaluable to those interested in the subject. Details are given, based on the author's own extensive experience, on "housing" "aviary fittings," "feeding" and "water."

Regarding Cayley's illustrations, I agree with Dr. Lendon in his preface, saying that they are "almost uniformly good." However, some points leave a lot to be desired, such as the colour of the White-tailed Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus baudinii* and the crest of the Gang-Gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum*.

Dr. Lendon implies in his preface that he did not at all wish to become "involved in taxonomic arguments." Accordingly I will comment only on the following two points. Firstly, he says that after seeing specimens of Goldie's Lorikeet *Psitteuteles* (or *Trichoglossus?*) *goldiei* in captivity in zoos, he feels it should be placed in *Glossopsitta*. Surely, he is asking for an argument here on such on a lively subject as the taxonomy of the Loriinae. Secondly, he says of the genus *Electus* on p. 137, "there are good grounds for retaining two species" but does not give these grounds. Finally, when he mentions the genus *Lorius* on p. 141, it is obvious from the context that he means *Electus*, and not the loriine *Lorius*, formerly known as *Domicella*.

Dr. Lendon has given us a work to be valued principally I believe for its avicultural and distributional data, while raising more problems for further investigation. — LEO JOSEPH.