

REVISED LIST OF QUEENSLAND BIRDS, by G.M. Storr, 1984. Records of the Western Australian Museum, Supplement Number 19. Pp 192, b. and w. fig. 1.

The first edition of this work was reviewed in this journal by S.A. Parker in 1974 (*S. Aust. Orn.* 26:146-148) who considered the *List* to be one of the most important works ever published on the distribution of Australian birds. Being in agreement with this, I consider that a review doing more than notifying readers of the *Revised List's* existence is warranted.

The *Revised List* has benefited from the recent, extensive survey work led by J.R. Ford and R.W. Draffan on mainland Queensland and Torres Strait, respectively, G.G. Sibley's studies of the relationships of higher passerine taxa and the recent upsurge of interest in littoral and marine birds.

The scope of the *Revised List* is essentially that of the first edition. From the accounts of distribution for each species, one can draw a map to assess whether a sighting of a bird is outside its known range. My comparisons of the species-accounts in the two editions for some 25 randomly chosen birds clearly indicate the policy adopted by Storr in preparing the *Revised List*. Gone are any tentative aspects, such as suggestions of possible subspecific validity or species recorded for Queensland on flimsy or incomplete evidence. Instead, the accounts of distribution have been extensively rewritten to define range limits even more sharply. Breeding seasons and months of passage for migrants have been variously enlarged, restricted or, curiously, changed altogether (e.g. breeding seasons of Rufous Scrub-bird and Boobook Owl ssp *boobook*) and the notes on ecology and status have been fine-tuned to provide more precise information (e.g. host species of cuckoos). Unfortunately, the *Revised List* has omitted or thoroughly condensed information such as notes on the spread of introduced species and the Galah. Presumably, this is a cost-saving measure, but it is a cause for some regret nonetheless. New to the *Revised List*, however, are data on clutch sizes. I note that most of the problems raised by Parker in his review have been implicitly addressed but the record of the White-streaked Honeyeater at Shipton's Flat, for example, is not discussed. The *Atlas of Australian Birds* recorded a population of this species in the Shipton's Flat area and one looks forward to

the publication of further details of the *Atlas* records.

For passerines, the composition and sequence of families and other major groupings have been altered to incorporate Sibley's DNA hybridization studies (see *Emu* vols 82-84). The nomenclature frequently incorporates changes suggested in recent revisions at the specific and subspecific levels. References to taxonomic studies, not all of which Storr accepts personally are, however, frequent (e.g. *Acanthiza pusilla*, see Boles, W. *Emu* 83 : 51-58). One further point not included is the suggestion of Parker (*S. Aust. Orn.* 28 : 197-200), supported by Sibley *et al.* (*Emu* 84 : 236-241) to recognize *Cormobates* for the White-throated Treecreeper complex.

The *Revised List* contains an extra 34 species, seven of which follow from taxonomic changes (*Collocalia chillagoensis*, *Zoothera heinei*, *Rhipidura dryas* and *R. phasiana*, *Cinclosoma castanoethorax*, *Meliphaga flavescens*, *Ramsayornis modesta*; see below) and 27 of which are new species for Queensland (13 seabirds, two waders, four gulls and terns, one duck, three pigeons and four passerines). Included here is the recently described Eungella Honeyeater *Meliphaga hindwoodi*.

Having to concur with the format of the *Records of the Western Australian Museum*, the hard cover of the first edition, which was a definite advantage under field conditions, has been replaced with a white (easily soiled!) soft cover on which a fine illustration of a Palm Cockatoo now appears. Misprints or editorial errors seem virtually absent: on p. 93 the journal name for the reference in the account of *Alcedo pusilla pusilla* should be *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* not *Emu*. A much revised Gazetteer is included but an Index is not. The latter would make the text more penetrable to ornithologists not closely familiar with the systematics of Australian birds.

I am tempted to compare the recently published *Atlas of Australian Birds* with the present work. An oft-admitted shortcoming of the *Atlas* is the practical difficulty of precisely delineating range limits when its maps are of necessity on a large scale. Works such as the *Revised List* remedy this important problem and will always provide the source of answers, if they are available, to the questions one may ask about distribution after examining *Atlas* maps. The *Atlas* therefore fills a worthwhile role in terms of overall distribution; checklists

such as Storr's remain invaluable and unchallenged at a regional level.

As in his previous ornithological works, Storr's taxonomy is akin to throwing the cat among the pigeons. Although I find many of his taxonomic arrangements plausible and attractive, specially the use of broad genera (e.g. *Platycercus*, *Ptilonorhynchus*) I agree with S.A. Parker's comment made when reviewing the first edition that it would be desirable to see these arrangements introduced less baldly, and I should also like to see them more consistently accompanied by some supportive argument (e.g. compare *Collocalia chillagoensis* and *Rhipidura dryas* both of which are new combinations). Undoubtedly, Storr intends to be provocative.

This book is a valuable addition to any library of Australian ornithology. It has been my experience with the first edition, however, that its full value and the detail that has gone into its preparation can only be properly appreciated when one is evaluating field observations. I have no doubt that the *Revised List* will be of even greater value in the field and strongly recommend that any serious ornithologist, amateur or professional, resident in Queensland or planning a trip there and who is interested in more than the (to my mind) rather wasteful custom of simply "ticking off" new birds be equipped with a copy of this fine work.

LEO JOSEPH