

## REVIEW

*Photographic Guide to the Waders of the World*, by David Rosair and David Cottridge, 1995. Hamlyn, London. 175pp. ISBN 0 0600 58475 5. GBP24.99.

Masses of beautiful photographs of waders make up half of this ambitious book, alongside text on all of the 212 extant waders of the world. The taxonomic order after the main body of the book largely follows the landmark *Shorebirds - An Identification Guide to the Waders of the World* (Hayman, Marchant & Prater, 1986), but it excludes the now discredited Cox's Sandpiper (*Calidris paramelanotus*) and three species presumed extinct: Canary Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus meadewaldoi*), White-winged Sandpiper (*Prosobonia leucoptera*) and Obi Woodcock (*Scolopax rochussenii*). There is some lumping and splitting of South American snipe, and Australia's Plains Wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*) and the two sheathbill species (*Chionis* spp.) are added in line with current thinking on waders.

The author's and photographic editor's impressive credentials are backed up by brief but informative text and over 700 mainly clear and useful photographs. These form the body of the book, with a concise introduction and acknowledgements, a page on wader topography, the list of species in taxonomic order, photographic acknowledgements, bibliography and index.

As is often the case with photographic guides, one would be hard-pressed to identify all the wader species one might encounter on the basis of this work alone. While photographs can reveal detail which colour plates may not, odd body stances captured by the photographer, an incomplete range of plumage and racial variations, or birds in flight versus on ground, variations in light and tone, and less than sharp images of, particularly, rare or more remote species, mean that more material is missing than can be included in a specialist guide.

There are one to six photographs of every species, with the exception of none for the critically endangered Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*), and eight of Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) and 12 of Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*). Some add less than might be expected - the in-flight shot of Eurasian Dotterels (*Eudromias morinellus*) for example - or contain rather too much unhelpful background. The decision to put in one slightly out of focus photo of Black-fronted Dotterel (*Charadrius melanops*) on the same page as five rather excellent photos of Banded Dotterels (*C. bicinctus*) is hard to accept.

Perhaps as a result of David Rosair's visit to New Zealand during preparation for the book, coverage of species occurring in New Zealand is excellent and up to date, and New Zealand photographers feature prominently. I recommend the book as a very useful companion volume in the libraries of wader enthusiasts and travellers to other parts of the world.

TONY CROCKER