

## REVIEWS

*Birds of the World. Version 2.0 (1996).* [Computer software.] By C.G. Sibley. Available from: Thayer Birding Software, P.O. Box 43243, Cincinnati, OH, U.S.A. 45243. \$US75 (+ \$US10 for overseas postage).

This programme is an up-dated computerised version of the massive book *Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World* by Sibley and B.L. Monroe, first published in 1990 (reviewed in *Notornis* 38: 251-252). It runs under Microsoft "Windows" version 3.x or 95, requiring a 386 CPU or higher and at least 4Mb of RAM.

There is an entry for each of the world's 9,946 species of birds (9,672 species in the 1990 book), giving a brief summary of distribution, habitat preferences and status. There are informative sections for each bird group (orders, families, subfamilies) as well as useful introductory sections (on classification, naming, phylogeny etc.). If printed out the computerised book would run to about 1,000 pages.

The beauty of the system is being able to jump about the "book" with ease. Using a simple search facility you can move quickly to any species entry via its English or generic name. The table of contents has "hypertext jump points" which bring forward any order or family at the click of a mouse. Introductory sections and the blocks of text for entire families can be printed.

Errors in the 1990 book have been corrected, and this edition incorporates findings from the very latest journal articles, all fully referenced. Updates of this version can be loaded down free from an Internet Web Page.

With this software on your hard disc, an encyclopaedia of bird species is always at hand. I have found it easy to operate and extremely useful. I recommend it to anyone with an interest in the birds of several regions.

B.J. GILL

*Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds, Volume 3: Snipe to Pigeons*, by Higgins, P.J. & S.J.J.F. Davies (Editors), 1996. Oxford University Press, Melbourne. ISBN 0 19 5530705. 1058 pp 60 colour plates. AUS\$300

HANZAB Vol. 3 completes coverage of the Order Charadriiformes (Scolopacidae, sandpipers and allies; Glareolidae, coursers and pratincoles; Lariidae, skuas, jaegers, gulls and terns) and then covers Columbiformes, (the pigeons and doves.) The format follows that of Vol.2, with colour plates spread through the book. In each plate individual birds are numbered for identification and text page reference given in the plate legend. Unfortunately the main index at the beginning does not give the plate page, so you must first find the text.

Because the majority of HANZAB 3 deals with migrants, only 20 of the 129 species covered breed regularly in the New Zealand region; five of them are endemics. A further 46 species have been recorded as migrants or vagrants. It is reassuring to