

*A Field Guide to Australian Bird Song: cassette two. Bird Observers Club 1985.*

This eagerly awaited second cassette in the series covers species from Rufous Night Heron to the Chestnut Rail and further extends the range of commercial recordings available on Australian birds.

It covers 69 species, including waterbirds, hawks, megapodes, quail and ends with four rails. The localities in which these recordings were made range from Nepal, Lord Howe Island, New Zealand and many widely separated localities throughout Australia with a solitary example from Great Britain. The oldest recording was made in 1958 and the most recent in February 1985.

The recordings are generally of a high standard, given the original field conditions and the great variety of recording equipment used. How Rex Buckingham and Len Jackson are able to 'clean up' recordings like the Mute Swan which has a water pump in the background defies a written description. Congratulations on a job very well done. The spoken identifications are by Len Grice. The folio that comes with this tape tells us the Latin names, the vernacular names of the species, *what the bird(s) are doing and the* running time of each recording, as well as who made the field tape and where it was made. Such data are rarely supplied with recordings these days, and so it is good to see a publication that supplies notes in a model form. At least 25 of the species on this second tape are on the New Zealand list, some like the Little Bittern being rare.

Many of the species on this tape are first releases and should create considerable interest among ornithologists for this reason alone.

Available from The Bird Observers Club, Box 185, P.O. Nunawading, Victoria 3131, Australia. Price \$A10.00. For a review of cassette one, see *Notornis* 31: 335 (1984).

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## LETTER

### An attempt to restore sex to the Cape Pigeon

For some time, by a quirky ruling of the International Commission for Scientific Nomenclature, this splendid petrel has borne a scientific name the gender of which is neuter.

Pintado, of which *Daption* is an anagram, is naturally pronounced with its final o long. Accordingly, if the anagram is correctly formed, it is daptiōn, not daptiōn. Thus it is allied, not with a big clutch of ancient Greek neuter nouns signifying diminutives, but with a substantial group of masculine and feminine names and nouns which end with long -ōn or -ion, e.g. *chelidon* (swallow), *aëdon* (nightingale or warbler), *halcyon* (kingfisher), *prion* (saw or sawyer). The word *prion* is especially interesting and relevant. As a bird name it goes back at least to 1800; yet another proof of the sound classical learning of most 18th century naturalists. Its gender was masculine. Buller's Broad-billed Prion was *vittatus*; and when later a subspecies of the Antarctic Prion was named *desolatus alter* it was doubly masculine. But the law of