

or any other African language. Baza is, apparently, an alternative Australian name for Cuckoo-falcon!

The bibliography is perhaps the most useful part of this book, although one cannot determine whether a quoted source is in print or not. Had the authors devoted their efforts to compiling a complete world-wide bibliography of this sort for the non-specialist birdwatcher, a real service would have been done to the prospective ornithological traveller and less potential harm to the birds they seek.

To sum up then, although books of this kind are likely to injure many of the areas they discuss and the birds they contain, this book, due to the inevitably inadequate treatment of so wide an area, is likely to do less harm than might be feared. The most potentially damaging information is given about the well-known parts of North America and Europe, where one hopes the growing conservation lobby may have some control over quasi-ornithological excesses. Further afield, the information is less specific and, one hopes, likely to result in a more individual approach, to the benefit of the individual, the birds, and our knowledge of them. The book is of limited use to non-North Americans owing to the number of strange common names used. (I hope these names are indeed understood in North America and that the authors have not had the arrogance to invent their own nomenclature.) Europeans in North America could make sense of the bird lists, as they have many bird species in common and so much other literature is available. But elsewhere most readers will find few familiar birds and will have very real difficulty in reconciling bird names in this book with those in the books they will need for identification. The bird lists seem to be complete for well-documented areas and less so as information becomes more difficult to acquire. The maps vary from adequate to useless and maintain a consistently scruffy schoolboy's-geography-exercise-book standard throughout (even the scales are not straight, ruled lines); they do nothing for the appearance of the book. The indexes do little to improve the nomenclature problems. The bibliography is the most useful part.

J. E. Squire

Birds of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, by Dick Watling, illustrated by Chloe Talbot-Kelly. 1982. Millwood Press, Wellington. 176 pp; 15 colour plates; many other illustrations in colour and monochrome; distribution maps; 128 species fully documented.

It is difficult to decide whether this rather handsome publication was intended as a regional field guide or a 'coffee-table' reference. Personally, and also because of the increasing numbers of naturalists visiting the area, I would have preferred a more conventional pocket-sized field guide. Nevertheless it is a valuable addition to the Pacific literature.

The illustrations are of variable quality, I suspect partly because of the problem of relating painting from museum skins and specimens to the impression one gets in the field of the living bird; and this is often reflected in a lack of 'jizz.' While the (mainly) black and white illustrations of the seabirds, for example, show good recognition features, some of the waders are barely recognisable, especially the Banded Dotterel; also, the legs of the larger waders are too short relative to body size.

The presentation of precise mapwork in relation to accompanying text is a feature I often find irritatingly deficient in many books, and this one needs a little tidying-up in some ways. For example:

1. The common error of scattering spurious meaningless dots about the Pacific to represent island groups — I find non-existent islands in Tuvalu and Kiribati, for example.
2. The shaded area (p. 15) to represent the region under review should be lowered about two degrees in latitude in the north to avoid giving the impression of including southern Tuvalu and Tokelaus.
3. Reefs should be omitted — they tend to create fuzzy outlines.
4. Why not have enlarged maps for Samoan endemics (e.g. Triller, White-eye) as has been done for Fiji?
5. 'Banaban' should be 'Banaba' or preferably 'Ocean Island.'
6. For comparative purposes it is preferable to have the same scale on all inserts.
7. Palmerston Atoll (photo p. 38) is part of the Cooks.

A reference on page 17 to the Rev. S. J. Whitmore should be to the well-known Whitmee. On page 151, the Niuean name *motuku* has again been incorrectly perpetuated for the Bristle-thighed Curlew.

Since a rare vagrant such as the Australian Pelican is fully documented, to be consistent, the same treatment should be accorded the White-faced Heron, Grey-tailed Tattler, Black-tailed Godwit and Little Tern, making the full species list at least 132.

On the positive side I especially liked the innovative and refreshing treatment of the historical and geographical sections, the useful vernacular index, and the delightful pencil sketches of details of heads, nests, fruits, etc. interspersed at appropriate places throughout the text.

There are some stimulating theories and tabular information about habitat utilisation, ecological isolation of local species, and breeding and moult cycles. Furthermore the author's emphasis on ecology and conservation throughout is one which all modern ornithological guides could well emulate.

The comprehensive bibliography will be a great help to any student of the South Pacific; inevitably, since the text was completed in 1978, there have been subsequent records and references. One of the most important results of this volume is again to demonstrate and identify the gaps that exist in our detailed knowledge of life histories, distribution and other features of the avifauna.

The price is a bit steep, but the quality is high, and I would recommend it to any naturalist interested in this region. (Normal price \$39.95; \$31.96 to members, ordered direct from the publishers, 291B Tinakori Road, Wellington.)

Peter Child

Having used this most welcome book in the field in both Samoa and Niue Island, I should like to make some relevant comments about it.

Although its size, 30 x 22 cm, is rather large for easy field use, it does stay open at any chosen page. I found some of the plates

misleading in field conditions. For example, the Red-vented Bulbul has a small crest and also a white band across the top of the tail, but neither of these field marks is shown in the painting in plate 7, although both are mentioned in the text. On Niue, I again found that the plates did not give the help one would expect in a publication of this type. However, the general text solved most problems, including the most difficult one of identifying a bird by its sound.

The range maps for each species I found useful, and I found the inclusion of local names for each of the island groups to be a major asset when discussing birds with residents. Twice I had local people confirm my tentative identifications by means of the local names. Another helpful feature, which should be used more often in bird books, is the provision of small sketches of a bird, its young, its nest or food, or comparative heads of the shrikebills and broadbills of the region.

In the sections on waders and seabirds, a silhouette is provided for most species, a helpful feature for readers not familiar with these groups. The bibliography of six pages contains 245 references, and the three indexes are for scientific, English and local names.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend this book, but it must be used with care in the field. As the author states in the introduction, much is yet to be learnt about many of the species of the region. The book should be a stimulus to ornithological work in the South Pacific.

L. B. McPherson

The bird fauna of Niue Island, South-west Pacific, with special notes on the White-tailed Tropic Bird and Golden Plover, by F. C. Kinsky and J. C. Yaldwyn. 1981. National Museum of New Zealand Miscellaneous Series No. 2; 49 pp., 22 tables of measurements. \$2.80.

This learned systematic treatise provides an adequate picture of the interesting avifauna of remote Niue Island.

After a brief account of Niue's topography and environment and a concise account of previous ornithological work, the 25 species of Niue birds are discussed meticulously in turn. The 25 species include 6 seabirds, 12 land and freshwater birds and 7 transequatorial migrants, increasing by 6 species my own comprehensive list of 1971 (*Notornis* 18: 291-304); however, Child (1982, *Notornis* 29: 99-100) has added three more and another three were seen but not confirmed. This shows how much calendar time is necessary for an island's avifauna to be completely recorded.

The taxonomic treatment of all species is, as expected of the authors, superior, and the two illustrations by Janet Marshall (not mentioned in the text) are of her usual high class.

The map of Niue is not adequate, and one wonders why the authors did not use the Department of Lands and Survey's aerial mosaic, which would have given much more topographical detail. The ecologically important Huvalu Tapu Forest is wrongly spelt and not adequately marked on the map. There is little reference to the relative abundance of various birds as indicated by road counts. More important, there is scant mention of the vegetation (see Sykes, W. R., 1970. *Contributions to the flora of Niue*, DSIR Bull. 200) and even less of