

## REVIEWS

*Birds of Africa*, by John Karmali. 1980. Collins. pp. 191. NZ retail price \$45.00.

Despite the all-embracing title, this book covers some of the bird-life of East Africa. The subtitle of the book is "A bird photographer in East Africa."

The introduction briefly describes the physical characteristics of both the Palaearctic and Ethiopian zoogeographical regions, across parts of which the continent of Africa lies. These descriptions are supported by relief and vegetation maps.

The birds are presented in 37 chapters, which follow classification order. About 75 species are selected for discussion and the summaries are informative and interesting. The amount of text for each species varies. For example, ostriches get two pages, whereas other species get only a few lines.

However, the real purpose of this book are its illustrations. There are 72 colour photographs and over 140 monochrome illustrations. The colour photographs, mainly portrait studies, are excellent. The monochromes illustrate bird activity, sometimes being presented as a series of time-lapse shots.

The layout of the book is good, except that many of the colour plates have been spread across two pages. In some cases the centre fold cuts the illustrated species in half, and in other plates only sky, water or leaves are printed on one half of the spread. At least 19 plates are of the latter sort and I would rather see single-page portraits and a few more species included on extra colour plates. At the end of the book the colour plates are repeated as monochromes in reduced form and notes are given about each. Some of these notes are of help to bird photographers.

It is pleasing that Collins have decided to publish these fine photographs by Karmali. However, as few of the species covered are known to New Zealand ornithologists or are likely to occur here, I doubt if many will decide to add this book to their libraries, also bearing in mind the price. I note that the UK price is quoted at £12.50 (approx. NZ\$37.00) and so the publication may find wider appeal there.

JOHN FENNELL

*A field guide to the birds of Australia*, by Graham Pizzey, illustrated by Roy Doyle. 1980. Pp. 460, 56 col. plates, 32 b/w plates. Collins. Aus\$25.00.

Graham Pizzey's one-volume field guide has been worth waiting for. All Australia's 700 or so species are covered in a 900-gram book, which is sure to replace in users' affections the current edition of Slater's two-volume 1200-gram guide.

Roy Doyle's illustrations are attractive and excellently reproduced, are generally accurate in detail, and capture the "jizz" of the birds. On each plate the scale is clearly shown and field marks indicated by