

EGRETS, by B. D. HEATHER

Any work that sets out to replace Witherby *et al.* faces a tough task. Volume 1 of Cramp & Simmons, as it will doubtless be called, succeeds admirably. The standard of research is high and the quality of presentation is impressive.

I don't regret the £25 (\$50+) I struggled to pay for it. I find I am constantly dipping into it, reading about species and topics I had largely ignored. It applies to New Zealand ornithology more than may be thought, providing a reference standard and showing the kinds of information lacking for the equivalent New Zealand birds. Its references provide a means of entry to the major literature, all available from OSNZ's library. Students of the Black Shag, the Dabchick and the Little and Crested Grebes, for example, should not ignore this volume's texts and illustrations as a standard against which to measure their observations and opinions.

I have taken the Cattle Egret as my sample species, for I know it and the literature for it well. The Witherby *et al.* text was very thin, reflecting how little was known up to 1938-41. Since then, a sizeable literature has appeared, much of it daunting to the amateur, recording detailed work in Africa and the Americas. This literature is splendidly condensed to fill out the rest of the text on distribution and movements within the Western Palearctic. The coverage is therefore clear and thorough, the best we could have for comparing with the New Zealand birds, the eastern race, which has not been studied anywhere in detail.

The colour plate shows a good range from nestling to breeding adult, supplementing well the text descriptions. I rather miss the meticulous detail of Witherby's plumage descriptions and will be interested to see how waders are dealt with in this respect, but I am relieved the basic-alternate system of plumage groupings has not been adopted.

We are resigned to world maps where New Zealand is an afterthought, and a projection centred on the Western Palearctic naturally squeezes us on to a remote edge. Using a magnifying glass, I discovered that the Cattle Egret visits Waikato-Bay of Plenty and West Coast-Canterbury, a reasonable generalisation for the mid-1970s, I suppose.

Users of this work in *Notornis* papers please note the citation form recommended on p. 36 (adapted to *Notornis* style): Cramp, S.; Simmons, K. E. L. (eds). 1977. The birds of the Western Palearctic, Vol. 1.



Some ornithological results of Cook's third voyage, by David G. Medway.. 1979. J. Soc. Biblioph. Nat. Hist. 9 (3): 315-351.

The author extends Stresemann's papers on the birds collected during the third voyage by examining two catalogues in the British Museum (Natural History) with lists by Dryander of the specimens that went to Banks and the paintings of them by Ellis and Webber. The paper works through the 159 species listed in the main (Solander) catalogue, untangling their identity and the cross references to them in the second catalogue, in Latham's, Pennant's and William Anderson's early descriptions, and in Stresemann's and Lysaght's commentaries. Several New Zealand specimens are included. The ultimate fate of Bank's collection is discussed. Review copy deposited in OSNZ library.

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