

very likely a 'non-species' from its measurements). The effect of small islands on many birds is to increase their overall size, compared with allopatrics on the mainland. Because of this I take it that the Yellow-crowned Parakeet antedated the Red-crowned Parakeet on the Chathams: '8' is so much larger than '9,' whereas '5' is only marginally different from '6.' Therefore, because of their lesser disparity in size, than is shown for other sympatric species, the parakeets on Chatham might hybridize the more readily. With time, I take it, the Red-crowned Parakeet of these islands will grow larger and/or the Yellow-crowned smaller.

On Antipodes Island and Mangere Island two species of *Cyanoramphus* co-exist and the circumscribed habitats must put them into strong competition for food. Taylor (1975, *Notornis* 22 (2): 110-121) had shown that for these islands each of the four items of food that contribute to more than 5% of the parakeets' total diet is disproportionately divided between the two endemic parakeets. On each island one species eat more leaves and far less flowers, seeds and invertebrates than does the other species. And this 'sharing-out' of the available food had allowed the species to co-exist: before the islands became affected by man.

But on Antipodes Island the Red-crowned Parakeet eats exactly the opposite diet to that which it takes on Mangere. It might be argued that as the islands differ considerably in the nature of their vegetable cover this might explain why the Red-crowned Parakeet has reversed its feeding patterns. My opinion, however, is that on both islands, because of competition for food, it is the bigger parakeet that eats the 'coarser' foods — because their larger bills are more appropriate for this fare — and the smaller parakeets attend to the 'softer' or smaller-sized foods with their relatively weaker bills. This is why I hold that "the difference in feeding pattern between (any) two (sympatric) species is but a further extension of the, very probable, similar feeding distinctions between the different sexes."

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The Editor,
Sir,

TRANSLATION PROBLEMS OF SHOREBIRD LITERATURE

Last winter a fellow graduate student (Winifred Cairns) and I contacted about 40 English-speaking shorebird biologists, plus various libraries and government agencies, and inquired about English translations of foreign literature on shorebirds. The response was uniformly enthusiastic, yet only a *modest number* of translations was located. Two points emerged quite clearly from this little survey. Whereas English-speaking shorebird biologists are keen on studying the extensive

foreign literature, few have the talents or time to devote to personal translations, and fewer yet have access to funds for translation or to translation services as part of their job. Second, the translations in existence enjoy virtually no portability; certain works have, therefore, been translated several times, and some that were translated even more than a decade ago are not available to the great majority of workers (primarily because most workers do not know of their existence). This situation is progressively worsening as the ornithological literature proliferates and as foreign research on shorebirds continues. In addition, graduate language requirements at most North American universities are being loosened; many students can obtain a Ph.D. with FORTRAN fulfilling their foreign language requirement!

I have some suggestions which could ameliorate this situation:

(1) Major English journals of ornithology could act as information centres, where people who translate papers or who have or know of translations could sink their information. This information could be disseminated by publishing titles and their availability, with translated works periodically indexed. A copy of each translation should be filed in the library of each co-operating ornithological society. I suppose the easiest way to handle this would be to have one volunteer worker (W) cope with paperwork for particular taxa, a responsibility which could be rotated.

(2) Recommendations about signal works in need of translation (e.g. vol. 6 of *Handbuch der Vogel Mitteleuropas*!) should be made to W.

(3) People and agencies willing to do translation for free or for a fee should be known to W, and exchanges channelled through him.

(4) People willing to do translations should have this expedited by being able to, for example, dictate translations into a tape recorder and hence to be freed of typing and writing duties. Master cassettes (which should be freely supplied at least to altruistic translators) should be handled by W, who has the responsibility of having typed copy prepared, or of delegating this duty to workers making use of the network. Details of diplomacy are left to W.

The position of W should perhaps be split among different taxa. Inasmuch as I have now sequestered a number of titles on shorebirds, I would be happy to act in that capacity at least for the present. But clearly this sort of thing should not be restricted just to shorebirds. Given the enthusiastic response of shorebird people contacted over the last eight months, I think that interest in such a network would be widespread, and that no trouble would be experienced in finding workers to handle other taxa.

This is a very pressing business, I think. Ornithology can only suffer from the increasingly impenetrable language barrier within its own literature.

I would be happy to receive any comments on this matter.

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