MISCELLANEOUS

Recoveries of Banded Argentine Waterfowl. C. C. Olrog 1974. *Bird-Banding*, 45: 170-177.

Recoveries of waterfowl over the past ten years are tabulated. Recoveries of some species are mapped.

Organochlorine Residues, Eggshell Thinning and Hatching Success in British Sparrowhawks. I. Newton and J. Bogan. 1974. *Nature* 249: 582-583.

The authors present a study of 325 nests of the Sparrowhawk *Accipter nisus* during 1971-1973 in Dumfriesshire, southern Scotland. Eggs from 130 clutches were collected for analysis. The main organochlorine residues found were DDE (metabolite of DDT), PCB and dieldrin. Compared with eggs from 71 clutches collected in pre- DDT times, there showed an 18% reduction in shell index, confirming the results of earlier studies in Britain. The eggshell index was found to be inversely correlated with DDE and PCB content. Among the 325 study nests, 34% showed normal hatching success, 31% showed partial success, and 35% failed completely. Hatching success was found to be inversely related to organochlorine content.

The authors found that, in spite of widespread shell thinning, egg breakage was a less important cause of unsuccessful breeding than failure to lay having built a nest, while desertions and embryo deaths also accounted for a large proportion of failures in chicks. Clutches failing owing to egg breakage or embryo death showed organochlorine levels significantly higher than those showing normal success.

Retraction of a Longevity Record for a 36-year-old Herring Gull

'An Additional Longevity Record' in vol. 6, no. 1 (March 1968), p. 9 of this Journal gave details of a Herring Gull reported to have lived over 36 years. The following extract from *Auk*, vol. 91, p. 432 (1974) stated that the 'record' had resulted from an error.

'The longevity record for a 36-year-old Herring Gull, *Larus argentatus* (Pettingill 1967, *Auk* 84: 123), is erroneous. Herring Gull with band number A-676871, the basis of the record, was found dead on 20 June 1966 on the shore of Little Traverse Bay near Petoskey, Michigan, and reported to the Bird Banding Laboratory. The laboratory then mistakenly advised Pettingill that this gull was banded by him on 29 June 1930 on coastal Maine. He actually banded Herring Gull number A-676871 as a young bird on one of the Beaver Islands in Lake Michigan on 8 July 1948. The gull was thus 18 instead of 36 years old.—George M. Jonkel, Bird Banding Laboratory, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Laurel, Maryland 20810, and Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., Wayne, Maine 04284.'

Reviews

Bird Guide of Thailand (2nd Revised Edition) by Boonsong Lekagul and Edward W. Cronin, Jr. 1974. Association for the Conservation of Wildlife, 4, Old Custom House Lane, Bangrak, Bangkok. Pp. 316; plates (paintings) coloured 107, black & white 5; line drawings 1; maps 2 plus individual species maps. Price $10.00 (US).

With the Western World's yet further increasing affluence, and the consequent travel explosion, it is not surprising that more ornithologists are visiting South-east Asia. While Australians have as yet not descended upon the region in organized bird-watching tours, as have the Americans, it will not be long before they do. Thus the publication of this book is, to us, timely.

The task facing the authors must have been daunting indeed. With 849 recorded species Thailand's avifauna is richer than that of the Australian continent. The discovery in 1968 of a new and striking species of swallow, *Pseudochelidon sirintarae*, the lack of seabird research and proximity of Eurasian migration routes make it likely that the list is by no means complete.

As the title implies, the book is a field guide in the Peterson tradition. Apart from a brief introduction and some appendices it sticks strictly to identification, with just a line or two of text about habits. In this respect the authors avoided the frequent mistake, in areas where no handbook exists, of trying to get the best of both worlds by producing what is, too often, both a cumbersome field guide and an incomplete handbook. The authors in fact draw attention to the great works of Salim Ali & Ripley, Robinson & Chasen, Smythies *et alii* for further reading by the more serious ornithologist, and generously acknowledge their debt to those workers.

The introduction explains the zoogeography of Thailand, gives a very brief resume of the past history of ornithology in the country, lists a few of the most suitable (?accessible) bird-watching spots and explains how to use the book. The zoogeographical discussion gives reasons for the great diversity of resident species and delineates regions of predominantly indigenous (the northern and central), Burmese (the eastern), Indo-Chinese (north-eastern and south-eastern) and Malaysian (Peninsular Thailand) affinities. Regrettably the accompanying map does not live up to the text and, for anyone unfamiliar with Thailand's geography, is difficult to follow. Unfortunately the zoogeographical content lacks any discussion of the Eurasian migration routes, which contribute greatly to Thailand's species list.

The arrangement of species follows the Wetmore pattern except where, as the authors explain, families of similar appearance are grouped together for comparison.

Thus the swifts (all 15 of them!) are sandwiched in between pittas and swallows, but as the authors' aim was to produce purely a field guide, one cannot seriously dispute their arrangement.

The 115 plates show almost every species of bird recorded for Thailand. Where known, female, eclipse and immature plumage is depicted, and the more distinctive and recognizable sub-species are shown. An appendix in the back of the book lists all known subspecies but would have been better omitted as it means little to the average bird-watcher and is too brief for the serious student. All plates are in colour save for those of flight identification patterns. The Peterson method is followed with indicating lines showing the main diagnostic feature of each species. As in standard field guides, duck, raptore and wader flight appearances are shown, and those of the storks, too, are added. Of particular merit is the depiction of the distinctive flight patterns of the five species of snipe, which must reflect painstaking field research on the authors' part. The tail feather patterns, the only really fool-proof identification of snipe, are also depicted separately. It is these details, and such small hints as indicating the tail-bobbing of the Common Sandpiper, that make Boonsong Lekagul's paintings so useful. One cannot, in all honesty, describe the illustrations as particularly meritorious. They are, however, better than those in some other field guides, and not a few handbooks, and certainly achieve the aim—i.e. to identify birds.

The text is concise with each species meriting about 70 words, mainly a brief description, special hints on field identification, description of voice, the preferred habitat and status. A small map showing known range in Thailand accompanies each species, but in the case of the rarely-recorded migrants the map record could be misleading to a novice. One feels that the extra-territorial range of migrants and seabirds could well have been included in the text. The index is satisfactory and includes scientific, English and Thai nomenclature, a 'check-list', and synonyms of English common names.

The book is of only indirect use to Australians. Most of the species do not occur in Australia and are predominately endemics of the Oriental Region. However, Thailand's avifauna includes almost all of those Palearctic migrants that could, but have not yet been, recorded in Australia (e.g. Spotted Greenshank, Pied Wagtail and Brown Shrike). The book would accordingly be very useful to observers resident in Northern Australia or New Guinea. One useful feature is the depiction of the breeding plumages of the Mongolian and Large Sand Dotterels, which maddeningly are often not shown or even mentioned in Australian texts.

For use outside Thailand the book would probably suffice for Indo-China's avifauna, except for montane isolated species. Even for other areas of South-east Asia it would be useful just to identify the main Oriental Region endemic genera and families, such as Broadbills, Minivets and Leafbirds.

The book is a handy size, 195 × 130 mm, is stout enough to withstand rough usage, and is attractively presented. Quality of reproduction and print is not good, but in no way reduces the book's usefulness. For an English language printing, in a country that uses neither English language, nor even Roman script, the text is surprisingly free of errors.

Unfortunately the book does not state whether it appears also in a Thai-language edition. It would be sad indeed if it does not. Thailand's natural habitats are largely gone already and, under human population pressure, many of those remaining seem certainly doomed. Only awareness and concern by the Thai people themselves can possibly save the country's rich avifauna—the under-developed nations are not going to save fauna just because we of the affluent West desire it. Fortunately Thailand has an excellent education system and this, plus a strong national pride, would be a suitable vehicle for conservation publicity, towards which a Thai edition would be a worthy contribution.

The book is a 'must' for those likely to visit Thailand, useful for visitors to other parts of South-east Asia, and well worth acquiring for those possessing a general ornithological library.

H. L. BELL, Canberra, A.C.T.

Wader Colour Marking Project

A colour banding and marking project on waders is being undertaken in New South Wales and Victoria to determine the movements of these birds.

Anybody observing a colour-banded or colour-marked wader is asked to contact either of the undermentioned, stating details and particulars of colours and bands.

Mr F. W. C. van Gessel, 4 Bennett Street, HAMILTON. N.S.W. 2303.

Dr D. F. Dorward, Department of Zoology, Monash University, CLAYTON. Victoria. 3168.

Darwin Members

The Committee, on behalf of all members, wishes to express sympathy to our Darwin members who may have suffered losses as a result of the recent cyclone. Their copies of *The Australian Bird Bander* will be retained until such time as the Secretary receives a forwarding address. We hope to hear from them soon.