

REVIEWS

- i. "Birds of Prey of the World". by MARY LOUISE GROSSMAN and JOHN HAMLET. Photographed by Shelly Grossman—Line drawings by Jo McManus. Published in England by Cassell & Co. Ltd., London, 1965 at 6 guineas pp. 1-496

This large work covers 289 species of hawk-like birds and 133 species of owls. Each species has its own distribution map and there is at least one sketch of the flight pattern, from below, of all the hawk-like birds excepting *Falco fasciinucha* (of which apparently no skins exist in the American Museum of Natural History.) There are no sketches of owls in flight. In addition, many species of both groups of birds are illustrated in colour or black-and-white photographs, or in line drawings—the authors' intention clearly having been to provide at least one illustration of a bird, at rest, from each genus. The quality of the photographs and of the maps is first class; in the line drawings, the flight patterns are better than those of birds at rest.

The work is divided into two parts. The second part contains the systematic descriptions of the species, dealing with them in the order used by PETERS in his "Check List of Birds of the World" Volumes 1 & 4; part one contains five chapters entitled Prehistory, Birds of Prey and Men, Ecology and Habits, Designs for Survival, and Conservation.

Chapter 1 deals with evolution and distribution in previous epochs. Chapter 2 deals with mens' knowledge of, and beliefs about, birds over the ages, with particular relation to birds of prey. Chapter 3 is an attempt to explain the place of the predator in Nature's scheme of things, whilst Chapter 4 is concerned with specialization in particular birds and with structural and physical developments in relation to such specialization. Chapter 5 pays particular attention to the relatively new menace of organic chemicals, now widely used in pesticides of the spray kind and in sheep dips and other ways, which have been shown in many instances to have significant effects upon

egg fertility and thus upon reproduction rates, resulting in serious declines in the populations of many European and American birds of prey.

It is Part 2 that is of the most interest to the Thai student of ornithology and it is most regrettable that the regional guides given towards the end of the book are limited to Europe and North America. However, the majority of species occurring in Thailand are given adequate treatment.

There are certain points which the reader in Thailand must bear in mind when using this work if he is basing his studies on the **Check List of the Birds of Thailand** by H.G. DEIGNAN 1963. DEIGNAN recognizes *Milvus lineatus* as a separate species from *M. migrans*, this work treats them as conspecific. Similarly, DEIGNAN recognizes *Buteo burmanicus*, the desert buzzard, as a separate species, geographically isolated in its distribution from *B. buteo*, the common buzzard. This work treats them as conspecific and the distribution map joins up their ranges. The distribution map for *Butastur teesa* shows the breeding range extending into Thailand, but the species is not included in DEIGNAN's **Check List**. Certain differences of opinion on Afro-Asian genera also come through. DEIGNAN considers the king vulture of Asia to be congeneric with the lappet-faced vulture of Africa *Torgos tracheliotus*. GROSSMAN and HAMLET prefer to keep a separate genus, *Sarcogyps* and it therefore becomes *S. calvus* with the vernacular of the Pondicherry, or Indian, black vulture. Similarly, *Polihierax insignis* of DEIGNAN, considered by him congeneric with *Polihierax semitorquatus* of Africa, is given a genus to itself and becomes *Neohierax insignis*. These are not new names or decisions but merely represent different views to those of DEIGNAN.

In comparing the section on owls with the arrangement of them in PETERS' **Check List of Birds of the World**, Volume 4 (Volume 1 which covered the hawk-like birds was unfortunately not available to me to permit comparison), certain points also need comment. These, in the main, represent the sum of advances in thought over the 25 years between the publication of these two works. The grass owls, *Tyto capensis* and *T. longimembris* are now considered conspecific. Mention

is made in this new work of a specimen of owl of the genus *Phodilus* taken in the Belgian Congo within the last 20 years which is considered to represent a new species. The treatment of the species within the genus *Otus* has undergone considerable change and six species listed by PETERS have presumably been lost in the synonymy of other species, these six being *Otus brucei*, *O. senegalensis*, (apparently merged with *O. scops*), *O. whiteheadi*, *O. insularis*, *O. hartlaubi* and *O. minimus* (which PETERS recorded on the strength of one specimen only from Bolivia). The genera *Pyrroglaux* and *Mimizuku* are treated as *Otus*, *Pseudoptynx* comes within *Bubo*, the species *Ninox philippensis* takes in what used to be *N. spilonota* and *N. spilocephala*, whilst *Strix davidi* is considered to be a form of *S. uralensis*.

Mention must be made of one or two apparent omissions or mistakes. No mention is made of the return of the osprey to breed in Scotland again as it has over the last few years. Nor is it suggested in the text that the monkey-eating eagle is considered to be in danger of extinction. For the Moluccan hawk owl, the name *Ninox squampilia* is used which is rendered by PETERS *squamipila*. Such minor errors are considerably outweighed by the usefulness of Part 2 of this work and by the excellent photographs in Part 1, where several of the colour photographs are beyond praise. A further valuable inclusion is a colour key and a reasonably extensive bibliography. To everyone interested in birds all over the world or to anyone particularly interested in birds of prey, this book is excellent value for money.

E.C.D.

II. THE REVISION OF THE GENUS *CAPPARIS**

The revision is made for the plants from South and Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Australia and the Pacific. The author finds it convenience to group the plants of these regions into 4 sections: I. *CAPPARIS*, only *C. spinosa*, represented, confines to southeastern Asia;

* JACOBS, M. : The genus *CAPPARIS* (*CAPPARACEAE*) from the Indus to the Pacific in *Blumea* XII. No. 3, 1965 pp. 385-540, 36 figs.