

**3. Plants of Khao Yai National Park.** Edited by Prof. Dr. Tem Smitinand. Friends of Khao Yai National Park Association. Pp. 73 plus illustrations. 1977.

This bilingual handbook under the editorship of Dr. Tem Smitinand, the Leader of the Natural History Section of the Siam Society, comprises two parts: (1) the vegetation of Khao Yai, and (2) some floristic elements of Khao Yai, with lovely coloured plates; both of which are contributed by knowledgeable personnel of the Royal Forest Department, Bangkok, Thailand. The two parts in general contain excellent descriptions and are very valuable for tropical ecologists and trained botanists, only that they have to spend more time visiting various interesting spots of the vast luxuriant area of the national park.

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**4. A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia.** By Ben King, Martin Woodcock, and E. C. Dickinson. 1975. Collins, London. 480 pages. Illustrated by Martin Woodcock. 32 coloured plates, 32 black-and-white plates and 161 species illustrated in line drawings, 2 end maps. Hard cover. Stirling Pounds 4.50. Collins, St. James Place, London, U.K. This volume is a very good field guide designed to cover seven countries (Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos) as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan. Fully 1,227 species are described with 869 illustrated. This is the first time that a comprehensive work on the birds of the entire region has been attempted. Our thanks go to the authors and publisher. The format is that of a typical Collins field guide: pages of text interspersed every so often with illustrated plates,

The clear and concise text begins with the English and scientific names followed by a size designation. In some cases brief general plumage descriptions appear but stress is rightly placed on providing diagnostic identification features. Helpfully, immature plumages are often given. A comment on voice follows. Then the general range of the species is shown after which a note as to where one may find the bird specifically in SE Asia occurs. The text concludes with a brief habitat summary.

The great strength of this book, outside of its comprehensive nature, is its meticulous attention to diagnostic identifying marks. Many new pointers and helpful hints are published here for the first time. Ben King and E. C. Dickinson are to be congratulated for their outstanding field work.

Similarly, the authors have embarked on a commendable programme to help standardize English names. The introduction devotes over two pages to listing criteria used in preparing the best possible English name for a given species. While other authors may not agree on all new names selections, there is no doubt that comprehensive field guides such as this one will lead the way to useful standardization rather than to assist in retaining the current confusion.

Another part of the introduction includes a feature on how to identify and measure a bird in the hand. These hints, rarely found in field guides, will be helpful to bird banders in SE Asia and greatly adds to the value of the introduction.

A Taiwan appendix, inserted at the end of the text, lists birds that are found in Taiwan but not covered in the main body of the book. This appendix extends the usefulness of the volume to this interesting island.

The coloured plates are very well reproduced on glossy paper and, although the birds are a bit stiff, show important field marks adequately, even when 26 individuals are crowded onto one page (as in the Flycatcher-Niltava plate). One, of course, wishes for more coloured plates as only 408 species, or 33% of the total, are thus shown. Esthetically, it would have been pleasing to have had the pheasants, for instance, in colour and from the practicability point of view, colour greatly aids identification. And identification is what this book is all about. If given the choice, I would invariably



gladly pay more for an all-colour guide than spend less for one that is half black- and -white. The decision on how much colour to print rests, of course, with the publishers who tend to view market matters rather than birds. We hope that an increased interest in birds will allow more coloured coverage in future Collins publications.

I was able to use this guide during a short visit to Thailand and found it most helpful, especially when used in conjunction with Lekagul's and Cronin's *Bird Guide of Thailand*. The field marks given in the text are particularly good, especially when encountering difficult groups such as birds of prey. King's descriptions of various raptor plumages, including numerous immature stages, is the best summary of Asian birds of prey that I have seen. Actually, one wishes that King might think of doing a small separate volume illustrating, in colour, all the known phases and plumages of Asian raptors. But dreaming aside, one is in good hands with his descriptions in *Birds of South-East Asia*. The book is a must for anyone interested in Asian birds and is highly recommended.

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**5. Bird Guide of Thailand, Second Edition.** By Boonsong Lekagul and Edward W. Cronin Jr. 1974. Bangkok, Thailand. 316+8 pages, 105 coloured plates, 7 black-and-white plates, 849 range maps, 2 general maps.

All illustrations by Boonsong Lekagul. Laminated hard cover. No Price given. Available from the Association for the Conservation of Wildlife, 4, Old Custom House Lane, Bangrak, Bangkok. *Bird Guide of Thailand*, Second Edition is a very good revision and updating of Dr. Boonsong's first effort which comprehensively described and pictured all of Thailand's birds. Now, fully 849 species are covered in this new and amazingly compact volume with the text for a particular species often located on the page facing the illustration. The text includes English, scientific and Thai names followed by a size