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REVIEW

Current Ornithology, vol 10, by Power, D.M. (Ed.) 1993. Plenum Press, New York. ISBN 0-306-44282-5. 383 p. Price: US\$ 69.50 (hardback).

Current Ornithology is a series devoted exclusively to reviews in ornithology. About six topics are chosen for each volume from outlines submitted by hopeful authors, with the collection providing an idiosyncratic perspective on current research trends.

The results are fascinating, but the reading may not be easy. Vol 10 includes chapters on how phylogenetic history might influence mating and parental care systems, trophic structure in raptor communities, the use of matrix algebra for studying demography, nocturnal behaviour in waterbirds, latitudinal gradients in species diversity, and patterns of development. The volume of information is overwhelming (there are 57 pages of references alone), but the book represents an excellent source of material on the topics being considered. Here are some snippets to whet the appetite:

It may well be that the predominance of exclusive male parental care (an unusual parental care system in birds) in modern ratites indicates that this was the system used by the original ratite.

A comparison of falconiform and strigiform community structure on three continents finds consistently fewer owls, and the missing owls are the large ones. This may be due to a simple habitat differentiation between these two groups: there are no thermals at night.

The chapter on matrix models provides an introduction to the leading text on that topic. The authors argue that matrix models will become the preferred method for analysis of demographic data from longterm studies. This chapter offers a primer in matrix modelling, and is remarkably lucid.

Excluding species that are crepuscular (active at dawn or dusk only), members of eight orders and 27 families of waterbirds are regularly or exclusively active at night. Most of these species are colonial breeders.

In contrast to the usual pattern, avian species richness in the summer increases with increasing latitude in the eastern United States. The two factors that facilitate this pattern are highly seasonal productivity in northern temperate forests, and migratory behaviour.

Eight different avian hatchling forms can be defined and characterised. Precociality (e.g. as in typical Anatidae) is the primitive form from which all other forms are derived.

One can always find something to complain about in reviews of this magnitude; I thought that the penguins were rather poorly served in the chapter on nocturnality. More generally, the chapters are frequently so long that they are impossible to read and absorb at a sitting. The cost of these volumes is too high for most readers of *Notornis* (whether amateur or professional ornithologists). But really, such complaints do the series a disservice and in at least some senses are in conflict with the object of the exercise. The good news is that authors will usually provide reprints, on request.

The information content and quality of presentation of volume 10 is typically excellent. I suggest that you start reading now, as it will take most of a year to do the volume justice. Vol. 11 is already here!

Ian G. McLean



The Birds of CITES and How to Identify Them. by Johannes Erritzoe, 1993. The Lutterworth Press, Cambridge. ISBN 0 7188 2894 1 hardback £30; ISBN 0 7188 2892 5 ringbound £26; ISBN 0 7188 2895 X leatherbound £95.

For the serious international ornithologist, anyone who might meet a smuggled bird, and all those who should be protecting our native wildlife from illegal imports, this book is a must. With 406 species described in detail - as one might see them in an aviary and without any reference to their natural habitat - and illustrated in colour alongside many more monochrome