

Campbell, B. and E. Lack. 1985. A Dictionary of Birds. Buteo Books. xxx + 670pp., illustrated. Available at \$75.00 from Buteo Books, Vermillion, SD.

This volume is a sequel to earlier volumes by the same title. The previous volume published by the British Ornithologist's Union in 1964 is now over 20 years old, and an update is certainly timely.

As its predecessor, A Dictionary of Birds is more appropriately an encyclopedia than a dictionary. The book contains over a million words supported by over 500 photographs, drawings and diagrams. The text contains definitions of terms as diverse as "acetabulum", "Christmas bird count", and "tautonymy"--many crossreferenced. In addition, more than 280 professional ornithologists contributed overviews of major topics. Such summaries are of subjects as varied as "archaeopteryx", "sexual characters", and "migration". Each of these major topics is addressed in detail equivalent to an introductory university lecture on the topic. The contributions provide a brief, comprehensive overview of the subject rather than excessive technical detail; followed by a selected bibliography (primarily of English titles) for the reader to use in pursuing the topic. Taxonomically, all bird families are discussed with information on number of species, physical characteristics, habitats, distribution, populations, movements, foods, behaviour, voice, breeding, and other subtopics. Again, each entry is followed by selected references.

Besides the inputs of an increased number of professional specialists, the addition of 20 years of ornithological knowledge assures that this is a clear improvement over the volume's long-revered predecessor. Attesting to this observation, few references predate 1965, the year of the second printing of the previous volume. The effective information date of this volume is probably through 1982 as numerous technical articles published that year are included in literature referral. Occasionally a 1983, rarely a 1984, and at least one 1985 reference were located in a quick scanning. The press has done an excellent job in having the volume on the market quickly.

This is a primary reference for an ornithological library. It is a thorough introduction for the student and an essential cross-discipline reference for the professional. I found minor problems with a few references and sundry other editorial inconsistencies. This new volume automatically becomes one of 3 indispensables in my library. The other 2 include Roger Tory Peterson's original field guide and the predecessor Dictionary which carried some spectacular color plates that are sorely missed in the new volume. When one considers the \$75.00 cost relative to knowledge to be gained, this volume is grossly underpriced. --Fritz L. Knopf, Denver Wildlife Research Center, 1300 Blue Spruce Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80524-2098.

Robertson, C. J. R., (chief editor). 1985. Readers Digest Complete Book of New Zealand Birds. Readers Digest, Sydney, Australia, and Reed Methene, Auckland, New Zealand. 320pp. \$45.00 N.Z. (\$23.00 U.S.).

Similar to the Readers Digest Book of Australian Birds. A very thorough review of modern New Zealand birds, native and introduced, by more than 80 ornithologists. Basically after some introductory material on understanding birds and their habitats, a large page (sometimes more) is devoted to each species reported from the "New Zealand region" with an essay supplemented by a column on field characteristics, molt, voice, distribution, and recognition. Each species is illustrated by an outstanding color photograph. Especially good for the many rare and endangered species still persisting in New Zealand. Too large to be readily used in the field, but an excellent buy.--R. A. Ryder, Fisheries and Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523.