

measures taken, Conservation measures proposed, Land use, Possible changes in land use, Disturbances and threats, Hydrological and biophysical values, Social and cultural values, Noteworthy fauna, Noteworthy flora, Scientific research and facilities, Conservation education, Recreation and tourism, Management authority, Jurisdiction, References, Reasons for inclusion and Source. A number of appendices on specific sites or groups of sites and references follow.

The basis for inclusion under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention includes either representative or unique wetlands, criteria based on plants or animals or specific criteria based on waterfowl. Perhaps because of this, the choice and/or grouping is sometimes hard to fathom. For example Lake Taupo is separated from the "South Taupo Wetland", while the lakes and catchments of the Kaituna River (Rotorua lakes, excluding the upper Tarawera catchment) are grouped and the seven Upper Tarawera catchment lakes are lumped. Similarly the "Canterbury braided rivers complex" includes 10 major rivers, the McKenzie Country lakes and their headwaters, with the Ashley (including its estuary), Ahuriri and Waitaki headwaters rivers *being singled out for individual attention within the grouping*.

As expected, birds feature prominently under the "Noteworthy fauna" and "Reasons for inclusion" subheadings in the site accounts.

Perhaps the most surprising feature of the *Directory* is the absence of references to the large body of material, both published and available through other sources, which would have been available to the writers of individual site accounts from OSNZ. Of the 20 pages of references at the conclusion of the book, several OSNZ unpublished regional reports are cited, *OSNZ News* features twice and *Notornis* once. This is particularly surprising in view of the frequent statements relating to percentages of birds supported by a site in relation to regional populations of that species, which are generally uncited. Western Sandpiper *Calidris maurii*, Great Knot *C. tenuirostris* and Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* are listed, without reference, among species of conservation concern along with other vagrants and endemics with small populations.

The above criticisms notwithstanding, *A Directory of Wetlands in New Zealand* is a highly significant work and will be an easily accessible resource for planners, scientists and conservation bodies for many years to come. While site maps and other information have been excluded for reasons of space, details from contributors are held on file for reference purposes by DoC in Wellington and IWRB headquarters in the United Kingdom. It is to be hoped that if the book is to be republished there will be a call for additional accurate and sourced information from interested bodies and individuals.

Tony Crocker



*Australian Birds of Prey* – by Penny Olsen. University of New South Wales Press, 1995. 256pp. ISBN 0 86840 039 4 (Hardback).

*Australian Birds of Prey* is an in depth look at the 24 species of raptor which occur in Australia.

Although this may seem a lot of species compared to the two which occur in New Zealand, for its size, the overall abundance of raptor species in Australia is low. Compare Australia's 24 species to Africa, with about 90, out of a worldwide total of 285.

Raptors are a very successful group being found on all continents except Antarctica.

In large format, with high quality photographs on nearly every page, *Australian Birds of Prey* consists of 9 chapters beginning with an introduction to the raptors of the world, then on to the 24 species which occur in Australia. A brief description of each, covering appearance, habitat and activities, is followed by a distribution map.

The chapters then focus in detail on each aspect of raptor life, dealing with ecology, lifestyle, reproduction and conservation. Everything you would want to know about the Letter-winged Kite for example, a highly specialised, nocturnal raptor which is particularly dependant on the distribution of the Long-tailed rat which plagues sporadically. Or the rare Red Goshawk, which hunts over an extremely large territory of up to 200 square kilometres.

The author, Penny Olsen is a research fellow with the Division of Botany and Zoology at the Australian National University. She is a world authority on birds of prey. Since 1975 she has been studying Peregrine Falcons near Canberra, although her interests are broad.

I would recommend this book for any birder with an interest in raptors, although the beautiful photographs are reason enough to add it to your collection.

Pam Agnew



*Birds of Polynesia*: Cassette Tape, compiled by L.B. McPherson. 1995, McPherson Natural History Unit, Christchurch.

This one hour cassette contains field recordings of 56 species of birds (some common, others very scarce and endangered) which occur in Polynesia. All tracks are in mono sound. In order, there are 10 from the Pitcairn Group recorded by Jim Jolly in 1991; 6 from Rarotonga and 1 from Mangaia, Cook Islands, by Michael Taylor, 1981 and 1986; 8 from the Republic of Kiribati by Katino Teeb'aki, warden on Christmas Island, in 1987-88; 3 from Niue Island by Les McPherson in 1982; 1 from Tonga, 18 from Western Samoa and 4 from Fiji, mainly by Tim Lovegrove on the "Derwent" expedition of 1982; and 5 from Rotuma by Les McPherson in 1986. Hence the collection is a limited one which reflects the available opportunities for recording by the few ornithologists who have taken suitable equipment from New Zealand to Pacific locations. Nevertheless, the tape is a worthy effort to meet the objective of making bird sounds available both to research scientists and to tourists with a serious interest in nature.