

go-ahead for publication eventually came. The only aspects of information given which appear to lag behind current knowledge concern the distribution of some of the species. Distribution is a dynamic aspect of a species's life history, however, and is ever subject to change of a greater or lesser degree.

Aside from this relatively minor detail the book is a mine of information. I doubt that there is any ornithologist in South Africa (aside from the author) who could read the text on any one of even the common species featured therein without learning quite a lot he or she didn't already know about the bird concerned.

Birdringers involved in woodland or forest community studies will find the section on that enigmatic group, the cuckoos, of particular value. Even the experienced ringer faces the risk of catching a 'whatzit'. He may know it is, for example, a cuckoo, but what sort of cuckoo? There is more than enough data in this book to permit an accurate identification to be made. Apart from such considerations, however, Bunty Rowan's book will be an authoritative reference work for a long time to come. It should be on the bookshelf of every person who devotes time to bird study.

TBO

Mead, Chris. 1983. BIRD MIGRATION Pp. 224; 35 black-and-white photographs, 18 colour photographs. Feltham: Country Life Newnes. U.K. price £9.95

This is an eye-catching book and, despite its stated aim to introduce "both the amateur bird watcher and the interested layman to the absorbing world of bird migration", it is no coffee-table edition. It presents a comprehensive review of migration patterns of European and North American birds and informs the reader on related matters such as flight strategies, energy costs, navigation and opinions on the evolution of migration. Additionally, there are chapters devoted to the history of Man's discovery of bird migration, the means by which migration is investigated and ways by which migrating birds can be

observed. There are 188 text diagrams of which 105 are two-colour maps depicting intercontinental migration patterns of selected species. Scientific names are listed next to English names in systematic order at the back of the book, as is a comprehensive index.

There can be few people better qualified than Chris Mead to compile such a book. He has recently been appointed Director of the Ringing and Migration Centre of the British Trust for Ornithology. He has observed bird migration on two continents and has personally ringed some quarter of a million birds. His experience in lecturing and broadcasting on birds indicates an ability to describe complex biological phenomena in terms comprehensible to the non-scientist. However, with the exception of two or three chapters, the "interested layman" will find this book too advanced. It will be better received by the amateur birdwatcher whose knowledge of birds allows accurate mental images of crakes, skimmers, rollers, dippers and thrashers to be conjured up when such names, as well as many others, are encountered in the introductory chapter.

However, even the knowledgeable reader must be dedicated to get the best out of some of the diagrams. This task is, unfortunately, made more difficult by cases of transposed captions (pp 162, 213, 215), transposed portions of the diagram (p. 213), errors in diagram lettering (p. 109) and too many incorrect text references including wrong page numbers or no page numbers (e.g. 'see page 000' on p.176), or references to the wrong diagram compounded by apparent absence of the right one. There are, in addition, some diagrams not specifically referred to in the text. This may be because sections of the text have been left out by design or accident. Certainly there is a missing line (at least) of text on page 197.

Some of the colour photographs are impressive and the monochrome photographs generally complement the text. The caption "Bramblings foraging for food on a woodland floor" (p. 101) seems inappropriate for a picture showing two such birds evidently drinking from a puddle.

It is a pity that more care was not taken to check text references and diagrams before going to print since the errors detract from what is otherwise a very informative text. Nevertheless, Chris Mead has done an excellent piece of work to pull together the many aspects of bird migration in so concise and objective a manner. The chapter detailing the history of Man's discovery of bird migration is both comprehensive and entertaining and the more technically-minded reader will find much of interest in the chapter on flight techniques and strategies. A good coverage is given of the many ways by which birds are thought to navigate, though the omission of Gerrard's recent proposals is unfortunate (see footnote \* overleaf).

Although the book is obviously aimed at the European and North American market, birdringers in southern Africa will find much of general interest within its pages and many documented facts which may be novel to them and show up some favoured species in a new light. Altogether a worthwhile addition to the bookshelf at a reasonable price (U.K) by today's standards.

TBO

- \* Instinctive Navigation of Birds. E.C. Gerrard. 1981.  
See review in Ostrich 53: 59-60.

Bub, Hans. 1983. ORNITHOLOGISCHE BERINGUNGSSTATIONEN IN EUROPA [BIRD OBSERVATORIES IN EUROPE] Pp. 190; 77 black-and-white photographs, 7 text figures. Dachverbandes Deutscher Avifaunisten Nr. 7, 1983. DM 20,--.

This soft-cover book gives details of 48 ringing stations or bird observatories in Europe ranging from Finland to Bulgaria and from Fair Isle to the Camarque. This is by no means a complete inventory as Editor, Dr. Hans Bub of the Institut für Vogelforschung (Vogelwarte Helgoland), points out in the Introduction. Many active ringing stations in Great Britain and Germany have been omitted for reasons of space. Although the text is in German, each station report has a summary in English; and all photographs and text figures have captions in English as well as German. All references to birds in the text are by scientific name and the book is concluded with an alphabetical list of all scientific names with their German and English equivalents. This list includes family names and group names such as "*Limikolen* (= Charadriiformes) - Watvogel - Waders". Many of the photographs are of excellent quality and there are enough of them to provide the reader with a form of ornithological armchair travelogue. Those planning a holiday in Europe would find this publication extremely useful since the reports give details of accommodation for visitors, costs, booking arrangements and hints on how to find the place.

The book can be obtained from DDA-Schriftenversand, Rosenwinkel 7, D-3325 Lengede, Federal Republic of Germany. The price in DM is roughly equivalent to R9,00.

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