BioOne COMPLETE

The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2010

Author: Rich, Terrell D.

Source: The Auk, 129(2) : 362-363

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: https://doi.org/10.1525/auk.2012.129.362

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

Downloaded From: https://complete.bioone.org/journals/The-Auk on 29 Mar 2024
Terms of Use: https://complete.bioone.org/terms-of-use

reviewing the literature on the species is a challenge. The mission is accomplished: in addition to English papers in scientific journals, this book provides nice coverage of relevant regional literature published in various languages and also builds on personal communications with experts on the species from several countries. As to Gorman's accounts of his own observations of the species, they contribute to vivid descriptions of the woodpecker's behavior.

The book is well thought out, to the extent that it is difficult to think of any major topic of general interest that could be missing. In fact, there is—in my opinion—only one significant weakness to this book: substantial redundancy among the different chapters. For example, one can find nearly identical information about the woodpecker's mammalian predators and secondary cavity users both in chapters about breeding and cavity use and in the chapter addressing relationships with other wildlife. This may be an advantage for readers using the book as a reference work, as it increases the likelihood of finding specific information. Still, those reading the book from cover to cover may get annoyed by such repetitions of facts, which often are presented in very similar forms. An additional drawback is that, although there is a species index at the end of the book, there is no subject index, which means that readers using the book as a reference may need to browse to find the desired pieces of information. However, my opinion is that the qualities of this book—in both content and form—clearly overshadow these limitations.

One major strength of the book is that it reaches far beyond a simple description of the Black Woodpecker's biological features. In that respect, the sections that address relationships between the woodpecker and other species (including humans) are particularly interesting. For example, the book includes a thorough account of the use of Black Woodpecker cavities by other species of birds and by mammals, as well as some information about invertebrates using those cavities. Relationships with humans are also well covered, from cultural aspects (e.g., tales) to conflicts such as damage to buildings inflicted by the woodpecker and possible threats posed by humans. On that latter point, a significant part of the book is dedicated to the effects of commercial forest management. There used to be much concern about the potential effects of forestry on this large woodpecker. However, current knowledge suggests that the Black Woodpecker is fairly tolerant of most common forms of modern forestry, notably through its ability to incorporate separate patches of forest into its home range, to forage in logged areas, and to use some types of degraded forests. Still, Gorman's review of the topic highlights the fact that close-to-nature forestry is more likely to provide suitable habitat than highly intensive forms of industrial forest management.

The book is of appropriate size and has a pleasant general appearance. There are relatively few figures, but the introductory page of each chapter is ornamented by the beautiful artwork of Szabolcs Kókay. Many figures are presented on color plates concentrated at the end of the book. These include a variety of sonograms and oscillograms, color drawings of the Black Woodpecker and its congeners with associated distribution maps, as well as several photographs showing various aspects of the woodpecker's behavior. In some instances it would have been better if those figures had been incorporated in the main text instead of being assembled at the end of the book, but I assume that this would have been problematic from a technical perspective.

A key question is whether this book provides anything more than the detailed accounts of the Black Woodpecker's biology given in previous works such as Cramp et al. (1994), Winkler et al. (1995), and Gorman (2004). The answer is yes. Undoubtedly, this book is the most comprehensive source of information on the Black Woodpecker published to date. Moreover, it is written in an accessible style, which means that a variety of readers, including professional ornithologists, birdwatchers, and the general public, are likely to enjoy the book. Hence, it would surely make a useful contribution to any university, municipal, or private library.—Jean-Michel Roberge, *Department of Wildlife, Fish and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Forest Science, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), S-90183 Umeå, Sweden. E-mail: jean-michel.roberge@slu.se.*

Literature Cited

Cramp, S., Ed. 1994. The Birds of the Western Palearctic. Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom.

Gorman, G. 2004. Woodpeckers of Europe: A Study of the European Picidae. Bruce Coleman, Bucks, United Kingdom.

Mikusiński, G. 2006. Woodpeckers: Distribution, conservation, and research in a global perspective. Annales Zoologici Fennici 43:86–95.

Winkler, H., D. A. Christie, and D. Nurney. 1995. Woodpeckers: An Identification Guide to the Woodpeckers of the World. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

The Auk 129(2):362–363, 2012
© The American Ornithologists' Union, 2012.
Printed in USA.

The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2010.—S. T. Garnett, J. K. Szabo, and G. Dutson. 2011. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Australia. x + 442 pp., 240 range maps. ISBN 9780643103689. Paperback, $55.00; Kindle, $44.00.—The purpose of this book is to provide a national overview of the conservation status of birds occurring in Australian territory that meet the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN 2011) Red List criteria for Extinct, Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Near Threatened. In 2010, these included 238 taxa at the species or subspecies level. Taxa in other IUCN categories are not addressed.

The bulk of the content (409 pp.) is devoted to Conservation Summaries, one for each taxa in these high-risk categories. Each summary begins with a history of previous IUCN status, notes on taxonomy, a description of the range, a range map, notes on abundance, a brief account of relevant ecology, and a brief discussion of threats. The summary then moves on to a table showing the taxon's current eligibility against IUCN criteria, and lists of conservation objectives, information required (e.g., research and monitoring needs), and management actions required. Items in these last three sections are typically both brief and specific, but they lack timelines, costs, or suggestions for who might implement each action.

Each Conservation Summary concludes with a bibliography that typically includes an extensive selection of titles that most of us are not very familiar with. In checking on several of these

Downloaded From: https://complete.bioone.org/journals/The-Auk on 29 Mar 2024
Terms of Use: https://complete.bioone.org/terms-of-use

citations, I found that there are a large number of recovery plans (e.g., Mathieson and Smith 2009) that detail the timelines, budgets, and responsible parties that are only summarized in this book. I found a few references to be missing from the bibliographies, but I doubt that this is a serious problem. Although there are no bird drawings or photos in the book, you can quickly find photos on the Web to round out your understanding.

The other sections of the book cover the methodology of how the IUCN criteria were applied and a few summary tables. The methodology reveals a very broad and patient application of criteria through data analysis, expert opinion, and peer review. There also is an important appendix that explains why taxa listed in the *Action Plan for Australian Birds 2000* (Garnett and Crowley 2000) are not listed in the current 2010 version. This is a most useful summary of status change that gives the reader a clear explanation and that almost certainly has fended off some angry phone calls.

In fact, this is the third iteration of the Action Plan, a yet earlier version having been published in 1992 (Garnett 1992). The more I looked into the book's methodology, the level of detail, and the careful comparisons from decade to decade, the more I came to appreciate the integrity and value of its content. This is a substantial, long-term commitment to understanding the threats to these birds and to taking conservation action in the right places for the right taxa.

This book is a very well-crafted portal to bird conservation in Australia. Clearly, it will be of great value to those working in that region. But anyone interested in bird conservation more generally might want to pick this up. I was somewhat surprised to find myself reading more and more of the book, to compare ecologies, threats, and solutions that I'm familiar with in the Western Hemisphere to what's going on in Australia. For example, feral honey bees, feral cats, feral rabbits, and foxes are often cited as problems for particular taxa. So one wonders whether, for example, feral cats should be getting more attention here in the United States than they are. Thus, anyone working in conservation planning at the species, subspecies, or population levels might find some new ideas in this book.—Terrell D. Rich, *Partners in Flight National Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1387 South Vinnell Way, Boise, Idaho 83709, USA. E-mail: terry_rich@fws.gov*

Literature Cited

Garnett, S. T. 1992. The Action Plan for Australian Birds. Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Canberra.

Garnett, S. T., and G. M. Crowley. 2000. The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2000. Environment Australia, Canberra.

IUCN 2011. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, version 2011.2. Available online at www.iucnredlist.org.

Mathieson, M. T., and G. C. Smith. 2009. National recovery plan for the Black-breasted Button-Quail *Turnix melanogaster*. Report to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra, and Department of Environment and Resource Management, Brisbane, Australia.

Downloaded From: https://complete.bioone.org/journals/The-Auk on 29 Mar 2024
Terms of Use: https://complete.bioone.org/terms-of-use