

NEWS AND REVIEWS

1992 STEPHEN R. TULLY MEMORIAL GRANT RECIPIENT

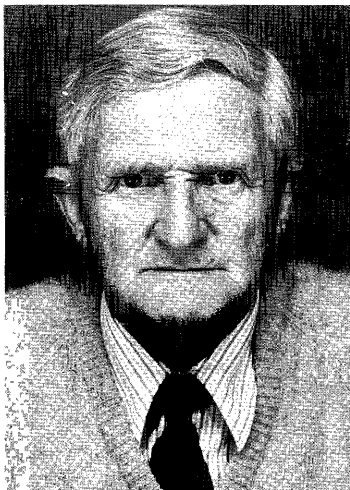


Martha J. Desmond

Martha J. Desmond received a B.A. degree in environmental studies from Wells College, Aurora, New York, and an M.S. degree in wildlife ecology from the University of Nebraska where she studied ecological aspects of Burrowing Owl nesting strategies. Currently, she is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Nebraska continuing to study Burrowing Owls. She is concentrating on their population reductions, movements, and genetic diversity.

Before returning to graduate studies, she had a diversity of experience including evaluating potential areas for black-footed ferret reintroductions in Nebraska, wading bird studies in Florida, raptor nesting surveys in Alaska, raptor migration studies at Hawk Mountain and in Israel, and recovery programs for Bald Eagles and Peregrines in Maine.

1992 LESLIE BROWN MEMORIAL GRANT RECIPIENT



G.E.A. Banfield

G.E.A. Banfield was born in London in 1918 and studied mining at the Royal School of Mines at London University. After serving with the British military in World War II, he moved to Africa where he was employed for 24 years by mining companies in South Africa and Zimbabwe. He also served 18 years on the faculty and as department head at Zimbabwe's School of Mines. Now retired, he continues to lecture part-time.

Having a long-term interest in birds, Banfield has been a member of the Ornithological Association of Zimbabwe. He joined the Black Eagle Survey Team in 1980 and has been the head organizer of the survey for the past nine years.

Birds of the night: owls, frogmouths and nightjars of Australia by David Hollands. Reed Books Pty Ltd, Balgowlah NSW, 1991. 224 pp. ISBN 0-7301-0325-0. Cost is \$49.95 plus shipping, available from the author at Box 125, Orbost, Victoria, 3888 Australia.

Many animals of Australia are unique and the nocturnal birds of that continent are no exception. David Fleay “whetted our appetite” on these birds with his *Nightwatchman of Bush and Plains* (1968) and David Hollands serves us the “main course” for those hungering to know about these fascinating birds. This book on the natural history of the Australian night birds is based on many years of traveling across much of Australia, untold nights in hides at nests, careful record-keeping, and the taking of many photographs (often triggered by infrared devices) with 124 colored photographs included in the book. The photographs were all taken in native habitats; hence, they reveal much about the biology of the birds but many are aesthetic as well. The text is loaded with biological information but is written in fine natural history style, e.g.,

“In north Queensland, Rufous Owl country lies between the foothills of the Dividing Range and the sea. Here the tumbling creeks from the mountains slow their rush to the sea and wind slowly across the plain; green ribbons of tropical luxuriance in a sea of dry savannah woodland. Often only a stone’s throw in width, these narrow strips are rainforests in miniature, dark and lush, with a flora and fauna quite different from the woodland that lies beside them.” Or,

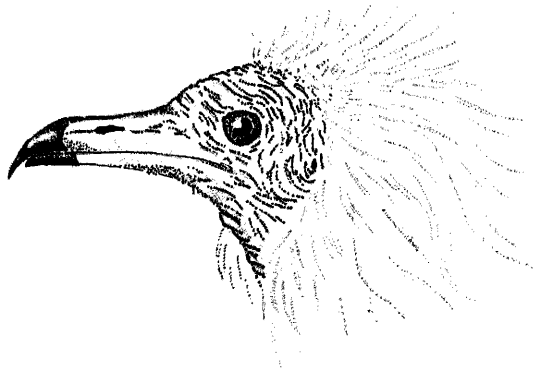
“Nightfall comes in layers in the rainforest. The sun had not quite set and, above the canopy, there was still light across the tops of the trees. On the forest floor, beneath the shrubs and tangled vines, it was already almost night. Most of the daytime birds had already fallen silent with only the squawk and cackle of a Jungle Fowl from the depths of the brush and the raucous shrieks of the last White Cockatoos heading home to roost. Then they too paused and, in the ensuing stillness, the male Lesser Sooty called from his roost along the creek. Above the canopy the cry carried with icy sharpness, a piercing, chilling scream, descending the scale and lasting a full two seconds. Often this call has been known as the ‘falling bomb whistle’ and, when heard from a distance, this is certainly an apt description but, heard at close quarters, the cry came with such icy intensity that I instinctively felt a thrill of fear, even though the cause was known.”

In addition to the 16 chapters that cover the night birds of Australia, there are chapters on pellets, eyes, ears and hunting, trees, hides and cameras, and a unique chapter (for this type of book) called a field guide. There is considerable information in this field guide on vocalizations, other names, field characters (including size—note the nature of dimorphism in some of the *Ninox* owls is reversed from the usual, i.e., female smaller than the male), food and hunting, breeding (including season, display, nest, eggs, incubation, young, fledging and postfledging), habitat, distribution (including maps) and distribution abroad.

While the author-photographer is a medical doctor, the text reveals considerable understanding of natural history. It also reveals a sincere caring, by the author, for the safety of his photographic subjects and he addresses the danger of using call-back techniques in locating owls and points out the possibility of severely disrupting breeding cycles.

While the stunning photography would suit this book as a coffee-table book the biology within the text will ensure its use by serious researchers and birders as well. The author shows some owl species at their nests for the first time and there are photos of owls, frogmouths and nightjars in flight.—**Richard J. Clark**

The **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation**, in fulfillment of the Endangered Species Act Section 7 commitments for Central Arizona Project storage features, contracted with BioSystems Analysis, Inc. to conduct a baseline study of the ecology of the Arizona Bald Eagle breeding population. This major research project is now complete and the Bureau anticipates the release of the 3-volume final report in early 1993. **Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado Regional Office, P.O. Box 61470, Boulder City, Nevada 89006-1470.**



Nikolai Stefanov