

Preface to the third edition

After more than 5 years, it seemed timely to update this guide with a fully revised third edition, rather than another reprint, partly to complement and serve as a companion to Richard Seaton's brainchild *Australian Birds of Prey in Flight: A Photographic Guide* (CSIRO Publishing, 2019). In addition, most species (including the least-studied species in 2012) have had significant new research papers published on them, such that substantial chunks of this guide require revision. Although it is still true that the species most in need of conservation action are certain eagles, arid-zone species and endemic bird-hunters, the Black-breasted Buzzard, Pacific Baza, Brahminy Kite, Grey Falcon and Black Falcon are now much better known than they were. A glance at the updated bibliography herein reveals that these species have each had between two and five dedicated studies conducted on them since 2012, and dietary and behavioural data on the Red Goshawk (formerly summarised in *HANZAB* and a generally unavailable RAOU report) are now in journal papers too. However, I need to correct a misconception in one review of *Australasian Eagles and Eagle-like Birds* (CSIRO Publishing, 2017). The situation is not as dramatically improved as suggested – the bibliography in the eagle book lists almost everything written on those birds since *HANZAB*, including minor notes, whereas the bibliography in this guide is intended

to highlight only major or significant studies and observations. So, the real measure of progress is to compare the bibliographies in the second and third editions of this guide.

In this edition I have tried to incorporate helpful and constructive reviews of the second edition, as well as updating the text with new information, including new vagrant raptors that have reached the Australian continent, or may do soon because they have occurred on islands off the tropical Australian coast or in Torres Strait.

One major aspect requiring substantial revision is that of raptor taxonomy, based on the latest DNA evidence. There have been recent DNA studies on: the Osprey; some goshawks and sparrowhawks; the endemic Australo-Papuan hawk genera; the harriers, and the implications for a large, artificial '*Accipiter*' genus; the booted eagles; and the falcons. These findings are reflected in the treatment of the Osprey as a single global species, and the Red Goshawk has moved herein to a position between the accipiters and the harriers.

This edition replaces some photographs in the second edition, and adds some additional ones on ages, sexes or morphs. I thank David Whelan and Mat Gilfedder in particular for providing new photos. David's photographs are showcased at www.wildpix.com.au. I gratefully acknowledge the many colleagues who collaborated on (and sometimes drove) the projects that

expanded the bibliography for half the species in this edition: Tom Aumann, George Baker, David Baker-Gabb, Chris Barnes, Alice Bauer, Tony Baylis, David Charley, Keith Fisher, James Fitzsimons, Heather Janetzki, Candice Larkin, Hans Lutter, Bernie McRitchie, Geoff Mitchell, Ben Nottidge, Bill O'Donnell, Jerry Olsen, Don Owner, Russell Palmer, Jeremy Rourke, Marlis Schoeb, Jason Searle, Leah Tsang, Fred van Gessel, Robert Werner, David Whelan and Andrew Zuccon. I also commend the people who rose to the challenge on the other little-known species (Black-breasted Buzzard, Pacific Baza, Brahminy Kite, Australian Hobby, Grey Falcon) and so expanded, or will soon expand, the bibliography on them: Allan Briggs, Mark Carter, Keith Fisher, Faye Hill, Immy Janse, Andrew Ley, Craig Morley, Pete Nunn, Chris Pavey, Will Riddell, Jonny Schoenjahn, Brian Tynan, Richard Waring, Chris Watson and Lois Wooding.

I note with sadness the passing of A.B. (Tony) Rose and Trevor Quested since the

second edition: both are acknowledged therein (and Tony was justly awarded BirdLife Australia's Hobbs Medal for his outstanding contribution to ornithology). I dedicate this book to the memory of my late parents Graham and Beatrice Debus, who passed away in 2016 and 2017.

I thank Mat Gilfedder for generously providing the distribution maps, originally prepared for *Australian Birds of Prey in Flight* and derived from records submitted to eBird. On request, the HANZAB line drawings in the first edition, by Mike Bamford, Nicolas Day, Kate Gorrings-Smith and Frank Knight, are reinstated; thanks go to John Peter of BirdLife Australia for retrieving the scans. I thank Lauren Webb, Tracey Kudis and the team at CSIRO Publishing for seeing the third edition through the publication process, and Peter Storer for copy editing. I thank my wife Sofia for her continuing love and support, as well as sharing some raptor-watching projects.