

Turacos

A Portfolio of All Species

by William T. Cooper
and Joseph M. Forshaw
Reviewed by Rae V. Anderson

"Expectations of a lover of fine paintings and the needs of a scientist are reconciled by this artist." "No living painter that I know manages this difficult balancing act with more skill." "William T. Cooper is a superb scientific observer." "They [the bird images] are so alive that they seem almost ready to fly from the page." "They have a uniquely powerful beauty."

All of these superlatives are from Sir David Attenborough in his introduction to TURACOS - A PORTFOLIO OF ALL SPECIES.

Turacos, a sub-Saharan, African order, are very interesting and spectacular birds. Strictly arboreal, these principally frugivorous beauties are unique in that the green and red coloring are copper-based uroporphyrins — the green pigment Turacoverdin and the red pigment Turacin.

Field biology of this group is generally rather poorly known though they are quite common as cage and aviary birds. They are easily maintained and, given proper conditions, are readily bred in captivity.

The order MUSOPHAGIFORMES includes three subfamilies, six genera and 23 species. All of these species are spectacularly illustrated and reproduced at original size (750mm [29.5in] X 570mm [22.5in]) in this portfolio. All species are depicted at life size with the exception of the Great blue *Corythaëola cristata* which is approximately 2/3 life size.

TURACOS - A PORTFOLIO OF ALL SPECIES, is principally a fine art publication from Nokomis Editions, Pty. Ltd., a joint venture of Noleen Glavish and Andrew Isles. The illustrations are by world renowned ornithological artist William T. Cooper and the text is by Australia's leading ornithologist Joseph M. Forshaw.

Beautifully presented, this edition is

more directed to the art and artist than to the text. The paper is archival quality, acid, alum, rosin and elemental chlorine free, with permanence in excess of 300 years. Six-color reproduction is being used to assure exceptional color accuracy.

Bill Cooper has stated that these portfolio prints are the best reproductions of his work to be done so far—good to the point of being difficult to distinguish the prints from the originals when they are side by side.

Cooper's paintings have never before been reproduced using the very best modern color processes.

During their field observations of these birds in Africa, Wendy Cooper, Bill's Cooper's wife, a botanist in her own right, researched and collected the botanicals in the habitats of each of the Turaco species. These plants and their fruits are, in most of the illustrations, food plants of the species illustrated.

The plates are unbound and are in a protective cover of the same paper as used for the plates. There is one page of text for each of the 23 Turaco

species. The accompanying text is a specially written, abridged version though it remains scientific and technical. The text is printed on the same quality but lighter weight paper as the illustrative plates and is bound in the same maroon book binding cloth as the protective box. The book of text measures 405mm (14 inches) by 245mm (10 inches).

The portfolio is protected in a hand-crafted solander type box. This is of wood, covered with book binding cloth—cobalt with maroon trim and gold blocking. These protective boxes are being individually hand made by one craftsman. The box is lined with the same quality archival paper as is used for the plates and text.

Joe Forshaw and Bill Cooper are generally considered the finest ornithological writer-and artist team of the twentieth century.

Bill Cooper is without question one of the world's leading contemporary bird illustrators and is arguably the world's best.

He has exhibited at the prestigious Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum



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Artist/illustrator William T. Cooper working on the Great Blue Turaco painting in his studio in North Queensland, Australia.



Writer/ornithologist Joseph M. Forshaw (right) and "reviewer" Rae V. Anderson with Cooper's 1988 Hyacinth Macaw painting in the background.

in Wausau, Wisconsin. Further, in 1990, he was awarded the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences Gold Medal for distinction in Natural History art. This award is given periodically to an artist "whose artistic endeavours and life's work have contributed to mankind's better understanding and appreciation of living things." In addition, in 1994, he was awarded the "Order of Australia" for his contribution to art and ornithology.

The 23 plates in this portfolio are what one has now come to expect of Bill Cooper though for the first time they are here reproduced at original size and in finer quality than ever before.

When viewing this portfolio I cannot help but feel as I have when having in my hands original sets of Gould's, Elliott's, Lear's, or Shelley's monographs.

This edition is strictly limited to 290 hand numbered sets for worldwide distribution. Orders will be filled strictly in the order received. Because of the initial strong demand, it is anticipated that the portfolio will be fully subscribed earlier than previously expected. This portfolio is quite expensive due to the extreme limitation and its very high production costs.

Undoubtedly, many sets will be broken up for the limited edition print market. In my opinion, complete, unbroken sets are destined to become rare and highly sought after.

TURACOS - A PORTFOLIO is part one of a two part series. The second part, COCKATOOS OF THE WORLD - A PORTFOLIO, will include all 21 species. Publication of The Cockatoos is tentatively scheduled for 1999. Priority for the Cockatoos Portfolio will be given to the purchasers of the Turacos Portfolio with the right to order the same numbered sets. It is anticipated that few, if any, sets of the Cockatoos Portfolio will be available for separate sale.

TURACOS - A PORTFOLIO OF ALL SPECIES is priced at A \$3,840.00 per set (deposit 10 percent) and is available from: Nokomis Editions, Pty. Ltd. P.O. Box 319, Clifton Hill, Victoria 3068, Australia Telephone: 61-39486-1756 FAX: 61-3-9482-3573

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