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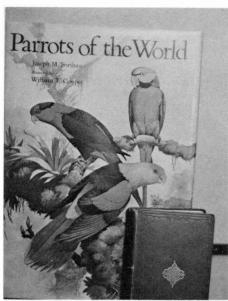


by Sheldon Dingle

#### PARROTS OF THE WORLD

From the days of the Roman Empire to our contemporary urban times the parrot has been a popular pet. No doubt its ability to mimic the human voice has been an appealing factor but its hardliness, longevity, and colors are also important. In addition to being a common pet, these birds adapt very well to our aviary and zoo displays. No one can question the popularity of the parrot.

Over the years many good parrot books have been written but until 1973 the last authoritative monograph of the parrots was published in 1868 by Otto

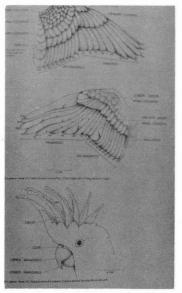


Finsch. (A monograph is a treatise on a single subject — in this case the order Psittaciformes, i.e., partots.) In 1973 Joseph M. Forshaw published his great monograph *Parrots of the World*. It includes all the new species and data discovered since Finsch's book came out.

Like Finsch, Forshaw was eminently qualified to prepare his monograph. Mr. Forshaw is an Australian ornithologist with a special interest in parrots. He has

traveled to many parts of the world to study parrots in their native habitats. He was awarded a Chapman grant and, later, a Churchill Fellowship which enabled him to study the great reference collections in various parts of the world and to make field observations when in the proximity of wild parrots. Mr. Forshaw has published papers and articles in the journals of three countries and has published a very beautiful book, *Parrots of Australia*.

Parrots of the World is lavishly illustrated. The artist, William Cooper, has paintings in collections all around the world. In 1968 he helped produce A Portfolio of Australian Birds. He next spent three years working full time to illustrate Parrots of the World. Each of the nearly 340 species of parrots is illustrated with the addition of numerous subspecies giving a total of almost 500 beautiful birds shown in glowing colors





Mr. Cooper's work ranks him among the finest living bird painters. If you like birds you will be delighted with the many full page paintings in the volume.



The book itself is a large tome fifteen inches high by eleven inches wide. It contains 584 pages of well organized material. The introduction alone is a gold mine of valid parrot lore. It opens with fossil history and moves through such interesting subjects as classifications, physical attributes of parrots, and natural history of parrots. The latter section deals with such diverse subjects as habits, nesting, parrots in captivity, the role of aviculture in conservation, and the pet trade. Re-



gardless how much one knows about parrots, one's knowledge will be increased by reading the introduction.

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The remainder and bulk of the

The remainder and bulk of the volume is devoted to the birds. Forshaw has divided the world's parrot population into three main categories each defined in geographical terms called Distributions. There is the Pacific Distribution with Australia being the dominant land mass; the Afro-Asian Distribution which includes Africa, India and most of the Orient; and the South American Distri-

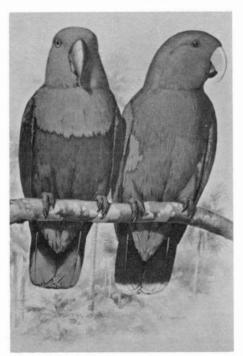




bution. The first and last distributions contain a wealth of parrots from Lorikeets to Macaws. The Afro-Asian Distribution although huge, contains surprisingly few species of parrots.

At the beginning of each distribution section Forshaw gives a general run-down on the avian history of the area and explains the probable migrations and relationships of the birds. He includes large maps that give the reader a clear picture of the geography discussed in the text. From this general introduction Forshaw moves right on to consider the birds themselves.

Each species of bird is dealt with according to the same format. The common and Latin names are given, followed by description, distribution, and general notes. General notes contain very lucid discussions regarding the birds behavior in the wild, its call, nesting habits, diet, and avicultural aspects. There is no other book available that gives so much information on so many parrots. It is



these accounts of species that most readers turn to most often.

The entire volume is well organized with a good table of contents, an index of scientific and English names, and a grand bibliography. The only features that ruffle my feathers, so to speak, are the use of the metric system in descriptions and an inconsistent numbering system on the small pictures that identify each bird on the larger plates. Granted, Forshaw is not responsible for my ignorance of metrics but he might have devised a consistent format to identify the birds.

All things considered, Forshaw's mon-

ograph Parrots of the World is a very excellent book that no bird enthusiast should be without. It is a very beautiful and useful book published by Doubleday and retailing for sixty-five dollars. It is the type of book that will increase in value as time moves along and should eventually become a collectors item. I'm betting on it. I bought three copies •



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