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A Book Review
by Rae Anderson,
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TURACOS – A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MUSOPHAGIDAE.

Hard cover, 223 pages, 25 full page color plates,
Nokomis Editions Pty. Ltd., 2002.
A\$230.00 plus shipping.

This beautiful and very informative book on this very distinctive bird family is a more definitive, technical, text follow up to *TURACOS – A PORTFOLIO OF ALL SPECIES*, which was reviewed in *AFA WATCHBIRD*, Volume XXV, Number 2, March/April 1998. Authored and illustrated by the renowned Forshaw/Cooper team, it also includes a section on Turacos in Aviculture by Robert J. Berry (retired Curator of Birds for the Houston Zoo and former president of AFA) and William W. Todd III (Curator of Birds, Houston Zoo). This is the first fully illustrated monograph on the Turacos to be published since 1860 and the only volume to cover all species.

TURACOS – A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MUSOPHAGIDAE is in the same format and arrangement as the many preceding Forshaw/Cooper titles and is executed in their same, now expected, scholarly manner. It contains all of the plates from the original *PORTFOLIO*, though significantly reduced in size because of the very large size of the original, where all species except the Great Blue Turaco were illustrated at very near life size. In addition, this new edition contains three additional plates, two of head details showing facial patterns and head – crest comparisons. One of the new plates shows the juvenile plumage of five species. There are also numerous and quite interesting full and partial page black and white text illustrations depicting various postures and actions. The size of this volume is quarto (4to), 215mm (8 1/2 in.) X 295mm (11 5/8 in.).

The Introduction discusses the confusion in the morphological relationships of the cuckoos, turacos, hoatzins, pigeons and galliformes, physical attributes, movements, vocalizations, food and feeding, breeding, status and conservation. The chapter on Turacos in Aviculture though brief, includes sections on husbandry (housing, breeding, feeding and diet) and captive status. The balance of the book follows the same format as all of its predecessor titles.

The Turacos are a very distinctive and beautiful bird family, indigenous exclusively to sub-Saharan Africa. Several of the species are well established in aviculture. Until fairly recently however, this family seems to have been little studied in the wild and this book is a welcome addition to our avian knowledge.

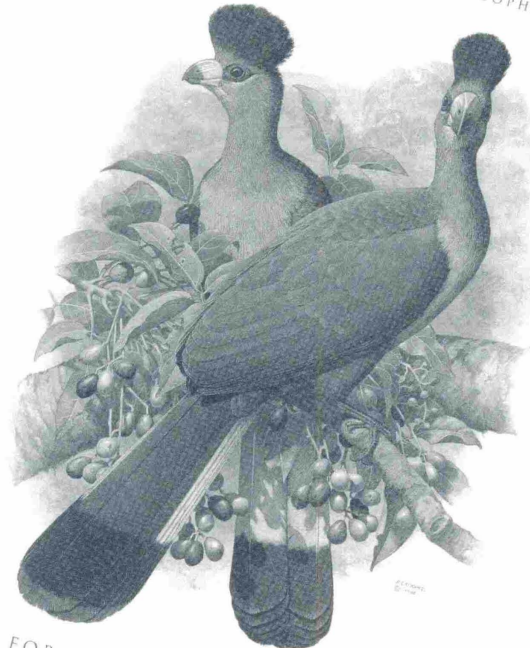
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ILLUSTRATED BY
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