

Prefaces

By the President of the British Ornithologists' Union

In 1964 the 'New Dictionary', as it became so well known, was termed a comprehensive book of reference on birds on a world-wide basis both by its editor and creator, Sir Landsborough Thomson, and by R.E. Moreau, then President of the BOU. The present volume is no different in this respect, but it has been very widely revised, a great part of it re-written, much fresh material added, and it forms a new and important almost encyclopaedic work, written and illustrated by several hundred experts. Once again the co-operation of authors, artists and photographers has been given unstintedly, nearly all of it in an honorary capacity, and to them all the Union owes much gratitude and praise.

To the great expertise and ability of the senior editor, Dr Bruce Campbell, and to his tireless assistant Elizabeth Lack, has fallen the task of organizing and completing this ambitious work with the help of a panel of advisors, of whom Dr David Snow must be especially mentioned. They have given readily of their time, thought and knowledge for over five years and the Union is indeed grateful. Our publisher also earns generous thanks, for he has given patient and sympathetic help all through and has worked well beyond the limits to which most publishers in his position would go.

A New Dictionary of Birds was in part a tribute to the memory of Professor Alfred Newton F.R.S., whose original *A Dictionary of Birds* was the inspiration behind Sir Landsborough Thomson's project for the Union's Centenary. *A New Dictionary of Birds* has been an important source of reference for 20 years and it so remains. That it needs this new volume to update it in so comparatively short a time is a measure of the immense output of present research into a subject for which Professor Newton did so much to originate respect and esteem. The Union that he helped to found has here been provided with a worthy successor to the two previous works.

J. F. MONK

By the President of the American Ornithologists' Union

The American Ornithologists' Union congratulates the British Ornithologists' Union for the publication of this major new work in our field. The completion in 1985 of *A Dictionary of Birds* continues and extends the service to ornithology provided first in 1896 by Alfred Newton's dictionary and then in 1964 by A. Landsborough Thomson's new dictionary. Because ornithology is expanding and diversifying so fast, the importance of having an up-to-date, comprehensive reference work of its terms is even greater now than it was at the time of Thomson's work. That work was initiated to mark the Centenary of the British Ornithologists' Union. This new dictionary was being prepared at the time that the American Ornithologists' Union celebrated its own centennial in 1983.

We are particularly indebted to the editors and to all the other people involved in its production for the role the dictionary will play in fostering communication among nations. For students it will serve as an entrance to the present status of the field. For scientists it will serve as a research tool and a bridge between disciplines. We are also glad that many of our members were able to serve as contributors to such a worthy cooperative project.

FRANCES C. JAMES