

Introduction

The predecessor of this publication (Christidis and Boles 1994) is well out of date. An update was originally planned to appear by 1998 at the latest. For a variety of reasons, this did not happen and, since then, a plethora of studies has been published that have resulted in taxonomic changes affecting Australian birds. Thus the present publication is timely, if not well overdue. Its aims are similar to those of the 1994 compilation:

1. Present an updated taxonomic list, using Christidis and Boles (1994) as the starting point into which subsequent taxonomic revisions are incorporated
2. Provide explanations for taxonomic changes in the literature and for those adopted here, including the citations for such work
3. Incorporate new species described and new records of vagrants to Australia since 1994, based on the recommendations of the Birds Australia's Rarities Committee (BARC) or that are represented by specimen records. BARC is the successor to the Royal Australasian Ornithologist Union's Rarities Appraisal Committee – RAC – which was the rarities committee operating at the time of Christidis and Boles (1994)
4. Maintain the geographical coverage to include the island territories of Australia. Those incorporated here are Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Heard Island, Lord Howe Island, Macquarie Island, Norfolk Island and the islands of Torres Strait, to which has been added Ashmore Reef, owing to the number of vagrant species that have recently been reported from this location. Also included are vagrants from the Australian Antarctic Territory not recorded elsewhere in Australian territory.

This species list includes all extant and recently extinct (post-1800) native species, including accepted vagrants (see below), and introduced species that have become established and continue to survive in the wild. Accepted vagrants are those for which observational records have been reviewed and accepted by BARC or are represented by a specimen record. Introduced species accepted into the list are those whose populations are naturally self-sustaining, without the need for additional releases or escapees to remain viable. The supplementary list includes introduced species that were established, but have now been extirpated, those species in the literature that are now not accepted and reports of vagrant species still under review by BARC at the time of writing.

Christidis and Boles (1994) dealt in an inconsistent manner with some Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands species for which the specimens on which the records are based have not been located. For example, based on specimen records cited by Gibson-Hill (1950),