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Emu
CSIRO Publishing
PO Box 1139 (150 Oxford St)
Collingwood, Vic. 3066, Australia

Telephone: 61 3 9662 7622
Fax: 61 3 9662 7611
Email: emu@publish.csiro.au



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JIRO KIKKAWA

Among ornithologists who have worked in the Australian region, Jiro Kikkawa stands out as having shaped the directions of progress in scientific ornithology in tropical regions. He has been a pioneer in this area, and his earlier work laid a foundation for much of the recent growth in the study of tropical ornithology. His influence is due not only to a large number of international and local scientific publications, but also to his role in developing an active research group, and fostering an interest in ecology and environment in generations of undergraduate and post-graduate students, who, (together with their students in turn), have since moved into intellectually influential positions throughout Australia.

Jiro Kikkawa was born in 1929 in Japan, and early in his career pursued a broad range of ecological subjects, including fisheries studies in Japan and small mammal ecology at Oxford University. However, his first love has always been ornithology, beginning with his early years as a youthful birdwatcher. He spent three years in New Zealand at Otago University where he laid the foundation for two major enduring research interests: the community ecology of rainforest avifauna and the behavioural ecology of *Zosterops* (silvereye) populations. He continued his work after moving to Australia in 1961, first to the University of New England (at the invitation of John le Gay Brereton) and then to the University of Queensland. After joining the RAOU in 1961, he published his first paper in *Emu*, the next year; he has served on the Taxonomic Committee and on the Editorial Board of *Emu*. Jiro was the President of the Queensland Ornithological Society from 1972 to 1975, and of the Ecological Society of Australia from 1974 to 1976; in 1990 he was elected Corresponding Fellow of the AOU and a member of the IOC. The University of Queensland awarded him a Personal Chair in 1980, in recognition of the quality of his academic work and in 1996 hosted a Festschrift meeting in his honour. Although he is now in official retirement, his scientific work continues actively from a base at the university.

Jiro's research has covered a broad range of species and topics, spanning ecology, animal behaviour, ornithology and nature conservation. By 1995, he had produced 120 original and review papers, as well as three books, seven edited volumes in English, and several texts in Japanese. The long-term (and continuing) pioneering study of the behaviour and ecology of Heron

Island silvereyes, started in 1965, is one of the few enduring studies in Australia. A series of papers and theses has unravelled the evolutionary logic of silver-eye behavioural patterns such as aggression, feeding, territory defence and mate choice.

In the early 1960s, he began studying bird assemblages within rainforests, in an era when Australian ecologists were largely focussed on issues of population regulation and were largely unconcerned with ecological communities. These papers tested quantitative computer-based methods of describing, comparing and analysing the species composition and habitat use of birds in rainforests. In the 1990s, these methods are now in standard use by scientists studying all types of bird community. In collaboration with others, including the plant ecologist Len Webb, this innovative work was also concerned with describing relationships between birds and plants, and with identifying parallel patterns shared by rainforests in different parts of the world. His publications on the biogeography of Australian rainforest birds are a major reference point for current work in this area.

Jiro Kikkawa has not been content with simply making a significant academic contribution, but throughout his career has actively engaged in transmitting scientific information into the public sphere. He has made both written and in-person contributions to the operation of many expert committees and government decision-making bodies responsible for significant conservation initiatives in the management of the Great Barrier Reef and of Australia's rainforests. He was the first director of the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Forest Ecology in north Queensland. He has also fostered and promoted scientific links between Australia and Japan, efforts that provided the founding stimulus underlying recent efforts in wader studies in Queensland.

Professor Jiro Kikkawa has made an outstanding contribution to scientific ornithology in Australia and this is recognised by the award of the 1999 D.L. Serventy Medal to him.

