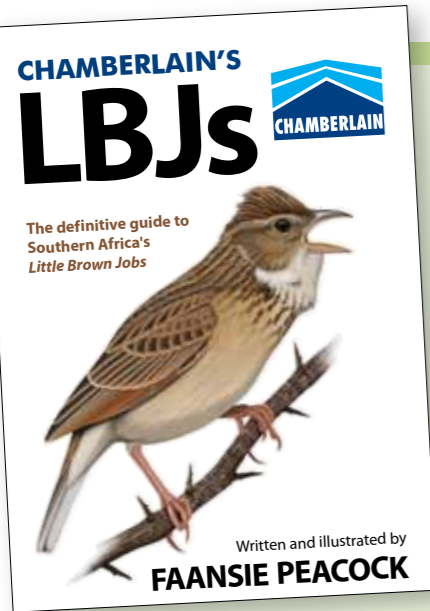


reviews YOU CAN use



Chamberlain's LBJs
The definitive guide to Southern Africa's Little Brown Jobs

Faansie Peacock

Mirafr Publishing, www.lbjs.co.za
Softcover, 352 pages. Approx. R325.
ISBN 978-0-620-54320-0

Until now, Faansie Peacock was best known for demystifying pipits with his book *Pipits of Southern Africa*. He also co-authored, with Etienne Marais, Chamberlain's *Guide to Birding Gauteng*. But with his latest offering, Chamberlain's *LBJs: The definitive guide to Southern Africa's Little Brown Jobs*, he has come of age. Four years in the making, this magnificent book catapults Faansie to the top of the small group of birders who illustrate their own guides. Move over Lars Jonsson and David Sibley, Faansie Peacock has arrived.

High praise indeed. You're probably thinking that there's more than a touch of hyperbole creeping in here, especially if (like me) you found Faansie's pipits in his first book a little wooden. But just flick through *LBJs* and I'm sure you'll agree that these are some of

the best bird illustrations you've ever seen. As Faansie admits in the book's preface, his artwork improved during the project, requiring him to repaint many of his early images. Combine the artwork with an authoritative, detailed and meticulously researched text and you have a book that sets a new standard for bird identification guides not only in southern Africa, but globally.

Before I get too carried away, I should explain the book's premise. Most birds are pretty easy to identify and a standard field guide is more than sufficient to identify bee-eaters, kingfishers, ducks and pigeons. But there are some groups that require more attention to detail, and this book provides that detail in spades. It covers some 230 species of mainly passerine birds that collectively might be termed 'little brown jobs' by the novice birder. The groups included are the honeyguides, larks, pipits, most chats and wheatears, scrub-robins, muscicapid flycatchers, sparrows, most weavers, bishops, widows, whydahs, indigobirds and selected finches, canaries and buntings. The appendix picks up a few other potentially tricky species (greenbuls, juvenile longclaws, hyltiotas, and some of the species of chats,

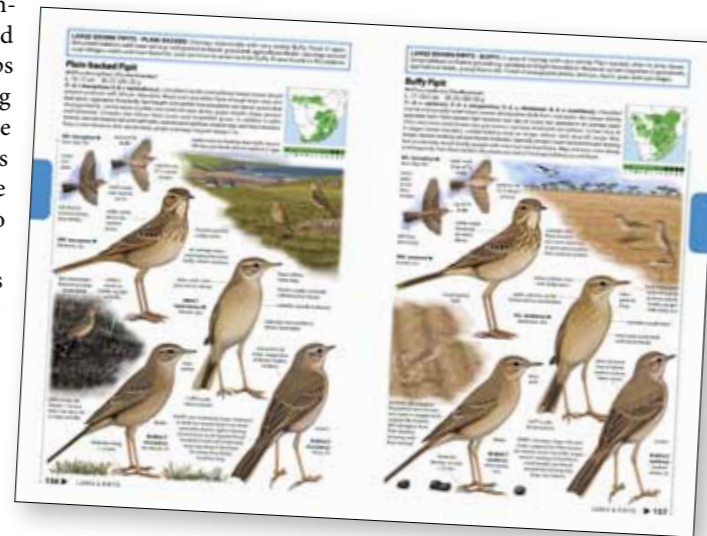
flycatchers, weavers, finches and canaries not treated in the main text). Perhaps the only group missing that should be there is the sunbirds, where females and the immature/eclipse males pose a challenge to most birders.

Each species receives either a half or a full page of annotated illustrations, which cover age- and sex-related plumage differences as well as regional variations. The plates also include a range map and breeding seasonality bar.

Accompanying each plate is a half page of text that highlights the key identification points, as well as covering habitat, status, confusing species, behaviour, voice and a few notes on diet and breeding biology. Each group also has a general introduction, which contains a wealth of information from practical identification tips to the latest findings on systematics and taxonomy. I was asked to review the lark texts because I have worked on their systematics, and I found very little to quibble about. Dipping into other groups it appears that this high standard has been maintained throughout the book. This is a field guide that has sections you'll actually want to read, not just grab when you are confronted with a bird you are struggling to identify.

In short, this is a must-have book for every birder in southern Africa. Beginners will learn a huge amount from it, and I suspect that even the 'experts' who have long since stopped carrying field guides will find this book indispensable in the field. Dawie Chamberlain is to be congratulated for once again supporting the production of a book – and this time it should reap rich marketing rewards.

PETER RYAN



The Verreaux's Eagles of Roodekrans

Garth Heydenrych and Libby Woodcock

Hardcover, dustjacket; 111 pages. R275. Self-published. Available from the Walter Sisulu and Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens, or e-mail the author on blackeaglebook@mweb.co.za to obtain a copy. ISBN 978-0-620-53884-8

and the associated decline of hyraxes, normally their main prey. To compensate they now feed predominantly on red rock rabbits, scrub hares and Helmeted

Guineafowl. A direct comparison can be made with the last breeding pair of these eagles on the Cape Peninsula mountain chain, which have also included other prey such as monagooses and even Feral Pigeons in their diet. In a book filled with so many outstanding images it is hard to single out some from others, but I particularly enjoyed the

bathing ones on pages 39–41, an aspect of their behaviour rarely portrayed. The juvenile plumage must be the most attractive of all the African eagles' and the pictures on pages 101–107 show the resplendent young eagle in magnificent flight.

Libby Woodcock's long period of dedication to the conservation of the Roodekrans eagles deserves our gratitude, and Garth Heydenrych's photographs are a celebration of their survival.

PETER STEYN



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Join internationally acclaimed Nikon photographer Joe McNally for exclusive workshops in June 2013.

In Joe's 30 years as a professional photographer, he has shot cover stories for *TIME*, *Fortune* and *National Geographic* magazines, to name a few. He is well known for his ability to produce complex images with the expert use of colour and light. Joe has been listed as one of the 100 Most Important People in Photography by *American Photo* magazine and, as part of his teaching activities, he conducts numerous workshops around the world.

Workshops will be held in Cape Town on Tuesday, 25 June at the CTICC and in Johannesburg on Thursday, 27 June at The Forum at The Campus. Each event will run from 08h00 to 17h00. The ticket price of R2 000 per person includes breakfast, snacks, lunch and beverages, as well as a R1 000 discount voucher which may be used on products valued at more than R2 500 purchased during the workshop. Selected items will be available and on promotion to attendees and the general public.



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