

trinomials and with a concise note on their known distribution, supported most helpfully as the need arises by a map. Nor, of course, are the "little brown jobs" neglected. *Anthus novaeseelandiae* is represented by eight subspecies and earns a map (p. 233). It is also worth noting that it has to compete with nine other species of pipit.

By contrast, New Zealand's remote insular avifauna makes a very modest showing. Only at sea with all our penguins, tubenoses and cormorants do we remain hard to beat. The long Hypothetical List suggests that South African ornithologists still have much to learn about their oceanic migrants and visitors. How satisfying, incidentally, to see *Catharacta* not *Stercorarius* used for the generic name of the big austral skuas.

All worthwhile checklists contain some curious scraps of information. That wayward nearctic sandpiper, *Calidris fuscicollis*, is on both the SA and the NZ lists. But the only one so far recorded in South Africa (p. 365) became a victim of botulism at a sewage works near Cape Town. Does this sound a warning for coprophilous birdwatchers on the Auckland Isthmus?

Just as on the football field Springboks have proved that they can run straight and kick goals, so the team which compiled this checklist has mastered a vast subject and revealed a meticulous attention to detail. Is it churlish to point out that on p. 298, *epomorpha* should be *epomophora*? The Royal Albatross is the 'epaulette wearer'. Even if we remember the ancient adage *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*, the SAOS Checklist of 1980 will be an indispensable tool for very many years and not without significance for serious NZ ornithologists.

R.B. Sibson

Contribution à l'Etude des Oiseaux de Polynésie Orientale, by D.T. Holyoak and J.-C. Thibault. Mémoires du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Series A, Zoology, Vol. 127. 1984. 209 pp., maps. Available from La Bibliothèque centrale, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, 38, rue Geoffroy-Sainte-Hilaire, 75005 Paris.

Anyone contemplating a birdwatching trip to the eastern Pacific, from Samoa eastwards, should get a copy of this book.

This modest publication, printed on non-glossy paper, is the most valuable guide to the birds of these areas at present available.

Not only does it give distribution maps and specific island information as to what bird is on what island, but it also gives early records, many of which go back to Captain Cook.

The book does not contain illustrations of the birds but gives adequate descriptions as to size, colour, song and habitat. As such it could be described as an elaborate checklist.

Already, as with most publications, it needs updating as it does not record the Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) on Tahiti or Moorea or the Zebra Dove (*Geopelia striata*) on Borabora. However, these introduced species on these islands do not constitute a serious omission.

The only problem with this book for many New Zealand birders is that it is in French. Nevertheless, it is well to take the time and translate it for its value is immense.

Stuart Chambers