

REVIEWS

A field guide to Australian birdsong. Bird Observers Club, 1983.

This first cassette of a series covers species from Emu to the Striated Heron and is a most welcome addition to the commercial recordings available.

It covers 70 species, most of which are seabirds, many of them rarely seen let alone heard by the average ornithologist. The localities in which these recordings were made range from Antarctica in the south through many subantarctic islands to New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain on a great variety of field equipment. The oldest recording on the tape was made in 1959, the most recent in 1979.

It is inevitable in a production like this that some species are not available owing to a lack of suitable recordings. One hopes that a future tape will cover those that eventually do become available. In this instance 24 species have been omitted, some of which this reviewer could supply.

The recordings themselves are generally of a high standard, given the original field conditions, and run for an average of about a minute each. The booklet that comes with the cassette gives all the data most users would require: the common names, the scientific names, who recorded the sounds, and when and where the recording was made. The spoken identifications are by Len Grice and the compilation and editing are by Rex Buckingham and Len Jackson, who are to be congratulated on doing a difficult job well.

For the price of \$A10.00 this is well worth having as it presents many species previously unavailable here or in Australia. Available from The Bird Observers Club, Box 2176T, GPO, Melbourne 3001, Victoria. This review copy has been placed in the Society library.

L. B. McPherson

Animals of the Estuary Shore, by Malcolm B. Jones and with contributions by S. Blomberg, R. Holdaway, P. Richard, M. Tate and J. Robb, University of Canterbury publication No. 32, 162 pp., 1983.

This fine, though unusual, publication is, as stated by Professor George A Knox, "a resource with multiple uses." It describes "a unique ecosystem that provides aesthetic enjoyment."

The thing that strikes the reader is the versatility of the publication because it includes almost the entire animal life to be found at an estuary in New Zealand. It begins with a concise description of the estuarine environment, followed by a short description of minor phyla such as flatworms and insects. This chapter is followed by the phylum of molluscs, beautifully illustrated, and with a key to major groups. Reading their descriptions, one is taken by the wealth of animal life in the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. This chapter is followed by a description of Polychaeta or marine bristle

worms and the chapter on Crustacea, a diverse and successful group of arthropods, which is again clearly illustrated.

The last chapter is devoted to birds, and about one-third of the text is devoted to this group of estuarine animals. The text is followed by a Glossary and Index of Animals. One is impressed by the excellence of the illustrations which, although mostly in black and white, provide ways of unmistakably recognising the birds. A total of 76 bird species has been recorded, together with a description of their appearance at the estuary, feeding, etc.

The authors of this publication have provided a great asset by including an account of the biology of so many animals at this estuary. The only possible shortcoming may be the failure to mention the amphibians and reptiles. May we hope that in other estuaries where the bird fauna is already known, studies of other animals will follow — after all, birds are dependent on other animals in the same habitat.

Kazimierz Wodzicki