

REVIEW

Oliver, L. Austin, Jr. *Families of Birds*. Illustrated by Arthur Singer. Golden Press, New York. US \$1.95 200 pp.

Thumb-nail sketches of the 34 orders and 208 families of fossil and living birds with some hundreds of coloured illustrations of typical species, by the author and illustrator of "Birds of the World," certainly add up to a useful and relatively inexpensive paperback summary of the Class Aves. Introductory sections deal with faunal regions, origin and evolution, and the fossil record, which has a table showing relative numbers of species in the main groups of birds in past geological periods (based on Brodkorb's data). New Zealand species illustrated by Singer in reduced "Birds of the World" style are *Dinornis* (silhouette), kiwi, Rockhopper penguin, Yellow-nosed Mollymawk, Sooty Shearwater, Diving Petrel, some rarer storm petrels, Red-tailed Tropic Bird, Black and Spotted Shags, Least Frigate Bird, Night Heron, a few waders, Great Skua, Noddy, Barn Owl, Rifleman, Kokako, Indian Myna, and some introduced finches, but it is for the world-perspective the book will be valued.

I find especially useful the inclusion of fossil families, especially irritating the small page size (7½ x 4 ins), uniform with little else, wasteful of shelf space, and not justified by pocket use in the field, but those who share my prejudice can buy the same book, hard cover, larger format, in the de luxe Goldencrest edition for US \$5.95.

C.A.F.