

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Birds in Bass Strait*, by Ken Simpson. Published for B.H.P. by A. H. & A. W. Reed Pty Ltd, Sydney, &c., 112 pp., illus., 1972, \$4.95.

Described as the first of several titles on selected Australian subjects initiated and sponsored by the Oil and Gas Division of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd., this book will be of particular interest to New Zealand readers. Bass Strait is not in any sense a narrowly restricted region, for its sea and shorebirds are representative of the same latitudinal zone as much of the New Zealand coast. The author, who is currently a Senior Technical Officer at Monash University, Melbourne, with a comprehensive background of varied field experience in both Australia and Antarctica, has a distinctive style and approach, refreshingly free of cliché and re-hashed data. When there is good published material available he gives the relevant reference, but devotes his text mainly to original observations and to comments which are practical and stimulating. It leaves the impression that Mr Simpson has digested the available literature, but also has kept his eyes open. The quality of the text is enhanced by good concluding chapters on landbird migration, research by banding, beach-combing, specimen preservation and recording, seabird photography, bird societies and clubs, and the marine mammals. Typical of the author's style are the instructions for such emergencies as dropping your camera in the sea — "Keep it totally submerged in salt water until you get it home . . . place it in the toilet . . . and then flush ten times . . . Have a stiff whisky if you feel depressed."

The printing, lay-out, and the standard and choice of illustrations, mainly in colour, are very good indeed. It is interesting to note that, with two exceptions, all the photographers are amateurs. There are some arresting and unusual studies, such as Graeme Chapman's Greenshank (Pl. 28) and a fine series of oceanic birds on the wing by Bill Burlace. One could be tempted to ask him why the Wedge-tailed Shearwaters (Fig. 15) are not Flesh-footed Shearwaters, why the immature Black-browed Albatross (Fig. 16) is not an immature Grey-headed; or ask Michael Carter why the Eastern Common Terns in Plate 20 are not White-fronted, but they could be right, and the questions only point up the pitfalls.

This attractive book can be recommended for both reading and reference.

R. A. F.



*Birds of the Antarctic and Subantarctic*. By G. E. Watson, J. P. Angle, P. C. Harper, M. A. Bridge, R. P. Schlatter, W. L. N. Tickell, J. C. Boyd, and M. M. Boyd. Antarctic Map Folio Series, Folio 14. Pp. 1-18, figs 1-2, 2 maps, pls 1-15. American Geographical Society, New York, 1971, US \$10.

Dr George E. Watson, of the United States National Museum, is the senior author of this impressive publication, and his formidable list of collaborators includes one active member of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. Published under contract with the National Science Foundation, the important distribution charts embody, along