

REVIEWS

The Sounds of Antarctica. Recorded and introduced by Hank Curth. A Kiwi Musiccolour Book. 16 pp., illus. One 33 1/3 r.p.m. record. Wellington, &c.: A. H. & A. W. Reed. 1965. \$1.90.

This record published in 1965 by Kiwi Records of Wellington (the record division of A. H. & A. W. Reed Ltd.) was the first commercial disc published anywhere in the world devoted entirely to sounds of Antarctica and since it is sufficiently important to be included in a catalogue of bird sounds from the Antarctic (Boswall & Prytherch, 1969: 604) it deserves to be brought to the attention of New Zealand readers because it is still readily available from the publishers. The record comes with a 16 page booklet containing colour photographs and descriptions of Antarctic scenery, activities and animals. It is a 7 inch (17cm) 33 1/3 r.p.m. disc and begins with the sounds made by the USS *Glacier* as she breaks through the ice some miles from McMurdo then going on to a recording of Adelie Penguin chicks with adults. The third recording on side one is unfortunately not clearly identified, but is of McCormick's Skua made in McMurdo Sound. Other tracks include Weddell Seals, ice noises, aircraft sounds, Emperor Penguins, huskies, an interview with a New Zealander at Scott Base and a recording of seals and small fish in the sea via a hydrophone. As a matter of local interest, the Editor of *Notornis* tells me that he shared a cabin in the *Glacier* with Mr Curth for several days and saw some of these recordings being made on a Uher machine.

The only complaint I have is that the scientific names have not been included in either the spoken introductions or the colourful booklet.

This record, which sells in most shops for about \$1.90, is the best buy available, the only other disc currently on the market being three times the price. For those interested in further information about this and other records of bird song (including much unpublished), I would suggest that you consult the following reference: Jeffrey Boswall & Robin J. Prytherch, 1969. A discography of bird sounds from the Antarctic. *The Polar Record* [Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, England] 14 (92): 603-612, 1969, a reprint of which is in the OSNZ Library.

L. B. McP.

A Field Guide to Western Bird Song. Introduced by A. A. Allen and Roger Tory Peterson. Three 33 1/3 r.p.m. records. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology. US \$14.95.

This set of three 12 inch (30 cm) records was published to match Roger Tory Peterson's famous "A Field Guide to Western Birds." This is done very well with only a few omissions. This set of records has special interest to New Zealanders as it includes recordings of species both resident and migratory. Among the credits on the back of the cover are two names well known in New Zealand: William V. Ward, who was responsible for the Hawaiian birds, and G. R. Williams, who supplied a Pitcairn Island recording of the Bristle-thighed Curlew. Other well-known names included are those of

Ludwig Koch and Eric Simms. The species are introduced verbally by Dr Arthur A. Allen and Roger Tory Peterson. The set covers more than 600 species; therefore the time allotted to each is rather brief, only 15 seconds. The cover of this set gives the species in order of appearance, the function of the sound illustrated as well as the locality and the month of recording. The Hawaiian recordings on side two of disc three are the only ones currently available.

I would highly recommend this set, which is available from the Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850, U.S.A.

L. B. McP.

HUTCHINSON, J. N. *Australian bird calls index* — Series 1, Western Australia, 12 inch LP record or one hour tape-cassette. Available from John N. Hutchinson, Gascoyne Research Station, Carnarvon 6701, Western Australia. A\$5.00 incl. postage.

This full length 33 1/3 r.p.m. recording was produced by John N. Hutchinson and he has provided a magnificent example of what can be done with an open microphone when recording bird song. The quality on this disc is excellent and reminds one of that famous pioneer of nature recording, Dr Ludwig Koch, who always used open microphones.

This disc has 50 species on it, three of which were supplied by Norman Robinson. The species are presented in taxonomic order and are introduced by Miss Gillian Waite, who made one small mistake on one of the announcements. The second bird on track two is announced as a Boobook Owl and is, in fact, listed as such in the main notes on the back of the cover; however, a little sticker attached to the cover states that the recording is a Barking Owl. Of the 50 species, 38 are, as far as I can tell, first recordings for Australia, some of them being of uncommon to rare birds. The cover photograph is a nice shot of the Wedgebill, *Sphenostoma cristatum*.

Mr Hutchinson is to be commended for this record: one hopes that he will go on recording more birds. The record is the result of nine years of patient field work with two Ficord tape recorders.

L. B. McP.

[A review of this recording has appeared in *Emu* 73 (1): 37, by "P.N.R.", January 1973].

BIGWOOD, K. & J. *A treasury of New Zealand bird song*. Introduced by G. R. Williams. Wellington: Kiwi Records (A. H. & A. W. Reed), LP SLD-25 (also available as cassette, TC SLD-25). \$5.50.

This long-playing record is a re-issue of the boxed set that was published some years ago and has many of the faults of that set. The long spoken introductions by Dr Gordon Williams are a waste of valuable needle time and could have been printed on the cover or on a supplementary page. These introductions do not always indicate which race of bird is being presented nor does the data on the cover help much.

These recordings were obtained by Ken and Jean Bigwood on EMI L2 machines and tend to show their age a little except for