

ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

JEAN & ALLAN BATHAM came originally from England. They lived for 10 years in the Virgin Islands in the West Indies and, on retiring, planned a round-the-world trip on a 33 ft ketch since sailing had always been their hobby and, as they have said, almost their way of life. They set off at the end of 1967 and came via the San Blas Islands off Panama, Galapagos, Marquesas, Tahiti, the Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji, thence to New Zealand, arriving in December 1968. They say: "We so fell in love with this lovely country that we have bought property here and have given up our wanderings with the intention of settling here for good."

At the time of their voyage, the Smithsonian Institution was making its survey of the sea birds of the Pacific and the Bathams thought it would add interest to their trip to have a job to do and they asked if they might assist the survey in keeping a bird log across the Pacific. They write of this: "Not a day passed at sea that we did not see birds, even in mid Pacific, 1500 miles from anywhere. Of course we had a marvellous opportunity to observe them, usually from their own level above the water and from a slow-moving vessel. We spent six weeks at Penrhyn and were able to explore many of the uninhabited 'motus' on the reef, which one felt belonged entirely to the birds. Man was the alien there."

PAUL HEPPLESTON graduated B.Sc. (Wales) in 1965 and Ph.D. (Aberdeen) in 1968. His research interests are primarily on oystercatchers and he has written a number of papers on their ecology and behaviour.

Dr Heppleston's thesis from the University of Aberdeen was entitled: "An ecological study of the Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus occidentalis* Neu.) in coastal and inland habitats of north-east Scotland." He has published a number of papers following this work, including — Anatomical observations on the bill of the Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus occidentalis*) in relation to feeding behaviour. *J. Zool., Lond.* 161 (4): 519-524, pls I-III (1970); Sexing Oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus*) from bill measurements. *Bird Study* 17: 48-49 (1970); Nest site selection by Oystercatchers . . . in the Netherlands and Scotland. *Neth.J. Zool.* 21 (2): 208-211 (1971); Feeding techniques of the Oystercatcher . . . *Bird Study* 18: 15-20 (1971); The feeding ecology of oystercatchers . . . in winter in northern Scotland. *J. anim. Ecol.* 40 (3): 651-672, 5 figs (1971); The comparative breeding ecology of oystercatchers . . . in inland and coastal habitats. *J. anim. Ecol.* 41 (1): 23-51, 8 figs.

He has also published ecological work on snails in relation to liver-fluke disease in Orkney, and on seals around Britain with particular interest in the amounts of pollutant chemicals reaching their tissues. Dr Heppleston has now become a schoolmaster, retaining his ornithological research interest as a sideline.

JOHN JENKINS is a shipmaster serving with the Union Steam Ship Company. He was born in Monmouthshire and after a period in various United Kingdom shipping companies joined the Union Steam Ship Co. of N.Z. Ltd in 1955. He has been interested in seabirds for some twenty years and has contributed a number of articles to *Notornis* since living in New Zealand. He is one of the few New Zealand members of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society which he joined in 1954. Captain Jenkins is, at the time of writing, Master of the M.V. *Kaimiro*. He says he is trying to organise some scheme of cooperative bird recording between ships in his Company.

CHARLES McCANN has had a long and interesting career in natural history. He has been a prolific recorder of his field observations and laboratory studies in both botany and zoology and has published over 200 notes, articles and scientific papers, many of them in the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. He has also written several books and monographs on Indian trees and grasses. Mr McCann was born at Castlerock, Goa Frontier, India, on 14 December 1899. He writes of himself:

"Some of the grandest tropical forest surrounded the area and the fauna abounded with wildlife, from elephants to flies, so much so that doors had to be closed at sundown for fear of dangerous intruders — even the King Cobra, though rare, occurred in the area. Such an environment seems to have influenced my future as a student of nature! (?). My parents informed me that I was the bane of their existence for I froze on to everything that moved. All attempts at shaping my ends had no avail. From "misdirected" babyhood onwards the "kink" increased out of all proportion (according to some I was just daft!).

After a chequered scholastic career, Dr E. Blatter invited me to join the biological laboratory of St Xavier's College, Bombay. I served as a lab. assistant and general factotum. At the same time I was made to attend the B.A. and B.Sc. courses in biology only. During my "spare time" I carried out research in systematic botany specialising in the glumiferous orders and in Agristology in particular. During the latter years of my college life I was appointed a Fellow in the Biological Department and instructed classes of the Inter-science, First Year Medical and took the practicals of the B.A. and B.Sc. in both botany and zoology.

During this period (1916 to 1920) I published several papers dealing with floristic aspects, either on my own or in association with Dr Blatter or others. The work on the *Grasses of Bombay Presidency* (and the collections) was completed during this period and was held in abeyance till the Imperial Council Agricultural Department to the Government published it in 1934.

At the end of 1921 I joined the Bombay Natural History Society as a field collector. After a few months in the field, I was recalled to take up the post of Assistant Curator. From then on I passed

through most phases of museum technique, helped in the construction of the Natural History Galleries of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, the conservation and preservation of the collections in every department, further the duties of taxidermist, modeller and general preparation. In addition to these duties I also became a co-editor of the Society's Journal till I relinquished my post in 1947 to come to New Zealand.

Some months after arrival in New Zealand, I joined the Dominion Museum, Wellington, as zoologist. I concentrated on the arrangement of the mammals and birds and giving a hand in the taxidermy department. Gradually, I concentrated more and more on the Cetacean and Seal collections which today are second to none for material. During my time at the Dominion Museum, I contributed several papers on Cetaceans and fish, not neglecting some ecological studies. In 1964 I was retired from the Dominion Museum and after a spell in hospital joined the N.Z. Oceanographic Institute and worked on papers dealing with fish, particularly deep-sea fishes (Macruridae). In December 1969, I was now retired for a second time! Financial circumstances necessitated some form of work, so I worked in a motor firm as garage assistant for two years — retired once more! Now, I am spending my time trying to catch up with much unfinished mss."

ALLAN BAKER is at present Assistant Curator of Ornithology at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada. He is also cross-appointed as a Research Associate to the Department of Zoology at the University of Toronto. Besides having interests in general ornithology, he is specialising in applications of multivariate statistics to ornithological data. He was born in Westport in 1943 but has lived mostly in Golden Bay where his interest in oystercatchers was kindled by the huge flocks which feed there. Having gained his University Entrance through Correspondence School, Dr Baker graduated M.Sc. with distinction and Ph.D. from the University of Canterbury under the supervision of John Warham and R. S. Bigelow. The topic of his Ph.D. research was systematics and affinities of New Zealand oystercatchers. He is currently working on multivariate geographic variation in New Zealand House Sparrows, and is writing a monograph on systematics and evolution in the world's oystercatchers.