

Charles Fleming has written a pithy foreword. Probing beneath the surface and viewing the New Zealand scene through the eyes of a palaeontologist to whom a million years are but as yesterday, he emphasises once again the antiquity and special character of our endemic species. But isn't his phrase "all the birds likely to be seen" unduly pessimistic? If your budding birdwatcher is on the coast, surely much depends upon where he is and when. Between Kaipara Harbour in summer and Otago Peninsula in winter the differences are more obvious than the similarities.

After the promise of the first volume, the illustrations are disappointing. They are boldly statuesque, but hardly inspired, smacking more of the museum specimen and the midnight oil than of the mountain air and the wind off the sea. In too many the essential 'jizz' is quite missing; but they will be helpful to uncritical beginners. If this booklet is a subtle experiment in marketing motorcars, let us have more of them. But its readers must revise their ideas of the common meaning of "common." A final tag is irresistible.

Fiat iustitia, ruat caelum.

R. B. S.



An undescribed extinct fish-eagle from the Chatham Islands, by C. J. O. Harrison & C. A. Walker. *Ibis* 115 (2): 274-277, text-fig. 1, pls 6-7, April 1973.

When Henry Ogg Forbes left New Zealand he took with him a large collection of bird bones which found a home in the British Museum of Natural History. For many years they remained untouched, but Elliot Dawson, working through them in 1961, found bones of an undescribed bird of prey. These (three tarso-metatarsi, two pelves, and a scapula) were considered by Dawson to be of the genus *Haliaeetus*, the Sea Eagles, but no further description was given by him. The present authors have diagnosed the bones as belonging to the related Fish-Eagles, *Ichthyophaga*, "because of the position of the outer proximal foramen."

The new bird is named *Ichthyophaga australis* — this is a welcome change from the *chathamensis* and *chathamica* used as a trivial name for so many of the Chatham Islands birds.

Detailed measurements are given for all the bones, but the scapula is not figured. Throughout the paper, in reference to the tarso-metatarsi, "left" and "right" are transposed*. As Colin Harrison (pers. comm.) comments "It is a pity we could not have left it. A fish-eagle with the feet on backwards would have been more efficient at scooping up prey."

The bird must have been rare when alive, as no examples have yet turned up among the Canterbury Museum collections, including the many thousands collected in the Chatham Island dunes by the reviewer and others during last December and January.

*[But see "Corrigenda" issued with *Ibis* 115 (3), July 1973 — Ed.]

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