

Subantarctic Campbell Island, by Alfred M. Bailey and J. H. Sorenson. Proceedings Number 10. Denver Museum of Natural History. Distributed in N.Z. by A. H. & A. W. Reed. 72/6.

Despite the attentions of sealers and an attempt which lasted nearly forty years to turn its forty square miles into a sheep-run, Campbell Island remains comparatively unspoilt, a subantarctic treasure-house for the zoologist and botanist and especially for the bird photographer, for among its many 'big' attractions are three breeding species of penguins, five of albatrosses and three of seals. Following upon Kaj Westerskov's modest but informative 'Birds of Campbell Island,' we now have 'Subantarctic Campbell Island,' liberally, not to say lavishly, illustrated by one of America's most eminent bird-photographers and by several New Zealanders.

The book, however, is much more than a portrait gallery. The authors have been able to use the notes of members of the Cape Expedition and of meteorologists and naturalists who have followed them, so that the text provides data on breeding and studies on population which are of great value to student and conservationist alike. It is very pleasing to have included for comparative purposes Dr. Fleming's account of the Wandering Albatrosses of the Auckland Islands.

Not only breeding species but also migrants and stragglers are discussed and the list is lengthened by the inclusion of some rather unsatisfactory sightings. Quite unacceptable is the record (p. 257) of Hudsonian Godwit. This rare wader has by no means a 'uniform greyish plumage' but in flight shows a distinctive pattern of contrasting grey, white and black. Might the wader which flew off with 'yelping calls' have been a tattler? Was it really necessary to shoot the Spur-winged Plovers? Surely they presented no difficulties of identification. Perhaps had they survived, an insular race, adapted to subantarctic conditions, would now be evolving!

There is still much research to be done at Campbell Island, for example on its petrels and shearwaters, and the effect of rats and cats. Nevertheless it now has a book well worthy of its magnificent fauna and flora, an 'island book' that can be set beside Rankin's 'Antarctic Isle' and Stonehouse's 'Wideawake Island.' It would make an ideal prize for the young biologist or geographer. The question is:— "How many schools have a prize-fund which can afford it?"

— R.B.S.



Birds of Western Australia, by D. L. Serventy and H. M. Whittell. 3rd edition. Published by Paterson Brokensha Pty. Ltd., Perth, W.A. £A2/10/0.

Though New Zealand and Western Australia are geographically far apart, they have many birds in common, tubenoses, shags, terns, herons, rails, migratory arctic waders, and even a few passerines and extra-limital stragglers. Since 1948 "Serventy and Whittell" has been one of the most helpful and instructive books on Australian birds. A second edition appeared in 1951 and now we welcome a third, with additional plates and drawings, and accounts of recent discoveries, irruptions and changes in status.

Tidily planned and authoritatively written, clearly and cleanly printed on strong paper, this handbook caters conveniently for the

field-worker. An excellent chart (p. 80) for the identification of storm-killed prions owes much to New Zealand research. The drawings (p. 185) done to show the plumage patterns of the Spur-winged Plover and allied species might one day be useful in New Zealand. The sketches (p. 188) of the heads of the three difficult migratory dotterels from Asia are helpful but not entirely convincing. But so wisely and thoroughly have the authors fulfilled their task that the voice of carping criticism is hushed. The book is a 'must' for the serious student of Australian ornithology; and the enthusiastic amateur could easily spend his money far less wisely than on acquiring a copy for his shelves.

— R.B.S.

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PERSONALIA

Congratulations to Mr. Roy H. Traill, a foundation member of the Society, on being awarded an M.B.E. in the New Year Honours.

Several well-known ornithologists and writers on natural history have recently visited New Zealand and been entertained in one locality or another by several of our members.

Among the visitors have been: John Warham, R. M. Lockley, Gerald Durrell, Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards, Lt. A. Y. Norris, R.N., from Britain; Jan Strijbos, from Holland, and Jean Delacour, from France and U.S.A.

21 Australian and one N.Z. members of the R.A.O.U., with the President and Brian Bell as guides, toured New Zealand during October-November, 1962. The tour was most successful. The visitors logged 114 species. In a number of centres members of the O.S.N.Z. were able to meet fellow bird-watchers from across the Tasman.

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OBITUARY — A. S. WILKINSON

Alexander Stanley Wilkinson, whose death occurred at Levin on December 28th, will be remembered in New Zealand ornithological circles as the cutodian of Kapiti Bird Sanctuary whose untiring work on that sanctuary ensured its reclamation from the ravages of browsing animals.

When he took up his duties on the island in 1924, it was overrun with wild goats and sheep and it was during the eighteen years of his stay on the island that it was freed from these animals, which had eaten out the undergrowth from much of its area.

With the help of a trapper and others, at least 300 goats and 1500 sheep were destroyed. This campaign, with those accounted for before he took over in 1924, removed a very serious threat to the future of the island as an effective sanctuary.

Mr. Wilkinson had a deep interest in the native birds and plants and throughout his residence on the island he took notes of the habits and occurrence of the birds of the island and its waters. In collaboration with his wife, he published, in 1952, in book form, under the title of "Kapiti Bird Sanctuary," a summary of his observations. This book was illustrated with many fine photographs taken by himself.