



[M. F. Soper

VI — Southern Crested Grebe. The bird has just returned to the nest and is uncovering the egg.

who are lucky enough to pass their days in 'Bellbird country.' Thoughtful remarks in the chapter on the Kea are an important contribution to the literature of this contentious subject.

In a short introduction, the author reveals some of his technical secrets. Modestly he claims that his book is "a miscellany and complete life histories are beyond its scope." Let us hope that another miscellany is on the way; and that a handsome clutch of two will receive an addition, marked with equal richness. Author and publisher have co-operated to produce a beautiful book; further proof, if need be, of New Zealand's growing maturity in yet another field of civilised endeavour.

— R.B.S.



*Birds of the Atlantic Islands*, Vol. II, D. A. Bannerman, Oliver & Boyd, 84/-.

This massive volume is restricted to the Madeiran islands. It is in the accepted Bannerman tradition. The author's personal experience of Madeira goes back for more than half a century; and he is nothing if not thorough in the study of possible sources of information, as is shown by the long bibliography. Most ornithologists who have visited the Madeiran archipelago in recent years have apprised him of their findings. The result is an authoritative volume, excellently illustrated, which will not be superseded for a very long time.

An 'Historical Introduction' with, of course, special reference to the ornithological exploration of the group is justifiably detailed, containing many names familiar to devotees of the tubinares. Aviculturists, too, may be interested to learn that by 1687 the commercial traffic in *Serinus canarius* was in full swing. In 1772 Captain Cook on the Resolution with the Forsters on board dropped anchor at Funchal. In a chapter specially written by the Curator of the Museo Municipal do Funchal, geographers will find an admirable account of the natural features and climate.

Perhaps the most relevant section for New Zealand ornithologists is that on the petrels and shearwaters. D. M. Henry's plate of *Pterodroma mollis* is most attractive. Surely this rare 'gadfly' is a near relative of our own now elusive Mottled Petrel (*Pt. inexpectata*). In 1934 Mathews described two district races of the Soft-plumaged Petrel from the Madeiran islands; and this distinction is upheld by modern research.

All thoughtful naturalists are alive to the problems of the conservation of insular avifaunas. These problems are much the same the world over. As the result of hunting and deforestation the endemic pigeons of Madeira have become very rare birds. Insecticides are frequently mentioned as possible agents in the growing scarcity of some small birds, e.g. Linnet Goldfinch. Introduced vermin and 'mutton-birding' are a threat to the 'cagarra' and other petrels.

Once in a while the reader is pulled up with a jolt. On p. 38 New Zealand is mentioned and it is stated that the Bobwhite Quail has been 'successfully' introduced. Any recent reports? On p. 189 it is curious to see the Kildeer mentioned as an African species. On p. 100 an unwanted *i* has crept into the spelling of Petronia. These are very minor flaws. An ambitious project is splendidly on the way.

— R.B.S.



*Birds of a Salt Field* by Roy P. Cooper.

Vast evaporating ponds constructed in South Australia by a subsidiary of Imperial Chemical Industries of Australia and New Zealand Ltd. were early proclaimed a bird sanctuary, and have provided an enormous area attractive to many birds, so that about 200 species have been recorded from it. Roy Cooper's booklet (62 pp.) was recently produced by I.C.I.A.N.Z. Ltd., and covers 130 species regularly inhabiting the salt field, giving excellent descriptions, habits, and habitats of each species. A particularly fine feature of the publication is the 50 photographs, several in colour, all but two being taken by the author, who is recognized as one of Australia's leading bird photographers. The species described are much the same as those to be found on any of the various salt fields in southern Australia, so a first class reference book to such areas has been produced. The edition is strictly limited, but while stocks last, copies may be obtained gratis by writing to the Advertising Manager, I.C.I.A.N.Z. Ltd., 1 Nicholson Street, Melbourne, stating that you are a member of O.S.N.Z. A further edition is promised for later in the year.

— A.B.