

(*L. bulleri*) were resting and a scattered flock of c. 80 Banded Dotterels (*C. bicinctus*) was feeding among the short herbage or over the bare mud; and while I was carefully glassing them in the hope perhaps of finding a Black-fronted Dotterel (*C. melanops*) among them — I didn't; and so far there is virtually no evidence that Banded and Black-fronted Dotterels flock together after the breeding season in Hawkes Bay — I noticed two sandpipers feeding close together on the wetter mud; and then, partly hidden by a tussock a few yards further away, a third sandpiper.

The first two had strongly marked gorgets of dense spotting; the chest markings of the third were little more than a buffy wash. I was able to study the three at leisure at a range of about fifty feet; and so to note other differences which confirmed that two were American Pectoral Sandpipers (*C. melanotos*) and one a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*C. acuminata*). The legs of *melanotos* were yellower and their bills slightly robuster, with a yellowish tone showing at the base. *Acuminata* was the odd man out not only in markings, but also in behaviour; for while the three sometimes flew together, the two Americans on alighting rested or fed close together, while the Siberian kept rather apart.

As these Sandpipers in New Zealand are primarily birds of brackish coastal lagoons, it was interesting to find both species about twenty miles inland. There is obviously a good deal of wader migration up and down the east coast of the North Island; along which estuaries and lagoons, such as Porangahau, Westshore, Ahuriri, Whakaki, Muriwai, provide resting places at conveniently spaced intervals. Strong east winds might push tired migrants inland. If they were lucky enough to find such a quiet and well-stocked feeding ground as the shallows of Lake Hatuma, they might stay for weeks or even months.

— R. B. SIBSON



REVIEWS

Gillham, Mary E., 1963 — *Instructions to Young Ornithologists IV. Sea-Birds*. Museum Press Ltd., London, 144 pp.

Dr. Gillham will still be known to readers of *Notornis* for her pioneering work carried out a few years ago on the effect of various colonially nesting birds on the plant ecology of sea-birds' nesting sites in New Zealand and elsewhere.

The present book is a part of a series on ornithology for beginners, initiated by the Brompton Library, which has already covered other aspects such as biology and behaviour. Although primarily written for young ornithologists in Britain, this volume contains much information on birds from New Zealand and Australian seas.

The book rightly begins with a classification of sea-birds, followed by chapters devoted to description of various ways of flying and feeding habits of sea-birds. These chapters are succeeded by a description of sea-birds on land and by a succinct final chapter on their breeding habits. These descriptions are accompanied by eminently pleasant and useful line drawings and a number of original photographs. The book concludes with appendices giving a map of sea-birds localities round the British Isles, a glossary and a good index.

One may regret the complete omission of scientific names, while the author devotes a whole chapter to sea-bird classification; the few publications on sea-birds other than those round the British Isles recommended for further reading; or the somewhat sketchy description of bird-banding without references. These are, however, minor omissions, without detracting from the value of this readable and useful little book.

— KAZIMIERZ WODZICKI



A Field Guide to Fiji Birds by Robin Mercer, Govt. Press, Suva, 1965.

Once again ornithology leads the way. No. 1 of the Fiji Museum Special Publication Series is Robin Mercer's Field Guide. The author is well-known to several visiting ornithologists from N.Z. whom he has often helped.

This handy, compact booklet is concerned mainly with forest and garden birds of the larger islands. Sixty-eight species, including nine introduced aliens, are discussed. It is not surprising that among the hundreds of far-flung islands of the Fiji group subspeciation is well marked; and the problem arises, especially with the splendid parrots of the genus *Prosopaea* which have several strongly marked insular forms, "When is a subspecies not a subspecies; but worthy of full specific status?"

A special section mentions six migratory waders; but as the author remarks, "there are undoubtedly many other species which must pass through." Since the text of the guide was completed, the occurrence of the N.Z. Banded Dotterel (*C. binctus*) has been reported in Notornis (XIII, 162).

The sea-birds are listed separately. Only a few species are commonly seen in coastal Fijian waters; but more than twenty species occur as breeders or migrants; and to learn more of their distribution and movements is a major task.

With its 14 illustrations which are photographs of the stylish and historic water-colours painted by W. J. Belcher, this pocket companion provides sound information to the eager traveller, who has eyes to see and ears to hear.

— R.B.S.



A Sketchbook of New Zealand Birds, by Molly Falla, A. H. & A. W. Reed. 14/6.

If you are the wife of a well-known ornithologist, you may expect to be the recipient, willy-nilly, of numerous avian waifs and strays. It is, therefore, not surprising that over the years Molly Falla has acted as nurse or foster-mother to a strange variety of young or injured birds and the Falla home has served as an orphanage for a truly representative selection of the New Zealand avifauna. This book, which is both earnest and gently humorous, has grown out of the writer's experiences, as she observed the growth, convalescence and behaviour of her patients and their response to her care and kindness.

Molly Falla has been making a name for herself as a painter of birds; and here we have confirmation of her reputation. It was a