

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