

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

young Kea which inspired her with the real desire to paint; but she knew that if she was to understand anatomy and feather arrangement, she must study dead specimens; and so she began the hard way — with a dis-interred Kingfisher! She stresses the difficulty of reproducing the iridescent hues which are present in the living plumage of so many New Zealand birds; and she asks the very pertinent question, "What are a bird's true colours?"

It is a safe forecast that this slim, elegant volume, the like of which has not appeared in this country before, will be widely read and enjoyed.

— R.B.S.



## NOTES

### NOTE BY THE HONORARY TREASURER

In my report for the nine month period ending 31/12/65 I have mentioned that there is a surplus of £37 but that in this shortened year some items of income and expenditure, including subscriptions, were at the rate for twelve months. Printing and distributing "Notornis" was at the rate for nine months. Exact figures to 31/3/66, which would have been the date for a full year, have since become available and show that at the present rate of income and expenditure an average annual loss of approximately £180 will be made. This will quickly reduce capital and consequently also the considerable income now being received annually from such capital by way of investments.

(Signed) H. R. McKENZIE,  
Hon. Treasurer.



### A NEW TREASURER WANTED

After many years of sterling service to the Society as Treasurer, Member of Council, and guide philosopher and friend to all, Mr. Ross McKenzie retired on 31st August, so that the appointment is now vacant. Would any member prepared to consider undertaking the duties kindly communicate with either the President or the Secretary. Every assistance will be afforded to a new Treasurer, who may, if he or she wish, recommend to Council a suitable person to be Assistant Treasurer, for the handling of members' subscriptions and other routine matters. The system of accounts is simplified, so that no wide knowledge of book-keeping is necessary.



### KERMADECS EXPEDITION 1966

Arrangements for the Kermadecs Expedition are now well advanced, with the departure date rapidly approaching. H.M.N.Z.S. 'Endeavour' is to transport the party to Raoul Island on 8th November, and they will return in late January on H.M.N.Z.S. 'Inverell.'

The Expedition Sub-Committee was faced with a major change in plan, as it was found that the establishment of a base camp near the Meteorological Station, and the use of its landing facilities, was not possible. It has therefore been decided to establish a base at Denham