

to lure him on, the botanist commonly finds himself in the midst of an almost fulsome *embarras de richesse*. While your birdwatcher seeks the elusive Rock Wren he may be diverted by the charm of shining clumps of Snow Marguerite — it is some consolation to learn that all the outlandish scientific names are not confined to ornithology; or as he watches the soaring Keas he may find some gratification in knowing that at his right hand there is growing a species of Maori Onion and at his left a native Edelweiss.

Let it be noted that this practical guide to our alpine flora has been assembled by an entomologist. To the ornithologist it offers an exciting opportunity to broaden his horizons. Birds as well as insects are very much related to their botanical environment.

— R.B.S.



“*The World of Birds*,” by James Fisher and Roger Tory Peterson. Publ. Macdonald, London. 5 Guineas.

Among the many exasperating follies of the mid-twentieth century, some signs of grace may yet be found; and one of these is the determination of its dedicated naturalists, aided by gifted artists and the skilled craftsmen of the publishing trade, to press on with the production of sumptuous volumes on natural history.

In “*The World of Birds*,” two ornithologists of international standing have collaborated to compile ‘a comprehensive guide to general ornithology.’ The format is a happy blending of text and pictures. Here we have something for every birdwatcher whatever his special interest, and many a knotty term — e.g. convergence — is elucidated and graphically illustrated. James Fisher casts his net wide. His text is good red meat and it is admirably garnished by Roger Tory Peterson’s vivid paintings. New Zealand is not neglected. It is pleasing to see on p. 128 a facsimile of one of Ross McKenzie’s nest-record cards; and gratifying on p. 143 to find *Notornis* among the emblems of famous ornithological societies.

It may be invidious to single out for praise any special chapter; but those on fossil birds and evolution seem to be of outstanding merit especially for all amateurs who are minded to ponder these thorny topics. Also particularly enlightening is Chapter VIII on ‘The Regiment of Birds.’ Nearly 100 pages are given to distribution maps on the different orders, sub-orders and families. New Zealanders would be repaid by studying these maps. The authors make no bones about placing Piopio among the Whistlers, a view likely to be supported by taxonomists who have been able to watch the endemic ‘Tamies’ of Norfolk Island.

A few slips and omissions have been noted; and minor blemishes though they are, in the interests of truth they should be mentioned. p. 115. It is stated that since 1916 only two new seabirds have been discovered, Murphy’s Petrel (1949) and Jouanin’s Petrel (1955). Might not a New Zealander interject, “What about Pycroft’s Petrel (1932) and Westland Petrel (1946)?” Moreover the identity of the once elusive Hutton’s Shearwater has been substantiated and thanks to Geoff. Harrow its montane breeding grounds have been revealed. If Dr. Bourne’s conjecture that *Pterodroma magentae* was the Taiko of the Chatham Islands is correct, its nesting was certainly known to Polynesian man and possibly to some early European settlers and seafarers.

- p. 157. On the distribution map of the Pelicans, New Zealand is shown as a blank, though sub-fossil bones were found at Waikaremoana and described in 1931; and now similar bones have been recovered from a number of sites in the North and South Islands. There is, moreover, the story of an Australian Pelican shot on the Wanganui River in 1890.
- p. 216. The colonisation of New Zealand by the Welcome Swallow since 1958 has escaped notice, although it is quite as dramatic as the spread of the Collared Dove across Britain. On the map New Zealand shows white, but has earned its blue.
- p. 221. It should have been mentioned that the Hedge Sparrow was introduced to New Zealand and has become one of the most widely distributed passerines.
- pp. 222, 234, 236. A false impression may be given by the phrasing as it stands. It is not made clear that Blackbirds and Song-thrushes, Skylarks and Starlings, and several species of finches, after being introduced to the two main islands, spread of their own accord across hundreds of miles of open sea to many outlying islands from Norfolk and the Kermadecs to Macquarie.
- p. 230. There is no indication that Buntings are not indigenous to New Zealand.
- p. 237. The colours have been transposed so that Australia is credited with Wattled Crows and New Zealand with Magpie Larks.

This is a noble and inspiring book which should be available to all students who are seriously concerned with the current problems of ornithology and conservation — the more so as on every copy sold a royalty is being paid to the World Wildlife Fund.

— R.B.S.



A Portfolio of Australian Birds, by Wm. T. Cooper and K. A. Hindwood, A. H. & A. W. Reed, \$9.95. Folio size 14 x 11 inches.

Several books of Australian birds of a somewhat similar type have been published over the past two or three years, but of them all, this book in my opinion is quite outstanding. It contains a random selection of 25 birds exquisitely painted by Mr. Cooper, who before turning to bird portraiture had already earned a reputation for his landscapes and seascapes. Each plate reveals the close study the artist has made of the bird in the field, and conveys its 'personality' to a marked degree. Keith Hindwood, one of Australia's leading field ornithologists, writes an interesting and informative text on each of the birds illustrated; and together the authors have certainly achieved their stated aim of indicating 'the beauty and interest that lies in the rich and varied avifauna of Australia.' Many ornithologists and bird-lovers are not disposed to invest in rather expensive publications of this kind; but this is a book with a difference. It is a book to gloat over, and to bring on a nostalgia in those who know something of Australia's birds. Whilst the book will surely have a wide appeal to the public, it is the discerning ornithologist who will really appreciate the accurate portrayal of each bird in plumage, attitude and stance, and background of foliage. May these authors produce other portfolios of equal perfection in due course.

— A.B.