

OTHER RINGING.

For the sake of bringing together as much ringing data as possible, the following records have been collected from various sources. The list of species ringed, and particularly the number of individuals ringed, are not necessarily complete, being taken from the references given, which often do not show numbers ringed and recovered:—

Albatross, Royal.—Otago Peninsula; L. E. Richdale; November, 1936, to May, 1949; 37 ringed. (The Pre-Egg Stage in the Albatross Family. Biol. Monograph No. 3.)

Diving Petrel.—Whero; L. E. Richdale; December 1, 1942, to February 12, 1944; 490 ringed. (Trans. Roy. Soc. N.Z., Vol. 75, No. 1.)

Duck, Grey and Mallard.—Manawatu; R. L. Balham; 1947-49; 1654 ringed. (in ms.) Many ducks have also been ringed and released by various acclimatisation societies. The earliest record available is 100 mallard released by the Southland society in 1911. (G. M. Thompson, "The Naturalisation of Plants and Animals in New Zealand.")

Mollymawk, Buller's.—Snare Islands; L. E. Richdale, January 9, 1943, to February 26, 1948; 161 ringed. (The Pre-Egg Stage in Buller's Mollymawk, Biol. Monograph No. 2.)

Penguin, Erect-crested.—Otago Peninsula; L. E. Richdale, 1938; two ringed. (Emu, Vol. 49, No. 3.)

Penguin, Little Blue.—Otago Peninsula; L. E. Richdale, 1938-39; 50 ringed. (Emu, Vol. 40, No. 3.)

Penguin, Yellow-eyed.—Otago Peninsula; L. E. Richdale; August, 1936 to January, 1948; 644 ringed; rings marked "Tell Otago Museum." (Bird Banding, Vol. XVIII, No. 3.)

Prion, Broad-Billed.—Whero; L. E. Richdale; 1941-43; 93 ringed. (Emu, Vol. XLIII, No. 3.)

Prion, Fairy.—Whero; L. E. Richdale; 1950-42; 328 ringed. (Trans. Roy. Soc. N.Z., Vol. 74, Nos. 1, 2.)

Silvereye.—Many others have been ringed, and some results are at present being collated and will be published later. For others, see Marples (N.Z. Bird Notes, Vol. 1, No. 5) which includes some of those records given above.

Sooty Shearwater.—Whero; L. E. Richdale; 1940-43; at least 186 ringed. (Condor, Vol. 46, No. 3.)

White-faced Storm Petrel.—Whero; L. E. Richdale; 1940-42; 1041 ringed. (Trans. Roy. Soc. N.Z., Vol. 73, Nos. 2, 3, 4.)

REVIEWS.

Oiseaux. Tome XV. *Traite de Zoologie*, Publie sous la direction de M. Pierre P. Grasse, Masson & Cie., Ed Veurs, Paris, 1950. 1164 p.p; illustrated.

This volume, a recent addition to the series "Traite de Zoologie," is the most comprehensive single treatment on birds since Brunn's *Klassen und ordnung* or Demantieff's *Traite de Zoologie* (Acad. Sci. U.R.S.S.), etc. It presents the material in more accessible form than former works and the abundance of illustrations makes the work usable even by those not familiar with the language. The price is the only prohibitive factor (6,000 fr., or £6 15s. in N.Z.). The binding and general lay-out reflect credit on the publisher's art. Such authorities as Benoit, Berlioz, Mayaud, Pasteels, and Portmann have contributed to this volume and have concisely summarised the details of much-scattered literature together with their own personal knowledge.

This is not the place to extend a detailed discussion of the relative merits of the contents, but suffice it to say that here, in a readily accessible form, are presented all the facts that any ornithologist, professional or amateur, will want regarding such topics as detailed anatomy, flight, locomotion, reproduction and embryology, social behaviour and ecology,

origin and evolution of birds, migrations, etc., concluding with a systematic account of the various families and their geographical distribution, written by J. Berlioz.

While the book has its faults and loop-holes for criticism, as is only natural, it remains a unique reference book, which although somewhat out of the question for the average ornithologist, should certainly be made available in our main libraries.—E. W. Dawson.

New Zealand Flycatchers of the Genus *Petroica* Swainson, by C. A. Fleming. Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand, Vol. 78, 1950, pp. 14-47 (Part I.) and pp. 127-160 (Part II.).

Many readers will be interested primarily in whether the author of this important revision of the classification of a group of New Zealand birds—the tits and robins—has proposed an entirely new, if not revolutionary, classification of familiar species and forms. In brief outline the main taxonomic proposals are to give equal rank as subspecies of *Petroica macrocephala* to each of the tits of the North (“pied”), the South (“yellow-breasted”), and of the various outlying islands. The author finds the robins related closely enough to the tits to place them in the same genus *Petroica*. They likewise become subspecies of the one species, *australis*, except for the Chatham Island black robin which is so distinct structurally that it receives status as a separate species (*traversi*). The robins, viz., the composite *australis* and *traversi*, form together a distinct group (“superspecies”) within *Petroica*, and to express this relationship use is made of the subgenus as a taxonomic category, the robins being classified accordingly as the subgenus *Miro* of *Petroica*.

The author’s arrangement follows the principle now accepted by most students of bird taxonomy that members of evidently closely related groups geographically separated from one another (“allopatric”) constitute subspecies, i.e. they have come to differ from the generalised stock in isolation but are still close enough to remain as part of the species: the concept of the polytypic species. In reaching the conclusions summarised above the author has carried out a thorough review of study skins in New Zealand and several overseas collections, and correlated this with field results. The latter include much distributional and ecological information published for the first time or summarised from various sources.

The work is especially outstanding for the presentation of evidence for the taxonomic recognition of the various subspecies, species and higher groups, and for its ideal of expressing relationship in the simplest possible system. It might be stressed that the nomenclatural changes required to express the fine degree of relationship demanded by this modern approach to taxonomy are comparatively slight.

Two new subspecies are described: *P. macrocephala chathamensis* (Chatham Island tit) and *P. (Miro) australis rakiura* (Stewart Island robin). There is a minor discrepancy in the description of the latter, “*steadi*” being given in the useful tabulation of contents, while *rakiura* is used in the text.

As indicated in his introductory remarks, the author was led to carry out a general revision by two specific problems arising out of recent field work. The first was that the author found sexual dimorphism to be suppressed in the Auckland Island tit (*P. macrocephala marrineri*) in which the adult female proves to be similar in appearance to the male and thus strikingly different from the females of other races. The second leading to an important taxonomic innovation was the observation during field work on the Chathams and Snares that while the Chatham Island black robin was typically a robin, the Snares black “robin” was more closely allied in appearance, behaviour and song to the tits. This conclusion is confirmed in specimens, and has been expressed in the present taxonomic arrangement by the allocation of the Snares bird amongst the tits (*P. macrocephala dannefaerdi*). The separation subgenerically of the tits and robins thus enables emphasis to be laid upon the diverse affinities of the two melanistic forms.