

## REVIEWS

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*Voices of the Wild*, by Eric Simms, Putman & Co. Ltd., London, 21/-: Many books have been written relating the experiences of bird and animal photographers; here is one about the even more exciting adventure of recording bird and animal voices. Following on the pioneer work of Ludwig Koch, Mr. Simms has, on the testimony of Peter Scott in his foreword, "developed the technique with great invention and skill" and produced some wonderful recordings. As director of the B.B.C.'s natural history recording work, Mr. Simms has had a varied experience in his fascinating occupation and this he writes about with understanding and enthusiasm, in which his great love of wild life is apparent. It is a delight to read this book and glean some of the glamour of the author's successes in the field of recording. — R.H.D.S.

*Bird Islands of New Zealand*, by Major R. A. Wilson, D.S.O., Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., 1959, 25/-: This is a personal and intimate book of the sort which nowadays only too rarely sees the light of publication. The author, who is now without doubt the reigning Grand Old Man of New Zealand ornithology, recounts his experiences in searching for many of our rarer birds and exploring the outlying islands from the sub-antarctic Aucklands to the sub-tropical Three Kings. Bob Wilson made his first trip as a schoolboy in 1891 and his memories go back more than sixty years to the days when specimens of Merganser and Pio-pio could easily be collected without fear of their becoming extinct.

On his trips to the southern islands the author was usually accompanied by Edgar Stead; later when he visited the northern islands Geoffrey Buddle was his constant companion. For both, he has the highest admiration, and he dedicates his book to them in affectionate remembrance. The first two chapters are 'profiles' of these two fine photographer-naturalists. Both of them produced books on New Zealand birds and it is good to know that their 'henchman' as he modestly calls himself, has found time to make his own contribution to the ornithological literature of this country. The study of birds in New Zealand owes much to the skill and enterprise of these three adventurous amateurs and it is important that a new generation should be trained to follow in their footsteps and carry on the work which they began.

'*Bird Islands of New Zealand*' is no mere biological or geographical treatise. Rather it is something much more precious; a charming farrago with comments not only on the finding of rare birds but also on a variety of allied topics e.g., sealing, muttonbirding, the food of petrels, shipwrecks, the botany of the offshore islands and the hazards of landing on them. All readers of this book — and there will be many — will realise much more vividly the imperative need for conserving the islands round the coast of New Zealand as wildlife refuges for such rarities as Saddleback, Stitchbird, Snipe and a host of petrels and shearwaters which, if they are to survive, must have immunity from cats and rats.

The book is profusely illustrated with significant photographs taken by the author and his friends. It is an obvious answer to the prayer of anyone who is wondering what to give a naturalist-friend for Christmas. — R.B.S.