

After a historical, climatic and geographical sketch in the first chapter, Lack deals with the problem of classification, ecology, plumage, sexual selection, beak differences, food, size differences between island forms and between species, hybridization and attempts to construct an evolutionary tree. That completes Part 1, Description. Part 2, Interpretation, deals with the origin of the Galapagos fauna, the origin of sub-species and of species, the persistence of species, and adaptive radiation. His criticism and development of Huxley's view on ecological isolation are particularly important. There is considerable illustration of his points by reference to many other species of birds. The book is amply provided with text-figures and tables, and is illustrated from photographs, drawings, and reproductions of Gould's admirable paintings of the finches. There is an extensive bibliography, full indexing, and, above all, the book is readable.—Ron Scarlett.

**New Zealand Birds and How to Identify Them; P. Moncreiff. Whitcombe & Tombs, Ltd.; 8/6.**

Mrs. Moncreiff is to be congratulated on publishing a third (revised) edition of this popular book. Its general style and arrangement follows that of previous editions, and it has been enlarged by the inclusion of an increased number, 18 in all, of coloured plates by the late E. J. Dart, some 35 species being illustrated in colour. The large number of photographs, mainly of museum specimens, include few from life, but their value as aids to identification is obvious. Although primarily designed for identification of wild birds, many of the descriptions appear to be taken from skins, and are not very helpful in the field. Under grey-backed storm petrel, for instance, it is stated, "Head dark greyish black. Upper parts grey. Tail tipped black," and it may be doubted if such a description would be of much use to the amateur observer. It is a pity, seeing that so many children will read this book, that the 50-year fable of the grey warbler being the foster parent of the long-tailed cuckoo has again been repeated, and there are other inaccuracies, such as the white-faced storm petrel not being as plentiful as the black-bellied species. A perusal of other recent literature will reveal much that might have been included in this edition, but these criticisms apart, the book will continue to spread knowledge and sympathetic interest about New Zealand bird life. The colour plates are beautifully printed, and the whole volume is an attractive production. It will fill a much needed want as a gift book to bird lovers and ornithologists will want it on their shelves.—J.M.C.

**The Life of the Robin, by David Lack. 2nd edition. Witherby, London, England.**

The first edition of this book appeared in 1943. This edition is considerably enlarged, with new photographs and other illustrations, and incorporates the results of the research on the robin which has taken place since the first edition was written. It covers every aspect of the bird's life, and is a model of scientific writing, in good prose which holds the reader's interest while imparting the essential facts. To those who know Lack's work it will need no recommendation.—Ron Scarlett.

**Notes on the Ecology of the Robin, by David Lack. Ibis. Vol. 90, No. 2, April, 1948; p.p. 252-279.**

This important paper supplements the book reviewed above, and brings the account of robin research up-to-date. A good bibliography is included.—Ron Scarlett.

**Kiwis in Captivity, as told to Robert Gibbings, by F. D. Robson, Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum, Napier; Whitcombe & Tombs, Ltd., 1948. Price, 1/-.**

Experiences with the kiwi in captivity are given in this publication, which is illustrated. According to Mr. Robson's observations, the male kiwi alone incubates the egg and the incubation period is from 75 to 80 days. It is an eminently readable account well worth perusing.—R.H.D.S.

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