

The Sunbirds of Southern Africa also the Sugarbirds, the White-eyes and the Spotted Creeper by C. J. Skead, 1967. A. A. Balkema, Cape Town. Pp. viii + 9-351 + gramophone record in endpaper, 10 colour plates of paintings, 12 pages containing 91 photographs, 41 line drawings, 25 maps. 9½" x 7¼". R 8.50 (SA).

This study of 26 species of southern African birds is a book like Frith's *Waterfowl in Australia* which is perhaps the best Australian example of a comprehensive account of the present state of knowledge of a bird or group of birds, giving the information required by the specialist in a manner appealing to the interested general reader. The paintings of each species, the habitat and nest photographs, distribution maps, text figures illustrating behaviour and a record giving 13 minutes of the songs and calls of 14 species (introduced on the record without superfluous commentary) serve to expand the details given in the text. Each bird is there described and discussed in a standardized manner which does not conceal the author's enthusiasm for the birds, their habitat, and for the flowers in which they find their food.

Australian readers will perhaps find most interest in the examination of the three southern African *Zosterops* spp. and will appreciate the author's statement, in introducing this group, that 'a bird which lives on the very doorstep of almost every home, both in town and in the country, is still very much of an unknown quantity in the more intimate circles of science'. The author frequently compares the African and Australian members of the genus, but the extensive banding of the forms in Australia which has gone some way towards solving problems relating to plumage and movement has apparently not occurred with the forms in southern Africa. These questions also arise about what the author calls the Cape-and-Green White-eye *Zosterops virens*. The work of Australian banders (see *Aust. Bird Bander, passim*) may well be of assistance to African ornithologists in this field.

R. A. Balmford.

SHORTER NOTICES

It is not possible for the Editor of 'Literature' to check the bibliographical accuracy of all titles and references supplied by contributors.

Overseas Publications

Species

BOURNE, W. R. P. 1968. Notes on the diving-petrels. *Bull. Br. Orn. Club* 88: 77-85.

Pelecanoides (urinatrix) exsul has now been found breeding beside *P. georgicus* in South Georgia. *P. magellani* has also been collected several times in the Falklands, where it may breed beside *P. (u.) berard*. A specimen of the nominate form of *P. urinatrix* has also been traced from Chatham Island where the form *P. (u.) chathamensis* (probably identical with *P. (u.) dacunhae*) is known to breed. If nominate *P. urinatrix* also breeds at Chatham Island it seems likely that the '*urinatrix*' assemblage will have to be divided into two distinct species, subtropical *P. urinatrix* and subantarctic *P. berard*, in addition to currently recognized divisions.

—J.L.McK.

Ecology

KIKKAWA, J. 1968. Ecological association of bird species and habitats in eastern Australia. *J. Anim. Ecol.* 37: 143-158.

In order to assess the applicability of the structural classification of vegetation to the description of avian habitats in eastern Australia, species lists (presence and absence) of birds were subjected to similarity analysis. The results, while interesting, indicate that a great deal more work is needed before this subject can really be said to be assessed.

—J.L.McK.

Morphology

BANG, B. G. 1968. Olfaction in Rallidae (Gruiformes), a morphological study of thirteen species. *J. Zool. London* 156: 97-107.

The design of the nasal fossa for the efficient function of the olfactory membrane is reviewed. Rallidae have an average olfactory bulb to hemisphere ratio of 23%, about the middle of the scale of relative olfactory ratios in birds. The ratio in Turnix is 12.5%.

—J.L.McK.

The Editor of 'Literature' is indebted to the contributors of reviews and of the shorter notices referring to selected items from various sources. Reviews of books are signed; shorter notices are initialled. Contributors of shorter notices undertake to watch periodicals of a particular region or kind for appropriate items. At present Queensland publications regrettably lack attention. With the aim of providing readers with a more adequate and stimulating reference to current ornithological literature, however selective it may be at times, an extended and better organized section is being planned. Original items of the kind formerly published as 'Literary Notes' will also appear from time to time under Shorter Notices.

For the information of readers, confronted only with initials, the names of those who have assisted the Editor of 'Literature' (A. McE.) are listed below.

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