

of the Short-tailed Shearwater, *Puffinus tenuirostris*, following upon the great deal that has already been discovered, using conventional methods, by workers in Australia.—D. F. DORWARD.

Sea Birds of The South Pacific Ocean.—A Handbook for Passengers and Seafarers. Containing a description of all birds that may be encountered on a voyage from New Zealand to Panama, with notes, illustrations and a guide to their identification. By P. P. O. Harrison, Master Mariner. Published by the Royal Naval Bird Watching Society, 1962, 15/- (U.K.). 144 pages. 39 illustrations + map. Printed and obtainable from H. G. Walters Ltd., Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, Wales.

The R.N.B.W.S. has, over the years, been collecting records of sea birds and plotting their distribution over the oceans of the world. This production by Captain Harrison, one of its most energetic and competent observers, is largely the result of his own observations on some fifteen crossings of the N.Z./Panama route augmented by information from other sources. An introductory chapter includes notes on geographical and local distribution, hints on observing and noting characteristics, immature and seasonal plumages, etc. A very helpful section indicating the species likely to be observed is divided into four sections, N.Z. Harbours, N.Z. to Pitcairn Is., Pitcairn to Galapagos, Galapagos to Panama, and these are further subdivided seasonally where expedient. Each family of sea birds is considered in turn with specific descriptions, notes on special identification points and the range pertinent to the route. Several inaccuracies, mostly small ones, are evident in this section which it would be hypercritical to list here in full. The Royal Albatross, for instance, would be difficult to recognize from a description which reads (in part) "except for the primaries . . . an entirely white bird", etc., when in fact the entire upper wing is usually dark with a white elbow patch on some males (subsp. *epomophora*), nor could anyone who has seen the beautiful and distinctively coloured bill of an adult Buller's Mollymawk reconcile it with "grey". Some species omitted are perhaps not commonly seen but the fact of their possible occurrence should be recorded, e.g. Brown-winged Terns, *Sterna anaetheta*, and migrating Arctic Terns, *S. macrura*, could occur near Panama and we find no reference to the numerous brown phase of the Red-footed Booby. Type errors, particularly in scientific names, are a trifle too numerous even for a first edition. Of particular value to the voyager is the compact and informative tabular reference to the shearwaters and petrels, which is a real aid to identification as are also the five pages of drawings (illustrating 17 petrels) with the field points clearly indicated. A further key, using appearance, behaviour and locality, enables the subject to be placed in its family and reduces final identification to a minimum number of species. An appended systematic list serves also as an index.

Ornithologically this is a useful contribution toward elucidating distributional patterns of South Pacific sea birds. More important is its popular function in stimulating in the casual observer a genuine interest which grows with competence in recognition. To this end, as a companion volume to Alexander's *Birds of the Ocean*, it should accompany every traveller on the South Pacific passenger route and it is not without its application in other southern oceans.—J. D. GIBSON.

News and Notes

COLOUR-BANDED SWANS

As part of its long-term studies of the ecology of Australian waterfowl, the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research has, during the last couple of years, intensified its studies on the Black Swan. The work is conducted by H. J. Frith and W. L. Braithwaite, and the field work is performed near Canberra and near Griffith, New South Wales.

In addition to breeding and food studies, the work also includes a marking and banding programme to learn something of the movements and longevity

of the species. As swans are very seldom shot by sportsmen, recoveries are expected to be few. For this reason each swan banded is also marked with a 2-inch wide plastic collar around the neck. These collars are of various colours—yellow, white, and red—the different colours denoting different localities. Already over 2,000 swans have been so marked.

It would be of very great assistance to the Division of Wildlife Research if anyone who saw a swan anywhere with a collar around its neck would report the locality and the date, and if possible the colour of the collar, to that Division. It is felt that the most extensive data will come from these sightings rather than from the recovery of bands in this particular case.

HONOURS

Mr. H. J. Frith, Chief, Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO, has been advised by the Senate of the University of Sydney that his published work, entitled "Collected papers on the ecology of birds", has been accepted for the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Science in Agriculture.

WANTED TO BUY

The Emu, volumes 1, 2 and 3, and parts 1 and 2 of volume 10. Apply John Howell, bookseller, 434 Post Street, San Francisco 2, California, U.S.A.

PHOTOGRAPHS REQUIRED OF FALCONS

Mr. F. P. W. Wyer is engaged in writing a Monograph of the Falcons of the World which he hopes to illustrate by photographs, including colour ones. He would be grateful to get in touch with anyone who has photographed the falcons of Australia, especially in colour. He is also particularly interested in the Black Falcon, *Falco subniger*, as to its distribution and ecology. Mr. Wyer's address is: The Hoddern, Piddinghoe, Newhaven, Sussex, England.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

The following outline of the Conservation Committee is intended to supplement the publication of the Union's conservation policy (1963: 76-7) and the notes thereon appearing in this issue.

As conservation problems vary so greatly between States it was decided that committee members should be responsible for taking any action that they consider necessary in their respective States. In order to simplify their task the policy was made as flexible as possible and applicable to all parts of the Commonwealth. Each State is represented by a conservation secretary who may nominate additional members to assist him if required.

The conservation secretaries report periodically to Council through the convener. A summary of these reports is sent to each committee member so that he will be kept informed of the overall position.

The convener is responsible for all matters beyond State jurisdiction and for co-ordinating the work of the committee within the framework of the Union's policy.

The conservation secretaries are listed hereunder in the hope that Union members will report any matters that require action by the committee:

Queensland: N. Jack, 54 Cochrane Street, Paddington, Brisbane; F. H. M. Everett (member), 23 Pioneer Street, Toowong.

New South Wales: J. A. Palmer, 82 Bridge Road, Glebe.

Victoria: R. J. Edge, Allansford.