

# BOOKS, PAPERS AND LITERARY NOTES

Edited by ALLAN MCEVEY

## Reviews

### BOOKS

**Population Studies of Birds** by David Lack, 1966, O.U.P., London, pp. 341, \$A11.50. The present volume is a sequel to the author's *The Regulation of Animal Numbers*, published in 1954 and now out of print, and deals with thirteen major population studies and several minor ones. The criteria for inclusion in the major category are that they are sufficiently detailed and that they extended over a period of a least four years.

Thirteen passerine species are discussed and in these, four land birds, a wide range of types in terms of patterns of ecology, reproduction and feeding are included. Of four sea birds, all are colonial nesters, and both inshore and pelagic species are included. The majority of the species were studied in Europe, with a few tropical species and only two Australasian representatives, the Yellow-eyed Penguin, *Megadyptes antipodes*, studied by Richdale in New Zealand, and the Short-tailed Shearwater, *Puffinus tenuirostris*, studied by Serventy in the Furneaux Group.

Population regulation is a controversial subject with three conflicting theories having been advanced, by Lack in his earlier book, by Andre-wartha and Birch (*The Distribution and Abundance of Animals*, 1954) and by Wynne-Edwards (*Animal Dispersion in relation to Social Behaviour*, 1962). Frequent reference is made throughout to these theories which are summarized briefly in the Introduction and more fully in the Appendix. In this sense the present volume is self-contained, but those seriously interested in population dynamics will want to read all these works if not already familiar with them.

The more recent studies in the present volume have not caused the author to alter his view that numbers are regulated by density-dependent factors, of which shortage of food outside the breeding season is the most important. In some respects modifications to the ideas expressed in *The Natural Regulation of Animal Numbers* have become necessary. The evidence from some of the studies discussed suggests that the start of egg-laying is determined by the female being able to obtain enough food to form the eggs, rather than having been evolved so that the young are produced at a time of optimum availability of food.

There are still many questions remaining unanswered, for example, what is the exact role of territory? As the number of species studied in depth is pitifully small, the present work should not be regarded as the definitive work in the field of population dynamics. This is not Lack's objective. The test of this book, in the author's own words, will not be what is written, but in any new research which it may stimulate. In this it must surely succeed.—  
DAVID THOMAS.

**Birds of New Zealand** by Gordon R. Williams, A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington, 1966, second edition, pp. 108, 50 colour plates, 7½ in. by 6½ in., £N.Z. 1/2/6, \$A2.79. This book gives a compact, authoritative background to bird research in New Zealand and to some typical New Zealand birds and their habits. Its author has spent many years working on the giant flightless gallinule, the Takahē, and other rare birds. This work was first published in 1963, but now appears in a second edition, again with an index and key to geographic localities. The pagination and the text, except for a few small changes in the latter, follow the first edition, but several colour plates have been replaced by better ones and there is a change in the design of the dust jacket.

An introduction gives the origin of New Zealand birds, their present status, their future and factors which affect migration and nesting. The colour plates are based on high quality transparencies, the work of expert bird photographers. These plates illustrate typical native New Zealand species, arranged in taxonomic order, from ratites to passerines, mostly according to the *Checklist of New Zealand Birds*, 1953, with explanatory notes on distribution, haunts, food, nesting and other habits.—H.L.S. (Not in R.A.O.U. library.)

**Domestic Birds** (*Instructions to Young Ornithologists VI*) by Derek Goodwin, 1965. Museum Press Ltd. London. Pp. 141, 16 half-tone illustrations, 23 line sketches, ca. \$A1.90. So far as self-contained subjects are concerned there are relatively few gaps in the wide range of ornithological literature. Domestic birds as such, however, has been rather neglected and this welcome addition to the *Instructions to Young Ornithologists* series provides a thoughtful, knowledgeable and interesting addition to it.

It is neither an avicultural, nor a cage-bird manual, yet all bird keepers will gain from the author's wide knowledge and his outlook; it is primarily instruction for the young but all ornithologists will find facts they had either forgotten or never knew, and aspects of provocative thought. In short there is here intimacy with a subject and sincerity of purpose as well as a useful book of reference.

The definition of domesticity rightly sees controlled breeding (whether carried out consciously or not) without the need for introduction of a wild strain, as its criterion.

The book comprises firstly a chapter on General Topics, e.g. Terminology ("variety", "breed", "fancier", "aviculturalist" are all aptly defined). Why People Keep Birds, Domestic and Wild Birds Compared (containing important and often over-looked characteristics of domestication), and others, which provides a sound and thought-provoking background.

There follow chapters on Waterfowl, Game-birds, Pigeons and a Parrot, Passerine Birds, The Cormorant, and Semi-domesticated Species, each of which gives a very adequate coverage but succeeds in making one want more. The reference to Domestic Fowls gone wild "on islands in Australasia" calls for more information among local ornithologists.

The author's opposition towards the "monstrosities" of some fancy breeds is clear; let us hope fanciers will accept it as a plea to draw more sensible limits. The index is good but one could wish for a larger and more detailed bibliography. Wright's *The Illustrated Book of Poultry* is not mentioned, for instance.

The whole subject still awaits its monograph preserving knowledge, for example, of the breeds that have disappeared, but in the meantime this is an excellent introduction full of interesting thoughts. That it makes one speak of monographs is a compliment to its author.—A.McE. (Not in R.A.O.U. Library.)

### Papers

**Ecological Factors in Distribution of Zebra Finch.**—To his already extensive range of contributions to our knowledge of Australian native finches Dr Klaus Immelmann has added a stimulating paper on the ecological factors controlling the distribution of the familiar Zebra Finch. In "Versuch einer ökologischen Verbreitungsanalyse beim australischen Zebra-finken, *Taeniopygia guttata castanotis* (Gould)" in *Journal für Ornithologie*, 106 (4): 415-430; Oct. 1965, he concludes that geographical distribution and annual periodicity in the species is determined mainly by temperature and precipitation.

Rainfall influences the breeding season in northern and central Australia, while in the eastern and southern portions of the continent breeding is determined merely by temperature. Immelmann discusses the effects of such artificial factors as the clearing of woodland, provision of surface water, and the introduction of superior exotic species of birds.—E. F. BOEHM.

## In Brief

(References indicate subject matter but do not necessarily give exact title.)

## AUSTRALASIA

## Victoria

*Vic. Nat.*, Aug. 1966, pp. 189-192. "Notes on Some Victorian Aboriginal names for plants and animals" by L. A. Hercus, contains many names for birds. *Vic. Nat.* July, 1966, pp. 157-167, "Once in the Suburbs" by G. M. Ward. A preliminary account of the loss of wildlife around Melbourne, 1850-1930, together with the changes of habitat.—M.C.D.

*The Bird Observer*, June 1966, No. 415, p. 3. "White-throated Warbler—a new nesting record for You Yangs" by F. Watts; "Australian Pelican—A strange visitor to the Musgrave Ranges, S.A." by V. Edwards; p. 4, "Noisy Friarbird in Black Rock Garden, Rare visitor to Southern Victoria" by B. Salter. *The Bird Observer*, July 1966, No. 416, p. 5. "Effects of Pesticides on birds in Black Rock garden" by B. Salter.—W.R.W.

## New Zealand

*Records of the Dominion Museum*, July 1966, 5: 185-193. "The Value of the Yolk Reserve in Adelic Penguin Chicks" by Bryan E. Reid and Colin Bailey. Discusses function of yolk reserve retained by chicks at hatching. *New Zealand Journal of Science*, June 1966, 9: 361. "A Sequence of Soils from a Penguin Rookery, Inexpressible Island, Antarctica" by I. B. Campbell and G. G. C. Claridge. Describes the changes made by penguin rookeries on soil structures.—H.L.S.

## OVERSEAS

*Ardea* 54 (1-2): 45-67, "Geographical variation in the Giant Petrels of the Genus *Macronectes*" by W. R. P. Bourne and John Warham. Two forms of Giant Petrel breed alongside each other and remain distinct on Macquarie Island so it appears that they must be treated as distinct sibling species. The name *Macronectes giganteus* applies to the antarctic polymorphic population and the name *Macronectes halli* to the subantarctic population.—JOHN L. MCKEAN.

*Bird-Banding*, 37: 193-197, "Longevity Records of Some Central Pacific Seabirds" by Roger B. Clapp and Fred C. Sibley. Describes the ages, as disclosed by banding, of tropical albatrosses, boobies and other species.—H.L.S.

*Auk*, 83 (1): 98-110, "Behaviour of the Australian Musk Duck and Blue-billed Duck" by Paul a. Johnsgard. Sexual displays of the Musk and Blue-billed Ducks are described and illustrated. Musk Duck are considered to have a completely promiscuous mating system while the Blue-billed Duck appears to have definite pair bonds. Pp. 117-123, "The Bowing Display of Pigeons in reference to Phylogeny" by Derek Goodwin. Discusses the displays of a number of Australian species.—JOHN L. MCKEAN.

## Literary Notes No. 5

*Additions to Whittell's "Literature of Australian Birds"*.—Adams, W. H. D.; *The Bird World*/ Described with Pen and Pencil/ By W. H. Davenport Adams/ Author of "The Mediterranean Illustrated", "The Arctic World" etc./ And/ H. Giacomelli,/ Illustrator of "The Bird" by Michelet, "The Insect" etc./ (Ornament)/ London: Thomas Nelson and Sons/ Edinburgh and New York/ 1885./ Pp. xv-16-464. Discusses Australian and New Zealand Birds and scenery (Parrakeets, Cockatoos, Aborigines, Owl Parrot, Budgerigah, Emu, Lower Goulburn, Morton Plains, Wimmera, Cassowary, Lyrebirds, pp. 257, 265, 269, 274, 279.)

Bushman. Old. See Wheelwright, H. W. In addition to this "An Old Bushman" was the pseudonym used by a writer on the Wimmera (Vic.) in *The Yeoman and Aust. Acclimatizer*, Oct. 5-Dec. 7, 1861. The issue for Oct. 5 coincidentally gives a review of Wheelwright's book. (Information acknowledged to Research Department, State Library, Victoria). Cheney, Gladys M. "Birds of Wangaratta District, Victoria", *Emu* 14: 199-213. (See also *Emu* 13: 216, 14: 98-99, Muriel Cheney, presumably same author.)—A.McE.