

The island waterfowl, by Milton W. Weller. 1980. Iowa State University Press. pp. 121 and i-x. B/w photos, diags, maps. US\$10.95 (plus \$1 postage).

On a number of islands of various sizes and degrees of isolation are found endemic species of waterfowl, especially ducks. Dr Weller has concisely described how these endemic species differ from their mainland relatives, and how they have adapted in the face of reduced mobility, different food resources, climate, etc. Responses to island life include varying degrees of flightlessness, marine adaptations, reproductive rate, plumage changes (including tendency to loss of sexual dimorphism and to development of white eye-rings), changes in body size, and development of endemism.

Copies are obtainable from Iowa State University Press, South State Avenue, Ames, Iowa 50010.

D. H. BRATHWAITE

A sketchbook of birds, by C. F. Tunnicliffe, R.A. Hutchinson Grp (NZ) Ltd. NZ retail price \$26.75.

This book, which consists of a selection of pages from the artist's many sketchbooks in which he recorded his field observations, includes seabirds (gulls, terns, cormorants & alcid), waders, herons and spoonbills, waterfowl and birds of prey. Any ornithologist, especially a wader watcher, who would like to develop his ability to do field sketches of birds seen should find this book interesting. Each page includes not only the watercolour sketch, but also the rough pencil outlines which preceded it. There are 125 plates.

D. H. BRATHWAITE

Papua New Guinea bird calls, by Harold and Audrey Crouch.

This cassette is the first recording to be made available of the birds of Papua New Guinea in this form and the only one currently available. Two earlier recordings on disc have been unavailable for many years.

The list of species given with the cassette numbers 40 and includes the scientific names, which are also given in the spoken introductions on the tape. However, 41 are presented on the tape, the addition being a recording of the Emperor Of Germany's Bird Of Paradise (*Paradisaea giuelmi*) that became available after the original master tape had been prepared.

The narrations, which are both adequate and informative, are given by Audrey Crouch in a style that I would like used more often both here and on the international scene.

Three of the species are on the New Zealand list — the Sacred Kingfisher, the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, and the Dollar Bird. Also on this tape is the Brown Quail (*Coturnix australis*), which is also on the New Zealand list as part of a hybrid stock now popular with cage bird people. Many more of the species presented are to be found in Australia as well as New Guinea in one form or another. However, the strictly Papua New Guinea species that make up the bulk of this recording have not so far as I know been released on tape or disc before.

Unfortunately, this tape has a high noise level (hiss) on it caused by the duplication methods used in transferring from master tape to cassette that can be distracting to listeners. If one can live with this above-average noise level, the tape is worth while as an introduction to the more common birds of Papua New Guinea.

The tape is available from two sources, Papua New Guinea Bird Society, P.O. Box 1598, Boroko, PNG, and from the Bird Observers Club, P.O. Box 185, Nunawading, Victoria 3131, Australia.

Harold and Audrey Crouch have produced at least three Australian cassettes and are to be congratulated for their enterprise in producing this material, which includes so many species not available elsewhere.

LES McPHERSON

Guide to Cook Island birds, by D. T. Holyoak. 1980. Published for Cook Islands Library and Museum Society Inc. Printed by Bascands, Christchurch.

This small book of 40 pages, plus map on inside front cover, and bird topography on inside back cover, is an excellent concise summary of the present knowledge of the birds in the far-flung Cook Island Group.

The foreword is by Taunga o te Tini Short. The introduction is followed by useful tips for beginners — and others — on watching and identifying birds, and tabular lists showing the islands where the seabirds and land birds nest. A note on conservation is followed by a systematic list, where breeding birds are marked with an asterisk, occasional visitors with a dagger, and those recorded tentatively — what we call a Suspense List — are inside square brackets.

Each bird listed is briefly but adequately described, with notes on calls, range, etc. Of the 15 good photographs in colour, nine are of seabirds, two of shore birds, two of land birds (that of kingfishers is from a painting of three subspecies) and two of habitat.

The book concludes with a useful bibliography.

The author makes it clear that a great deal of information is still to be gained about Cook Island birds. The Cook Island Group has only ten endemic species of land bird, but six of these are found nowhere else.

The introduction of the Myna, cats and rats has played havoc on some islands, as well as disturbance by man of breeding colonies of seabirds. It is the same sad old story.

I can recommend this book, even to those not going to the Cooks. Price is not stated, but it should be reasonable.

R. J. SCARLETT