

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