

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF THE WEST INDIES. By James Bond. Illustrated by Earl Poole. Macmillan Company, New York, 1947: $4\frac{7}{8} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$ in., ix + 257 pp., col. frontispiece, 211 drawings. \$3.75.

Bond's latest work on West Indian birds is based on his well-known "Birds of the West Indies" (Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1936), but the text has been completely rewritten and abridged, and the new volume is definitely not a second edition. The detailed descriptions in the predecessor volume are reduced to a few lines of general description with particular emphasis on field marks; the ranges are stated in less detail. On the other hand, the accounts of the haunts, notes, and habits have been expanded, and a general statement of each bird's status is appended—helpful features not to be found in the earlier volume. Poole's line drawings which illustrated the 1936 work are again used, with numerous new ones as well, bringing the total number of species figured to over 210.

The use of Bond's field guide, which has no keys of any kind, naturally assumes that the student is able to place in their proper families the birds seen and then run down the specific identification by comparison with the drawings and a perusal of the appropriate text. North American migrants and wide-ranging water birds known to occur in the West Indies are included, as well as the endemic species, and Bond himself suggests in the introduction that one of the recent standard North American bird guides can be employed as a useful adjunct by visitors to the Caribbean. A short statement preceding each family, of the type used by Mayr in his recent "Birds of the Southwest Pacific," would facilitate placing of birds in their proper families by the less experienced observers, but this suggestion is not intended to be a criticism of what promises to be a most useful and convenient popular bird guide.—J. L. Peters.

THE BIRDS OF BREWERY CREEK. By Malcolm MacDonald. Oxford University Press, Toronto, Canada, 1947: $9 \times 6\frac{1}{8}$ in., x + 334 pp., 23 photographs (7 in color). \$5.00.

However busy he may have been as High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Canada, The Right Honourable Malcolm MacDonald put his early morning hours to good use. This book, of engaging and disarming charm, contains no little factual material. Clever interweaving of first-hand observations and recounted incidents has made a highly readable narrative of bird life. Certainly it is one that can be read with pleasure and much profit by laymen and with pleasure and probably some profit by most ornithologists.

Launching the account with a description of the area and a chapter devoted to "A Bird's Year," Mr. MacDonald continues with a report of his observations, arranged chronologically, by months. From a birdless first day in the field to a final accounting of 160 species, he writes of many varied incidents—and with great freshness of viewpoint.

The outstanding feature of the book is the easy cadences, which permit whimsical analogy to follow straight reporting. Without assuming the "sloppy sentimentality" of which Mr. MacDonald warns, it still is fun to picture his Red-wing as an Admiral complete with epaulets, or his Robin as a General in ceremonial dress. Too, one cannot help cheering him in the role of Matchmaker MacDonald during his encounter with the amorous Buffie-heads.

His life-history reports show remarkably fine powers of observation. Accounts of the Flicker, Catbird, Oriole, and particularly of the Spotted Sandpiper are exceedingly well handled. He proposes a very logical theory regarding the "decoy"

antics, or distraction display, of the Spotted Sandpiper as being related to the courtship display but later presents new evidence, thus leaving the matter open to more observation.

The book includes 23 photographs (some in color) by Arthur A. Allen and W. V. Crich. These are related only in that the birds portrayed are named in a quoted line of the text. Excellent photographs all, those in color being reproduced about as successfully as the present use of this process will allow, but the black and white ones suffer from a toning which robs them of a good deal of character.

The book is carefully indexed, so that one may follow all the material relating to a particular species. Some typographical errors do not appreciably detract from an otherwise finely produced book.—Rosario Mazzeo.

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* Loose-sheet reprints of this section have been available for the convenience of Members who clip the titles and paste them on cards for permanent reference files, but the number of requests received for these has not covered the printing cost. Unless additional Members wish to subscribe, reprinting the section must be discontinued. Two sets of the Bibliography (one for author and one for subject-file) can be supplied for fifty cents a year. Members are asked to send to the Editor new orders and to confirm standing orders before September. Double sets for past years (1941-47) are available at forty cents per year.

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