

include any endemics. Bird protection, and resident ornithologists are both wholly lacking in the islands, and although the goodwill of the authorities might well result in the setting up of some reserves and sanctuaries, they would be ineffective without somebody to police them. The Bannermans make out a good case for such intervention, and it is to be hoped that the International Council for Bird Preservation will take steps to see that not only are reserves set up, but wardens appointed to guard them.

RICHARD FITTER

Birds of the Atlantic Ocean paintings by **Keith Shackleton**, text by **Ted Stokes**. Country Life, £6 6s.

This handsome volume, in a series that benefits the World Wildlife Fund, includes photographs of 15 oil paintings, each devoted to a single species, and 23 plates of drawings in gouache grouping several related species which are admirably devised for their purpose of identification. With the text Commander Stokes has made a very adequate contribution, in part by means of compilation inevitable in dealing with some of the less familiar birds, with accounts that are clear and concise, and accompanied by most useful distribution maps. His account of the status of the cahow (the Bermuda petrel) will be disturbing to conservationists.

Keith Shackleton regrets that ocean birds have no gaudy plumage, but his paintings reveal that many of them in their plumage – white, brown, grey, black – follow the injunction of Polonius to be ‘rich, not gaudy,’ while, as Prince Philip aptly says in his foreword, the artist has captured ‘the grace and ease of flight’ which characterises all sea-birds. The plate of the little terns I find least satisfactory, perhaps through some fault in the colour-printing, and rather overcrowded. The rest are a sheer delight – the Arctic skuas, the fulmar, the white-tailed tropic bird, the northern gannet, and pre-eminently the wandering albatross – the real albatross, the albatross of the *Ancient Mariner*. If any ornithologist does not already know that famous and moving poem by heart, this painting may persuade him to learn it.

HURCOMB

Seabirds of the Tropical Atlantic Ocean by **George E. Watson**, \$3.75.

Seabirds of the Tropical Pacific Ocean by **Warren B. King**, free; both from Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

The purpose of the ‘Smithsonian Identification Manuals’ is to assist ‘reliable identification of organisms in little known parts of the world which are not otherwise covered in readily available handbooks’. Of these two the Atlantic one is a hard-cover second edition, the Pacific a paperback classified as ‘preliminary’. Both are printed photographically from typescript and from pen, ink and wash drawings by Tina A. Clapp which illustrate most of the species described, with results that are as satisfactory as they are economical. Both drawings and text, which are properly cross-referenced, are of a high quality.

The care taken in preparation, supported by full consultation of authorities and testing in the field (if such an expression may be used of great oceans), is such that the books can be unreservedly recommended to all land-based or shipboard seabird watchers. All species known to occur in the Atlantic between 33°N and 35°S and in the central Pacific (west of the line Hawaii–Easter Island) between the 30° parallels are included, representing a sizeable sample of the birds of the two oceans as a whole – in fact 107 for the Pacific and 115 (plus brief notes on a further 15 ‘strays’) for the Atlantic. Mr Watson’s descriptions are admirably succinct, while Mr King, though a little more wordy, includes 34 distribution