

A skin collection of more than 2000 birds from Nepal was presented by Bailey to the British Museum (Natural History). Various notes and papers on birds were published in the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. Mammals receiving attention included the kyang, serow and takin. A large collection of butterflies from Tibet and elsewhere is now in New York.

A. LANDBOROUGH THOMSON

Handbook of the Birds of Cyprus and Migrants of the Middle East, by D.A. Bannerman and W.M. Bannerman. Oliver and Boyd, £3.00.

Since 1958, when Dr and Mrs Bannerman published their pioneer *Birds of Cyprus*, much new knowledge of the avifauna of this varied and attractive island has been obtained, largely by the observations and ringing activities of the members of the Cyprus Ornithological Society. For this new volume, devised as a handbook rather than a comprehensive history, these distinguished authors have been able to draw on these results as summarised in the recent *Check List of the Birds of Cyprus, 1971* by P.F. Stewart and S.J. Christensen. This handbook concentrates on 285 of the species occurring in Cyprus, and includes brief notes on identification, the present and former status for breeding species, and times of appearance and indications of numbers for passage migrants and winter visitors. Many of these species are attractively illustrated by colour plates from paintings by Chloe Talbot Kelly and D.M. Reid-Henry, and others by line-drawings. They also include an appendix giving details of the occurrence of rarer species with some past records now rejected.

The species accounts make very clear the decline or disappearance of many of the larger breeding species (even though some past records may be doubted) due partly to increased population and development of the island, but mainly to the almost uncontrolled shooting which has to be seen to be believed. In addition, liming in some areas takes a heavy toll of passage migrants. The Cyprus Government has recently strengthened the protective legislation and is extending the reserve areas, the most recent being the Klidhes islands where a small colony of Audouin's gulls nest. This handy work, valuable for the visiting ornithologist, should also stimulate the growing efforts by the Cypriots themselves to improve their laws and to ensure that in future they are better observed.

STANLEY CRAMP

The Birds of Zambia, by C.W. Benson, R.K. Brooke, R.J. Dowsett and M.P.S. Irwin. Collins, £2.50.

This latest and most valuable addition to Collins popular Field Guides ranks high among text books on African ornithology. Each of the four experts discharged his special task with infinite care and exemplary diligence, but, writes Benson, 'we remain firm friends'. The simplicity of the style is admirable, and brevity is achieved without detracting in any way from the importance of the essential information. They must all be congratulated for having compressed into a book of handy size so much information, so comprehensive a treatise, while it is impossible to praise too highly the twelve pages of beautiful colour illustrations by Commander A.M. Hughes who makes his subjects really live.

The reviewer has a special personal interest in this book for the original Northern Rhodesia Check List was included in his 1934 Report

on a Faunal Survey of this territory. He has seen the infant of 40 years ago grow up by stages to maturity and finally to adult perfection.

A concise description of habitats, together with reference to their bird populations (evoking nostalgic memories of 1931-32), is supported by informative monochrome photographs. The systematic list, occupying 330 pages, is a striking example of how a little ingenuity enables limited provision of the maximum essential information – distribution, habitat, breeding and bibliographical references. Wetmore's arrangement is followed for families, but the specific order and nomenclature are according to White's revised African Check Lists (1961-65).

Four Appendices comprise a bibliography – 38 titles, comprising 500 references, all related to the systematic list which incorporates a complete list of published references to each known Zambia species; a 14-page gazetteer of place names with their co-ordinates; six pages of ringing recoveries and three pages of distribution maps. An index of scientific names is followed by one giving English names; a useful map of Zambia is printed inside front and back boards.

Altogether, a most valuable compendium, more a pocket text-book than just a *Field Guide*.

C.R.S. PITMAN

Woodland Birds, by Eric Simms. Collins, £3.

Which of our birds can fairly be grouped as falling into the description of woodland birds? Apart from those which are primarily denizens of high forest and deep moors, numerous and varied species frequent the margins, fringes and clearings of woods of all sorts and sizes, and find in such territories, at least for some seasons of the year, their essential requirement for food, shelter or nesting. And what indeed is woodland?

Intimately acquainted with both birds and countryside, Eric Simms answers the first question for practical purposes in a detailed survey of the range of the second. He is familiar in many countries with high forest, extensive woods, groves, belts, clumps, thickets and scrub, and has studied bird life wherever trees occur as well as the varying habitats provided by different layers of foliage from the canopy down to the ground cover. No more delightful approach to his subject can be imagined than a walk with him through the woods, such as he invites the reader to take in his fourth chapter, to spend a long summer day with him in one of our oakwoods, pedunculate or sessile as may be closer at hand, with eyes and ears well open. His comments are scientifically based and many of them confirm or develop the impressions of experienced ornithologists, but the spirit in which they are made has a Chaucerian freshness and Gilbert White's sympathy with the charm of a wooded landscape well populated.

The group of woodland birds, however narrowly or loosely we define it, is perhaps of particular interest both as illustrating the origins of much of our avifauna and as offering, readily available to a wide range of people, fields of study of the changes in status and distribution of important species, changes which are still in progress with the spread of afforestation, the introduction of conifers and the new habitats provided in the stages of plantation, where populations will develop, shift and recover. Space is rightly devoted to the so-called 'ecotones' where woods shade off into wooded heaths or the important areas of traditional parkland, orchards and suburban gardens. A chapter on woodland birds in towns might seem but is not at all out of place.