

families and species of New Guinea birds, with their known distribution and longer. The main part, nearly 600 pages, comprises a systematic account of all the subspecific variation (if any). It is a good feature that nesting and displays where known are given such thorough treatment; for instance, the summaries of the displays of each species of bird of paradise – New Guinea's chief glory, both in beauty and evolutionary interest – are a most valuable feature of the book.

The illustrations, by two artists, are rather mixed, both in style and conception. Five attractive coloured plates by Albert E. Gilbert show 27 species, and 48 pages of half-tone plates show 129 species, giving 156 species illustrated out of a total of about 650. The half-tone plates give the impression of being chosen rather haphazardly: those by Douglas E. Tibbitts are stilted compared with Gilbert's, though all appear adequate for identification. It may have been deliberate policy, but it seems a pity to illustrate well-known species of wide distribution such as the oystercatcher and little ringed plover, rather than typically Papuan species which cannot be found elsewhere.

Tom Gilliard's sudden death at the age of 53, soon after the manuscript was completed was a great loss to New Guinea ornithology, and especially to the study of the birds of paradise; he had been responsible for much of our knowledge of these superb birds and would surely have discovered more if he had lived.

D. W. SNOW

Birds of South Vietnam, by Philip Wildash. Charles E. Tuttle, \$7.50 US.

The author has long served in the British Foreign Office, including several years in Saigon. He is a laudably social-minded ornithologist, founder of both the Cyprus Ornithological Society and the Ornithological Society of Vietnam. This book is itself a form of social service, in that it is patently a first effort, largely based on other work no longer available, notably that of Jean Delacour – who writes a Foreword of proto-Gaullist egocentricity.

Compiled for his own use, the book is compressed and impersonal, but basically to the point. There is no word of the war, or its huge effects on bird and all other wild life, e.g. from American defoliation chemicals. It is a devoted effort to produce a practical, effective, slightly larger-than-pocket book, and the colour plates, a joint effort by author and wife, help in this effect. The outline drawings are dashing, but some colour values seem to have suffered in reproduction. More important, neither in the text nor on the plates is there ever any indication of bird *size*, a defect that is accentuated by strange scale effects on several plates, where large birds are shown smaller and vice versa. There is also an annoying tendency to devote illustration space to very well-known birds rather than especially Vietnamese ones. The selection of these illustrations implies some publisher influence, and this is emphasised on the book's front cover, which proclaims other countries 'covered' by the book, North Vietnam, China, Burma, etc. to Borneo. It is true there is considerable species overlap, but in the text there is no attempt to indicate – even by an asterisk – any distribution outside South Vietnam.

Let us hope the FO keeps the Wildashes in Saigon, and that rockets permit a revised second edition of a brave venture, ignoring the publisher's sales ploy for the goose-lover or Borneo boy.

TOM HARRISON

Birds in the Balance by Philip Brown. Deutsch, 25s.

Philip Brown was for many years an official of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and for the last eleven of those years their Secretary; now he is editor of the *Shooting Times*. Has he defected to the 'other side'? Sensibly he

argues that as both conservationists and shooters want as many birds as possible they have a basic common interest; they should work together and not squabble amongst themselves. In both his jobs he had done a great deal to bring this about. Yet in reading *Birds in the Balance* one wonders if he does not believe that sportsmen are better at conservation than the avowed conservationists. He refers to the breeding and release of greylag geese by the Wildfowling Association: 'I doubt myself if anything has been more imaginative and its education value seems to me to be much greater than most of the ideas protectionists have hitherto thought up.'

The best parts of the book are the author's personal reminiscences of trying to catch egg collectors and dealers after the Protection of Birds Act, 1954, had been enacted. On the whole this activity was remarkably successful and it is a pity that there should have been little happening in the last few years although 'there is ample evidence to show that their activities continue almost unabated.' The official agencies of law enforcement – the police and to a less extent local authorities – do little or nothing on their own initiative.

The book is a readable, discursive but highly personal account of bird protection within the space of a hundred pages. An objective account remains to be written. There are nine pages of photographs of traps, gibbets and oiled birds to emphasise that protection has some way to go before it is effective in these islands.

G. des FORGES

A Wealth of Wildfowl by Jeffery Harrison. Deutsch, 30s.

Wildfowl can be objects of beauty and fascination to be watched and studied, or a quarry providing a thrilling sport. In previous writings the author has left no doubt that he is in the happy position of being able to enjoy wildfowl in every way, and in this 'Survival' book he ably demonstrates that co-operation between wildfowling, bird-watchers and biologists really works in this country, to the lasting benefit of the wildfowl and therefore of all those interested in them. Co-operation only came in the last decade, and some of the arguments and wordy battles which preceded the present happier atmosphere are recalled. If this one chapter seems just a little pointless, as indeed may some of the happenings related in it, Dr Harrison uses it as a starting point to show how conservation works in practice, given the necessary precondition of mutual understanding between differing interests.

The quality which comes through on almost every page of the chapters dealing with present research into British wildfowl is enthusiasm. Dr Harrison has himself pioneered or partaken in many of the study methods which he describes. The recent growth in international co-operation in wildfowl conservation is given due prominence and the reader is introduced to many of the leading figures in this field, though an indication of their nationality or position is sometimes lacking. The reader is left sharing Dr Harrison's own undoubted optimism about the present state and future prospects for wildfowl in Britain; that anyone should be able to be optimistic is greatly due to Dr Harrison's own efforts, and this book puts wildfowl further in his debt.

M. A. OGILVIE

A BEAUTIFULLY produced, quite slim picture book, with a short authoritative explanatory text, *Tracks*, (Clarendon Press, 25s.) is a combination of lively drawings by E. A. R. Ennion and revealing photographs by N. Tinbergen, the subjects ranging from a weevil toiling up a sandy slope to wildebeest streaming across the Serengeti; a splendid book for the young naturalist.

The Birds of Chile, by A. W. Johnson, reviewed in the May issue of Oryx, can be obtained in Britain from Bernard Quaritch, London, Wheldon and Wesley, Hitchin, or the Scottish Ornithologists' Bookshop, Edinburgh; and in the USA from the Pierce Book Company, Winthrop, Iowa.