

Penny's area at the time of the Royal Society's first footing on Aldabra, when almost weekly new records were being established for the vast scatter of islands over the western Indian Ocean. The Bahamas have been more completely documented. For a long time there has been a strong population of both breeding and migrant ornithologists – especially on New Providence. And the Galapagos speak for themselves. As perhaps the world's most sensational laboratory of natural evolution, these islands stand in a class of their own and one is left to wonder, as always happens when a deep need is filled, how it was ever possible to manage so long without the book.

The fourth guide is a little different. It is not a Collins, not in fact a Field Guide at all – just a lovely and much needed book. *Birds of the Falkland Islands*, illustrated by the authors' own photographs, does everything a field guide should do, is valuable and complete. Though I have a possibly self-centred conviction that reference books should be illustrated by artists, and that photographs are the pictorial equivalent of piped music, this is probably as suspect as all generalisations. Behind, beyond, around these photographs of birds lies all the landscape wilderness appeal, the rock and tussac-grass, beaches and cliffs of the windy Falklands – and there are few better places on earth for escape.

KEITH SHACKLETON

**Ocean Wanderers**, by R. M. Lockley. David & Charles and Stackpole Books, £5.25.

Few are so well qualified to write a popular account of the migratory seabirds of the world as R. M. Lockley. During his years on Skokholm he did much to pioneer field studies of seabirds, working not only on their behaviour and breeding biology but, in the case of the Manx shearwater, initiating some of the first tests on their astonishing navigational abilities. Since then, seabird studies have burgeoned dramatically all over the world, and even so skillful a writer faces a stiff task in attempting to summarise current knowledge in 168 pages.

The book falls into two main sections. The first half consists of a series of general chapters on origins and evolution, adaptations to oceanic life, behaviour, food and feeding grounds, navigation, and relations with man. These are immensely readable, conveying the essence of the topic clearly and vividly, though at times, perhaps, the easy prose obscures the complexity of a problem, and on occasion, as in his discussion of marine pollution, even his skill cannot do justice in the limited space available to the many ramifications of the possible dangers. In the second half there are chapters on each of the seven main groups, with some mention of most species involved, but with space to cover only one or two in each section in any detail. Here again, they are often illuminated by his own field experience in Britain and abroad.

This is an exciting and attractive introduction, well illustrated with maps, colour and black-and-white photographs, and many delightful drawings by Robert Gillmor. It underlines the need now for a more comprehensive work, covering fully the mass of new knowledge acquired since 1954 when the author, with James Fisher, wrote the classic *Sea-birds*, one of the best of the New Naturalist series.

STANLEY CRAMP

**The British Oak**, edited by M. G. Morris and F. H. Perring. Claxsey, £6.00.

This book is the result of a Conference of the Botanical Society of the British Isles, held at the University of Sussex in 1973. It is therefore a collection of papers, twenty-one of them, plus an introduction by Dr Eustace Jones, on a wide spread of subjects including the history, folklore, silviculture and utility of oak, *Quercus robur* and *Quercus petraea*, as well as all branches of its botany, its teeming inhabitants and their enormously rich ecology.