

known anywhere (though breeding is presumably regular somewhere in the Orinoco river system). Yet the protection theoretically accorded to it is not fully effective; in some years poaching and disturbance can, and do, effectively prevent the birds from breeding at all. Jan Lindblad gives a vivid account of how he personally took a hand in improving the situation at least in one year; we must hope that the improvement lasts.

D. W. SNOW

A Contribution to the Ornithology of Zambia by C. W. Benson and M. P. Stuart Irwin. OUP, 50s.

In the course of preparation is a book, *The Birds of Zambia*, which will be the culmination of some 20 years' intensive study of the birds of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) by C. W. Benson, as well as elaborate follow-up and complete revision of a series of check lists of progressively increasing scope and value. This paper, published on behalf of the National Museums of Zambia, is an essential preliminary and supplement to that project, and its co-authors are unrivalled in their knowledge of ornithology in their respective territories either side of the Zambezi, besides both being indefatigable field workers. Though comprehensive on an individual basis, it is restricted to some 240 selected species and provides extensively important details which could not be conveniently included in the major work. It concentrates, too, mainly on western Zambia, and particularly Barotse, a region hitherto little documented, and besides including a wealth of additional information on distribution, ecology and breeding seasons, also discusses a variety of taxonomic problems. In conclusion, it is scarcely necessary to mention that it is of the high quality that one associates with the authors.

C. R. S. PITMAN

History of the Birds of the Cape Verde Islands by David A. Bannerman and W. Mary Bannerman. Oliver & Boyd, £6 6s.

When David Bannerman originally set out to write *The Birds of the Atlantic Islands*, of which this is volume IV, his declared intention was to do two volumes on the birds of the Canaries, Madeira and the Azores. The Canaries and Salvages volume appeared in 1963, but volume II he found necessary to split into two; in the third volume, on the Azores, he was helped by his wife, who has established an ornithological reputation in her own right. Now, again with her aid, he has added a fourth volume, to complete the oceanic islands in the tropical and sub-tropical parts of the north-eastern Atlantic. This maintains the high standards already set by the first three (two of which were reviewed in *ORYX* in April 1966 and December 1967), and contains much additional material of interest, going so far as to include an excellent chapter by Norman Riley, on the butterflies together with a colour plate. Indeed one third of the book's 458 pages is occupied by matter other than the normal systematic treatment. These additional delights include a fairly detailed account of the authors' journeys in the archipelago, and notes from the diary of the junior author. Some 34 birds are illustrated in fine colour plates by D. M. Reid-Henry and P. A. Clancy.

As with all oceanic islands the main interest of the Azores to the naturalist lies in the random selection of the avifauna of the nearest mainland which has both managed to reach them and succeeded in building up a viable population. They include two endemics, one of which, the Razo lark, has set taxonomists by the ears for many years in their attempts to determine its affinities – currently it has come to rest in *Alauda*, although Dr Bannerman is clearly not happy about the latest fashion. Some species notably the white-breasted cormorant, appear to have become extinct on the islands in recent years, but fortunately these do not

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