

Short reviews

Birds of Kerala: the birds of Travancore and Cochin. By **Sálim Ali.** (Oxford University Press, India; first published 1953, second edition 1969, reprinted 1984. £15.00) This welcome reprint will be indispensable to anyone visiting southern India (and not just Kerala). After a stimulating introduction, all relevant species and subspecies are comprehensively treated in Handbook style. Only a selection is illustrated in colour, but this includes most of the endemics and many distinct races. [NIGEL REDMAN] **Birds of the Cayman Islands.** By **Patricia Bradley.** (P. E. Bradley, 1985. £22.00) Competently written, well-produced guide to the birds of these islands. The 72 excellent colour photographs illustrate most of the common species (though not all of those also found in North America). The 148 regularly occurring species are covered in some detail (163 pages), whilst 28 rarer visitors are dealt with in a nine-page appendix. Birdwatchers visiting the islands should obtain a copy, though the high price may put others off. [DAVID FISHER] **Manual del Anillador (ringers' guide in Spanish).** By **Pedro Ceballos, Juan Molina, Antonio Franco and Borja Palacios.** (Instituto Nacional Para La Conservacion de la Naturaleza, 1984. No price given). Based closely on the BTO *Ringer's Manual*, this is more weather-

proof, pocketable and better illustrated, but less comprehensive and with no index. Essential for foreigners ringing in Spain (although with no instructions specifically for them), as required ring-sizes and methods differ a good deal from ours, and there are recommendations for Iberia's special birds, ringing in mixed heronries, and other local tips. It is possible for the non Spanish-speaker to follow some of the critical sections. [J. M. O'SULLIVAN] **Der Weiss-Storch.** By **Gerhard Creutz.** (Die Neue Brehm-Bücherei 375. A. Ziemsen Verlag, 1985. DM25.20) Number 375 in this series of paperback monographs with all-German texts. The references alone take up 8½ of the 216 pages; invaluable source of information concerning the White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*. **The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland.** Edited by **John Heath and A. Maitland Emmet.** Vol. 1 Micropterigidae-Heliozelidae. Vol. 2 Cossidae-Heliodinidae. Vol. 9 Sphingidae-Noctuidae (Part I). Vol. 10 Noctuidae (Part II) and Agaristidae. (Harley Books. Vol. 1: 1976, £37.50; vol. 2: 1985, £47.50; vol. 9: 1979, £40.00; vol. 10: 1983, £45.00). One of the complaints about some binoculars which do not focus close-to is based on their bird-watcher owner's wish to obtain close views of butterflies and moths. There

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have been some good and well-illustrated books on butterflies, and others on moths, in the past, but this (eventually) ten-volume set is the lepidopterists' equivalent of the ornithologists' *BWP* (except that it covers Britain and Ireland rather than the Western Palearctic), combined with *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland*. The standard of text and illustrations (execution and reproduction) and the inclusion of standard dot-distribution maps make this set not only very valuable for the entomologist or general field naturalist, but also a collector's item for lovers of good books. The editors, John Heath and A. Maitland Emmet, and their team of associate editors, artists and authors, are achieving an end-product which many ornithologists will—if they can afford it—want to own. It is worth purchasing each volume as it is published, since, for instance, volume 1, which cost just £17.50 when it first appeared in 1976, is now £30.00, and further increases seem inevitable. Highly recommended (and a good investment!).

Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa. By Gordon Lindsay Maclean. (John, Voelcker Bird Book Fund, 1985. R24.50 + p&p) Even if you already own the book of this title, first published in 1940 and with second, third and fourth editions in 1957, 1970 and 1978, you will probably wish to obtain this fifth edition. Not only have there been many amendments and additions made (the text has been 'completely revised' by Dr Maclean), but also the distribution maps now show resident breeding (green), passage (yellow) and migrant breeding (blue) separately. The most important change, however, is in the illustrations. There are many completely new plates by Geoff Lockwood and Kenneth Newman, and the standard of illustration is now comparable with that which we have come to expect of field guides and handbooks. The plates are also now all arranged in one block, which is much more convenient for reference compared with the previously awkward-to-use scattered plates. With over 200 more pages than the last edition, this book will be wanted by everyone with an interest in the birds of Africa south of the Kunene, Okavango and Zambezi Rivers (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe).

The Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland. By Michael J. Roberts. Vol. 1 Atypidae-Theridiosomatidae. Vol. 3 Colour plates. (Harley Books, 1985. Vol. 1, £45.00; vol. 3, £55.00; vols. 1 &

3 together £90.00). When complete, this three-volume set will form the definitive guide to the identification of all British and Irish species. The paintings, as well as the text, have been prepared by Dr Michael J. Roberts, who has managed to combine this with his medical practice. Volume 1 provides an introduction and species-texts for the larger spiders; the still-in-preparation volume 2 will contain texts for the smaller species; volume 3 contains 237 full-page colour plates, illustrating the 307 species. The illustrations are all much enlarged, but each one includes a small, life-size line-drawing to give scale. Every British naturalist who ever wants to identify a spider will refer to this work, and these volumes must become an essential part of the library of every serious field naturalist, whether professional or amateur. The one thing lacking is distribution maps, but the author points out that 'Because there are still relatively few people working on spiders, it can be argued that our present knowledge of spider distribution partly reflects the distribution of active arachnologists. It is hoped that the present work will stimulate further interest in spiders and an increasing number of records from individual collectors. The known distribution patterns might then be altered somewhat and could form the subject of a separate publication.' Personally, I hope that this information will eventually form a slim volume 4 in this magnificent set.

Travel Diaries of a Naturalist. II. By Peter Scott. Edited by Miranda Weston-Smith. (Collins, 1985. £12.95) If you enjoyed the mix in volume 1 (reviewed *Brit. Birds* 77: 132), you will find this a most satisfying second helping. One travels around the world—this time to Hawaii, California, Alaska, Florida, the Bahamas, Iceland, Norway, Spitsbergen, Greenland, Israel, Romania and Siberia—with Sir Peter Scott, sharing his thrills, his tribulations and his thoughts, all wonderfully illustrated by those best-of-all paintings, those from an artist's field sketchbook. Birds, fishes and plants are all delightfully lifelike, and almost every double-page spread without some paintings or drawings has colour photographs of the places visited. A book to enjoy.

A Century of Bird Books. By Peter Tate. (H. F. & G. Witherby, 1985. £10.50) This second edition (the first was reviewed in *Brit. Birds* 73: 274) contains an extra 16 pages of new and previously omitted titles.