

## BOOK REVIEW

AUSTRALIAN WARBLERS, by Arnold R. McGill, illustrated by Rex Davies, maps by Reg Johnson and Alex Stirling, published by The Bird Observers Club, Melbourne, 1970; 147 pp., 12 colour plates. Price \$4.00.

Slowly but surely all Australian bird groups are being covered by really good field guides and handbooks. This latest addition to the list covers 83 species of small birds, grouped under the general name of "warblers," included in one or several families depending on the authority, and containing a number of genera with which most observers have identification problems, due to their small size, constant activity and/or secretive habits. This book, by one of Australia's most experienced field ornithologists should help to solve most of these problems. The illustrations by Rex Davies are very good, showing each species as it appears in the field.

The size of the book,  $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ , is smaller than the previous two volumes in this series, being small enough to fit the average coat pocket—a decided advantage.

Each species is dealt with under the headings Brief Description, Field Identification, Distribution, Habitat, Voice, Breeding and General Remarks, and is accompanied by a distribution map; some of the latter are not quite accurate as far as South Australia is concerned, but there do not appear to be any serious errors. Each group of species is preceded by some general information on the genera involved, including relationships within and beyond Australia.

With Australian avian taxonomy in its present chaotic state McGill's treatment has been intelligently conservative; the retention of such forms as the Spotted Scrub-Wren and Rufous Field-Wren as full species will be popular amongst field workers. The dry-country forms of the Brown Thornbill complex in South Australia are treated as a separate species, the Broad-tailed Thornbill, *Acanthiza apicalis*. Vernacular names are mostly those of the 1926 R.A.O.U. Checklist; the few changes should not be unpopular, e.g. Cisticola instead of Fantail-Warbler (I personally would like to see others—*Hylacola*, *Calamanthus*, *Amytornis*, etc.—similarly used), and White-tailed Warbler instead of Western Warbler (which extends almost to the N.S.W. coast).

An essential addition to a bird observer's library.

B.G.