

1930, contains no reference to modern work on its persistent mysteries. These are but a few of many failures to be up-to-date.

Dr. Oliver believes that the changes due to settlement continue to reduce native birds and that their worst enemies, rats and stoats, are still increasing throughout the land, implying that a balance has nowhere been attained, an attitude (whether justified or not) that is akin to Buller's confidence, 50 years ago, that native birds were inevitably doomed. Fortunately several of the species Buller condemned to extinction still thrive, and Oliver's chapter on Changes in the Fauna does not record any losses in the quarter century between editions—in fact the only changes in this section are a transfer of responsibility from weasel to stoat, and an under-statement of improved conditions for some species. Apparently no bird has been exterminated for 25 years (compared with several in the previous like period). No complacency of course!

New Zealand legislation to protect birds is well known overseas, but receives little mention and some neglect in this standard work. We learn that "the Kermadec Petrel . . . has always formed the staple food of the inhabitants" of Raoul Island, but not that it has been totally protected since 1922. Use of Bittern feathers for trout flies is mentioned without caution of its illegality. Sportsmen will find no help in determining which New Zealand waterfowl they may shoot as game.

Many fine photographs, tribute to bird photographers of three decades, have been added to the new edition. A dozen in colour, however, fall short in the standard set in overseas bird books, chiefly owing to the false values of blue and green tones. Of the brush drawings of bird heads, those by the late Lily Daff brought forward from the first edition remain outstanding, but E. H. Atkinson's have suffered by insufficient reduction and lack of scale detracts from their value. Several fine petrel heads have been sympathetically drawn by R. Jacobs, but some by other artists are grotesque and misleading. For these illustrations, conveniently spaced, the reader suffers the glare of reflecting light from text printed on shiny art paper, substantial contribution to a total weight of over 4½ pounds. No pocket handbook this, but the size does not justify the price, again by overseas standards.

The second edition of *New Zealand Birds* has the good qualities of the first and many additional merits; its deficiencies are also mostly inherited. Dr. Oliver has collected more information on his subject than has ever appeared in one volume before. He has compiled the observations and opinions of past and contemporary New Zealanders conscientiously if not thoroughly. This is the work of one man, and not a young one, with inspiration and energy to finish a task few would tackle unaided. Future standard New Zealand bird books will probably be written by a team, who will depend on Oliver's volume to provide a foundation and to spotlight the pitfalls. Meanwhile, *New Zealand Birds* is a much-needed reference work for hundreds of amateur and professional ornithologists who will observe and record the data for its successor; unfortunately, few of them can afford to buy it.

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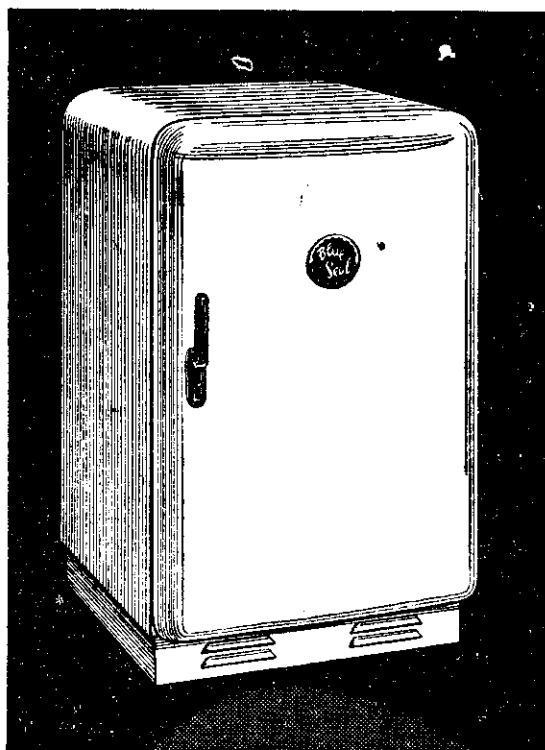
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