

are numerous American warblers belonging to quite a different family—the Mniotiltidae, a large assembly of birds differing much in colour and habits from our warblers.

Though the common house sparrow was introduced long ago and is now widely spread, there are also many types of American sparrows and juncos belonging to the Fringillidae, but more nearly related to the buntings than the true finches.

In spite of the small space allotted to habits Mr. Pough has managed to give us much interesting information which adds to the interest of the book.

N. B. K.

SOME COMMON AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.

BY ALAN and SHIRLEY BELL. Oxford University Press. 1956. 35s.

This book purports to simplify the identification of about 100 common Australian birds. Brief and chatty information is given on the left of each two pages, and a coloured picture of the corresponding species on the right. It is doubtful, in the case of many species, whether the book will achieve its aim. The illustrations must be amongst the most inaccurate ever published of Australian birds. Much space has been wasted throughout the book. Most pages of letterpress are only partly filled, and often a whole page contains only one small figure. It is astonishing, when we consider the high costs of modern production that a book of such meagre virtue ever found a publisher.

A. J. M.

ÉCOLOGIE, BIOLOGIE ET SYSTÉMATIQUE DES CHEIROPTÈRES.
Par JACQUES VERSCHUREN (Bruxelles). Exploration du Parc National de la Garamba. Fascicule 7. Bruxelles, 1957. (In French), 478 pp., 178 figs. (photographs, sketches, diagrams, charts, tables, maps); 2 col. plates (1 page); map. Obtainable from: l'Institut des Parcs Nationaux du Congo Belge, 21, rue Montoyer, Brussels, Belgium. Price 900 Belgian francs.

This text-book, devoted to the mammalian order Chiroptera—Bats—and based on the researches of the scientific investigators enumerated on the title page in a small area of N.E. Belgian Congo, is of the high standard which has always been associated with the publications of the Institut des Parcs Nationaux du

Congo Belge. In it will be found a wealth of information, lucidly expressed, on every aspect of bat ecology, behaviour and morphology.

There is a brief foreword; a useful general introduction; a succinct two-page summary, which though at the end can profitably be read first; and a valuable bibliography. It lacks an index, instead the concluding eight pages constitute a comprehensive "Table of Contents". The main text is in two parts—the first, "Écologie et biologie générale", is a general analysis of the subject, covers 178 pages and is divided into nine chapters; the second, "Récoltes, systématique et écologie des espèces," deals in detail with 38 species and with a thoroughness which occupies 269 pages.

Of these 38 species, four belonging to the sub-order Megachiroptera are all in the family *Pteropidae* though representative of the four separate genera *Epomops*, *Epomophorus*, *Microp-teropus*, and *Myonycteris*: the absence of any species of *Rousettus* is surprising. The other 34 are members of the sub-order Microchiroptera and represent six families and eleven genera. In greater detail these are (1) *Emballonuridae*, with three species of *Taphozous*; (2) *Nycteridae*, with 6 *Nycteris*; (3) *Megadermidae*, with the partially diurnal *Lavia frons*; (4) *Rhinolophidae*, with 3 *Rhinolophus* and 5 *Hipposideros*; (5) *Molossidae*, with 8 *Tadarida* and 1 *Otomops*; and (6) *Vesper-tilionidae*, with 3 *Eptesicus*, 2 *Pipistrellus*, 1 *Nycticeinus* (*Scoteinus*) and 1 *Scotophilus*.

The first part is a general discourse on all aspects of bat roosts; ecological grouping; sex ratio and populations; sociability—amongst bats of the same species, with other bats and with birds and mammals; food; reproduction; behaviour—particularly in relation to habitat; the influence of man; technical classification; and finally on the relevant activities of the scientific mission of investigation of the Garamba National Park.

The second part elaborates systematically and comprehensively what has already been outlined generally, and for each species is recorded a list of the specimens collected together with essential data; the distribution generally and locally; measurements; classification and description; ecology and biology; and behaviour. Of special importance are those sections which deal with the type of habitat and the specific roosts of each species, amplified with references to the influence of man who provides new hiding places in permanent buildings, who exploits forests and so destroys many bat refuges, who

starts bush fires, and so forth ; as are also the comprehensive details about behaviour. The numerous figures depicting so clearly the variety of roosting places and the diverse, but characteristic, rest attitudes adopted by the various species are, too, of particular value.

The hours of activity of the different species ; the influence of habitat on feeding range ; whether insectivorous or frugivorous ; whether feeding in flight or the prey taken to a " perch " ; are among the many items discussed. The meticulous study of the methods of entry into and departure from roosting places, as well as the descriptions of the initial line of flight when emerging from a shelter make entertaining reading, as do the accounts of methods of capture, and the analysis of bat voice—diurnal and nocturnal, in the habitual roost, on the wing or at rest.

The wealth of detail with which this work has been compiled is well illustrated by the way each captured specimen had its rectal temperature taken, parasites collected, stomach contents examined, state of genital organs noted and measurements and weight recorded.

Although this is a highly scientific treatise much of the subject matter is not only of zoological interest but at the same time provides enjoyable reading.

C. R. S. P.

THE CRY OF THE FISH EAGLE (sub-title "The Personal Experiences of a Game Warden and his Wife in the Southern Sudan"). By PETER MOLLOY. 254 pp., 46 pp. illus., map. Michael Joseph, 21s.

Books about Africa continue to come off the production line so frequently that one wonders how it is possible to maintain the reader's interest in this well publicized subject. But, much more than just a thrilling animal story, this is a lively portrayal, in simple language and delightfully expressed, of the inhabitants—both human and wild—of a region so vast that in extent it equals the combined areas of France, Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland. It is a stirring tale of achievement and endeavour, an epic of six years of toil, sweat, blood, and tears ; as well as a valuable record of the ethnology of a little known region at a particularly interesting stage of tribal evolution. That Molloy made a success of an immense task is due to his sympathetic understanding of the African, which won for him the necessary confidence without which his efforts would have