

Bird Guide of Thailand by **Boonsong Lekagul**. Obtainable from the Fauna Preservation Society, London, 62s. 6d., postage 2s.

This handy pocket-book is a very fine effort on the part of Dr Boonsong, who has written it (in English), illustrated it (broadly in the Peterson manner), and published it from the Association of which he is the leading spirit. It is probably the first first-class bird book produced wholly inside a South-east Asian country.

Indeed, it is quite astonishing what Dr Boonsong has achieved in these 272 pages and 85 plates. Every bird anyone is ever going to see in Thailand is here figured, clearly, in colour. The colour tones are not always perfect – for instance the house sparrow has gone a bit green on plate 80. But in general the standard is very high, not only as regards plumage and shading, but equally in the outline, shape and stance of each species. It is clear that the author knows these birds in life; he gets the feel of the living bird on to the page.

The text, covering the astonishing total of 828 forms, is to the point. An average of four birds are covered on each page. Popular and scientific names are followed by the local name in both Thai and western scripts – very useful as you can thus show the page to a rural Thai and get on-the-spot information. Then size, sexual characters, basic plumage, status and main habitat are given, usually with precision. The whole book is based on H. G. Deignan's *Checklist of Birds of Thailand*, 1963, (reviewed in *ORYX*, December, 1964) which made the present popular work possible. A final chapter adds no fewer than 37 species since 1963, plus the really astonishing white-eyed river martin, a new and striking swallow only discovered in 1968. Dr Dillon Ripley writes a helpful introduction.

TOM HARRISON

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