

address. If it is to be successful then cases for reservation must be thoroughly prepared and well presented. The interest theme is not sufficient. We have rare opportunities in New Zealand for studying near-natural com-

munities. We already have a surfeit of material for most purposes, but there are still many lowland communities of special interest in danger of extinction. These we would like to see reserved.

BOOK REVIEW

An Introduction to Freshwater Life in New Zealand. B. J. MARPLES. Pp. 160; 25 text-figures. Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd. Price 20/-.

General accounts of the freshwater community in New Zealand have been limited to various publications of the Education Department and to P. Dickinson's "Field Notes for the Freshwater Naturalist", all restricted to particular aspects. Professor Marples has, therefore, produced the first comprehensive account, dealing specifically with New Zealand and including at least some reference to all the principal groups.

The book is aimed towards "school and university students, teachers and amateur naturalists", and the standard of knowledge assumed in the reader is generally appropriate, particularly for the sixth-form school or first-year university level. Inevitably perhaps there are a few inconsistencies such as the extremely elementary account of the binomial system of nomenclature followed by the unexplained use of the terms haploid and diploid. Some knowledge of, and access to, a microscope are also assumed.

Introductory chapters deal briefly with the main features of freshwater as an environment, and with the classification of living organisms. They include a simple key to enable any animal to be placed in its group. The bulk of the book is then devoted to a series of chapters on the phyla occurring in New Zealand freshwaters. Each describes the essential structural features of the animals in the phylum, the principal groups into which they are divided, and something of their habits and way of life. No attempt is made to provide a systematic account from which the species or even

the genus of a particular animal could be determined, but in the better known groups some of the commonest forms are briefly referred to and sometimes illustrated. The line diagrams, though sometimes rather crude, are clear and give a good general impression of the animal concerned. Each chapter or major section has a list of references which, though far from comprehensive, includes three or four of the principal publications. The book concludes with a short chapter on practical methods.

Although the title of the book refers to freshwater life, by far the greater part of it deals with animals. Plants are limited to a single short chapter and to a few passing references in the chapters on ecology and identification.

The format is suitable for the purpose. The type is clear, the size convenient for the pocket, the binding stout and workmanlike. There is a good index. Proof reading has generally been good but a few errors in technical terms have crept in, e.g. *Nototroctes* for *Prototroctes* on page 138, and *incus* for *uncus* on page 58; the latter is particularly awkward since *incus* is actually used correctly elsewhere in the same paragraph.

In conclusion, this book undoubtedly helps to fill a long-existing gap, and should be particularly welcome to school and university teachers and those with a general interest in the life of our freshwaters. With it, the reader should be able to place almost any animal he finds in freshwater in its correct group and learn something of its structure and mode of life.

K. RADWAY ALLEN.