

critically. A good example is his questioning of Pedersen's hypothesis of a continual circumpolar "migration" of the entire polar bear population over a period of years. There are many reasons for suspecting this idea, although polar bears do drift with the pack ice at times.

Some details mar the book, but not seriously. Photographs are tastelessly jammed together (with superimposed typewritten captions), and errors are common in the list of scientific names of Arctic animals in an appendix. But there is a useful range map, bibliography and index.

Mr. Perry concludes that polar bears have a precarious future, and that immediate, concerted action is necessary to save them. He is in an ideally neutral and well-informed position for assessing the situation, which gives the greatest force to his statement. His main concern is for the polar bear.

C. R. HARINGTON

**Mongoose, Their Natural History and Behaviour, by H. E. Hinton and A. M. S. Dunn. Oliver & Boyd, 42s.**

Owing perhaps to the diurnal activity of many species, the mongooses are one of the better known groups of small carnivores, but as with the majority of taxonomic groups of vertebrates the relevant literature is exceedingly fragmented and scattered. Professor Hinton and Miss Dunn have therefore done a useful service in bringing together much of this information into a single volume (over 250 references are listed).

No detailed ecological study appears to have been made of any species of mongoose in its native range, and the information comes largely from casual observations on wild mongooses in Africa and Asia; from more detailed studies of introduced mongooses on the Caribbean islands and Hawaii; and (predominantly) from animals in captivity, especially the South African meerkat *Suricata suricatta* whose behaviour in captivity has been subjected to careful study by ethologists. In spite of the addition of chapters on mongooses in Indian folk tales, in Ancient Egypt, and as pets, the book remains a compilation of rather disjointed facts with little attempt to draw from these any overall picture of the group and little evidence of personal involvement with mongooses that might commend it for continuous reading rather than reference. A final chapter lists the 36 species of mongooses with a statement of distribution and lists of subspecies, synonyms and local names. Only for seven species is other information given under species headings, and the sixteen plates of photographs illustrate only four of the 36 species.

G. B. CORBET

**Animals and Birds in Australia, by Graham Pizzey. Cassell, £5 5s.** This is a very pleasant introduction to the wildlife of Australia, with many fine photographs. The author deals with a hundred species, ranging from corals to possums; and here one must murmur against the title which perpetuates the idea that birds are not "animals". The arrangement in sections, under such titles as "The Great Hardwood Forests" and "Bass Strait" is rather unsatisfactory, but under each of these headings a useful sketch of the ecology and history is given. Oddly, the nearest thing to a contents list is the alphabetical list of species at the end of the book.

The book has an appeal at more levels than one. On the one hand many of the pictures—24 full-page colour plates and 250 black-and-white photographs—have a charm that reaches out to the very young. On the other hand the three-page introduction includes a judicious thumbnail sketch of the past of the Australian continent as a theatre for evolution. Moreover a distribution map is provided for each species and, in an appendix, the scientific name. The text accompanying