

Peru, and the difficulties in camping on isolated islands. Although some might quibble with a few of the general scientific conclusions, there are gratifyingly few errors. The text is augmented with many plates and some generally less successful line drawings.

This book shows how scientific work can safely be undertaken without undue disturbance of the animals, and contrasts most favourably with many recent writings on the Galapagos from which it sometimes appears that 'conservation is only for other people'. Such work as this is essential if the irresistible tide of tourism is to be channelled, not to destroy the golden goose but to act as the necessary financial inducement for governments to support conservation.

M. P. HARRIS

Great National Parks, by Richard Carrington. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 6 gns.

Measuring 12½" by 10", and containing 240 thick pages, this is a lavish book fit only for the stronger coffee tables, two-thirds photographs, one-third widely spaced text. The pictures, always beautiful, sometimes exciting, are almost all of animals which reside in parks, rather than views of the parks themselves. 'Lovely photographs of animals in parks' is a fair working title for the book.

Nevertheless the text is good. It goes through most of the major parks in the world, and manages to turn what could be largely indigestible dollops of fact about each into extremely readable prose. There is also a good introduction which points out that part of Fontainebleau was the world's first nature reserve (in 1858), that the congressional decision to hold the Yosemite Valley in trust for public use and recreation (in 1864) really set the ball rolling, and that Yellowstone was the first true national park (in 1872). Mr Carrington also describes the concept of zonation, whereby part of a park is strictly for casual tourists, part is more inaccessible, and part is solely for scientific investigation. Skilful zonation is the key to the successful management of many parks, notably the American ones.

To my mind the captions – admittedly always difficult – are the greatest let-down of this work. Sometimes they assume the reader to be blind: 'The leopard cub above does not seem to regard the photographer with favour.' Worst of all is when they appear to have been written by a computer, and are just the same old boring captions we have all read a million times. As a plea for a cessation of this practice, herewith a questionnaire taken from this book: Guess what African animal is being described – 'alleged aphrodisiac properties', 'this antelope . . . often feeds standing on its hind legs', 'beautiful lyre-shaped horns', 'its long neck is an evolutionary adaption to the habit of browsing off tall trees', 'one of the swiftest land predators . . . 60 mph', 'reputed to be one of the most dangerous animals', 'feathered tufts . . . like quill pens', 'flightless'. No prizes are offered for knowing all eight.

But as an appetite-whetter for where next to go in the world this book is unsurpassable.

ANTHONY SMITH

A Field Guide to the National Parks of East Africa, by John G. Williams. Collins, 45s.

John Williams has done visitors to the East African parks a great service with this guide, designed to assist both the identification of the mammals and rarer birds and the planning of an East African holiday to the best possible advantage; he has accomplished both aims most successfully.

The first of the guide's three sections describes briefly the situation and size of