

detail, about one wild species. Amongst an astonishing diversity of subjects are – behaviour, captivity, distribution and description; enemies and food; history, habits, hunting and heraldry; man-eating and mythology; photography, superstitions and weapons. Eight appendices provide additional information, some seemingly superfluous, especially the lengthy dissertation on hunting with a pistol or hand-gun. What could have been a valuable text book has become tedious reading by the far too frequent resort to speculation and conjecture, as well as much unnecessary explanation; inevitably it is repetitive. Those familiar with the leopard in Africa and India may not accept some of the claims and theories. There are numerous spelling mistakes and some careless inaccuracies, for instance 'French Guinea' on p. 65 should be 'French Guiana', and 'Carl Aberley' on p. 197 (index ref. p. 196) should be 'Carl Akeley'. It is well illustrated, and particularly useful in the Index is the 'Leopard or Panther' section with its 179 specific items.

In conclusion, it seems appropriate – in view of his admitted 'rebellion' – to reproduce from a title page the author's quote from Kipling, perhaps recorded with his tongue in his cheek – 'What is this new folly, little dreamer of dreams.'

C. R. S. PITMAN

### **Birds and Wild Africa, by William Condry. Collins, 30s.**

The author spent five months travelling in the country near the border of Zambia and Tanzania. The area holds a wide variety of habitats, from the low-flying Rukwa Valley only 2500 feet above sea-level, through *Brachystegia* woodland at mid-levels to highlands rising to over 8000 feet. He was able to draw on the experience of two well-known local naturalists, and it is evident from the bibliography that he has read widely. The result, written with a general ecological approach, makes excellent light reading. The final chapter deserves special attention. Stress is laid on the vastness, by European standards, of African relict wilderness areas which yet hang in a precarious balance – 'it only wants a few hostile decisions and, with the aid of modern science and technology, all could be irredeemably altered in a very few years'. Tribute is paid to the tsetse fly, which has prevented huge areas being taken over by domestic cattle. The author expresses his doubts about game management methods, even conservationists being ingenious at inventing excuses why they should interfere with nature. He fears that those in charge of wildlife areas may rush headlong into crash solutions of pressing problems, whereas it is only by careful study that satisfactory ways of coping with the problems of a reserve can become known. There are 30 photographs, all by the author, mostly of birds, a few of insects and plants.

C. W. BENSON

### **The Last of the Wild, by Eugen Schuhmacher. Collins, £4 4s.**

In 1959 the author embarked on a seven-year wildlife photography tour of every continent, including Antarctica, and a number of islands, including New Guinea, Galapagos, and Spitzbergen, with the aim of 'arousing the interest of people of every nationality in the need for conservation measures'. This book, together with a film, is the result; and pretty stupendous it is. The photographs, 8½" × 10" all in full colour, are superb, many of them of the popular and well-known species – leopards, bears, flamingos, African elephants (three) lions (three) emperor penguins (three), but with a fair proportion too of the rare and the endangered – whooping cranes, leathery turtle, nyala, vicuña, and (triumph indeed) Javan rhino. This fell to the camera of his patient co-photographer (surprisingly not mentioned on the title page), Helmut Barth, who after two weeks' searching the Ujung Kulon reserve – a 'fabulously beautiful wilderness of rain forest' –

came up with an adult rhino and a young one – this was in 1963 – and got the photograph of which a black and white version appears on plate 3 opposite page 340. The photographs are accompanied by a ‘running commentary’ describing the journeys, and the book concludes with useful accounts, by four German scientists, of the species photographed; these are occasionally rather out of date in the conservation aspects, for events move fast, and the book was first published in German in 1966.

Where one would like to see this book is not so much on the coffee tables of the four-guinea book buyers but in the school libraries and on teachers’ desks. The combination of travel story, exciting photographs and species description should be many a teachers’ answer to prayer.

MAISIE FITTER

**Time is Short and the Water Rises, by John Walsh with Robert Gannon. Nelson, 42s.**

ISPA, the International Society for the Protection of Animals, was brought into being in 1959 in the USA. Its largest single undertaking is the subject of this book, Operation Gwamba: ‘the rescue of 10,000 animals from certain death in a South American rain forest’, described also as ‘the largest and, probably, the most dangerous animal rescue project ever attempted’.

The story is comparable to that of Operation Noah. In this case the dam, the Afobaka, is in Surinam (formerly Dutch Guiana). The artificial lake, officially known as the ‘Prof Dr Ir. W. J. van Blommenstein Meer’ (no doubt known as ‘Blommers’ for short) covers either ‘about 870 sq miles’ (page 19) or ‘650 sq miles’ (page 42). In 18 months, 23-year-old John Walsh and his team trapped, netted, dug out or stunned with tranquillisers 9737 animals. The inventory in an appendix shows that the large majority were mammals including 2104 three-fingered sloths, and 1051 nine-banded armadillos. Dr Jan Michels, secretary of the Surinam SPCA, himself expresses the two viewpoints about this sort of rescue: ‘. . . if you look at it purely from a dispassionate view point it makes no scientific sense to save the animals’; but ‘. . . we cannot passively see the drowning of thousands of animals without taking any action’. This point was discussed, in reference to the Lake Magadi flamingo chicks, by John Pearson and Peter Scott in *ORYX*, April 1965.

The story is told in popular language, and should have a good propagandist effect, and the 41 photographs, 19 in colour, are good. To anyone who knows about animals it is rather long-winded and lacking in meat. But then it wasn’t written as a sermon for the converted.

JEFFERY BOSWALL

**The Whooping Crane, by Faith McNulty. Longmans, 30s.**

In 1965 whooping cranes numbered only 44, but even that was an improvement on 29 in 1937. This story of the efforts of the National Audubon Society and the US Government, to stop the decline and increase the number of birds is almost a case-history of all the difficulties involved in trying to save a vanishing species, and they seldom all occur in one instance. The habitat necessary for the crane, shallow water and marsh vegetation, is almost wholly incompatible with human occupation. Even before the appearance of the white man this sort of country was shrinking before the advancing forests and drying up owing to the lowering of the water table. Deliberate destruction of the birds was almost as deadly as the spread of agriculture. When public opinion became convinced that the whooping crane must be saved, disagreement between animal societies, lack of