

That Mr. Iles has the conservation of wild life very much at the centre of his thoughts and actions is evident in the final chapter in which he makes a plea for an international charter in connection with the control of the standards of keeping captive animals. He believes that it is vital for some major organization to be formed to ensure that, whatever disasters may befall animals in the wild, they will be safe from extinction, in ideal conditions in the zoos of the world. As he says at the end of his book "A good zoo is a joy to all concerned—a bad zoo is one of the worst abominations in the world."

D. M.

PENGUIN ISLAND. By CHERRY KEARTON. Hutchinson. 15s.

Peter Scott, in his foreword to this book, says that he was given his first book by Cherry Kearton when he was a schoolboy. He already knew he would be a naturalist and the reinforcing influence of the book was significant. I also remember, as a child, very much enjoying Cherry Kearton's books. Sadly, I did not enjoy this one. I found its excessively anthropomorphic approach and its air of "talking down" very trying. This disappointed me as I have always admired Cherry Kearton and his work, and was pleased to see that a new edition of *Penguin Island* had been brought out.

I have not tried the book on children, but my feeling is that nowadays they demand either a story, or a sensible book, on scientific lines, giving them factual information. The book does, in fact, give the information—but well and truly cloaked in such sentences as, describing penguin courtship, "There must, of course, be an engagement—the most enjoyable period of a young girl's life," and, referring to the hen penguin during nest building, "His wife is a little indignant at that, 'Oh, John, can't you see that we aren't nearly ready yet?'"

The book contains thirteen chapters and, in my opinion, the last five or so are better than the first eight. Their approach is more straightforward and directly informative and much that is written about the penguins and their habitat is interesting. A child who really wanted to know about the blackfooted penguin and its ways might find the book rewarding, in the end, if he were willing to persevere and read it right through.

The line drawings by Mary Krishna, and of course Cherry Kearton's own photographs, are delightful—although the effect of the photographs is sometimes marred by silly captions.

M. D.