

maintaining them. To the uninitiated the situation is bewildering. Cloudsley-Thompson has examined a considerable literature as well as conducting numerous significant investigations of his own. He reviews the variety of our knowledge as it stands at present and discusses the relevant physical principles.

Different reptiles can operate over much wider ranges of bodily temperatures than can mammals or birds; nonetheless they generally have fairly well defined preferred temperatures. We learn, for example, that some select the temperature of their surroundings, that some lizards can regulate heat gain and heat loss using the sun as the source of energy, that some large snakes can so reduce their exposed surface area by coiling that the generation of metabolic heat becomes significant. Some, particularly desert forms, operate a rigorous water-saving economy; freshwater forms are understandably lax in this respect.

The author has had the happy idea of supplementing the list of literature citations with a list of further references—this should be a considerable help to others considering entering the field. Fragments of a pattern begin to emerge but it is too early to hope for a new set of broad generalisations. Cloudsley-Thompson has taken a first and essential step in this direction and placed us in his debt in so doing.

GARTH UNDERWOOD

The Book of Reptiles, by R.A. Lanworn. Hamlyn, £1.95.

This is an attractive addition to the fast increasing library of modern reptile books. Almost everyone, it seems, wants to know about reptiles—except perhaps the academic zoological establishment, whose courses seldom do much to encourage the university student with herpetological interests.

Mr Lanworn was in charge of the Reptile House in the London Zoological Society's Gardens for many years, and some readers, the reviewer among them, will have received their first introduction to living reptiles from his capable hands; they will remember his kind and thoughtful advice on the manifold problems of keeping reptiles in captivity and his wide knowledge of these animals, which is here deployed to good effect.

He gives an excellent popular account of the main adaptations exhibited among the 6000 or so species of living reptiles, touches on the long-past Golden Age when dinosaurs were the dominant forms of terrestrial life, explains the sad fate of all too many reptiles kept as pets in this country, which languish and soon die because of their owners' lack of knowledge of their basic needs and habits. He also describes the ruthless exploitation which many types such as crocodilians and turtles have suffered at the hands of man in his search for attractive leathers and table delicacies, and the less obvious but perhaps even more serious danger from habitat destruction. A final chapter deals with the task of conservation, and mentions the role of such bodies as IUCN and the Charles Darwin Foundation which is doing so much to ensure the survival of the giant tortoises and unique iguanas of the Galapagos Islands.

This finely illustrated book is recommended very strongly to those who require a reliable and readable introduction to the reptiles, as they live in the rapidly changing man-dominated environment of the modern world.

A.d'A. BELLAIRS

Wildfowl in Captivity, by Richard Mark Martin. John Gifford, £1.75.

Written by a real enthusiast who knows his subject, the book fulfills a great need, for the amount of up-to-date practical duck-keeping literature is very