

find a place on library shelves not only throughout Zaire but far and wide, and thus play the part desired for it: the awakening and encouragement of a widespread desire to conserve as well as to study these 'joys of creation', as the President calls them, the marvellous birds of Zaire and neighbouring countries. So much has still to be learned of them, as the authors aptly say – *in Africa semper aliquid novi*.

H. F. I. ELLIOTT

Ethiopian Wildlands, by **Melvin Bolton**. Collins, £5.50.

Melvin Bolton and his wife were rather suddenly transported from the wilds of Wigan to those of Ethiopia. This was fortunate for the wildlife of Ethiopia, for during his time there he made great additions to the scanty knowledge of many Ethiopian animals and of little-known areas rich in wildlife. And he enjoyed himself thoroughly while he did it.

The book both describes the lighter side of some of his field trips (expeditions would be a better word if the word 'expedite' was not unknown to the Ethiopian vocabulary): the tremendous fun of being stuck in the mud; of mending punctures; of being surrounded, in the back of nowhere, by rifle-armed warriors; of falling into rivers infested with crocodiles; but also the pleasures of watching spectacular assemblies of water birds, finding populations of animals believed almost extinct, and the simple joy of breaking into new country and learning for oneself about the wonderful African animals in their natural habitat. Some solid science is injected into the matrix here and there, in a readable style, but this is essentially an enjoyable book of personal reminiscences about the joys and tribulations of studying wildlife in Ethiopia. As one who has had his fair share of these joys and sorrows, I can endorse the feeling that one gets from the book that the pleasures exceed the pain.

The chapters cover the Rift Valley Labeo area; the plains of Nachisar (one of the last haunts of Swayne's hartebeest); the flood plains of the Baro River; the little-known mountains of the eastern Omo Valley and Lake Stephanie; the magnificent Simien Mountains; the Danakil desert, and the eastern lowlands where he rediscovered populations of typically Somalian animals such as dibatag, Speke's gazelle, and beira. His interest in all things natural is inexhaustible; he is also an excellent photographer, and his pictures, including unique photographs of beira greatly enhance the text. He was fortunate in having a wife who not only tolerated his long trips away from home, but went with him, on the wildest and woolliest of them, to Lake Stephanie, and was perhaps more alarmed by swarms of lake flies than by Hammarkokke riflemen. It is a book thoroughly to be recommended, not only as a vignette of Ethiopian wildlands, but as the personal adventures of a couple of very enterprising young people.

LESLIE BROWN

Terrestrial Environments. Croom Helm, £5.95; **The Desert**. Orbis, £4.95, both by **J. L. Cloudsley-Thompson**.

Professor Cloudsley-Thompson is one of the more prolific of authors, but his book on *Terrestrial Environments* breaks new ground in its comprehensiveness. It is one of his less 'popular' books in that it carries an extensive bibliography and numerous citations in the text. Nevertheless, its greatest appeal will be to the layman; despite its documentation, it is not a book for the professional biologist or even the undergraduate, because its wide scope inevitably leads to superficiality. Most readers will pick up snippets of information that they did not know before, but, judging from the topics that I know best, some recent developments seem to have been omitted. The book starts with good introductory chapters on zoogeography and factors influencing the ecology of animals. Each succeeding chapter deals with a single habitat type, including fresh waters which some might think inappropriate in a book on terrestrial environments. Three final chapters discuss the adaptive significance of morphological features and the interactions between organisms and their environments.