

without any conclusion. However, the result is that the reader is better placed to judge any attempt to press a point of view. Some topics are treated less than adequately but, bearing in mind both the complexity of a subject that encompasses farming practice, badger ecology, bacteriology and immunology, and the gaps in our knowledge of the disease, this booklet is required first reading. Hopefully, the planned second edition will rectify the deficiencies.

ROBERT BURTON

Historical Plant Geography, an introduction, by **Philip Stott**. Allen & Unwin, Hardback £12.00. Paperback £5.95.

There has been a great upsurge in the publication of ecological books in recent years. Interest in ecology largely grew out of the knowledge gained in the nineteenth century about the geographical distribution of plant species and vegetation types over the Earth, but in the last 30 years there have been few books on this subject, and a text, which will serve both for introductory courses at university and for use at school, is long overdue.

Dr Stott has written the book that was needed. After introducing the subject, he discusses the recording of plant distributions, mapping of plants and patterns of distribution and then turns to the interpretation of these patterns, a field in which there has been ample scope for controversy in the past. He finishes with a brief account of genetic resource conservation, which he rightly emphasizes as a central concern of plant geographers among others.

In this well written and well illustrated little book the non-specialist will find much of interest. Though intended for a student readership the intelligent and interested layman can read it with profit, and it may well turn such readers to the wider literature of plant geography.

S.R.J. WOODSELL

Conservation of New World Parrots, edited by **Roger F. Pasquier**. Smithsonian Institution Press for ICBP. Technical Publication no. 1, £8.00.

The word Parrot first appeared in written English about 1525. Its origin is uncertain for there is no comparable word in any other language, and unusually in our linguistic rag-bag it is a word which has remained completely unchanged. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the status of many of the birds themselves. This volume, the proceedings of the ICBP working group meeting held in April, 1980, clearly shows the serious threats that parrots are having to contend with, particularly in the New World. These threats, direct and indirect, which may well lead to the extinction of some species, are in almost all cases the results of man's greed. As with many animals and plants the accelerating destruction or alteration of natural ecosystems is one of the main causes of changes in numbers and distribution. With this family of birds, it is also man's direct actions which pose threats, either by killing for food or feathers, or by capturing alive for the apparently growing international trade. Until the 1980 meeting, what was not known in detail was what effect these threats were having or are likely to have on individual species.

The majority of the 28 papers give some of the answers by providing the necessary background data on status, distribution, ecology, and in some cases, on captive breeding. The working group, using this data, devised conservation strategies country by country (pp 1-20) for parrots of the Caribbean and neo-