

Book reviews

elephant *Loxodonta africana*, are now classified as Out of Danger.

A comprehensive summation under a dozen separate headings is given of the conservation status of all these species, while more limited data are supplied for a further 45 whose status, for want of detailed information, is classified as Indeterminate. There are brief discussions on mammal conservation, including the need for further investigations into various aspects of individual species, and legislation in the Republic in 1985, as well as a comprehensive bibliography. This is a valuable addition to the RDB list.

Christopher Lever, Newell House, Winkfield, Windsor, Berkshire, UK.

Fraser Darling's Islands

John Morton Boyd

Edinburgh University Press, 1986, 252 pp, HB £12.95

Fraser Darling's Islands is the first volume of a new 'Island Biology' series published by Edinburgh University Press. The author, who is also General Editor of the series, uses the occasion to pay tribute to a doyen of conservation philosophy, Sir Frank Fraser Darling. He takes full advantage of the general aim of the series—to present the results of island biological investigation within a biographical context—to draw on a careful selection of Fraser Darling's personal records. He has chosen especially those concerning his work on the Scottish islands in the 1930s and early 1940s, when many of his ideas on relationships in nature were developed and moulded into what we now take for granted as 'ecology'. These descriptions, in his own words of his activities, thoughts and feelings of the time, bring out Fraser Darling's personality and disposition sufficiently vividly to suggest 'The Islands' Fraser Darling' as an equally apposite title.

John Morton Boyd explains that this volume should be regarded as leading into, rather than representative of, the series. He has allowed himself the liberty of concentrating on biographical detail, letting the scientific aspect emerge from within it or by implication from

Fraser Darling's professional reputation; this is not a technique likely to be appropriate for future volumes, since it inevitably involves straying beyond 'island biology' limits. Thus, an account is given of Fraser Darling's early life and the development of his scientific career, while a short epilogue touches his closing years.

As a friend, John Morton Boyd writes of Fraser Darling with sensitivity and affection; as a Scot he understands and interprets the special love Fraser Darling had for Scotland, its islands, highlands and people. Those of us who knew Fraser Darling will find many pleasant and evocative reminders of his character, at once direct and secret, simple and complex. We will be able to recall, reading the extracts of his journals, his measured, well-chosen and picturesque way of conveying his ideas. Those who did not know him will be able to gain very personal impressions of a man who was aware of ecology before it had a name as an acceptable discipline of biological study, and of natural resource conservation when the voices of its few prophets were crying in the wilderness.

The quality of presentation hardly lives up to that of its contents. The book is of small format and some of the photographic reproductions are poor.

Tony Mence, Editor of Parks, IUCN Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK.

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