

have been able to observe over a period of years how these animals prey on the moose population and keep it within reasonable numbers for the range. One-track-mindedness still allows the wolf to be hunted in Alaska by airplane, but now only on licence as a sporting amusement. It is quite horrible than an animal should be chased relentlessly in all its doublings to and fro until it surrenders with the gesture of rolling over on its back. That is when the sportsman shoots it. In other words, when a fellow puts up his hands, that is the moment to shoot him. Cattle and wolves do not go together, but why wolves must continue to be killed where there are no domesticated stock is a mystery of human psychology.

F. FRASER DARLING.

African Wildlife, by **Franz A. Roedelberger** and **Vera I. Groschoff**. English Version by **Nieter O'Leary** and **Pamela Paulet**. Constable, 45s.

Reviewers usually start their brief sermons with an arresting phrase or a statement about what they do or do not know about the subject matter. I want to say as forcibly as I can that, as a professional science writer and amateur photographer with a pronounced interest in African wildlife, I consider this to be the best collection of African wildlife pictures I have ever seen. You can rely on an intake of breath on almost every page. The book opens theatrically with an upsweep of the curtains. Two pages are devoted to an aerial photograph of some hundreds of elephants. The scene changes to equally astonishing numbers of lechwe, waterbuck, Cape buffalo, a profusion of pelican, hippo, cormorants, crocodile, glossy ibises, lesser flamingo and giraffe and then shows more intimate shots, each of outstanding photographic quality, of almost all the animals most of us are interested in. The scope ranges from big mammals to their smaller brethren with many pages devoted to colour shots of birds, invertebrates and fish. Life-sized chameleons have been photographed against a background of scarlet flowers, striped tree frogs are more vivid than a poster, whilst fire-fish against coral can be likened to nothing more striking than what they look like at close quarters.

The text is something considerably more than just the usual sort of verbal glue put in to justify the photography and link one series of pictures with another. The authors have got that feeling of the oneness of life and have expressed accurately and briefly what conservationists are concerned about. Without smudging this brief notice with an excessive number of superlatives I want to say once more that I cannot envisage a better compilation of photographs and text than what is offered here at a reasonable price. I recommend it with the utmost confidence and warmly congratulate those who put it together.

JOHN HILLABY.

The Great Arc of the Wild Sheep, by **James L. Clark**. University of Oklahoma Press, \$6.95

Of all the big game trophies of the world, the sheep is probably the most prized, for to find his quarry the hunter must take to the high mountains—in short he must follow the Great Arc of the Wild Sheep, the shape of which, suggests the author, resembles their long, curved horns. This arc runs from the western part of North America, across eastern Siberia, down through Central Asia and terminates in the Middle East. Nowhere else in the world are true wild sheep to be found, and none occur south of the Equator. The author gives a brief description of the various species and sub-species of sheep, with details of their habitat, colour and some typical measurements. To those unfamiliar with the grandeur of some of these fine animals it will no doubt come as a surprise to discover that the shoulder height of some of the Tibetan argali, such as

Ovis ammon ammon and *Ovis ammon hodgsoni*, run up to 48 inches—there is even one recorded shoulder height measurement of the former of no less than 53 inches, about 10 inches higher than a wild stag in Scotland. Although both these sheep are larger than the Marco Polo sheep *Ovis ammon poli*, the latter holds the world's record for horn length, with a distance of 75 inches over the curl and a tip to tip spread of 54½ inches.

This book is intended not only for the scientist but also for the sportsman, and to cater for the latter, the author has quoted freely from sporting literature describing the pursuit of the various sheep of the world. Some of these accounts, such as that by Carruthers in *Beyond the Caspian*, describing how he shot his fine *Ovis ammon ammon*, make good and exciting reading, but others, such as the somewhat bloodthirsty exploits of Theodore Roosevelt junior after his *Ovis ammon karelini*, or the irresponsible shooting of L. S. Chadwick after stone sheep, when he continued shooting at a ram which he could “no longer see with the naked eye”, would be better forgotten than repeated.

This is a useful book of reference on an animal which, for the most part, frequents those parts of the world about which little information has yet reached the western world.

G. KENNETH WHITEHEAD.

Life Histories of North American Thrushes, Kinglets and their Allies, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. Constable, 22s.

Life History of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers and their Allies, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. Constable, 22s.

It would be impertinent to attempt to review these unaltered reprints of two volumes in a well tried series, which were universally acclaimed when they were first published 17 years ago. They are standard works, and any British ornithologist who does not already possess them will be delighted at this opportunity to fill a serious gap in his library. Since the series includes also European species vagrant in America, this also gives the opportunity of acquiring some of the late Bernard Tucker's best work, his summaries for Bent of the redwing, fieldfare, blackbird, wheatear and bluethroat. Other birds closely related to European birds and included here are the American brown creeper and the various races of winter wren, conspecific with the common treecreeper and wren of Britain.

RICHARD FITTER.

Birds of Prey in the World, by Mary Louise Grossman, John Hamlet and Shelly Grossman. Cassell, £6 6s.

Lavishly illustrated and handsomely produced this book sets out to be a definitive work on the world's birds of prey, including all Falconiformes and Owls. The first half covers general biology, and includes chapters on prehistory, legends and myths, including a history of falconry, ecology and habits, adaptations for survival, and conservation. One may wonder if it was really necessary to include so much detail about evolution, legends and myths; space could have been saved here to give a fuller account of ecology and habits, about which there is much good information but one has to dig for it, and it is not systematically presented. The authors are inclined to accept too facile explanations of e.g. territorial behaviour, and in attempting to present the detail in a “popular” manner the whole becomes confused and scrappy. The chapter on conservation is up to date, but it could have been longer with advantage, and have reached some more definite conclusions and recommendations. The second half of the book is an Atlas and Field Guide. But the information is not sufficiently com-