

expenses. The importance of this growing problem was emphasised by the inclusion of six papers and much objective discussion.

The problems are likely to stay with us for a long time, and the Institute of Biology is to be congratulated on bringing together such useful and thought-provoking papers and participants.

P. J. OLNEY

British and European Birds in Colour, by Bertel Bruun and Arthur Singer. Hamlyn, 70s.

In this handsome volume Arthur Singer's illustrations of more than five hundred species, excellent in accuracy as aids to identification, appeal to the eye as being lively and attractive. They are well produced even though one or two of the smaller paintings seem to have suffered a little in the process of colour-printing, well arranged and convenient to consult. The textual notes by Bertel Bruun, a Danish ornithologist, are sound and compendious, and his brief introductions to each family are helpful descriptions of habits and habitats. Particularly interesting and helpful to an English reader is the account of the American sandpipers and other waders which are increasingly identified as visitors to our shores and are finely portrayed on pages 124 and 131.

The introduction (with a vegetational map) stigmatises the boundaries of Europe as being, from a zoogeographical angle, both 'artificial and dissatisfactory', with their eastern limits ill-defined. It is to be inferred from Bruce Campbell's foreword that the authors have resolved this undeniable difficulty by including all birds seen in the European part of the USSR though not recorded elsewhere in Europe. Whether this is more satisfactory than to take a line of longitude, it is hard to say. No doubt it is very difficult to combine brevity with precision in all respects, and the following remarks are not to be taken as expressing 'dissatisfaction' at the general way in which the condensed notes on species are framed. But even after study of the 148 useful distribution maps and close attention to qualifying broad indications of habitat, those who do not already know their European birds and where to look for them may be puzzled at the use of the word 'common' in relation to many species, for example, the red-necked grebe, the rough-legged and honey buzzards, marsh and Montagu's harriers, hobby ('quite common'), collared and red-breasted flycatchers (in open country), corncrake ('locally common in fields') and so on; in dealing with the passerines an effort is made to apply this vague term less loosely.

The distribution maps at the end are preceded by a list of almost eighty 'accidentals' for which there are fewer than five records in the present century. Of these nearly half have been recorded in Great Britain.

HURCOMB

The Kingfisher, by Rosemary Eastman. Collins, 30s.

The book of the film, *The Private Life of the Kingfisher*, by the author and her husband, which achieved an outstanding success, recalls Sielmann's film on woodpeckers and his subsequent book telling how it was made. This details the life cycle of the birds which were studied for the film, and it would be surprising if it did not add to our knowledge of their biology. Inevitably they were subjected to a good deal of disturbance including arrangements for filming them feeding their young in the nest-

chamber under full artificial illumination, but they were compensated with supplies of fish and one parent was rescued from untimely death. Nevertheless some readers will ask: does the end justify the means? In this instance undoubtedly yes. The end was a happy one, with no accidents leading to desertion, and a fine film made which will have enhanced many people's awareness of the beauty and interest of a species that needs all the friends it can muster. Not all photographers have proceeded with so much care or put their results to such good purpose.

For the conservationist the most interesting point is that kingfishers will accept an artificial nest-site; how to provide this is described at the end. The author says ". . . much more of this type of work is called for, and the trout fisherman who encourages the building of banks and accepts the kingfisher is doing a very fine job in the preservation of our most attractive bird species." Making kingfisher banks need not be left to trout fishermen alone, and suitable sites are not necessarily, or even usually, on the main stream. Seclusion is the chief consideration.

The author writes pleasantly with a minimum of generalization and the book can be warmly recommended. It is illustrated with photographs of the quality one would expect after seeing the film.

G. DES FORGES

International Zoo Yearbook, Volume 10, edited by Joseph Lucas. Zoological Society of London, 135s.

With 25 articles on breeding and 20 on birds of prey in captivity (also largely breeding), this invaluable mixture of a reference book and up-to-date advice manual makes a useful contribution to Conservation Year; breeding in captivity is becoming more and more a conservation tool. The chief contribution to the small section entitled Conservation is an account by Gerald Durrell and Jeremy Mallinson of the successful breeding of the volcano rabbit, a Red Book species from Mexico: ten were captured in 1968, the expedition finding them comparatively common in small isolated pockets but threatened by agriculture and indiscriminate shooting. The reference section includes the usual useful statistics about the world's zoos, including breeding records for the year, and a census of rare animals in captivity with Red Book species indicated—123 mammals, 48 birds, 105 reptiles and four amphibians. One does so hope that from this tally one of the two zoos with a single male Flinders Island wombat will arrange for breeding with the owner of the only known female in captivity.

Palestine's Natural History

Natural History of the Land of the Bible, by Azaria Alon, (Hamlyn, 84s) is a large, beautifully produced and popular account, with outstandingly good and numerous photographs, many in excellent colour; especially good are some of plants and magnificent scenery. Large mammals inevitably are scarce, but the colour reproductions of the lion in mosaic is a happy reminder of the country's former richness.

Germany's Oldest Zoo

Germany's oldest zoo, the Berlin Zoo, commemorated its 125th anniversary last year with the publication of a profusely illustrated and well produced volume by the present Director, Dr Heinz-Georg Klös, *Von der Menagerie zum Tierparadies* (Haude & Spenersche, Berlin, DM29.80), recounting the zoo's history since King Friedrich Wilhelm IV presented his private menagerie to the citizens of Berlin.