

# Book reviews

books available at present, there is a 12-page chapter-by-chapter bibliography.

It is with the chapter on 'man and bats' that I have particular complaint. This includes a section entitled 'Bats and public health', which discusses the bacterial, viral, fungal and invertebrate associations with bats and has very little to do with humans—it is a fascinating aspect of bat biology often omitted from bat books, but one which belongs outside the scope of this chapter. In attempting to justify its place here the authors have suggested possible links with human health which are often, at best, misleading. This is not good for a book that purports to give a more realistic image than the one bats have suffered for so long.

Bat workers will find faults, as with any book, but they will find this a valuable reference work.

*A.M. Hutson, Bat Conservation Officer, FFPS.*

## The Lives of Bats

W. Schober

Croom Helm, London, 1984, £13.95 (Available from FFPS)

Over the past few years there has been a great increase in interest in bats, especially amongst members of County Trusts for Nature Conservation and of national conservation and wildlife societies. This is fortunate, since bats are still regarded with horror by many people and an army of bat ambassadors is needed to educate the public as to the true nature of these useful and fascinating creatures.

One problem that those interested in the Chiroptera have faced is the shortage of available books on the subject. Schober's account admirably helps to fill this gap.

Covering topics ranging from the probable evolutionary development of bats, through their feeding and breeding habits to the threats currently facing these animals and possible conservation steps it provides a most useful introduction to these flying mammals. Despite the fact that bats are hard to study, a great deal has been published on them in scientific journals, so to find only 48 references at the end of the book is a little disappointing.

Most of the photographs are good, but the shot of

the serotine in flight suggests that the open mouth, typical of an echo-locating bat, can be seen. This is certainly not the case. Some of the other flight shots are not up to the standard we have come to expect in wildlife photography nowadays.

But these are minor faults—this book should be required reading for all Bat Group members and for anyone who comes into contact with these much misunderstood animals.

*Henry Arnold, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology*

## The Fauna of the Hortobagy National Park Vols 1 and 2, and The Flora of the Hortobagy National Park

Editor-in-Chief, Z. Kasab

Budapest, 1981

Obtainable for £25.00, £25.00 and £12.50 respectively from Collets, Denington Estate, Wellingborough, Northants NN2 2QT, UK, plus postage—say £1.50

These volumes comprise a series of papers, 48 in volume 1 totalling about 400 pages, 46 in volume 2 totalling about 500 pages and eight papers in volume 3 totalling about 175 pages. Almost all of the papers are faunistic treatments with lists of species being dominant. The paper on birds (pp. 391–407 in volume 1) is the only one the present reviewer feels competent to comment upon.

The 215 bird species known to have occurred are biologically grouped by freshwater, grassland and woodland habitats, each subdivided by finer vegetational subdivisions in the case of the 106 nesters. The 109 transients are separately listed.

*Jeffrey Boswall*

## The Mammals of the Southern African Subregion

H.N. Reay Smithers

University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa, 1983, R100

In outline based on the author's former works on the mammals of several southern African countries, the present book has to be considered as a masterpiece, admirable for the enormous mass of information collected. It fills a long-felt gap for anybody working with the mammalian fauna of southern Africa. With gloom one reflects that not more is known about many of the listed

*Oryx vol 19 No 2*