

a carefully thought-out approach to understanding, by observation and experiment, the world of the mouse and the ways in which the mouse organises his world.

One of the most interesting aspects of this work is the way in which various individual mice emerged as personalities, so that the reader's feelings cannot help but be engaged, as were those of the writer, by the life and death problems faced by a mouse in a hostile universe. However, in spite of this, the account never ceases to be objective, which is the reason why this book can be so warmly recommended.

H. N. SOUTHERN

**The Tuatara, Lizards and Frogs of New Zealand, by Richard Sharell.** Collins, 30s.

The first book on the reptiles and amphibians of New Zealand, this is a useful guide for both professional and amateur naturalist. Well written and illustrated with over 50 colour photographs, the majority by the author, it contains a wealth of scientific detail which is easily understood by the layman, and much of it the result of the author's own experience in the field. The chapters on lizards and frogs, in which each specimen has its own paragraph dealing with colouration and habitat, etc., are very useful for identification.

Of particular interest to me were the two chapters on the tuatara, the lizard-like reptile that has remained virtually unchanged for the last two hundred million years, because I have been in charge of the only true pair of tuataras outside New Zealand; these are in the Jersey Zoo. In an interesting account of his stay on Stephen's Island, one of the twenty small islands off the coast of New Zealand which are the last stronghold of the tuatara, the author describes the habitat, feeding habits and even the hatching of the clutch of tuatara eggs. A short chapter describing the part played by reptiles in the legend and art of the Maori is most welcome—a very important aspect seldom mentioned in natural history books.

JOHN HARTLEY

**The Snow Bunting, by Desmond Nethersole-Thompson,** Oliver & Boyd, 45s.

Of biologists as well as economists and politicians it can be said that some know more and more about less and less, while others know less and less about more and more. As one of the latter category myself, I salute Desmond Nethersole-Thompson as a distinguished member of the former. He has devoted the greater part of his life to intensive study of a small number of breeding birds in one part of the Scottish Highlands. The fruits of this study appeared first in his *New Naturalist* monograph on the greenshank, and now in this thorough and detailed study of the life history and biology of the snow bunting. His subject is something of a mystery bird in the British avifauna; its exact breeding status has never been quite clear, for few ornithologists have been prepared to ascend the highest Scottish mountains year after year to check on its presence. The author and his son Brock are among those few, and they have come to the conclusion that Scottish snow-bunting breeding colonies are temporary affairs reflecting climatic conditions both in the Highlands and elsewhere. On the whole snow buntings are less likely to nest or attempt to nest in