

Book Reviews

Men and Apes, by **Ramona and Desmond Morris**. Hutchinson, 50s.

The authors are to be congratulated on taming a Minotaur: on getting a cogent and coherent tale out of a mass of material available to them on the subject of men, monkeys and apes. This they have done by diligent research, long acquaintance with the subject, the use of plenty of arresting illustrations, and, above all, good writing. The page-by-page text and picture lay-out is anti-monotonous, the type-face pleasant, the book magnetic.

The first two-thirds of the book are primarily historical, and this means that we have essentially a compilation of what has been known and believed about monkeys and apes at different times, based in part on earlier compilations by such writers as Aristotle, Pliny, Gesner and Buffon.

The latter third of the book is concerned with modern studies and ideas about monkey and ape behaviour, and this is largely uncharted ground; at any rate while the landmarks are well known, the best course to steer through them has yet to be determined. Here, I should like to have seen more references to man, who features in the title, and more on the implications of modern primate studies for man. For example, Harlow's experiments showing self-inflicted aggression, lack of ability to form social or sexual relationships, and cruelty to their own infants, in mother-deprived rhesus monkeys, could have led into a consideration of just how reasonable are our society's regulations on adoption, authority care, the removal of infants from their mothers in hospital, and so on. However there is much originality in this section and all the different sources of data have been brought together with complete success.

On conservation, the book works by implication rather than by direct exposition of the problem. The work of Barbara Harrison with orang utans, with which all ORYX readers are familiar, scarcely gets a mention. On the other hand, considerable space is given to the ways in which monkeys and apes are exploited in scientific research, and the reader really does realise the hundreds of thousands of animals involved. This shift of emphasis is useful, as it gives a good idea of the extent of the opposition awaiting any person or organisation that tries, on conservationist grounds, to restrict the movement of monkeys and apes from their jungle to ours.

VERNON REYNOLDS.

Wild Animal, White Man, by **Bernard Grzimek**. Deutsch and Thames & Hudson, 45s.

The Director of the Frankfurt Zoo is such a vigorous self-confident, knowledgeable character that an uncritical reader might swallow whole chapters of this book without realising that sage observations on innumerable kinds of animals are sometimes smudged, rather than reinforced by the author's occasional lapses into downright believe-it-or-not journalism. The book gives the impression of a digest of a diary about trips to zoos, institutes and reserves in Russia, Europe and the United States.

The essays range from a rather tedious story, told in a series of chronological flash-backs, about the creation of the remarkable Askania zoo, on the Lower Dnieper, by Friedrich Falz-Fein, who must have been rather like the late Duke of Bedford, to shrewd comments about the pollution of the Rhine, the care of tortoises and the habits of polar bears, marmots, musk-oxen, beavers, sable and many other animals. Some of this is new; some of it will be well-known to readers of ORYX; most of it is related forcibly, and illustrated by photographs of an exceptionally high quality. The pleasure that comes from the text lies largely in stumbling over the

unexpected, such as facts about the domestication of the eland in Russia or the fact that polar bears are poor swimmers and sometimes get their back legs bitten by ringed seals. The valuable point that Dr Grzimek puts over time and time again is that even hard-pressed animals can make a rapid come-back if given a little encouragement. The pity is that the style is occasionally too bright and assertive for total credibility. As an example of book production, the book is almost faultless; it is a pleasure to open it.

JOHN HILLABY.

Wild Animals in an African National Park, by Rennie Bere.

Deutsch, 18s.

Game wardens, when they retire, tend to write lengthy reminiscences in which their many original observations are difficult to sort out of a welter of how-the-lion-nearly-got-me yarns. Mr Bere escapes this fault completely. Instead of reminiscing he gives us pretty straight natural history, and whenever he is briefly anecdotal his stories all make a worthwhile point. Evidently assuming that the reader is quite untutored in nature study (which, alas, is still true of most people) the author tells us simply and clearly about the animals, and a few of the birds, that he met with during his years as Director and Chief Warden of the Queen Elizabeth and Murchison Falls National Parks in Uganda. I thought him particularly good on elephant, hippo, lion, crocodile and Uganda kob, but he writes of many others also. He recounts too the problems facing conservationists: the poaching, the overstocking of hippos and elephants, the lack of money that hinders so many schemes. My only regret about the book is that it runs to only 91 pages, for I felt that the author had many more good things to say. A map is provided, and of the 25 photographs a particularly interesting one shows a monitor lizard making off with a crocodile's egg.

W. M. CONDRY.

The Story of Elsa, by Joy Adamson. Collins, Harvill, 30s.

The publishers have called this book: "The full story of Elsa and her cubs published for the first time in one volume." Well, it is, and it isn't. The three earlier books have all been compressed into 319 pages (marred only by bad proof-reading and occasional left-overs of repetition) with a first-rate selection of photographs. The bare bones of this fantastic story are all there, told in Mrs Adamson's diary English; but so much is totally lacking. The foster-care of Elsa, and then of Elsa's cubs, was certainly of exceptional emotional concern to everyone involved, and primarily to the author, but there is next to no self-analysis of this deeper side of things. I kept on feeling that the book had been written by some third party who had scarcely ever seen a lion, let alone lived with one, loved one, lost one.

I personally would have welcomed more introspection, more conversational comments from someone who witnessed this remarkable man-animal involvement, and more from George Adamson who was half a conductor, half a second fiddle throughout the story. In these days of rigidly scientific behavioural studies it is fantastic, and refreshing, to read Joy Adamson's unashamed anthropomorphism—"Elsa came back very proud of herself," "she talked very agitatedly to them," "she was very nearly crying," "did she have any realisation of the extraordinary link she was between the two worlds?" Mrs Adamson is also prepared to give reasons for events where many behaviourists would fight shy of such conclusions—"Could it have been that she knew I was coming back?" "It is obvious that she was in love," "She went to sharpen her claws."

And yet this unique combination of Joy Adamson, George and Elsa managed to pull off a coup between man and beast that has few, if any, equals. There was Elsa killing that buck a few yards away, or permitting