

persistent pesticides with reduced egg-shell thickness in certain species.

The increasing restrictions on the use of organochlorine pesticides in many developed countries are described, but it is pointed out that total world use is still increasing, with, in 1967, the US exporting 80 per cent of its production of DDT, much of it to the underdeveloped countries, where, as this survey clearly shows, there has been virtually no research on pesticide residues or their effects. Dr. Edwards concludes that while the spread of these chemicals into all parts of the environment must be a cause for anxiety, the present situation is not too serious, a conclusion that appears to give too little weight to their effects in enormous areas of the world where usage is increasing and controls almost non-existent. There is now an urgent need for the international agricultural and health organisations to review their approach to such environmental contaminants.

STANLEY CRAMP

Reptiles of Oklahoma, by Robert G. Webb. Bailey Bros. & Swinfen, £4.50; US \$8.95.

This regional study contains keys to identification with diagrams and maps, a review of previous collections and reports, and an account of the relationship between flora and geography, and the distribution of reptiles. There is a good bibliography. This specialised (but rather highly-priced) book can be recommended as an authoritative survey of the subject.

A. d'A. BELLAIRS

A Discussion on the Results of the Royal Society Expedition to Aldabra 1967-8. Organised by T.S. Westoll and D.R. Stoddart. *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc. Lond. B*, vol.260 (no. 836), £19.00. US \$50.

All conservationists know about the recent successful struggle to save the unique atoll of Aldabra from military devastation. The Royal Society led in this; and it has become responsible, with the aid of a government grant, for organising research into the rich scientific treasures of the island. This 654-page volume of papers by various authors, presented at a discussion in March 1969, records the results of the first six phases of the Royal Society Expedition; further phases have followed, and there is now a permanent research station.

There are papers on the geomorphology of the atoll, the climate, and the tides of the lagoon; then others on marine ecology, and several on the vegetation. Most of the rest are concerned with the fauna, including crustaceans, molluscs and insects. One is on the vast population of the giant tortoise, another on the sea turtles, and another on the bats (the only known land mammals). The birds are treated under several heads. Of the resident land birds there are 6-7 ciconiiform species and 13-14 'land birds proper'; the latter include the new warbler *Nesillas aldabranus* and the white-throated rail, the last surviving flightless bird in the western Indian Ocean and here the subject of a separate paper. Other contributions deal with the migrant waders and with the ecology of the breeding sea-birds; the populations of the red-footed booby and the frigate-birds (two species) are estimated at 12,000 and 30,000 respectively. More general papers include remarks on problems of conservation.

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