

# Book reviews

ists; together they are the result of a notable co-operative exercise and form one of the most comprehensive studies of birds in the British Isles ever to have been undertaken.

Nor are the BTO and IWC content to rest on their laurels. Now they are preparing to take part in the compilation of the 1987 European Breeding Atlas, and are planning the updating—this time with quantification—of their 1976 publication: even the ambitious project of spring and autumn passage Atlases for the British Isles is being contemplated. Such initiative and ambition deserve success. *The Wintering Atlas*, like its predecessor, is an essential acquisition for any serious ornithologist, and is outstanding value for money. *Christopher Lever.*

## Off-Beat Biologist

Sir Alan Parkes

The Galton Foundation, 1986, £20 (US\$30)

Sir Alan Parkes has set out the terms of reference for his autobiography thus: 'I had no intention of trying to produce a definitive history of anything. My aim was to write a light-hearted account of my personal contact with a lot of things over many years. . . . Expecting nothing more personally, I can look back with warm nostalgia on successes and failures, on good times and bad times, on friends and colleagues and, above all, on the fun of having lived.'

The *Off-beat Biologist* will be of greatest interest to those professionally conversant with Sir Alan Parkes's field of investigation—reproductive biology in its many facets and its wider implications—who can see the application of his pioneering work in various aspects of this field as management techniques for the conservation of animal species, especially our own. Indeed, the fact of publication of the book by the Galton Foundation is evidence enough of the socio-biological impact of his work. The less scientifically minded will be given some insight into the author's versatility and achievement through the accounts of his involvement in various initiatives concerned with the captive breeding of wild animal species and with the mobilization of international action and opinion on the control of human population levels. His own thoughts on the ethics of these matters are provocative and

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fascinating. Despite his professed light-hearted approach, the author has observed strict scientific discipline in constructing his work. Each chapter is carefully annotated by footnotes or expanded in an appendix, while the acknowledgments constitute a formidable list of those who have reviewed them. Epigrammatists will find a number of quotes worth remembering.

*Tony Mence, Editor of Parks, IUCN Conservation Monitoring Unit, Cambridge, UK.*

## International Zoo Yearbook 24/25

Edited by P.J.S. Olney

Zoological Society of London, 1986, 651 pp, HB £46.00, SB £39.00

Section 1 of Volume 24/25 of the International Zoo Yearbook is devoted to the Proceedings of the Fourth World Conference on Breeding Endangered Species in Captivity, which was held in September 1984 and was organized by the FFPS in conjunction with the Zoological Society of London and the Royal Rotterdam Zoological and Botanical Gardens. Section 2 focuses on new developments in the zoo world and includes papers on breeding broad-nosed caimans *Caiman latirostris* and red-billed curassows *Crax blumenbachi* in captivity. Section 3 provides an updated list of the world's zoos and aquaria, two years' data on animals bred in captivity and the census of rare animals in captivity.

*Editor.*

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