



One of Dr Cott's drawings in *Looking at Animals*

is the world authority, coloration, the art and practice of wildlife photography and the employment of black-and-white drawing to convey the feel of Africa.

It all adds up, no doubt, to something of a rag-bag, but is none the worse for that since the contents are of fine material. Not only does he write attractively but the book is lavishly illustrated with his own work. The photography is excellent. As for his drawings, I find them wholly delightful, with an unusual felicity of design and a delicate sense of texture. The pen, guided by Dr Cott's perceptive eye and finely practised hand, steals the picture from the camera every time – or so it seems to me.

*Looking at Animals*, unluckily, is too large for the pocket and perhaps too heavy for some suitcases. Whether packed or not, it should certainly be read before departure and it will surely come down from the shelf again on return.

JOHN OWEN

**Elephants and their Habitats:** the ecology of elephants in north Bunyoro, Uganda, by R. M. Laws, I. C. S. Parker and R. C. B. Johnstone. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £15.

Before Dr Laws started his work on elephants some ten years ago, very little was known about their biology. The production of this authoritative book shows how far the subject has progressed since then. The study began when it was found that the Kabalega (then Murchison) Falls National Park was overstocked with elephants and the decision was taken to reduce their numbers by culling. The controversy over elephant control need not be considered here since the authors discuss the problem fully and, considering the adverse criticisms their proposals have received, with commendable objectivity. However, their conclusions will need to be reassessed in the light of the recent increase in poaching and it is unlikely that the suggested further reduction will now be undertaken.

The scope of the book goes beyond its sub-title, for it includes some results from the authors' later work in Kenya and Tanzania. Most of the scientific data have been collected from dead elephants and cover such topics as nutrition, growth, reproduction and population dynamics. There is little on behaviour, although much of the social organisation can be deduced from the composition of the family units which were shot *en bloc* in order to reduce disturbance to other elephants and to prevent the breakdown of the social order.

The text is well written in an interesting style, although it makes no concessions to the 'popular' market and some passages will probably be skipped by the general reader. Similarly, the photographs are there to provide information and not to embellish the text with pretty pictures. The book will be the standard reference for

many years and it can be thoroughly recommended to anyone interested in the conservation of African wildlife. It is to be hoped that its relatively high price will not mean that it will be purchased only by other scientists working on elephants.

S. K. ELTRINGHAM

**The Man Who Loves Giants, by David Shepherd.** David and Charles, £4.50

David Shepherd may appear to have joined the ranks of the wildlife conservationists by pure accident, but really it was a case of predestination. He is a man who simply likes to conserve things, whether they are ancient steam engines or endangered animals—especially if they are big ones such as mammoth locomotives and giant elephants. On leaving school he did try to enter conservation by the big front door and flew out to Africa to enlist as a game warden. Having no qualifications he was naturally turned down. He earned his fare home by painting birds, decided to study art and eventually made a living by painting aeroplanes. While doing a commission for the RAF in Nairobi he was asked if, for a change, he would try his hand at elephants. He has never looked back!

This book is not primarily about wildlife: it is the autobiography of a painter who happens also to be a passionate conservationist and who, by his art and his generosity, has made an outstanding contribution to the financing of conservation—particularly in connection with Operation Tiger. As one would expect with such an author, there are copious illustrations in both black and white and colour

G. T. CORLEY SMITH

**The Living World of Audubon, by Roland C. Clement.** Country Life Books, £5.95.

The comparison of painting and photography grinds on, as indeed it always will, because there is an obvious parallel in any visual presentation of life and happening. The scales are recurring ones – the freedom of an artist to create and compose a situation balanced against the sheer scientific exactitude of a photograph.

If an original painting is set against a photograph, the indefinable merits of a painted surface and the individuality of the artist's brushwork combine to devalue the chemical product. A welcome sentimentality is aroused that gives all painters a lift. But here there is something else – both paintings and photographs are reproduced by the same mechanical process; their surfaces are identical. One is left to ponder a purely visual comparison.

Roland Clement has presented something that will delight all who see it. As an experiment in juxtapositions, the choice of Audubon is brilliant, for his painting, perhaps more than any other, distilled every drop of decorative lineal delight from a subject without loss of scientific observation – for a perfect example see the great blue heron on page 31. Moreover he lived before cameras, when artists bore a responsibility to 'record', and before they became confused and manipulated by the camera's split-second caricatures of truth. He looked, closely and clinically, bringing his 'art' to bear not just on the birds but on the flowers and grasses, berries and landscapes of his living world.

Clement has taken only 64 from the 435 species illustrated in the original double-*elephant* folios of 'Birds of America', but he has chosen carefully. All the main groups are represented and he has selected for diversity, spectacle and artistic impact. An introduction to each tells of Audubon's own associations with the bird and its status in his day. Then he describes the bird as an object of up-to-date field study, in the form of expanded captions to the supporting photographs. These links are fascinating and beautifully presented, so one sees first the Audubon print, followed by camera portraits from America's leading photographers, showing each subject,