

species that turns seaweed into meat and then obligingly crawls ashore to be slaughtered? Here, above all, seems a case for rational conservation and utilization, the Costa Rica conservation project is not isolated but it is all too rare.

Having said, without reservation, that this is an excellent and most useful book the reviewer feels reluctant to make any adverse criticism. But it does seem that price (nearly three pounds) may put it out of reach of many zoologists who have to buy their own books, and the size (quarto) will make it an awkward shape on many bookshelves. As only two thirds of each page are occupied by the subject matter, the lavish production and price might well have been reduced to give the book a wider circulation.

J. I. M.

FRESHWATER FISHES OF THE WORLD. By GUNTHER STERBA. Translated and revised by Dr. Denys Tucker. London, Vista Books, 1962. 70s.

In the fresh waters of Britain we are accustomed only to top fish such as trout and salmon and a group of coarse fish mostly belonging to the carp family. In other parts of the world, and particularly in the tropics, the range is vastly bigger and this is covered in Professor Sterba's large and copiously illustrated book on the world's freshwater fishes. The treatment is systematic, that is each natural family is considered in turn, with a straightforward description of each species dealt with, as well as notes on its distribution in nature and in particular the methods of keeping it in an aquarium. Here at a glance those interested in fish can learn of the breeding habits of the lesser-known species as well as the more ordinary mollies, guppies and swordtails.

Of particular importance at the moment are the cichlids, in some of which the fertilized eggs are brooded in the mouth of one of the parents until they hatch. Even then the tiny fry may still seek shelter in the parental mouth when threatened. One of these fishes, *Tilapia mossambica*, is not only interesting biologically, but is also of considerable economic importance, being farmed in fish-ponds in many parts of the world, particularly in S.E. Asia, where it helps to increase the local production of good animal protein.

This book gives much information on this essential part of the world's aquatic fauna.

G. V.

TASMANIAN WILD LIFE. By MICHAEL SHARLAND. Melbourne University Press. 86 p., 14 plates. 25s. (Aus).

This is a rather slight account of Tasmanian mammals, with a chapter on snakes. It cannot be taken seriously as a "field-study book" or as invaluable to bushwalkers and naturalists, as the dust-jacket claims. It is, as its author states, a popular account, and it consists of a series of short essays which combine brief but useful descriptions, animal anecdotes, and statements strongly coloured by personal likes and dislikes.

Reliance upon the few available literary sources is clearly acknowledged and has led to the restatement of much reliable information. But non-literary sources have occasionally let the author down. Tasmanian deer are said to be a special kind derived from the cross-breeding of Fallow deer with deer from India and Africa! Mont Turner's claim to have found the desert hopping-mouse in Tasmania, which has not been verified, is hardly a sufficient ground for listing the animal as native to Tasmania.