

Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, vol. 4 by Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley. OUP, £6.25

A Guide to the Birds of Ceylon, by G.M. Henry. OUP, £2.75

The first three volumes of this standard work were reviewed in *Oryx* for December 1969 and September 1970, and this one maintains their high standard. It finishes the non-passerines, and gets a toe-hold on the vast canvas of the Passeriformes with the broadbills and pittas. Just how numerous the Passeriformes are compared with the twenty-odd orders of the non-passerines is demonstrated by the fact that six more volumes will be required to finish them and also the work as a whole. The non-passerines of India and Pakistan number 863 species and subspecies; by extrapolation we must expect some 1300 passerines. This volume covers the frogmouths, nightjars, swifts, trogons, kingfishers, bee-eaters, rollers, hoopoes, hornbills, barbets, honeyguides and woodpeckers, a splendidly colourful array beautifully depicted in 54 well produced colour plates by four artists: D. V. Cowen, Paul Barruel, A. M. Hughes and J. P. Irani. Line drawings supply detail, mainly of heads, and a key to nightjar calls is a particularly useful feature.

The second edition of the standard work on the birds of Ceylon (a country which is also included in the great Salim Ali/Ripley enterprise) has three new features: eleven pages of additions and amendments to the original text, which is otherwise more or less unchanged, twelve pages of pictures of nests and nest-holes of Ceylon birds (an aspect which is strangely neglected in most bird books), and a table comparing the very out-of-date order in which the families are arranged in the book to that (more up-to-date but still controversial) used in Phillips's *Revised Check-List of the Birds of Ceylon* published in 1952. The author, being primarily an artist (he has done all the splendid colour and black and white illustrations) clearly cannot understand all the fuss that systematists make about the order in which birds are arranged. For him the order used by Whistler in his pre-war *Popular Handbook of Indian Birds* is quite good enough, and who shall say, *sub specie aeternitatis*, that he is not right?

RICHARD FITTER

A Field Guide to the Birds of Southern Africa, by O. P. M. Prozesky. Collins, £2.50.

A Field Guide to the Snakes of Southern Africa, by V. F. M. FitzSimons. Collins, £2.10.

Two more African volumes in a popular series, both by well-known authorities, will be of value to students as well as to visitors and bird watchers. Both are well illustrated, the bird guide by Dick Findlay, the snake one by A. H. Barrett; 327 of the 411 birds are depicted, and 56 of 103 snakes are in colour. Occasionally the colour reproduction suffers and a couple of vipers especially and some other snakes are made to appear somewhat bizarre. Prozesky's text fulfils the objects of a field guide, and the colour plates are adequate for identification purposes, although the subjects are sometimes ill-assorted, with postures unnatural, necks exaggerated and eyes strangely enlarged. Popular names, though of some value, have no scientific basis and it is unfortunate that scientific designations are omitted from the explanatory page facing each plate, as in all this series.

The Natural History of the African Elephant

SYLVIA K. SIKES

This book has been written to meet the need for a handbook on the species which would be factual, up-to-date and technical, as well as readable and well illustrated, with a comprehensive bibliography which includes the latest research references. It also emphasises the bleak prospects of survival for the species unless measures are taken urgently to change the present situation

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In both Guides the individual characters of each species, their habits and habitat are described – in the bird volume plumage and voice as well, and the diagrammatic ‘topography’ of a bird provides information of which many are ignorant. The snake volume has a valuable key to identification based on colour and markings and, particularly important, related to local distribution; useful diagrams portray scalation, head shape and dentition. Of the 138 snakes listed, 35 are extremely venomous and dangerous to man.

C. R. S. PITMAN

Brief Reviews

The Tiger – its Life in the Wild, by George B. Schaller and Millicent E. Selsam (World’s Work, £1.50 – is a beautifully illustrated (black-and-white photographs and drawings), 70-page account based on Dr Schaller’s studies in Kanha National Park, written in a factual and totally unsentimental way for young people.

Of the greatest value and interest to those who are interested in the development of animal behaviour studies is Konrad Lorenz’s *Studies in Animal and Human Behaviour* (Methuen, £4) translated by R.D. Martin, and consisting of six of his early papers, including those on the ethology of the social crows, companionship in birds, and egg-rolling in the greylag goose.

Hawks, Owls and Wildlife (Constable £1.80), by John J. and Frank C. Craighead Jr, both of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, is a paperback edition of a valuable study on predator-prey relationships, first published in 1956. In a Foreword the authors note that ‘current researches confirm . . . the conclusions’.

Instinct and Intelligence (Penguin, 50p) is a valuable introduction to ‘the behaviour of animals and man’ (its sub-title) by S.A. Barnett of Glasgow University Zoology Department. It is difficult to formulate adequate conservation policies for animals until we know much more than we do about the roots of their behaviour.

The Tenrecs – A Study in Mammalian Behaviour and Evolution, by J.F. Eisenberg and Edwin Gould (§3.25) is Smithsonian Contribution to Zoology No. 27. It covers the 25 named forms of these endemic insectivorous mammals which have adapted to a wide range of Madagascar habitats, illustrated with black-and-white photographs.

BBONT – The First Ten Years is an attractively illustrated account of the reserves and activities of one of the larger naturalists’ trusts which now cover the British mainland with a network of local protection bodies. In its first ten years to 1969 BBONT (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists’ Trust) accumulated 37 reserves (from an acre or less to 250 acres) including one of world-wide renown at Cothill, near Oxford, scene of Dr E.B. Ford’s research on the scarlet tiger moth. (Birchcroft, Sylvia Close, Great Missenden, Bucks.) 35p.

Conservation and Wild Life in Mongolia, by O. Nammandorj, of the Academy of Sciences in Ulan Bator, edited by Henry Field (Field Research Projects, Miami, Florida, \$6.00) includes an account of the country, nature reserves and protected animals, and a bibliography.

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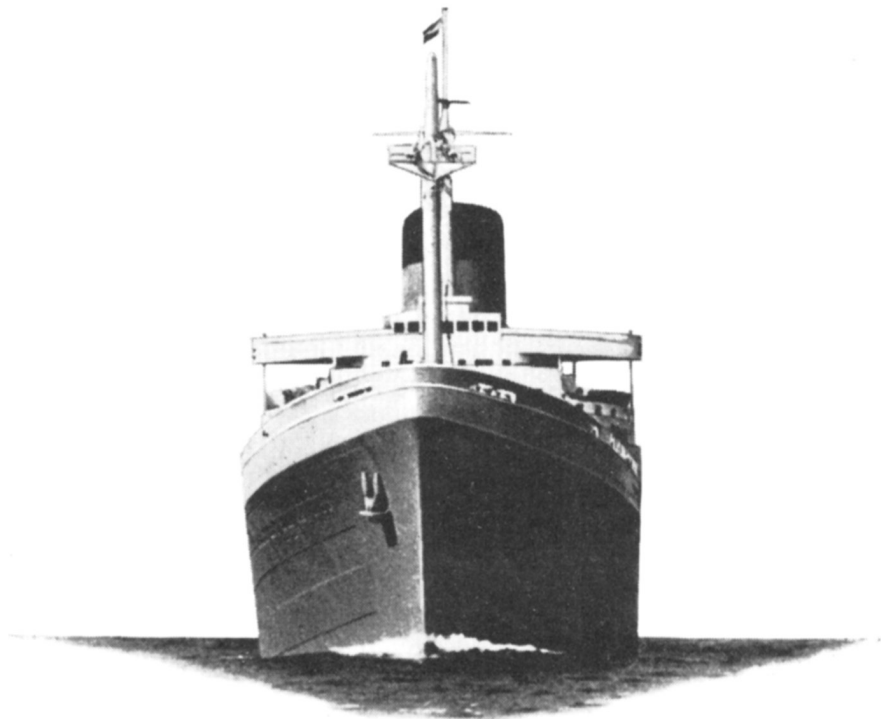
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BIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN MAMMALS

In 1968, the *Society for the Study of Fertility*, with the co-operation of the University College, Nairobi, and the East African Academy, sponsored a symposium on Biology of Reproduction in Mammals which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, 9th to 12th April.

The aim of this symposium was to provide an opportunity for biologists from different parts of the world to meet together and to discuss, from many viewpoints, comparative aspects of reproduction in mammals, especially wild mammals and those indigenous to Africa. Seven sessions were organized and the titles of the papers are listed below.

This meeting was outstandingly successful and led to the presentation of a wealth of new material.

The volume of Proceedings is published as Supplement No. 6 to the *Journal of Reproduction and Fertility** and contains 45 papers, covering 532 text-pages, and 48 half-tone plates. It was edited on behalf of the Society by Dr J. S. Perry and Dr I. W. Rowlands.

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