

each species is informative and usually well selected; perhaps the statement that "the frogmouths are related to the nightjars and the swallows" (for swifts) is the only slip of its kind. With commendable honesty the author tells the reader which of his sitters was photographed in other than fully natural conditions.

The author is an ardent conservationist, who, certainly with justice, sees much to condemn in the attitude of the generality of his countrymen towards their wonderful fauna even at the present day. The appearance of a book like this cannot fail to help his cause.

R. E. MOREAU

Four-legged Australians, by Bernhard Grzimek. Collins, 45s.

Dr. Grzimek, the famous Director of the Frankfurt Zoo, recently visited Australia and New Guinea, to see, in their wild state, the fauna of this remote continent, which for tens of thousands of years has been isolated from the rest of the world. This book describes what he saw and learnt, illustrated with magnificent photographs in both colour and black-and-white. In every chapter he sheds light on the purpose of the marvellous works of nature. He writes of the megapodes who build incubators for their eggs, which the male bird tends with great care and skill; the marsupial gliders which are descended from three quite separate families, the marsupial wolf, which, as ORYX readers know, is believed to exist still in Tasmania although it has not been seen by man for a decade; the egg-laying mammals, or monotremes, which are unique to Australia; the marsupials, whose pouches are back to front, a typical example of the miraculous design of nature—in the case of the koala the reason has only recently been discovered; the dingo, one of the earliest settlers from overseas, which can still be seen in considerable numbers in the outback—I have found them in the forests within a few miles of Brisbane. About kangaroos, he notes that the Wild Life Section of CSIRO have only recently discovered that each of the two teats in the females pouch gives a different beverage, one suitable for the youngest member of the family, the other to meet the needs of the joey which is soon to be weaned. In a chapter on "The Birds of Paradise and the Stone Age Men of New Guinea" he paints a vivid picture, on the one hand of some of the most gorgeously feathered and beautiful birds in the world, and on the other of their enemies, the primitive tribes, whose customs are often unbelievably barbarous, but who are being guided, humanely and effectively, towards a civilised way of life.

In a chapter on the rabbit he clearly shows how much extensive research work is required, over many years, before a true picture can be obtained.

The revelations which Dr. Grzimek unfolds throughout this great book fills the mind with wonder; it should be read not only as an account of the Australian fauna, but by everyone who appreciates the marvels of nature.

H. ABEL SMITH

Tropical Fishes of the Great Barrier Reef, by Tom C. Marshall. Angus and Robertson, 75s.

It is two hundred years since Sydney Parkinson, and later Georg Forster, official artists on Cook's first and second voyages, brought home folders of coloured drawings, many of the former's depicting Australian fishes. For more than fifty years these sketches, although never published, were drawn upon by European naturalists for descriptions of new Australian species. By the 1880's, however, several lists, catalogues and descriptive papers on fishes had been published in Australia, and the Australian fish fauna became reasonably well-known. An important contribution was Marshall's *Fishes of the Great Barrier Reef*, published in 1964, of which the present book is a scaled-down version.