

Peru, and the difficulties in camping on isolated islands. Although some might quibble with a few of the general scientific conclusions, there are gratifyingly few errors. The text is augmented with many plates and some generally less successful line drawings.

This book shows how scientific work can safely be undertaken without undue disturbance of the animals, and contrasts most favourably with many recent writings on the Galapagos from which it sometimes appears that 'conservation is only for other people'. Such work as this is essential if the irresistible tide of tourism is to be channelled, not to destroy the golden goose but to act as the necessary financial inducement for governments to support conservation.

M. P. HARRIS

**Great National Parks, by Richard Carrington. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 6 gns.**

Measuring 12½" by 10", and containing 240 thick pages, this is a lavish book fit only for the stronger coffee tables, two-thirds photographs, one-third widely spaced text. The pictures, always beautiful, sometimes exciting, are almost all of animals which reside in parks, rather than views of the parks themselves. 'Lovely photographs of animals in parks' is a fair working title for the book.

Nevertheless the text is good. It goes through most of the major parks in the world, and manages to turn what could be largely indigestible dollops of fact about each into extremely readable prose. There is also a good introduction which points out that part of Fontainebleau was the world's first nature reserve (in 1858), that the congressional decision to hold the Yosemite Valley in trust for public use and recreation (in 1864) really set the ball rolling, and that Yellowstone was the first true national park (in 1872). Mr Carrington also describes the concept of zonation, whereby part of a park is strictly for casual tourists, part is more inaccessible, and part is solely for scientific investigation. Skilful zonation is the key to the successful management of many parks, notably the American ones.

To my mind the captions – admittedly always difficult – are the greatest let-down of this work. Sometimes they assume the reader to be blind: 'The leopard cub above does not seem to regard the photographer with favour.' Worst of all is when they appear to have been written by a computer, and are just the same old boring captions we have all read a million times. As a plea for a cessation of this practice, herewith a questionnaire taken from this book: Guess what African animal is being described – 'alleged aphrodisiac properties', 'this antelope . . . often feeds standing on its hind legs', 'beautiful lyre-shaped horns', 'its long neck is an evolutionary adaption to the habit of browsing off tall trees', 'one of the swiftest land predators . . . 60 mph', 'reputed to be one of the most dangerous animals', 'feathered tufts . . . like quill pens', 'flightless'. No prizes are offered for knowing all eight.

But as an appetite-whetter for where next to go in the world this book is unsurpassable.

ANTHONY SMITH

**A Field Guide to the National Parks of East Africa, by John G. Williams. Collins, 45s.**

John Williams has done visitors to the East African parks a great service with this guide, designed to assist both the identification of the mammals and rarer birds and the planning of an East African holiday to the best possible advantage; he has accomplished both aims most successfully.

The first of the guide's three sections describes briefly the situation and size of

each park with sketch maps, how to get there, the accommodation available, the vegetation and the mammals and birds of particular interest, with a check list of mammals and birds for the keen naturalist. This is followed by a comprehensive field guide to the mammals most likely to be seen, based on the Peterson system, excellently illustrated, with a short description of each species, and notes on identification and distribution. The third section, confined to the rarer birds of East Africa, is supplementary to Williams's *Field Guide to the Birds of East and Central Africa*, dealing fully only with those birds not included in that volume. This makes it imperative for anyone wishing to identify the birds to have both guides, particularly as the majority of the birds seen are likely to be those described in the earlier publications.

In this new guide the bird section is generally very well illustrated and the colour reproduction much superior to that of the earlier one. It is unfortunate that its overall excellence should be marred by faulty relative proportions of the birds in some of the plates, notably the kingfishers and rollers in plate 18 and the yellow-billed shrike and raven in plate 26, and by the lack of a scale in all plates. To the serious ornithologist the omission of scientific names opposite the plates is somewhat aggravating, but a minor fault in such a generally excellent publication, which no visitors to East Africa's incomparable national parks should be without.

N. R. FUGGLES-COUCHMAN

**The Book of the Giraffe, by C. A. Spingale.** Collins, 30s.

**The Leopard by Peter Turnbull-Kemp.** Bailey Bros & Swinfen, 65s.

Skilfully presented and well documented, *The Giraffe* is an exciting and informative monograph about one of the most extraordinary and bizarre of ungulates, which somehow seems all wrong with its outsize proportions and little head, 18 feet above the ground, surmounting a 'watch-tower' neck. Colonel Meinertzhagen once aptly described giraffes as 'appearing to be lame in all four legs, besides having their shoulders dislocated'. The author has done an astonishing measure of meticulous research to provide such a wealth of valuable detail in support of his hope that the book 'will help people to reach a better understanding of this unique animal', which he has surely done with this 'introduction to the literature, the history and the habits of the giraffe'.

He traces the story of the giraffe, which, beginning millions of years ago, has had a place in the primitive culture of Africa for at least 5000 years, at the same time dealing with a variety of interesting subjects including origins, primitive art, legend, early introductions to foreign countries as far afield as China, anatomy, physiology, habitat and habits; much that is remarkable and well-nigh incredible is revealed. Certainly it is not generally known that the first giraffe calf to be born in Europe was at the London Zoo in 1839, where up to 1892 seventeen had been born. The giraffe's sole relative, the strange, forest-dwelling okapi, rightly receives more than passing mention in a comprehensive appendix.

The illustrations and distribution maps of the giraffe and okapi, past (hypothetical) and present, are excellent.

*The Leopard*, a bulky tome of some 160,000 words is best judged from the author's own words - 'For the past ten years I have conformed to the orthodox form of presentation. This little book has been my first attempt at rebellion.' One shudders to contemplate the extent of a 'large' book. Certainly a tremendous amount of painstaking research has been expended in the compilation of this highly informative and almost encyclopaedic account, replete with a wealth of