

as Audubon put it, 'at their natural avocations'. Again the choice of photographs is brilliant, for some are almost a perfect facsimile of attitude with the painting; others are wildly contrasted showing the unbelievable range of camera capability in skilled hands.

'The artist paints in order to see better', writes Clement, reminding us of Turner's equally apt comment: 'Every look at nature is a refinement upon art'. This book will certainly give a new boost to the unending, if fascinating, debate, but as a painter I am biased. I still recall the words of a famous and successful wildlife photographer – 'I've just come out of my darkroom and never realised what wonderful things there were in Africa'.

KEITH SHACKLETON

**Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan**, by Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley. Vol. 8. Warblers to Redstarts, £8; Vol. 9. Robins to Wagtails, £8.50; Vol. 10. Flowerpeckers to Buntings, £11.20. Oxford U.P.

Surface mails having reverted to the pace of sailing days, the final volume of this great work, although published in India in 1974, only reached the FPS after the October issue of *Oryx* had gone to press. Six years have therefore elapsed since the first two volumes were reviewed here, but there is really very little more to add to one's first impressions. This is an avifauna in the great tradition of Witherby's *Handbook of British Birds*, with detailed and scrupulously accurate information given under a dozen or so headings – such as field characters, status and distribution, food, voice and breeding. There is a useful cross-reference to a full description of the plumage elsewhere (often to Baker's *Fauna of British India*), and for the great majority of species both a distribution map and a colour illustration. A commendable feature is that, in order to reduce costs, colour plates from other books, such as Smythies's *Birds of Burma*, have been cannibalised, and though this leads to occasional duplication and the illustration of less common subspecies, it seems to me wholly justifiable.

Will this, one wonders, be the last regional avifauna on such a scale to succeed in getting published? Both the even more ambitious enterprises for North America and for the Western Palaearctic have run into difficulties, in the latter case largely due to burgeoning printing and other costs. I am sure the authors involved in both would be delighted to think that in six years' time their task would be successfully completed. But then this team has the unique strength of joining the greatest Asian ornithologist of modern times with an outstanding American ornithologist who has achieved the pinnacle of the Secretaryship of the Smithsonian. We expected great things of them, and they have not disappointed us.

RICHARD FITTER

**Birds of Prey in Europe**, by Maarten Bijleveld. Macmillan, £12.50

Very rarely have the fortunes or misfortunes of a group of birds been chronicled in such detail as in this dossier. In Britain we already know quite a large part of the story of the recent declines in our raptors, and now the appalling story of their systematic persecution throughout Europe is narrated in full. Both in Britain and continental Europe persecution continues on big shooting estates. Dr Bijleveld gives all the details of continuing habitat destruction, all the details of the deliberate use of poisons, all the details of deaths resulting from the use and misuse of organochlorine pesticides. He points out, too, the increasing disturbance at the nests of rare birds of prey by ornithologists taking advantage of cheap travel offered by package tours; travelling educates, but a code of behaviour seems essential. But he fails to mention the problem caused by the rash of zoos and bird gardens all wanting eagles and vultures as a public attraction. Nor does he mention as a problem the increasing demands for falconry. Perhaps this problem is not general in Europe and perhaps the