

REVIEWS

WILD LIFE IN AN AFRICAN TERRITORY. By F. FRASER DARLING.
Oxford University Press. 25s.

Fraser Darling is an ecologist with considerable experience of eastern and south-central Africa. "Land is not only soil. Land is life. The only true strength of a nation is the land." This is a quotation from *Wild Life Review* (Sept., 1960) the journal of the Fish and Game branch of the British Columbia Department of Recreation and Conservation. It is the basis of Darling's theme, which is primarily a plea for more imaginative and better land use in the interests not only of the wild life, but principally for the benefit of the human population. The book is factual, forthright and forceful, albeit contentious; but will it at this eleventh hour evoke the desired response? Defined as "A study made for the Game and Tsetse Control Department of Northern Rhodesia", it is written as a specialized, highly scientific report; for public consumption it had better have been served up in simpler style. The views expressed are the author's own and must not be interpreted as those of the Government.

This comprehensive dissertation on wild life management emphasizes that the necessity for the conservation of the hoofed mammals, once so abundant but now so sadly reduced through human greed and thoughtlessness, is as yet unrecognized by the African inhabitants and little appreciated by the immigrant administration. Yet, the wild life constitutes one of the continent's greatest assets, and Darling's is a praiseworthy effort, an urgent endeavour, to awaken interest in ensuring the survival of what is left. There is still time and opportunity for a great revival, for the astonishing recuperative power of the African fauna, given favourable conditions, has been demonstrated again and again. Is it possible to awaken the interest of the African, who mainly remains primitive and untutored? It can be done, as tersely expressed by an eminent scientist in the four words "profit, protein, prestige and pride". "Profit" is a tangible asset and has universal appeal; "protein" soothes the stomach and helps to satisfy the meat hungry; while "prestige and pride" go together, indicative of tribal stature—when one has something, a reserve or a rare animal, which the others have not and in which world wide interest may be shown. All these factors are suitably dealt with by Darling; but over-riding is the relation of wild life conservation to land use policy and African nutrition.

The wasteful use of land and its resources is preventable; the

widespread incidence of fire has a degrading effect which should be readily apparent, though usually ignored; the incalculable harm caused by overgrazing is rarely appreciated; and wild life if reasonably conserved can be profitably cropped.

Darling claims that as most of Northern Rhodesia's 287,640 square miles are unsuitable for domestic stock, the wild ungulates if properly farmed are of priceless value. The uncontrolled African exploitation of the "game" animals is a disaster. In the past thirty years there has been an appalling decrease in all Northern Rhodesia's wild animals, but it is not too late to apply the remedy. The author's "Conclusion" and "Recommendations" summarize the whole complex problem and its solution. Let us hope that those who are in a position to act will take heed of what has been written.

The book includes three maps showing respectively the author's itineraries, the human population and the Game Reserves and Controlled Areas. In an Appendix there is a valuable "Present-day status of ungulates in Northern Rhodesia".

C. R. S. P.

ZULU JOURNAL: FIELD NOTES OF A NATURALIST IN SOUTH AFRICA. By RAYMOND B. COWLES, University of California Press. 1959. \$6.

Raymond B. Cowles, Professor of Zoology in the University of California, was born in 1896, the son of pioneering missionaries stationed on the Amanzimtoti river in eastern Natal. Hunting and fishing, collecting and observing in the unspoilt wilds that were his home, and learning skills and bushcraft from his Zulu friends, the young naturalist had opportunities that others, less fortunate, may well envy. Everything fresh and new, curious and wonderful, made its deep impression on the boy's roving eye and receptive mind—an early contribution to knowledge, made at the age of ten, was his remarkable discovery that the Nile monitor lays its eggs in the nests of termites.

In the opening pages we read the account of a way of life that has now vanished. The author has twice returned to the scenes of his childhood, in 1925–1927, and in 1953: and his story, based on early memories and on notes from his field journals, includes not only a wealth of original observations on the country, its large game animals and lesser wild life, and on the characteristics, customs, fears and folklore of its human inhabitants, but also a revealing survey of the rapid and drastic