

Unfortunately, the book opts for a romantic not a zoological portrait of the condor. Some of the pieces contradict each other over details, yet the overall rhetorical bias permits no space to opposing points of view. The world's captive-breeding successes, for instance, are given scanty analysis.

Despite the book's assertions to the contrary, rearing condors in captivity does not exclude preserving their habitat. That so many sincere conservationists should oppose the recovery team, however, may be a justified indictment of the high-handed conduct of the team's members if not of the principles of its programme. Though unsatisfactory as an answer to 'the condor question', the book is eloquent in warning against the triumph of 'science' over sensitivity.

STEPHEN MILLS

Vanishing Eagles. Illustrated by Trevor Boyer, written by Philip Burton. Rigby International Pty, London, £9.95.

People have long regarded eagles as regal birds, because of their large size, predatory habits, aloofness, and mystery, and because of the wild country they usually inhabit. Many have admired their beauty and power, and their almost effortless flight into the teeth of a gale. Others for generations have regarded them as enemies of their domestic stock or game, and have persecuted them remorselessly. The bald eagle is the national emblem of the United States, but is in danger of extinction. Indeed, eagles as a group are now more gravely threatened than ever in the past, by persecution, pollution from modern chemicals, and destruction of habitat for human development.

This book is timely, and puts this conservation message well. It also offers an accurate yet readable summary of information that is available only in more detailed form elsewhere. A small criticism is that Iceland does not appear on the map of distribution of the white-tailed eagle, nor Britain for the golden eagle despite Scotland's large population of golden eagles. The book contains a set of striking drawings and paintings by Trevor Boyer, first commissioned by Eagle Star Insurance. These make this book something of beauty and wonder, catching the grandeur of the world's eagles and wild places.

ADAM WATSON

Waders, by W.G. Hale. Collins New Naturalist, £9.50.

Estuary Birds of Britain and Ireland, by A. J. Prater, T. and A.D. Poyser, £14.

The first of these in Professor Hale's own words 'is a general and personal view of wading birds'. It is a fairly comprehensive review of the biology of waders, mostly British species, well up to the usual high standards of the New Naturalist series.

The second book presents the results of the BTO Birds of Estuaries Enquiry, dealing not only with waders but also ducks, geese, swans, divers, grebes and cormorants. It is in three parts: general estuarine biology and threats to estuaries; an account of estuaries on a regional basis; and an account of each species. It is an extremely useful and worthwhile document but sadly the results only apply up to 1975. I would have preferred to have had the results sooner without much of the dressing up of the earlier chapters. There are other sources for estuarine biology. There is one persistent mistake common to both books in the spelling of the scientific name for the catworm. The first book only uses *Nephtys* and is therefore consistently wrong. The second book uses three different spellings,

as above, *Nephtys*, and the correct one of *Nephtys* in the space of a few pages.

CHRIS TYDEMAN

The Trees of Britain and Northern Europe, by Alan Mitchell and John Wilkinson. Collins Pocket Guides, £6.95 hardback, £3.95 paperback.

Alan Mitchell has been described as 'the great tree connoisseur of our generation; the Evelyn, the Gilpin or the Elwes of the mid-20th century'. Certainly his other excellent work on trees, the Collins *Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe* which appeared in 1974, has become almost a 'standard work'. The new *Pocket Guide* has the same dimensions as the *Field Guide* but is in other respects quite different. It is clear, concise, and only marginally less comprehensive, covering over 600 species and varieties. But from its key to its overall presentation it is written in a more 'popular' style, clearly aimed at the enthusiastic beginner rather than the committed amateur. The whole book is in colour so that illustrations appear against the species descriptions – an improvement on the *Field Guide* – but the illustrations are less clear, and the descriptions shorter, more 'chatty' and without the systematic detail of its more scholarly sire.

The appeal of the new *Pocket Guide* is that – especially for the beginner – it is simple, accessible, and easy to use.

RICHARD CLARKE

The Oxford Book of Insects, by John Burton. Oxford University Press, pocket edition, £2.50 paperback.

Many readers of *Oryx* interested in British natural history will need no introduction to the *Oxford Book of Insects* and will welcome the new pocket edition – identical in all respects except size and soft cover. Inevitably the selection of about 800 of a possible 20,000 species is somewhat arbitrary. Thus almost all the British butterflies are shown, but only some 10 per cent of the more than 2000 moths. Nevertheless, enough examples are given to enable the user to recognize insect groups and there is a fair chance that any common specimen will be found illustrated. The plates and adjacent text will be sufficient to whet the appetite of even those for whom all insects are merely 'creepy crawlies'. Above all, the *Pocket Guide* is exactly what it says – small enough to slip into the pocket on a Sunday walk and, a small investment which will yield an immense return in interest, enjoyment, and awareness of what for many nature lovers is an 'unknown world'.

RICHARD CLARKE

The Falcons of the World, by Tom J. Cade (Collins, £15) deals only with the genus *Falco*, which includes such well known birds as the peregrine, gyrfalcon, kestrel and kestrel. The author is an expert on the peregrine, and accompanies R. David Digby's fine paintings with an excellent and comprehensive account of the natural history of each species.

Aves Brasilieras, Vol. 1, by Johan Dalgas Frisch (Editora Dalgas-Ecoltec Ltda, Rua de Consolacao 3095, CEP 01416, Sao Paulo SP, Brazil, \$29.95), when