

Book reviews

The Mole, by Kenneth Mellanby. Collins, £2.00.

Much of the current work and interest in mammal ecology I date to Collins' first New Naturalist Monograph, Ernest Neal's *The Badger*, nearly 25 years ago. The mole shares some of the romance associated with the badger and is certainly more familiar and readily observed. A readable, authoritative and inspiring account was much needed, and Kenneth Mellanby has produced just that. Readable, in that the 148 pages can easily be read at a sitting and there is no cumbersome scientific jargon to put off the layman; authoritative, for mention of all the notable and up-to-date work is somehow incorporated. The author too transmits his real feeling for his subject – 'If you are lucky enough to find them (molehills) on your lawn.....', and he writes from first-hand experience – 'If you pick him up he will bite you'. Indeed my main criticism is that I would have enjoyed reading more of Dr. Mellanby's own laboratory work and field techniques and a little less of earlier accounts of mole life. Perhaps, too, more detail of Gillian Godfrey's admirable field work, especially as her book – *The Life of the Mole*, Godfrey and Crowcroft (1960) – is now out of print.

Diagrams, although clear, would be more helpful if labelled more fully or even annotated – a fault with many New Naturalist publications. Fig 8 has units incorrectly marked (milligrams should be to an extra power of 10). I like the brief notes included in the bibliography but in view of the fact that this is a monograph a more extensive one would be useful.

The book answers such intriguing questions as why all moles are male for some part of the year, and tells of Eimer's organs, Pinkus plates, fortresses, numbers to the acre and how moles hunt frogs. In fact it gives a very satisfying account of the adaptations of one of our original woodland species to new man-made habitats. Welcome for its easy style and stimulating reading, I put it down only to rush out to the garden and dig away at tunnel systems!

COLIN RUSSELL

The Wild Goats of Great Britain and Ireland, by G. Kenneth Whitehead. David & Charles, £2.95.

The Watcher and the Red Deer, by Richard Perry. David & Charles, £2.

The wild goat is without doubt the most neglected large member of the British fauna. Not one person in a hundred who knows there are wild deer in Britain and (so-called) wild ponies in the New Forest realises that there are wild goats in many parts of northern and western Britain. This is not surprising, for before Kenneth Whitehead, a leading authority on wild deer in Britain and a former member of FPS Council, wrote this book, there was hardly any written information about it. Indeed, before I summarised what was then known in *The Ark in Our Midst* (1959) there were only two traceable papers in natural history journals and a variety of letters and articles in *Country Life* and other magazines.

But now Kenneth Whitehead has amply filled the gap. He has put