

There is a most noticeable present increase of people (many of them newly-leisured and better off than ever before) embracing shooting and wildfowling as a hobby. Refuge administration and protection legislation can be but palliatives, a temporary mud-bank against the approaching flood. Those of us who, like Mr. Butcher, prefer atmosphere to sporting achievement, must dig in, do our administrative best to preserve and increase sanctuaries, and uphold the law and hope that the flood will swing into a new channel. Books like Mr. Butcher's will help to change the climate of public opinion in every civilized country.

In the old days it was the leisured few who, on a fine day, could go out and kill something. Now it is the leisured many. The leisured few did not have to calculate what nature could spare. For the leisured many of to-day certain calculations are made and actions taken by our agencies of conservation and by the Law, to prevent them taking more than nature can now spare. Excellent though these measures are, they can never succeed unless they are backed by the altruistic and self-denying actions of all shooting sportsmen.

My personal view is that, whatever we do with legislation and administration, the future of our wildfowl lies in the hands of the man with the gun, and is unlikely to be safe until he uses that gun for two purposes only—the advancement of science, and the filling of his family's (and nobody else's) cook-pot.

J. F.

AN AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL BOOK. By CHARLES BARRETT.
Oxford University Press. London: Cumberlege £1 7s. 6d.

I will express at once my only regret about this book. The opportunity of this second edition has not been taken to bring it up to date. For example, though there are many fully justified complaints about the terrible destruction of the fauna, there is no word of the conservation bodies, both official and private, which have been doing good work during the last few years; the Fauna Protection Panel of New South Wales for instance was founded in 1948. The plea for the preservation of the wedge-tailed eagle is based largely on its value as a rabbit destroyer; yet though there is a chapter on introduced mammals, there is no mention of the likely effect of myxomatosis which was brought into Australia in 1944. We are told that emus were plentiful in Wyperfeld National Park in 1942, but nothing of their present status there.

That much said, I can unreservedly recommend this book to anybody who wants a general account of the vertebrate animals of Australia. One can read the mammals section straight through like a story book. To those to whom Australia means marsupials and marsupials mean kangaroo, koala and Tasmanian wolf, the variety and beauty of the smaller mammals will be a revelation. Many animal ways are finely described—the lesser flying phalanger, or sugar glider, beautifully builds its nest; the tree kangaroo makes its amazing leaps.

The bird chapters can hardly be read in the same way as those on mammals, for there are nearly 700 species of birds in Australia. Neither can this book claim to be a full guide to bird recognition, but at least a few representatives of each group are discussed. I was particularly impressed by the account of the lyrebirds, the bower birds and the mound builders.

There are short chapters on reptiles and fishes, seventy-four plates, many of very high quality, and a good index.

C. L. B.

THE BARREN GROUND CARIBOU OF KEEWATIN. By FRANCIS HARPER. University of Kansas Museum of Natural History. 163 pp., 28 photographs, 1955. \$1.50.

This publication will provide a valuable source of personal observations, of information collected from trappers, Indians and Eskimos in the Keewatin area, and of bibliographical reference to barren ground caribou in general up to 1951. Publication in 1955, therefore, means the loss of consideration of such important work as that of Banfield. The author has been meticulous in recording, a task which he has not equalled in capacity to interpret, prune and collate.

Caribou are rarely still, and though they may be absent from any particular area for several years, the 300,000 square miles of the Barrens of Canada are undoubtedly traversed completely by the caribou in the course of the years. They exhibit a curious rhythm in their migrations in that, after the broadly northward migration in May–June and a southward movement to the woods in August, there is a further but lesser northward thrust to the Barrens in September. The retreat to the taiga for the winter is in October–November.

Men are on the watch for the caribou, ready to intercept them at vantage points; a steady following of the deer through the seasons would be quite impossible. Harper recounts what we have heard before, the wasteful slaughter that goes on year