

The Mammals of Arabia, Volume 2 by David L. Harrison. Benn, £7 7s.

The second of three volumes on the mammals of Arabia, this covers Carnivores-Hyraxes and Ungulates; the first, published in 1964 but not unfortunately reviewed in *ORYX*, dealt with the Insectivores and Bats. They are obviously intended to be regarded as one work – the pagination runs on from volume to volume – but this method of publication unfortunately means that the specialist worker, needing to use perhaps only one of the later volumes, has to refer back to the first for the interpretation of the abbreviations used and for a map of the area. However, this is a minor criticism of a work which will undoubtedly be a standard reference book for the next generation or so, not only for the systematist but also for the general naturalist interested in the habits and distribution of the region's mammals. It has come just at the right time to be useful as the countries in the region open up with the development of oil and all that goes with it. The author is probably the most competent amateur systematist in this country working on mammals; it is fortunate that he is also a keen field naturalist.

This volume deals with all the larger mammals of the peninsula, many of which are fast disappearing. In the past a number of subspecies have been described on what today would be looked upon as wholly inadequate material, and the author points out that the acquisition of more is not only difficult but undesirable bearing in mind the status of the animals concerned. It is much to be hoped that these volumes will bring home to the authorities concerned their responsibility for the preservation of the wealth of interesting species described.

The distribution maps for each species and the three dozen admirable text figures drawn by the author, showing such diagnostic features as teeth, skull and the like, are all very useful, but with the photographs the author has been badly let down by his publisher: many of them are so evilly reproduced as to do little more than add to the cost of this admirable and desirable book which is so expensive as to be out of the reach of most private purchasers. It is difficult to see how black and white photographs of museum skins can be of any use to either systematist or field naturalist.

CRANBROOK

Animal Life of Europe by Jakob Graf. Warne, 75s.

Having just returned from the Continent with half-a-dozen praying mantids I eagerly opened this book hoping to find some useful information about one of the most conspicuous, common and widespread insects in southern Europe. I was disappointed to find no mention of any of the several species which occur in France and elsewhere in Europe. Likewise a number of well-known species of snail such as *Otala* sp. – often eaten in the South of France – are accorded no space. The enormous number of Clausiliidae – a typical central European family of snails is represented only by *Laciniaria buplicata* 'especially where there is chalk' – which is meant to be limestone, a rather different thing! The snail *Helicella itala* is indicated as not occurring in Britain, where in fact it is local but sometimes abundant. Spot-sampling amongst the other invertebrates we find the millipede *Glomeris pustulata* shown as occurring in Britain which it does not, yet *G. annulata*, a common southern European species is not mentioned. Again in the Lepidoptera the Bee Hawk *Hemaris fuciformis* is given as absent from Britain, and the harvest-mite does not suck blood. These are a few of the too many errors which permeate the sections on the invertebrates. The information given about many species is often sketchy, frequently little idea is given about distribution and the different groups receive very unequal treatment. Perhaps this is inevitable when trying to cover such a wide field. It might have been better to omit