

S.O.S. Rhino, by **C. A. W. Guggisberg**. Deutsch, 27s. 6d.

This book documents the sad story of the decline of the rhinoceroses, sacrificed in part to the demand for their horn in pursuit of the elusive El Dorado of sexual pleasure. Firstly, the three Asian species were all but exterminated, and then the sun of rhinoceros fortune started to sink at an unbelievable speed in the west, as the traders looked to Africa. Coupled with loss of habitat, and exacerbated by big game hunting, poaching activities have reduced both black and white species to but a vestige of their former glory.

Of the six chapters in this book two are devoted to the black and white rhinos of Africa; the three Asian species, about which less is known share a single chapter. Every detail of their life histories and relationships to other species, particularly man, is included; even the plants taken for food, and rhino parasites are listed. The author is obviously a keen rhino watcher, and many of his field observations, for example, of the turbulent pre-copulatory behaviour of black rhinos, must surely make a valuable addition to our knowledge. There is also an eminently readable account of the 60-million-year history of the rhinoceros family, and a chapter entitled 'Rhinos and Man' is a compendium of rhino lore, a subject with which the author is obviously as much at home as with natural history. This book must be read by all conservationists. Because of the sensitive writing one closes it with a greater appreciation of these fine mammals, and with a feeling of despondency about the folly of man. However, Mr Guggisberg has his feet firmly planted on the ground, and leaves us in no doubt about the problems of maintaining the stocks of rhinos, particularly the Asian. He makes a timely plea for good sense.

JOHN SPARKS

The Mammals of Rhodesia, Zambia and Malawi, by **R. H. N. Smithers**. Illustrated by **E. J. Bierly**. Collins, 25s.

Although unlikely to rival their avian counterparts in number, it is pleasing that several popular books on African mammals have been forthcoming in the past few years. This one sets out to provide the general reader in Rhodesia, Zambia and Malawi with the means of recognition of such mammals as he is likely to encounter, mainly during visits to wildlife areas, though in some cases in the course or normal day to day travelling, and it succeeds admirably. Primates, carnivores, ant-bear, pangolins, dassies, elephants and even the odd-toed ungulates found in the area, plus several selected species of the lesser known small mammals, are described, with concise notes on distribution, habitat, habits, diet, breeding and miscellaneous points. Subspecific names have rightly been omitted; they are of real interest only to the specialist, and often confusing to the layman, though they can be of considerable importance from the conservation angle. The text is supplemented where necessary by silhouettes of spoor taken from clay casts of the feet of fresh specimens, and also by individual range maps, which come out surprisingly well considering the small scale, though, as the author points out, knowledge of distribution is still often incomplete. A few records have been overlooked—for example the mongooses *Helogale parvula* and *Paracynictis selousi* have now been confirmed from Malawi, and the red duiker *Cephalophus natalensis* has been recorded from the south of that country, though there is no recent record. There is a short, well chosen bibliography, and separate indexes of colloquial and scientific names.

The frontispiece shows elephants, lions and buffalos in tree savanna country, and the eleven other colour plates illustrate virtually every species dealt with in the text, most of them very well, though the figure of the blue duiker *Cephalophus monticola*, is poor, and one of the lechwe is a composite animal with the colour of the black lechwe *smithemani* but the great spreading horns of the Kafue lechwe *kafuensis*. The colobus monkey illustrated is *C. abyssinicus* not *angolensis*. Nevertheless the general standard of the illustrations is high and the colour reproduction good. They are a most attractive feature of a book which is excellent value, informative, concise and attractively produced.

W. F. H. ANSELL

Grey Seal, Common Seal, by **R. M. Lockley**. Deutsch, 27s. 6d. There is a mass of information on every aspect of seal life in this "Survival" book published in association with Anglia Television's Natural History Unit; and it makes delightful reading. The author has made extensive observation on seals in the wild and gives some fascinating descriptions of their life and behaviour. A chapter on "The Breeding Season" gives a detailed picture of the grey seal's courtship and mating habits, with plans of two sites, showing the dispersion of the animals over them, a great help in visualising the scene.

Mr. Lockley has also brought up orphan seals, and shows that the curious difference in the temperaments of grey and common seal exists from an early age and is not modified by being reared by humans. Anyone who has watched seals knows that the common seal is livelier than the grey seal, and seems to be more affectionate, or at least less quarrelsome, in its relationship with its companions. Mr. Lockley's orphans showed the same behaviour. Diana, the common seal, always wished to be with her humans, even coming out of the sea when they did; Sabrina, the grey seal, never showed any liking for her guardians. Mr. Lockley points out that "a grey seal pup, in nature, is hostile to all other animals except its mother, and that such hostility is valuable in securing living space in the nursery for the more dominant pups best fitted to carry on the species."

As well as the invaluable results of Mr. Lockley's own observations, one of the most surprising of which is that totally blind seals can live and thrive, the book contains the results of a great deal of work by others on a number of topics: on the depths to which seals can dive, on population studies and on the physiology of seals. Mr. Lockley loves seals and after reading this book, even those who have never seen them will understand why.

DIANA SPEARMAN

No Room for Bears, by **Frank Dufresne**. Allen & Unwin, 32s. Anyone truly fond of animals, whether watching them in the field or reading about them in an armchair, should have this book by purchase or prescription as a gift. This is quite sweeping praise given conscientiously. Frank Dufresne wrote many books about the North but I think this is his best; he knew his animals intimately and he wrote so easily. This book is as full of human and ursine anecdote as many of his others but it holds together as a valuable commentary on the behaviour of the big bears of Alaska and on their several habitats surviving in a hungry new State where natural resources are looked at covetously as ready cash. One is sorry, for example, to hear of the destruction going on at Admiralty Island