

## Book reviews

designed to assist the international traveller in the identification of wildlife. Both books live up to the high standard that has generally been set in recent years and have been most attractively produced. They make an interesting contrast, for the authors have taken very different approaches to their subjects.

The African continent boasts more than 3000 species of butterflies, to say nothing of the subspecies and numerous polymorphic butterflies which have evolved different mimetic or seasonal forms. To produce a comprehensive field guide would therefore be a highly ambitious undertaking. Dr Carcasson, lately director of the National Museum in Nairobi, has sensibly set himself modest aims. He describes his guide as being no more than an introduction to the study of African butterflies. He has illustrated 354 species representing the larger genera, the commonest and most widely distributed species, and the largest and most conspicuous by reason of their behaviour etc. (There is a hardback edition which includes a list of all the species and subspecies known to occur in the Afrotropical Region.)

Dr Carcasson has illustrated the book himself from set specimens in the British Museum (Natural History) and his artistic talents are remarkable. His beautifully painted butterflies are a delight to the eye. He has been particularly skilful in the way he has captured the elusive quality of many of the species displaying iridescent colours. A few illustrations of larvae and pupae representing characteristic species from most families give one some idea of the remarkable forms and extraordinary diversity present in the early stages of the Lepidoptera. There are useful notes in the introduction describing mimicry, polymorphism, interesting butterfly behaviour and helpful cross-references in the species list to aid one in sorting out mimics and models.

This splendid book will certainly achieve its aim in stimulating people's interest in the great richness, variety and beauty of African butterflies. Hopefully, some will be encouraged to devote time to their serious study, for much still remains to be learnt about their biology and behaviour.

Whereas Dr Carcasson has illustrated his book in the conventional way with set specimens, Björn

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Dal, in his *Butterflies of Northern Europe*, edited by Michael Morris, has depicted the butterflies in their natural environment. The result is a most attractive book filled with delicately executed illustrations. It includes all the species regularly found in Britain and Northern Europe, but excludes 'high arctic' butterflies not often found below the Arctic Circle.

Instead of being arranged systematically, the butterflies have been grouped according to their usual habitats. This system has the advantage in enabling readers to identify species from amongst a relatively small number, rather than having to plough through pages of similar types. On the other hand, the book originated in Scandinavia and this may lead to some confusion in other geographical regions. For instance, *Argynnis paphia*, the silver-washed fritillary, is listed under meadowland and marshes, whereas in Britain it is usually associated with woodlands. Michael Morris's edited text has been expressly written for British readers and helps to overcome this problem. There are also distribution maps for each species.

*The Butterflies of Northern Europe* will be most useful for beginners and for those visiting Scandinavia or wishing to broaden their knowledge of European Lepidoptera beyond the shores of Britain.

Robin Crane  
Robin Crane Films

### W.H. Hudson, a biography

Ruth Tomalin

Faber & Faber, 1982, £13.50

A biography of Hudson is a daunting task. The main reason is that much of his writing is autobiographical but apart from his own writings, there is very little material upon which to base accounts of the early parts of his life. Ruth Tomalin has attempted this difficult task and the result is readable if a little pedestrian. However, I do wonder if at times she accepts Hudson's accounts of his early life a little too readily; after all he was usually writing decades later and even if the overall memories are accurate I wonder how precise the chronological details are.

Ruth Tomalin's book provides a work of reference for the Hudson *aficionado* which has long

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been lacking since, until now, apart from Hudson's own writings and several collections of his letters, there have only been short biographies and two bibliographies. Few of these even mention his strangely Victorian love affair with Linda Gardiner, assistant secretary of the RSPB. However, Hudson still deserves a biography written for the general reader, by someone who would do for Hudson what Alan Moorhead did for Darwin and the Nile explorers, and what William Gaunt did for art history. Hudson was one of the pioneers of modern conservation. His name is known to most conservationists, who may also have read *Hampshire Days* and one or two other of his books. But Hudson the passionate crusader is largely forgotten.

John A. Burton

### Also received

The following books have also been received and are held in the ffPS office for reference:

#### **The Fall of the Wild, the Rise of the Zoo** Robert Bendiner Dutton, 1982, \$15.50

*The Fall of the Wild and the Rise of the Zoo* is not recommended. Reading it in the ffPS Office in London Zoo, I not unnaturally first turned to look up Arabian oryx, and found that the account managed to omit any mention of the Fauna Preservation Society as we were then. The book is rife with errors. The literature concerning conservation and zoos has not been enriched by the publication of this book.

#### **The Wild Mammals of North America** Joseph A. Chapman and George A. Feldhamer (Editors) John Hopkins University Press, 1982, £37.50 (US\$65.00)

Nearly 1150 pages of closely written text, this is a massive compilation, each section written by acknowledged experts. It provides a useful, up-to-date, and detailed account of most species or groups of species, and the only major criticism concerns the species included in the book. Although it looks comprehensive, as the preface explains it only deals with '... 57 of the economi-  
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cally important mammalian species or species complexes'. Consequently, many of the species such as shrews, most bats and many other small mammals are omitted. Certainly this should be in the library of anyone interested in the exploitation or conservation of North American fauna. At £37 it is a bargain (3.2p or 5.6 cents per page!) and I recommend that authors and organisations used to publishers who consistently produce books at prices largely outside the reach of the individual scientist, take note.

#### **The Cotingas: bellbirds, umbrellabirds and their allies in tropical America**

David Snow  
Oxford University Press/British Museum  
(Natural History), £30.00

Written by a long-standing member of the ffPS, although primarily a comprehensive monograph of an interesting group of tropical birds, it is a book of considerable interest to conservationists. The cotingas include several endangered species and the fate of many of these is closely tied to that of the ever diminishing forests of South America. The introductory chapter on their distributional history and their probable areas of origin (Pleistocene refugia) is of particular interest.

All 65 species are illustrated—surprisingly—for the first time in a single book. Detailed distribution maps are a particularly useful feature for those concerned with developing conservation priorities in South American forests.

This book is available from ffPS at £31, inclusive of postage and packing.

#### **Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.**

**Volume 3: Waders to Gulls**  
Stanley Cramp (Chief Editor)  
Oxford University Press, 1983, £49.50

The book's 913 pages give full descriptions of 112 species: field characters, habitat, distribution, mortality, longevity, population, social patterns and behaviour, breeding, food, voice, plumage, moults, measurements, weights, structure and geographical variation. Each species is illustrated by a colour plate showing the full range of normal plumage together with distance flight views and,

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